



Auction Action!

IARCHS

Iowa Antique Radio Club and Historical Society

IARCHS NEWS – Winter 2006

Boy talk about “pay backs” no sooner did I mention in the fall newsletter how warm it had been than we get clobbered with a record breaking Decemberrrr. I think I’ll avoid comment on the current weather other than to note that I sure am glad winter got here because I couldn’t take too much more of fall. **BUT** before the weather turned, a few of us were able to make it to an auction to stock up on “good stuff” (more pictures to come). Also in this issue are plans for a “hands on” basic electrical restoration session at the home of one of our newest members, Bob Elbert of Roland, and yet another fine contribution from Sherry Cowden of OKVRC; a tribute to the career of Ralph Edwards that she originally published just a few weeks before he died. I suspect many of you will recall Mr. Edwards’ association with “This is your Life” as I did, but I bet you’ll be surprised at

the scope of his contributions over a long career. We also have in this issue an interesting tech article on the variety of 6SN7 tubes that was pointed out to me by Tom Laszynski, the newsletter editor for OKVRC.

Dave Perkins

The Lowdown on the Lowly 6SN7

In the last couple OKVRC newsletters there has been an interesting series of articles on tubes. In an email exchange with Tom Laszynski regarding these I learned of an interesting web site that includes write ups on some common tubes that delineate the features and differences within their respective tube families. What follows is an example that is not only technically interesting but

it may also lead you to find some "hidden gems" in your stock of tubes. Credit for this is due to **Brent Jessee Recording and Supply Inc.** and more can be found at www.audiotubes.com .

The 6SN7 tube is a medium-mu twin triode in an octal based package, usually glass, although some metal envelope types were made. In normal use it operates as a class A amplifier. It was widely used in the early days of television as the vertical amplifier, and it's use was so common in most TV chassis designs that vintage 6SN7 tubes are still fairly easy to find today. Audio designers soon found it made a great audio preamp with it's large plates, ample power reserve, and low microphonic octal package. The GTA and GTB types, having been fine tuned for demands in television chassis vertical sweep circuits, can handle up to 7 watts maximum plate power!

The demands for these tubes today are primarily in vintage and recent design audio amplifiers and preamplifiers of the high-fidelity type, up to and including the most expensive and esoteric. It seems there is a 6SN7 tube for every taste and budget, and some of the vintage versions are being hunted to extinction, especially those made for the military. I will try to explain the differences between some of these tubes, and list specifically what I have in stock. I expect some of these tubes will skyrocket in price worldwide as more and more audio designers find out that this preamp tube is a design that really can't be improved upon....and that the fine vintage tubes just cannot (and probably will not) ever be duplicated by a current production tube.

Three envelope sizes are common in the full octal base version: SHORT, glass is 1.5 inches high; MEDIUM, glass is 1 3/4 inches high; TALL or "TALL BOY", glass is 2 inches high.

6SN7GT / G:

This is the original version of this tube. It may be found in all three sizes of glass envelope. The Sylvania Tall Boy types have

two triangular shaped plates facing each other mounted high in the tube, with either a top or bottom getter. The early Sylvania types had a top getter and silver flashed the entire top of the tube, sometimes called "chrome tops". Many brands used this design, but the high mounted triangular plates means it most likely was made by Sylvania. The early RCA "GT" types were usually in either a medium or short envelope and have a grey RF shield sprayed on inside the glass. The GE and KenRad types were similar, but the inner glass coating is deep black. These tubes usually have flat black plates, like large 12AX7 blackplates. The military versions of these are the VT-231 and are in very high demand today.

6SN7GTA / GTB:

This is the later improved version, and the improvements were primarily geared toward the TV chassis designers who demanded more max. plate wattage and voltage, where vertical circuits can put up to 1500 volt pulses at 7 watts on the plates. For hi-fi audio use, these improvements are meaningless. These are fine tubes, nonetheless. Most are found in the short glass envelope, but some brands like Raytheon used the Tall Boy style. Sylvania made tubes have the triangular plates mounted lower, and set at angles to each other, although some of the very earliest examples of the GTA types still used the dull blackplates facing each other. RCA used the flat black plates "sideways" to each other, and GE used the grey plates parallel to each other. The Sylvania types in demand have a large top getter patch. The earliest Sylvania GTA types have a green label and heavy top getter flashing extending down the sides of the tube. The early GTB types are similar, but have a yellow or red label. The versions from the 1960s have the getter just covering the top of the tube. All of these have the same black triangular plates and are excellent tubes. The GE types have a side getter and large parallel grey plates, and the RCA used both bottom or side getter. Most other vintage USA brands you find will have been made by these three vendors, and will be one of the above variations, regardless of

brand on the label. A few were made with brown micanol bases, the RCA types being very dark brown, the GE types being a lighter, marbled brown. Many audiophiles prefer either the Sylvania chrome tops, the RCA, or the GE side getter over any others, even over the military or redbase types. These are all a great bargain now, and are sure to be rare and expensive tomorrow.

6SN7W / WGT / WGTA:

This type indicates a military spec tube that was not made for consumer use. These usually have extra support posts on the plate structure, heavy mica spacers, and brown micanol bases. These also have the famous triangular shaped black plates. They have been ruggedized to withstand shock, the brown low loss micanol base resists mold, mildew, and fungus growth, and they can withstand heat even if used upside down. The early Sylvania 6SN7W types from the 1940s had a metal collar around the base, then later a black base. These look internally a lot like the early Sylvania GTA types listed above. Sylvania made these for other brands as well, including RCA. Easy to spot as they have the triangular blackplates facing each other in a short bottle, with a very heavy chrome top flashing extending down the sides of the tube. These are RARE and worth seeking out! The WGT and WGTA types all had brown bases. Only the WGTA types made in the late 70s and 80s reverted back to black bases then coin or wafer bases. These are all wonderful tubes, are long lived, and sound fantastic. No wonder they are fast disappearing from the vintage market.

ECC32 and ECC33:

A fine European version of the 6SN7GT. These don't often turn up in the USA. The few I have seen have been British and manufactured by Mullard or Brimar. This tube is usually medium glass, large, sometimes fat, full octal base, and some have a dark grey inner glass coating which hides the plates from view. I believe nearly all ECC32 tubes are cylindrical or oval plates. These are very rare, and worth seeking out. The early 1950s oval plates

with brands like Cossor, Marconi, Osram, Mullard and Brimar are awesome. They are noted for their excellent sonics in audio use. Some may be labeled with either ECC32, ECC33, 6SN7GT, or a combination of these. Some have the BVA label, and the older versions often have the date and factory codes on the bottom of the base between the pins. Be careful when buying these! Later versions were made in Russia, but still say "Great Britain" on them! The Russian tubes have a rounded glass top, and a cup or square shape solid getter. They also often have a large, very shiny black base NOT made from bakelite but from an inferior plastic. We do not carry these types in our stock.

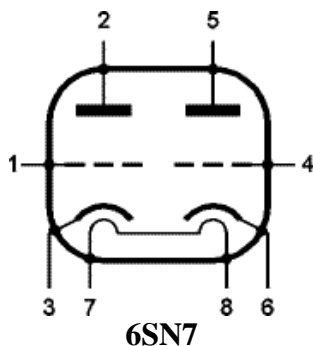
CV1988:

Another fine military version of the 6SN7GT, this time from Western Europe. These don't often turn up in the USA. The few I have seen have been British and manufactured by Mullard. This tube is usually medium glass, dark brown full octal base, and has a dark grey inner glass coating which hides the plates from view. I suspect these are cylindrical plates, as most of the European 6SN7 varieties have been this type. These are rare, and worth seeking out. Not only do they sound as good as the best industrial 5692, but they have the higher specs of a 6SN7GTB with regards to plate current and voltage, and have the long heater life and overall ruggedness of the US military types. A winning combination!

5692:

This is the premium commercial / "industrial" grade of 6SN7. The most famous of these are the RCA "redbase" series, with their distinctive red marbled full octal bases. These are always in the short glass envelope style, and most have four support rods joining the four corners of the top and bottom mica spacers and supporting the plate structure. These have 10,000 hour life filaments and are very resistant to shock and vibration, making them low in microphonics. The RCA versions have the "stop sign" label on the top of the tube with the number 5692 inside, and on the older

tubes this was often smeared off, being printed with a chalky white paint. ALL of the redbase versions of this tube were made by RCA, regardless of the brand on the label. TungSol, GE, and Raytheon can often be found branded on the label, but RCA made them all. Other brands like CBS/Hytron and Sylvania made brownbase versions of this tube, but I suspect all were actually made by RCA, as they are identical inside. These are all really fine tubes, but have been hunted nearly to extinction. I usually only have a few in stock, but they are worth the higher cost in overall long life and great sound.



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CHECK OUT THE CLUB WEB SITE AT WWW.IARCHS.ORG

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Editor's note: Next we have part one of a tribute to Ralph Edwards. Sadly within a couple weeks of Sherry's first article Mr. Edwards passed on and we have a remembrance in response to his death in part two.

Remembering Broadcast

by Sherry Cowden of OKVRC
Oklahoma Vintage Radio Collectors

In the case of radio and television announcer, host, and creator/producer Ralph Edwards, the number "13" was a lucky one for his audiences. He was born June 13, 1913 in Merino, California. He began working at radio stations during his college

career. In 1936 New York was still the center of radio broadcasting, so young Ralph Edwards, with \$90 in his pocket, set out to hitchhike there. Upon arrival, he soon found work as an announcer at CBS. In a short time he had made a name for himself, announcing for as many as 45 shows a week. His goal, however, was to be a producer, and at age 26 he came up with an idea for a new radio program. It was based on the childhood game of Forfeit, where one person would hold an object behind another's head and say, "Heavy, heavy, hangs over thy head . . . tell the truth or pay the consequences." If the person couldn't guess the object, they would be ordered to do something silly. The show, *Truth or Consequences*, premiered on NBC in March of 1940, hosted by Edwards, with sportscaster Mel Allen providing announcing services.

At the beginning of each program, the listening audience would hear the studio audience howling with laughter. For many years Edwards refused to reveal how they got such gales of merriment from the studio audience. The secret was a warm-up routine that began just before airtime when two men from the audience (often servicemen) would be asked to don as many pieces of women's clothing from a trunk as they could. A variation had a man and wife each trying on clothing belonging to the opposite sex. This stunt was carefully timed so that the show opened at the most hilarious moment, such as when the participants were trying to struggle into a girdle. In the midst of the laughter, the announcer would say, "Hello there, we've been waiting for you! It's time to play *Truth*...(organ trill)...or *Consequences* (rude buzzer)!" The organ would then break into the theme, "Merrily We Roll Along."

Ralph Edwards was a suave, sophisticated host who always kept his cool in the midst of the hilarity. He stashed several tuxedos back stage so that he could maintain that unflappable appearance even when the stunts were messy, as they often were. Each studio contestant was asked a question; any attempted answer was cut short by the sound

of Beulah the Buzzer. Edwards would then say, "You did not tell the truth, so you must pay the consequence!" The failed contestant would be required to perform an outlandish stunt, some of which carried over to subsequent shows. Edwards created many of the stunts himself, aided by several gag writers, with an attorney checking for possible liability. The gags outdid each other for outrageousness. A couple had to feed each other blueberries while blindfolded. A bachelor was given the opportunity to prepare for marriage and fatherhood by having him diaper a pig. A man was instructed to bark like a seal searching for a mate – in response a live seal appeared on stage. One long-term stunt had a man drive a golf ball – across the country.

Although all contestants received some sort of small reward, one of the most famous consequences involved Edwards asking the listening audience to send in a single penny to one contestant. The contestant had to open each letter and count the money. She received 330,000 pennies, a total of \$3,300, which she was allowed to keep, making her a happy participant. In December of 1945, Edwards started a stunt that was supposed to be a one-time parody of giveaway shows but proved such a boost to ratings that it was carried on until 1948. Every week a mysterious "Mr. Hush" gave a clue to his identity. The first person to guess who Mr. Hush was would receive substantial prizes. After many weeks, someone finally correctly identified Mr. Hush as prize fighter Jack Dempsey, thereby winning \$13,500. This was followed by a "Mrs. Hush" contest. That winner hauled in \$17,590 by naming actress Clara Bow. "Miss Hush," dancer Martha Graham, was a tough one which netted a contestant over \$21,000 in 1947. The final contest was to identify "Walking Man's" footsteps. The correct guess, Jack Benny, made its winner \$22,500 richer.

Some jokes didn't go quite as planned, which only made them more hilarious. When a contestant was sent out of the studio to perform a stunt, Edwards would include the audience in the conspiracy with the

gleefully diabolical aside, "Aren't we devils?!" The show also incorporated a sentimental element -- stunts which provided a cover for an emotional reunion of the contestant with a family member, often a serviceman.

Strangely enough, not being able to see the stunts never seemed to dim the radio audience's enjoyment. In fact, some people felt that the television version, launched in 1954, wasn't as funny when the gags could be seen. *Truth or Consequences* was an instantaneous hit and ran on radio for 17 years, until 1957. It was variously sponsored by Proctor and Gamble, Philip Morris, and Pet Milk. Its roster of announcers over the years reads like a who's who of announcing – Bud Collyer, Milton Cross, Harlow Wilcox, Ken Carpenter, and Ed Herlihy. Ralph Edwards went on to produce many successful radio and television programs, including *This Is Your Life* on radio and television, and most recently, *The People's Court* on television.

For *Truth or Consequences*' 10th anniversary in 1950, Edwards offered to bring the show to any town in America that was willing to change its name to that of the show's title. The then Hot Springs, New Mexico Chamber of Commerce, tired of having their town confused with the more famous Hot Springs, responded, and a majority of the town's 1,589 citizens voted to become Truth or Consequences, New Mexico. The new name represented "the truth that we have health-giving waters here" (hence the original name); "the consequences are that people get results." Edwards did indeed broadcast the show's first remote live, coast-to-coast broadcast from the newly renamed town that year. To this day, the town hosts a yearly gala fiesta on the anniversary of the name change. The guest of honor each year is Ralph Edwards, now 92 and still going strong.

As of October 2005 (ed.)

Continued on the next page



Ralph Edwards

And here is part two from just after Mr. Edwards' death.

In Memoriam: One of the few remaining pioneers of radio, and the subject of last month's column, is gone. On Wednesday, November 16th, 2005, Ralph Edwards, 92, died peacefully in his sleep at his home in West Hollywood, California, surrounded by his family. He was born at 9:13 pm on June 13, 1913; he died at 9:13 am. His wife Barbara Jean, whom he married in 1939, preceded him in death. He is survived by their three children, six grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Ralph Edwards was a broadcasting phenomenon for over 50 years. There has been a Ralph Edwards production on television each year since 1950. His radio/television program "Truth or Consequences" ran for 38 continuous years. The television version launched the career of another perennial host, "The Price is Right's" Bob Barker. He succeeded Edwards as host of "Truth" and has said of his early mentor, "Ralph Edwards is truly a giant of radio and television."

Truth or Consequences was a vehicle for broadcasting breakthroughs. It was the first television program to be filmed on 35mm film before a live studio audience, using the multiple camera technique that was later made famous by the Lucille Ball and Desi

Arnaz program "I Love Lucy." TV sitcoms still use the format. "Truth" was the first to leave the studio for remote broadcast of its stunts. It was the innovator of the surprise reunion. And, it was the first to incorporate fundraising with entertainment. Ralph Edwards sold \$500,000,000 in war bonds during World War II, earning Edwards the Distinguished Service Citation from the U.S. Treasury Department. The "Hush" contests mentioned in last month's article garnered \$1,500,000 for the March of Dimes. The "Walking Man" contest helped the American Heart Association become established.

"The Jimmy Fund" was created on Truth and still exists today. In 1948 a young cancer victim named Jimmy told the Truth audience that he only wished for a TV set. The response garnered not only the television for Jimmy but \$20,000 as well – the start of the Jimmy Fund. Because Jimmy was an ardent fan of the Boston Braves, the Fund has always been supported by Boston baseball.

The popular radio and television series, "This Is Your Life," hosted by Edwards, grew out of the Truth reunions. It spotlighted not only celebrities like Roy Rogers, Steve Allen, Dick Van Dyke, and Nat King Cole, but also featured what Edwards described as "the heroic unknowns." Typically, these were people with a cause, and out of these programs came endowments to the Alice Lloyd College in Kentucky and Dr. Laurence C. Jones' Piney Woods School in Mississippi. "Life" also occasioned a generous response from its audience when Rear Admiral Samuel G. Fuqua was its subject. Fuqua was the last man to abandon the sinking USS Arizona in Pearl Harbor at the start of World War II. Broadcast from Hawaii, the program asked for contributions for a memorial, and the audience responded with enough funds to seed the USS Arizona Memorial in Honolulu, Hawaii.

For over 60 years, Edwards raised money for such organizations as the Make-A-Wish Foundation, Women in Film, American

Cancer Society, American Parkinson Disease Association, Easter Seals, and a number of schools and hospitals. Because of his contributions to charitable causes, Edwards was the recipient of numerous awards from many of those and other organizations. His shows received Emmys and the Golden Globe award. He was the recipient of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Lifetime Achievement Award and has been inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame and the National Broadcasters Hall of Fame. He has two stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame – for both radio and television. His innovative program, Truth or Consequences, endures through its namesake town in New Mexico.

Resources: *Raised on Radio*, G. Nachman, 1998; *Tune In Yesterday*, J. Dunning, 1976; *The Great American Broadcast*, L. Maltin, 1997; *The Big Broadcast*, F. Buxton & B. Owen, 1972; websites – www.truthorconsequencesnm.net; <http://us.imdb.com/title/tt0143074>; <http://us.imdb.com/name/nm0250287/bio>; <http://classictv.about.com>.

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UPCOMING REGIONAL MEETING SCHEDULE

January, 20, 2006

Jack Sweeney
321 Olympic Heights Road
Dubuque, Iowa 52001
Phone 563-588-1831

A hands on, restoration session

1 - 5 PM Saturday February 18

Bob and Sue Elbert
513 S. Main St.
Roland, IA 50236
Home 515 388-4238
Cell 515 290-9529

**See more about this in the
*Editors' Column***

March 17, 2006

Jerry Lange
790 Kane St
Dubuque, Iowa 52001
Phone 563- 556-3050

Friday March 31, 7 PM the IARCHS Annual board meeting.

Dave Perkins
2608 C Reed Ave
Marshalltown, Iowa 50158
641-752-3417

**See more about this in the
*Editors' Column***

May 12, 2006

Jim Moran
3942 Aurora St.
Dubuque, Iowa 52001
Phone 563-556-1914

AVAILABLE FREE OF CHARGE: A PHOTOCOPY OF THE SCHEMATIC DIAGRAMS FOR YOUR ANTIQUE RADIO FROM THE OLD RIDER AND SAMS MANUALS, AVAILABLE TO IARCHS MEMBERS COURTESY OF JACK SWEENEY, 321 OLYMPIC HEIGHTS, DUBUQUE IA 52001 . ENCLOSE MAKE AND MODEL NUMBER AND A 4x10 SELF ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE

#1 RARE ZRK POLISH RADIO FROM THE EARLY 60'S WORKS GREAT ON FM, NEEDS A FERRITE ROD ANTENNA FOR AM AND SHORTWAVE
\$65

#2 1939 STEWART WARNER 7-514-H TOP OF THE LINE INGRAHAM CABINET, NEEDS DECALS (AVIALABLE FROM A.E.S.) AND ORIGINAL KNOBS. RESTORED VALUE \$275 YOU CAN OWN IT FOR \$95

#3 FOR EITHER #1 OR #2 OR TO SELL WORKING SETS AND RELATED ITEMS IN A CASE I HAVE RESERVED AT THE BRASS ARMADILLO IN DES MOINES (FOR A 10% COMMISSION FEE) CONTACT JOHN MOORE 700 EAST 5TH STREES, #11, DES MOINES, IOWA 50158 515-288-0612

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: March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1



Philco Transitone

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IARCHS is a 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.



Editors' Column: Dave Perkins

As I mentioned in my opening remarks, back in November Anton Vanicek sent me, along with a number of other IARCHS members, a note about a pending auction at the estate of a long-time Zenith dealer in Muscatine (my home town), so I made the trek and found a few things worth bidding on along with a lot of not so desirable stuff. Also in attendance was Jack Sweeney. As we circulated around to the different batches of items to be sold (this was a large sale with TWO auctioneers working at once so there was no way to bring all the items to one place) we tried not to step on each other's toes and to avoid bidding each other up. But at one hay rack full of "good stuff" I lost track of Jack and it turned out we both had our eyes on a fairly large (10 tube) GE Cathedral. I have to take the blame for what happened next because Jack was a bit in front of me so I could have figured out who that other darn stubborn guy with deep pockets was that pushed me to bid at least \$20 over my mental "maximum bid" [a nice thing about mental notes is there's no written record of your mistakes - until now]; only after my stubbornness had overwhelmed my planning (and the grumbling from my wallet) did Jack turn around and we both saw who "the other guy" was and (now the full truth can be told) Anton was on hand as a witness and with his camera:



So, as much as I'd like to, I can't deny it. Among other things she warned me about, my mother always said my "bullheadedness" was going to cost me; now I know how much. But, in keeping with the need to find at least one "bargain" at any auction (said in quotes in deference to my wife's opinion), I also bought the whole pile of miscellaneous radios on the end of that same hay rack for \$1:



Some real gems 'eh, (well maybe in the rough).... On another, hopefully more useful, note. Back in December I was contacted by Bob Elbert, a new member from Roland (just a bit north of Ames) requesting some help with basic electrical restoration. We got together and while we got one old set going again we decided to use his home to host an open

session for anyone who'd like to discuss and participate in an attempt at those things most often needed to get an old set up and at least working again such as identifying and replacing filter caps, cleaning POTS and so on. This is set for Saturday ,February 18th from 1 to 5 PM (more or less). Bob has an old set that I've looked at and that I think will serve as a good piece for this activity. But I encourage anyone who wants to attend to bring a project set and their questions. I have had a number of requests for a session like this over the past couple years and so I am hopeful that we'll have a good turn out and at least some of those who've made such a request can make it. Here are the directions to Bob's home:

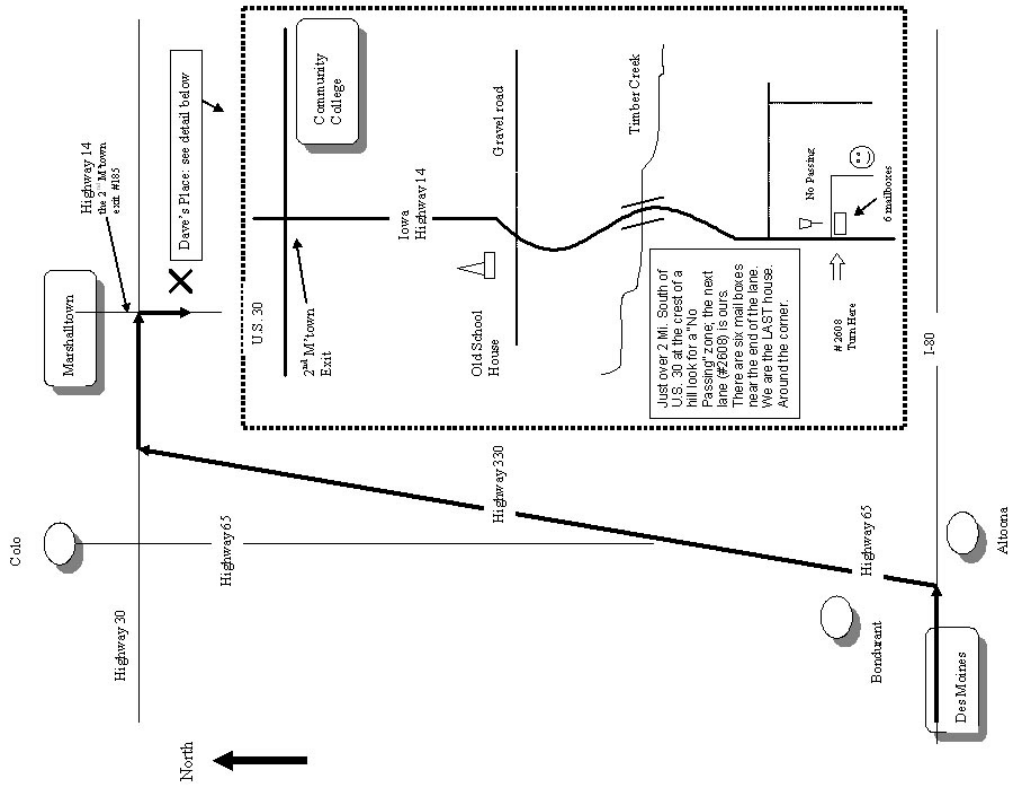
From I 35 take Exit 123 (Roland Exit) It is about 10 miles North of Ames and 1 mile South of Story City. Go East (County RD E-18) into Roland about 3 miles to the stop sign. That will be Main St. Take a right (South) at the Caseys/Main Street intersection. We are the last home on the right side, 513 S. Main St.

Come through the garage door entrance.

Home 515 388-4238
Cell 515 290-9529

One last note: the annual IARCHS board meeting is now set for 7PM on Friday March 31 (the evening before the Harris radio auction) at my home south of Marshalltown; see the map on the back cover of this mailing; snacks provided (solid and liquid). I hope to see you then.

Dave



IARCHS
 c/o Dave Perkins
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