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**QST Issue:** Jul 2000
**Title:** Building A Fine Old Radio Today
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# Building A Fine Old Radio Today

In last month's column I talked about the "Around the World Four" receiver by Silver-Marshall. At the end I mentioned that this would be an easy antique to replicate due to its use of standard old parts that can still be found at hamfests. In fact, replicating old radios is a very popular part of collecting. Sooner or later, many collectors build their favorite radio from their own spare parts and, with a little hamfest shopping, they are able to get the rest.

This month's column is about a replicated radio built in 1997 from the 1941 edition of *ARRL How to Become a Radio Amateur*. It was a popular design of the time—a two-tube regenerative receiver with plug-in coils. It could be powered two ways: by ac with an attached power supply, or by dc with batteries. (Remember that in 1941 there were still many rural homes and farms without commercial power, so their radios had to be battery powered.)

The receiver shown here was built by collector and "Master Craftsman" John Kelly, N3GVF (SK). John was well known for his immaculately restored collection, which contained over 300 ham radio receivers and transmitters, hundreds of Morse keys and sounders, as well as microphones and other ham radio accessories. He also had a radio library containing thousands of books, old radio magazines, radio manuals and schematics for most of his collection.

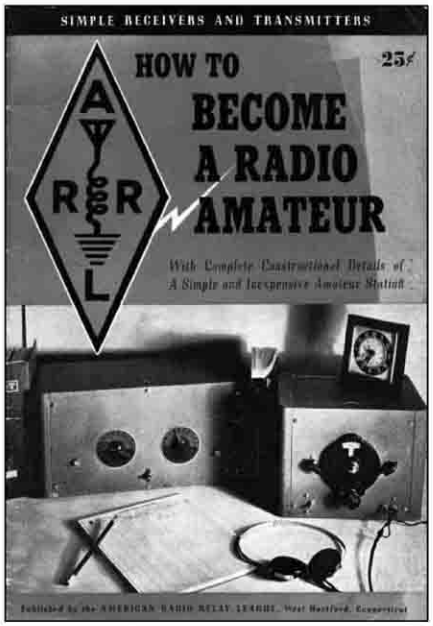
This was last radio that John built. He died unexpectedly just after finishing it, before he could complete the matching transmitter from the same publication. He intended to enter the pair into the Antique Wireless Association's annual contest. I entered this radio for him in 1999, after acquiring it a year earlier from an auction. It won the prestigious AWA "Ellie Craftsman" award for outstanding construction techniques.

The ARRL construction article describes two ways to build it. One approach used a nice metal cabinet and the other, which John decided to build, used a wooden base with an aluminum plate attached to mount the parts. An additional piece of aluminum provided the front panel where the various controls and variable capacitors would mount.

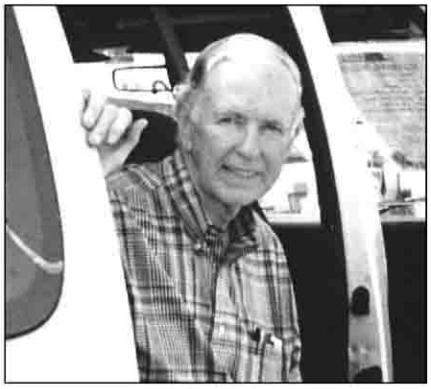
The article is well written with many photos to help you with parts placement. There is an easy-to-follow schematic and a complete parts list. The table with coil data is shown with well-drawn examples on how to construct the five plug-in coils. This radio covers from 1.55 to 33 MHz in five bands. The coils are designed to place the center range of the tuning control in the center of the 160, 80, 40, 20 and 10-meter ham bands.

If you decide to construct one yourself, you won't be sorry. This radio works very well. It will pull in weak stations quite nicely on the lower bands. Match this up with a homebrew single 6L6 transmitter, throw in a nice 40-meter dipole, add an old-fashioned knife switch to change the antenna from receiver to transmitter, and you'll have great starter station that graced many shacks from the late 1930s through the mid 1950s.

During the year there are contests for vintage stations by various groups. This is a fun way to contact others with similar stations. If you know about a vintage or Boat Anchor type contest, please send me the information by e-mail, and I'll place a vintage contest schedule on my Web page.




**The 1941 edition of *How to Become a Radio Amateur*.**



**"Master Craftsman" John Kelly, N3GVF (SK).**

**John's handsome version of the two-tube regenerative receiver with plug-in coils from *How to Become a Radio Amateur*.**

**John was well known for his immaculately restored collection, which contained over 300 ham radio receivers and transmitters.**

## Building It Yourself

With the permission of ARRL, I have scanned the entire 11-page article, which contains the construction portion and the details on how to operate this radio. (There is also information for building the all-metal version there if you so desire.) It is located on my Web site for you to download and print. I have also placed additional photos of John's radio so that you can study his construction techniques. The site URL is: **http://www.eht.com/oldradio/arrl/index.html**. Please let me know how your project turned out!

I'm looking for other nice homebrew radios to feature in this column from time to time. If you have something to share, please let me know. These could be radios your dad built way back when, or something you found in an old *Handbook* or magazine article and built yourself.—*K2TQN* QST

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