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QST Issue: Mar 2002

Title: Displaying Your Collections

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OLD RADIO

Displaying Your Collection

Small displays of radio related items could really dress up your shack. Hams with small apartments or condos sometimes don't have a lot of room for equipment, so they have to look for small things to collect. If you have more room, you probably have more stuff, but you still need a few wall displays to contrast with the bigger things.

This month I have a "Shadow-Box" display with most of my ARRL pins and ribbons in it. I have found these over the last 10 years, mostly one at a time. The display box was purchased at A. C. Moore, a local craft store. It originally had some fake golf junk in it and was on clearance sale. It was well made, about 15 inches square, and I knew it would look great hanging on the wall. Out went the golf junk and in went my ARRL ribbons and pins.

Finding Ribbons and Pins

Many of you emailed me about the 1925 hamfest column a few months back, wondering how often the old pins and ribbons show up. My answer is: often enough if you look for them. You have to be patient, though. Here are a few suggestions:

At hamfests, look for someone selling a ham's estate, or someone who is cleaning out his or her cellar. You can spot these kinds of sellers, as they tend to bring much more than they can possibly sell in one day, nothing is priced and everything is a mess. They usually have a lot of boxes full of small items. Look through all the junk boxes. Look for boxes that have items in that might have once been in a desk, dresser or workshop drawer.

At estate sales and moving sales, ask the owner if there are any retirement pins, tie clips, organization pins or lapel pins. If you're lucky maybe someone there had worked in radio at one time. Many did during WW II, and then went on to other careers after.

At Antique Malls and Shops, check out the displays of costume jewelry and fraternity pins. I've been lucky here.

Go to Auction houses, the kind that sells household items. Much of their stock comes from dealers and gleaners who make a living cleaning out old homes. Look through the boxes before the



sale and bid on the ones that look most promising. You might find a few nice old radios here, too.

Talk to your friends. Let them know what you're looking for. You'd be surprised how often friends find things for you.

I have found radio pins from old radio schools, radio shows (like Orphan Annie and Gene Autry), manufacturer product pins, employment pins and trade-show pins. The ones I treasure the most, and I only have a couple, are pins from radio clubs. If you look through the 1920s and 1930s QSTs you see ads from companies that made and sold pins to ham clubs. There were also local and national Short-Wave club pins, some dating back to the late teens and early 1920s. Some are really attractive and you'll catch yourself wearing them from time to time.

One pin that you really want to find is the First National ARRL Convention at Chicago in 1921 (shown here, along with several others). I found this one at an es-





tate sale and have seen one other at a radio auction that was converted into a watch-fob with a small leather belt. I have heard of a few others, but they are rare. How rare?

In the October 1921 *QST* there is a 16-page convention report. It says that, "there were twelve-hundred amateurs from out of town, representing every district and almost every state, augmented by several hundred local fellows," attending. Additionally there were 50 commercial booths, each manned by several persons. All the photos show everyone wearing a pin. So my guess is that about 1600 to 1800 badge/pins were given out.

On page 121 of the same issue there is an ad offering a "limited number" of left over badges for sale as souvenirs. This means there were probably a total of 2000 of them given out, and some went to every state. You'll want to look for them. Some are still around.

The 1921 Convention

It was a huge success. It was the first national gathering of hams, and by the numbers mentioned above, a great percentage attended. All of the ham pioneers were there. They had a great program full of speakers on all subjects, lunches, din-



ners and banquets. It lasted four days, and all had a good time.

Sales were brisk by the manufacturers and vendors, with many hams picking up some of the very latest radios and accessories to take home.

If you get a chance, get a copy of the article from the *QST View* CD-ROM and read about it. There are seven additional pages about the new products that were introduced there. (I sure would like to have one of each.)

Other Small Displays You Can Build

Small tube collections display well inside a shadow-box. This helps keep little fingers from removing valuable tubes and causing damage. One friend of mine had over 15 displays about 2 feet square and about 6 inches deep, all filled with tubes. His display went from early De Forest to the latest RCA and GE. He would take



them to ham clubs and give talks, then return home and hang them back on the wall.

He also had similar displays of resistors, capacitors, relays, IF-cans, old audio transformers (small ones) and Morse telegraph keys. It was always fun to go over for a visit. He'd show me the latest display he had built and I would learn from him.

What I'm saying is, you can have fun collecting almost any radio item, and making a nice display finishes it. You'd be surprised how many different resistors my friend had in his display. Once you start, you'll find more pieces and you'll learn too.

HAMFEST SEASON

This year I'm going to try and get to more local hamfests. I won't always have my museum with me, so if you'd like to see it, check my schedule the week before the hamfest. I'll try to keep it up to date. You can find my Web site at www.eht.com/oldradio/arri/index.html. Click on my Museum to see the schedule.

Good hunting. Look for my call letters on my hat and say hello.—K2TQN **QST**

NEW PRODUCTS

LPT-2250 SPECTRUM ANALYZER

LP Technologies, of Wichita, Kansas, introduces a new high-quality, low-cost spectrum analyzer. The LPT-2250 is said to use the latest in RF technology to give the user superior performance in a lightweight package. Unlike other units in its price class, the LPT-2250 is said to provide stable and accurate frequency displays and sweeps.

The LPT-2250 Spectrum Analyzer has a bandwidth of more than 1 GHz and uti-

lizes a fully synthesized RF system. The LPT-2250 has an integral CRT display with powerful marker and video func-



tions. A four-line LCD provides easy to read instrument settings and measurement values.

The options include a 2 GHz RF power meter, a tracking generator, an AM/FM receiver and Windows-compatible software. The LPT-2250 weighs less than 18 pounds (8 kg) and has a list price of less than \$2700. For more information, contact LP Technologies, Inc., Samuel Lee, Marketing Director, 1919 N Amidon, Suite 216, Wichita, KS 67203, tel 316-831-9696, fax 316-831-9692; e-mail stan.pierson@lpotech.com; www.lpotech.com.

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