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OLD RADIO

OLD RADIO PROFILE: A 1934 Clough-Brengle, model 4581 transmitter.

Every collector dreams of finding a rare radio. The rarest is the "one of a kind." This month's feature radio is truly "one of a kind."

The project started when Ron Lawrence, KC4YOY, bought his first vintage transmitter from the estate of his good friend, and a long time ham, Bob Van Sleen, W4AGO. "I had been admiring Bob's Clough-Brengle transmitter for a long time," Ron said, "And when his widow asked our club to help dispose of his collection I knew which piece I wanted."

This transmitter is apparently a pretty rare bird. Ron has spent a lot of time searching for information about it. He found there are a lot of advertisements for Clough-Brengle test equipment in the 1930's magazines, but not one mention of a Clough-Brengle transmitter.

One of the best opinions Ron has heard was from AWA Museum Curator Ed Gable, K2MP. Gable thinks that it might have been built to bid on a government contract that didn't get approved, and that this might be the only one there is. Ron doesn't really know, but if anyone out there does, he would sure love to hear from you.

Soon after getting the transmitter home Ron decided that he needed a vintage receiver to go with it. Since most hams back then built their own transmitters, he figured that whoever had that transmitter would have had the best receiver they could buy. Another good friend and long time ham, Tom Boone W4COC, was asked, "What was the best receiver in 1934?" His answer, "Why, an HRO, of course."

Ron will be displaying this transmitter at the CC-AWA Spring Meet, on March 23-25 at the Sheraton Airport Plaza Hotel, I-85 at Exit 33 on the Billy Graham Parkway, Charlotte, North Carolina. This is a good radio show if you are interested in collecting and learning about old radios. There are forums, equipment contests, a flea market and an auction. For additional meet information, please visit <http://www.cc-awa.org/index.html> on the Web, or e-mail Ron at kc4yoy@trellis.net. Ron is President of the CC-AWA.

For additional information about this transmitter and to see other photos of Ron's collection, please visit my Web page at <http://www.eht.com/oldradio/arrl/index.html>.

Collector Profile:

Ron Lawrence, KC4YOY

Ron's hobby of radio collecting began in 1969 when he was in high school. His best friend talked him into changing plans from taking a course in machine shop to taking electronics. He was told there was a new electronics teacher coming next year. Ron had played around with CB radio for some time and was sort of interested, but didn't know what he was getting into.

Rick Bilbro, K4KAV, was the new electronics teacher. He was just out of the Army and this was his first teaching job. Almost instantly they became friends, a friendship that has now lasted over 30 years. Rick tried and tried to get him started in ham radio back then but it wouldn't be until 1991 that Ron would finally get around to getting his ticket.

Rick brought some back issues of *Popular Electronics* into the class. In the July 1969 issue there was an article titled "Whatever Happened to Atwater Kent." This was the first time he really knew anything about early radio and was fascinated. The next spring his mother took him to something new in their area, a "flea market". There he spotted a radio and recognized it from the article in *Popular Electronics*: an Atwater Kent model 20. Looking inside he found the tubes were missing, but there was a real nice pair of Western Electric headphones with it. The price tag read \$15.

Looking in his wallet he found only \$10. He rushed to his mother and asked to borrow \$5 so he could buy the radio. She said there was no way she would give him \$5 to buy an old junk radio and that if he really wanted it he should try and haggle the man down to \$10. "It worked." Ron said, "and I was ruined." A newspaper columnist who later wrote an article about his collection said, "from innocent beginnings do dark obsessions grow".

"Boy, was he right," Ron said. "I still have that first Atwater Kent and that issue of *Popular Electronics*. They have a place of honor in my collection that now contains nearly 500 radios plus several thousand other pieces including tubes, speakers, headphones, vintage magazines and books on early radio."

Since becoming a ham in 1991, Ron is more and more interested in the history of Amateur Radio. "There are a lot of hams out there that have no idea what kinds of radios came before their pocket sized HTs." Ron said, "To help them learn, I have set myself a task of assembling representative amateur stations to show the development of ham radio through the years."



K2TQN's Old Radio Museum Schedule for March 2000.

The first display for this year will be on March 25-26, at the ARRL Maryland State Convention, the Greater Baltimore Hamboree

& Computerfest, at Timonium, Maryland (<http://www.gbhc.org/index.html>). Look for my big 28-foot white museum with a flat-wire antenna in the main flea market area. Please stop in and say hello. **QST**