

Volume 36, Issue 3

Next CRC Meeting - May 18th at Castle Rock

May/June 2025

## A Journey Into The Catacombs

by Bill Potorti - Flash! Editor

You may have come across this sometime in your radio experience- circuits or components embedded in tar or wax/resin. It may be a power transformer, components in a "B" power supply or, as in my most recent experience, the circuitry in a Radiola Super VIII. The Super VIII was produced in 1924 and was RCA's first foray into a console radio. I suppose the reasoning behind potting everything in tar or resin was to protect the components (it also kept competitors' prying eyes away from the design). In those days if anything went bad, you just swapped in another one. Obviously that's not practical now-repairs are needed. In the case of my Super VIII, there was a broken connection somewhere in the metal can called a catacomb ("cat" for short)



Besides the Super VIII and the AR-812 (same circuit but in a portable), catacombs were also found in the Radiolas 24-26 and 28.

There is a method in the service notes for testing the catacomb without removing it from the chassis. This involves placing an ohmmeter across various test points on the cat and comparing it to the expected results. Oftentimes everything will check out and no further action need be taken. In my case, there was a problem between lug 5 and the grid of V2. After labeling all of the wires (15 of them), as well as taking pictures, I unsoldered the wires and removed the catacomb from the set.

(Continued on page 3)



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Newsletter for The Colorado Radio Collectors Club, founded in the Fall of 1988

"Dedicated to the preservation and education of wireless, antique radio, television, and associated equipment"

**CRC MEETINGS:** Meetings are held on the 3rd Sunday of every other month starting in January at 1:00 pm. The meetings consist of business, "show & tell", raffles, auctions, swap meets, technical discussions and other subjects of interest. Visitors are welcome!!

**CRC MEMBERSHIP:** Current annual dues are \$20 and membership in the CRC runs from January to January. New memberships will be prorated to the following January. Members are entitled to attend meetings, participate in our Spring show and our Fall auction, and receive our newsletter, **The Flash!**. Submit dues payable to: **Merril Campbell - 4723 Woodbury Dr. - Colorado Springs, CO 80915**

**UPCOMING EVENTS:** May 18th, 2025 CRC meeting - Castle Rock Library

## CRC Contact Information

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**New e-group:** <https://groups.io/g/ColoradoRadioCollectors>

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Happy spring, everyone. I hope you are enjoying the return of green grasss, trees, flowers and warm weather. I grew up in the northeast, and I was always told that "March goes in like a lion and out like a lamb". And "April showers bring May flowers". Maybe that was all true back east, but around here March goes out anything but like a lamb.

Hats off again to Bill Potorti for another excellent issue. We are so lucky have him keeping the flames of The Flash alive and well. He is writing articles, producing the newsletter (that's a tricky job), and tracking all the things that need to be done for each issue. Be sure to thank him when you see him. I personally have to thank him for the excellent write-ups of our recent meeting and our spring show. But ... also please help him! Write some articles You could write about anything. Write about your personal experience a the show. I'm sure if you sit down at the keyboard, in about 15 minutes you will have something that we'd all like to read.

The shirts were a big hit! Thanks to all who made it happen, especially Scott Thomas and Bill Lettow. Wear them with pride!

I have two main objectives this year, and they are related. One: focus on finding new members; Two: make our meetings more interesting. If we find members, they have to enjoy the meetings. If they enjoy the meetings, they might bring along others. We will talk more about this in our next meeting on May. See you then!

*Paul*

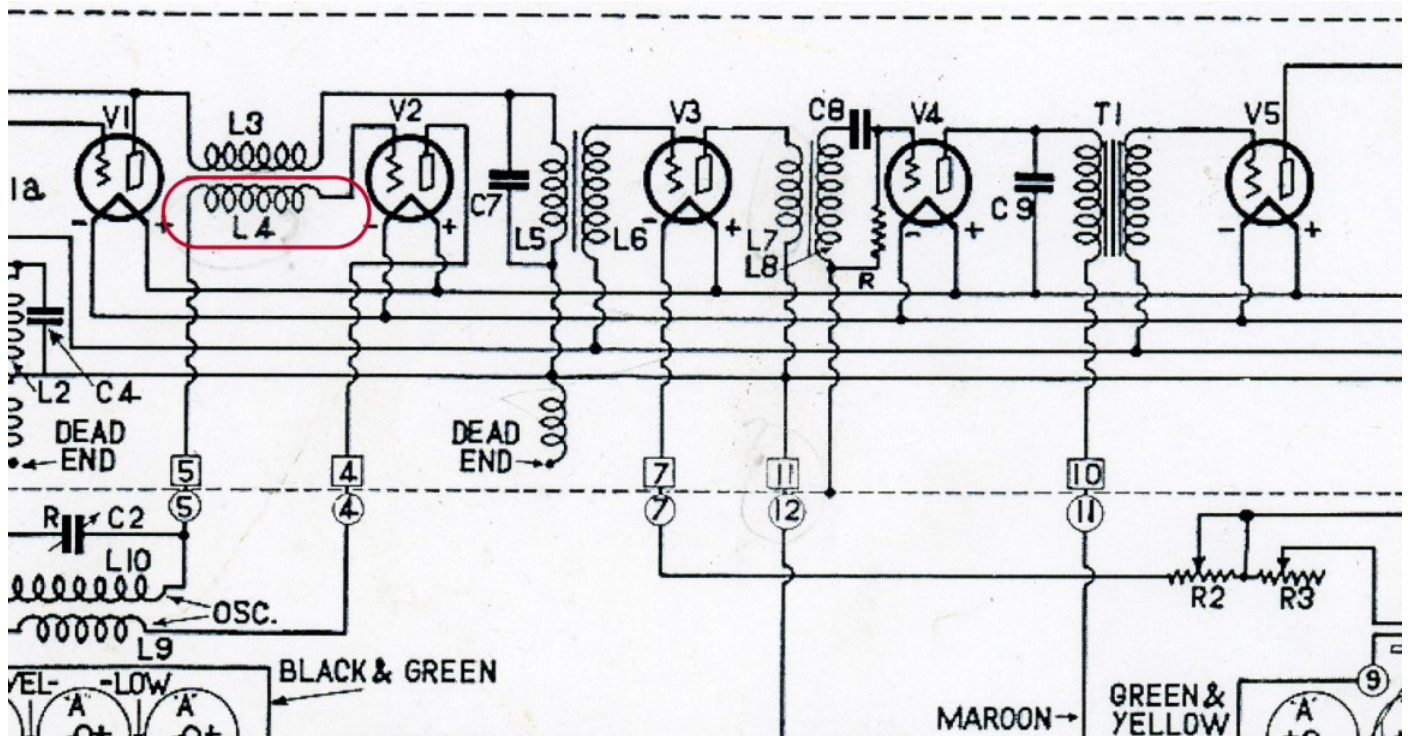


From	To	Test
1	V1 grid	Open
4	V2 plate	Closed
5	V2 grid	Closed
6	V1 plate	Open
6	V1 grid	Closed
6	V3 grid	Closed
6	V5 grid	*Closed
6	V6 grid	*Closed
7	V3 F—	Closed
8	V1, V2, V4, V5, V6 F—	Closed
10	V4 plate	Open
10	Catacomb can	Closed
10	All F+	Closed
10	V4 grid	Open
11	V4 plate	Closed
12	Terminal 3	Closed
12	V1 plate	Closed
12	V3 plate	Closed
12	Terminal 14	Closed
13	V5 plate	Closed
15	V6 plate	Closed

Using an ohmmeter, I tested the connections and found an open circuit between lug 5 and the connection going to the grid of V2. This narrowed down what to look for when I opened it up. (\* indicates a reading of some resistance, neither open or closed)

The waxy resin needs to be removed to get access to the components. There are various methods to do this, one involving hanging the catacomb upside down in the oven at a low heat. I didn't think my marriage would survive that so I opted for door number 2, the heat gun method.

\* With headphones, a weak click should be heard.

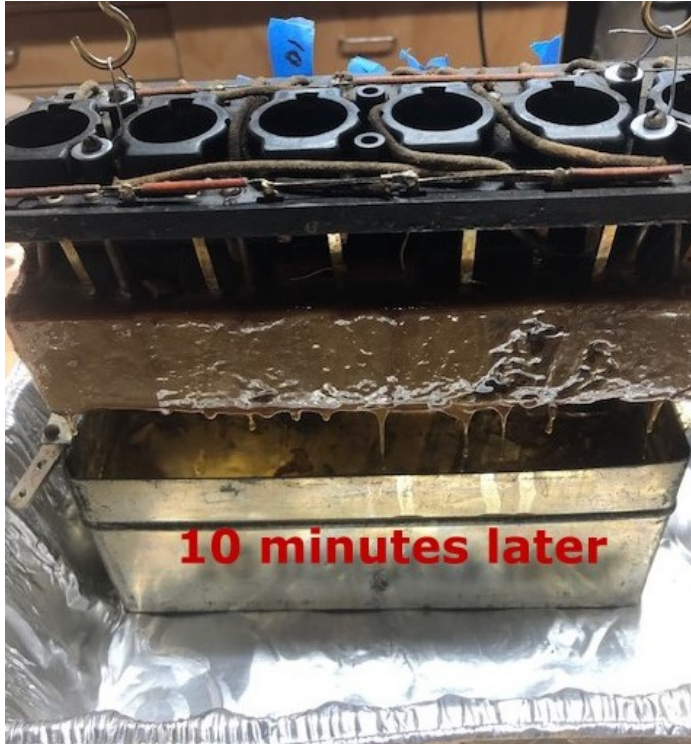


The schematic had the test points labeled which indicated where the bad connection was expected to be found



I constructed a crude stand to hang the catacomb above a disposable aluminum pan. Using a Wagner hot air gun, I kept the gun 6-8 inches from the catacomb to prevent damage to the delicate wires within. The metal case came loose in about 10 minutes. View a short video of melting resin here: [https://youtu.be/YE6w\\_GMPukg](https://youtu.be/YE6w_GMPukg)

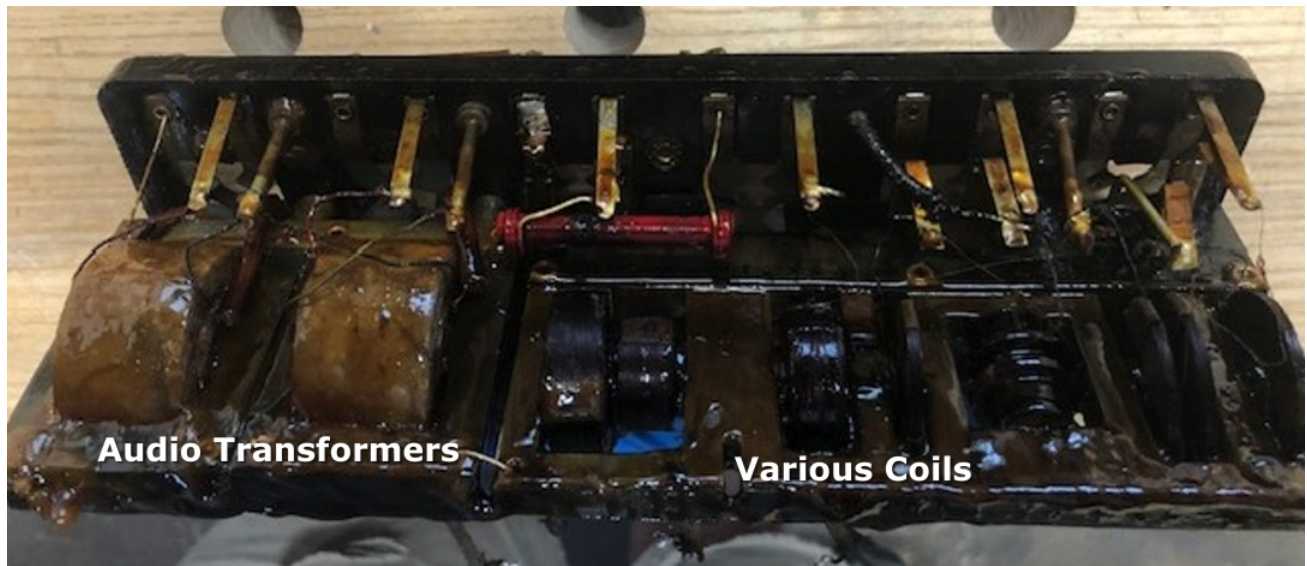
All in all it took about an hour to get rid of the bulk of the resin. It's not necessary to remove every bit of it.



**Can Released**

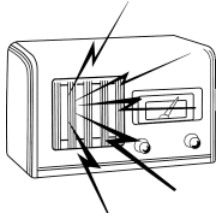


**Bulk of resin removed**



The smell of the melting resin actually wasn't bad at all. It brought to mind one of the antique stores I frequent.

Luckily the break in the wire was evident and I was able to re-solder it to the metal tab with little effort. I did not re-pot it, but left it as is, with a note tucked away of what was done for any future owners of the set.



News Flash  
March 16th, 2025



# The Latest CRC Club News

We had a successful meeting on March 16th at the Highlands Ranch Library. Paul Heller was back from his travels and officiated. 26 members attended including a new member, Richard Gannon. Merrill stated that we had \$8079 in the treasury after the expenses of the Vintage Voltage Show.

Traci Anderson from Vintage Voltage gave a short presentation and handed out further information for the show.

Bill Lettow volunteered to try to get a new show banner with our new logo. You can see the result of his efforts in the Vintage Voltage



section of this newsletter.

Our shirts with the new embroidered logo came in. They look great! For those of you who would like a shirt, or another shirt, you will have another opportunity to have this done. Bring your shirt in to the next meeting (May 18th).

There was ongoing discussion about a replacement for our e-group messaging platform. The likely candidate is Groups.io, but MailChimp is also in the running. You should all have received invitations to join the Colorado Radio Collectors group on Groups.io. If you didn't receive one, or need another, contact the Flash editor.

There was some clarification about meeting dates. In the past all of the meetings were on the 2nd Sunday of the month, with the exception of May being the 3rd Sunday (because of Mother's Day). This year, because of scheduling difficulties with the libraries, all of the meetings have, so far, been on the 3rd Sunday. This will continue for the foreseeable future.

We had a discussion on how to grow the club. How do we attract new members? How do we get the younger generation interested in radio? There is no simple solution. Ideas were bandied about from creating displays in public areas, high school science projects, swap meets, antique stores. The resurgence in vinyl may attract a certain element of audio enthusiasts with hifi systems, but not necessarily with radios themselves...

We took a break to buy raffle tickets and prepare for the bi-monthly raffle



## The Raffle Table

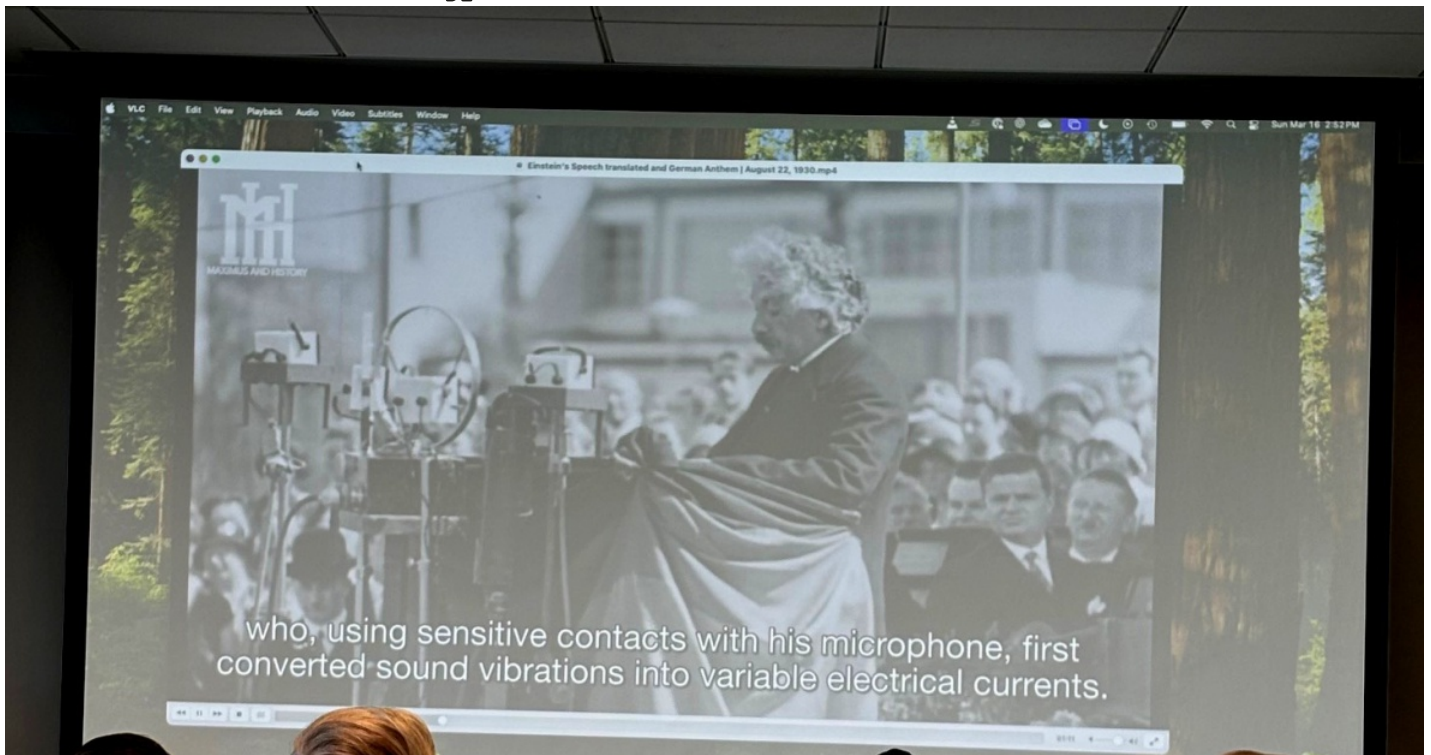


Photos courtesy of Jerry Stone - Flash! Photog

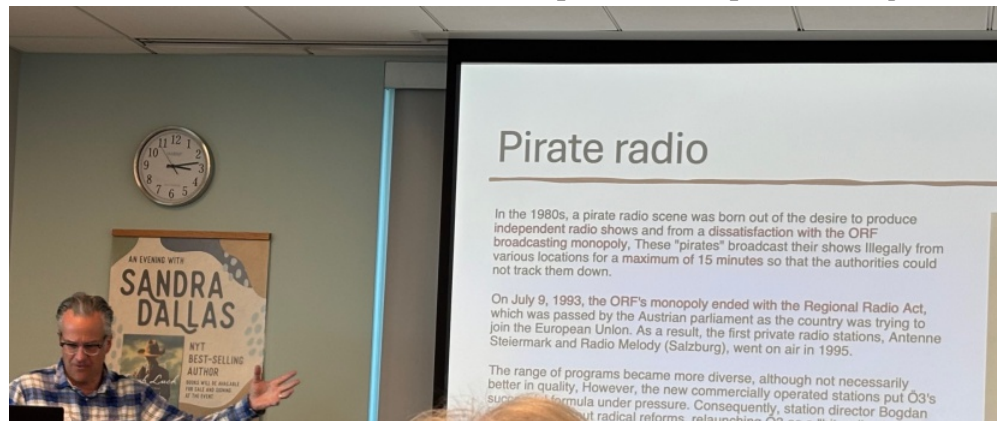


Lots of nice items on the raffle bench this meeting. Ralph Brands also took photos of some donated items as well, which were picked up at his car after the meeting. Thanks Ralph.

Paul Heller, back from his journeys overseas, gave a great presentation entitled '100 Years of Radio in Austria'. He visited the Vienna Museum of Science and Technology as well as the Radiomuseum in Innsbruck.



In a 1930 speech at the 7th German Radio and Audio Show, Albert Einstein urged his audience to think of the scientists and engineers who contributed to radio's development, emphasizing its potential as a tool for world peace and democracy



Paul explained that through the years, there was a striking difference in radio programming development between the US and Austria. Government control of programming

remained prevalent for a long period. Advertising was not common.

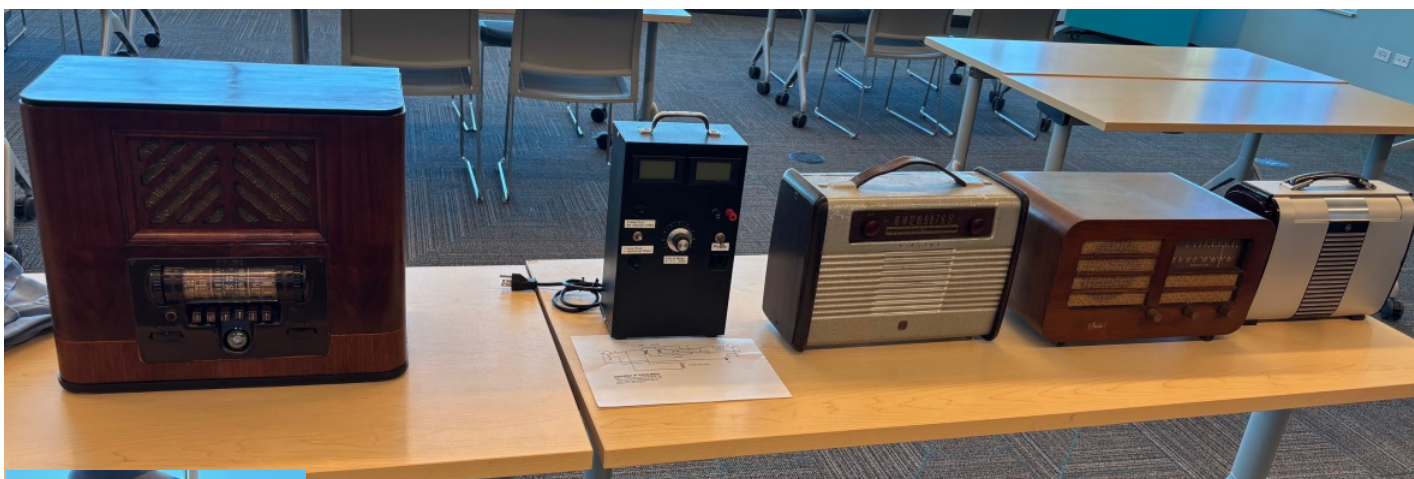
Paul spoke of the 'Copenhagen Plan' of 1948, which tried to organize and 'regulate' radio broadcasting in Europe, touching on such subjects as the frequency spacings between stations as well as allocating frequencies and allowable power output. Austria, amongst several other countries, did not completely abide by this.

There are also differences between the US and Europe in something as simple as the radio dials. Where we find our stations by frequency, European radios are often marked by the station call letters (e.g. BBC1) and historically were also marked by the city (e.g. Berlin)

All in all, a very interesting presentation by Paul.

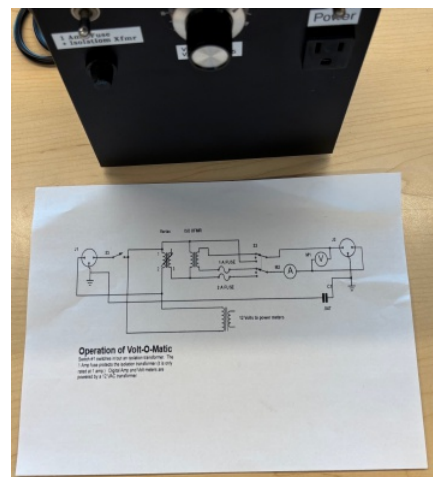


## Show 'N Tell



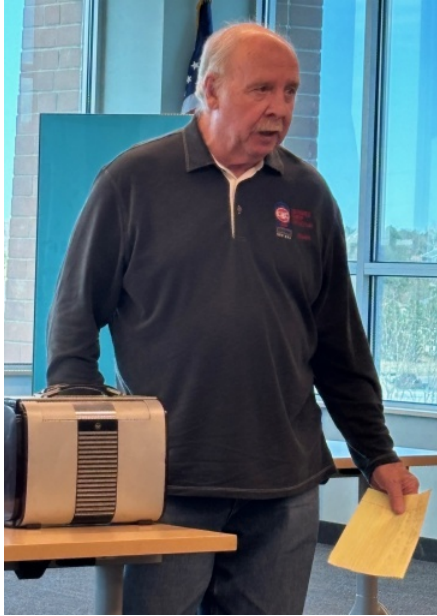
Scott Thomas showing his Airline 62-713 radio that he and Tom Dodds worked on.  
Scott did the cabinet restoration, while Tom worked on the chassis and the electrical restoration  
This is a 7 tube superhet from c.1939

Rich Kuberski with one of his  
handmade variable power supplies-  
the Volt-O-Matic



Manny Dubois showed off his Airline 84BR-1053A. He plugged it in-it works!  
This is a 4 tube superhet from 1948





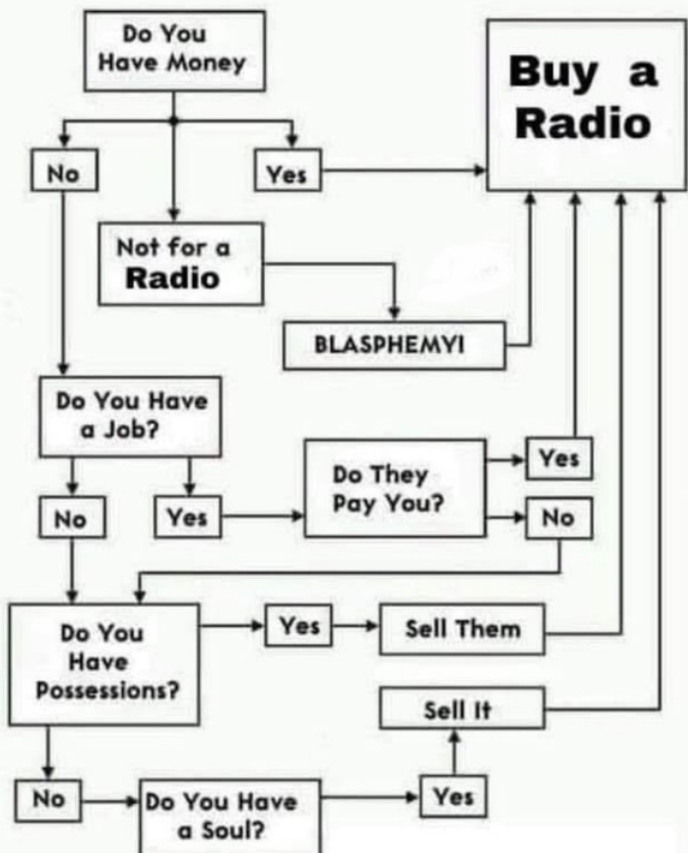
Merill Campbell exhibited his RCA 8BX6 also known as the 'Globe Trotter'  
This was produced in 1948/49

**Notice:** We're experimenting with a new e-group (groups.io) to replace (or compliment) the existing Google group. Everyone should have gotten an invitation to join in their email. During this trial period, you won't be able to subscribe directly. If you didn't receive an email and would like to join, drop me a line at [billpot@gmail.com](mailto:billpot@gmail.com) and I'll send out another invitation.

**AUCTION:** The fall auction/BBQ is now slated for August 17th. Mark your calendars!



## Radio Collector/Hoarder Flow Chart





# *Vintage Voltage Show*



This year's show was held On April 13th in the Expo Hall at the National Western Complex. Our new banner was designed by Bill Lettow. Bill also designed the new masthead for the Flash! This year's show brought a lot of interest from the crowds. Our display was not as large as in the past. We were allocated 42 tables for the show but only managed to fill 26 of them. Thanks to all who brought in their gear.















Ralph Brands with his Stromberg Carlson 350R. It was missing the acoustical Labyrinth, so Ralph designed one from patent drawings. It sounds great and provided us some music during the show, fed by his AM transmitter.



Wayne Russert and his early radio display

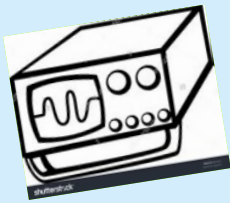


We shared the huge space with the Toy and Doll Show, the Vintage Vinyl and equipment show, as well as the Guitar Show.

Getting in and out was a challenge, but Dana Cain and the facility provided people to handle and direct traffic so it wasn't as bad as it could have been.

It was a beautiful day outside, but that didn't deter people from coming inside to enjoy the shows.





# Classified Ads



Ads are free for CRC members. To place an ad send your ad description along with personal contact information to the Flash Editor or one of the CRC officers.

FOR SALE: New old stock & quality used vacuum tubes. Please refer to my business card pictured to the right. Thank you! Sean Duffy (573) 999-6187  
acmetubesupply@gmail.com



**CRC Meeting - May 18th, 1 PM at the Castle Rock Library (Miller Library)**  
**Address: 100 South Wilcox Street, Castle Rock, CO**

