

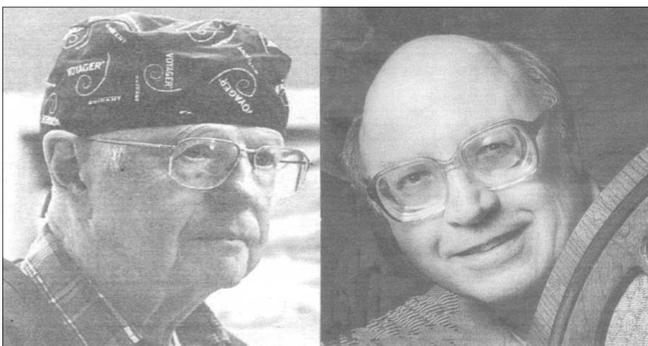
A Brief History of MAARC

One spring day in 1984 Joe Koester and Ted Hannah were taking a stroll around the grounds of their workplace after lunch. Both were antique radio collectors. They talked about the benefits of having a local antique radio club, and decided to form one.

Each knew of several other antique radio collectors in the area. They made a list of roughly twenty-plus individuals and invited them to an organizational meeting at Joe Koester's home in Laurel, Maryland, on July 14. The following fifteen were present at that first meeting:

Brian Belanger
Charles Brunnelson
Ed Bruns
Tom Calantonio
Dave Frohman
Ted Hannah
George Hamner
Glenn Hartong
Dwight Heasty
Don Hunter
Joe Koester
Norm Messerschmidt
Emmett Smith
(plus two who cannot be identified)

All present agreed that forming a club was a fine idea. Joe volunteered to be the first president. Brian Belanger agreed to handle membership and Ted Hannah agreed to be secretary. The Mid-Atlantic Antique Radio Club was chosen as the club's name. Joe and his wife Kathy prepared the first newsletter, dated August 1984. It consisted of two stapled sheets photocopied on blue paper.



Ted Hannah (left) and Joe Koester, MAARC's founders.

Joe felt strongly that monthly meetings and a monthly newsletter were crucial to success. He was right, and that model continues to the present.

The first monthly meeting of MAARC was August 17 at Joe and Kathy Koester's home. Ken McIntosh presented a talk on early television. Gerald Schneider agreed to be MAARC's first treasurer. Twenty-five attended. In November the first club exhibit was held, at the Laurel Mall, and a number of people who saw the exhibit signed up to become members.

MAARC's first auction was held the next spring, on March 24, 1985, in Joe's carport. In June of that year a get-together with Pennsylvania collectors was arranged at a park along the Susquehanna in Wrightsville, Pennsylvania. And on July 21, the first annual picnic meet was held at the home of Millie and Ed Lyon in Myersville, Maryland. The first member open house was held that December.

A contest was held to create a logo for MAARC, and in March 1986, MAARC's logo with the blue Atwater Kent cathedral, designed by Ted Hannah, was adopted.

MAARC's first convention was held in New Carrollton, Maryland, in June 1987. It was jointly arranged by MAARC and ARCA, the Antique Radio Club of America. (ARCA subsequently merged with the Antique Wireless Association.) The first annual RadioActivity meet took place seven years later, in June 1994.

MAARC grew rapidly. By the end of the first year the club had 106 members. There were 206 at the end of

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MAARC's Presidents

- Joe Koester (1984-1992)
- Lloyd Kendall (1992-1994)
- Sam Cannan (1994-1996)
- Ed Lyon (1996-2001)
- Geoff Shearer (2001- Present)

the second year, and 307 at the end of the third. By the summer of 1990 the total was up to about 700.

MAARC established a library of service literature. Michael Prosis volunteered to be librarian, and the collection of literature grew steadily. Through Johan Svanholm the club acquired the service literature of the National Radio Institute. The club acquired a photocopier and provided copies of service data to members for a small fee. (MAARC's library was eventually merged with the library of the Radio & Television Museum.)

Don Patterson of Augusta, Georgia, had been publishing an antique radio newsletter called *Radio Age* since October 1975, but in 1993 made a decision to cease publication. He was looking for someone to buy the rights to the publication. In the spring of 1994 MAARC's board decided to buy *Radio Age*. In June 1994 MAARC published the first issue of the new *Radio Age*.

From the beginning of MAARC, there had been an interest in establishing a radio museum in the area. At



Joe Koester at the first official MAARC meeting, held in his home.

MAARC's Meeting Places

- Joe Koester's home
- Community Methodist Church
- Laurel American Legion Hall
- Sharp Street Methodist Church
- Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory
- New Hope Seventh Day Adventist Church
- Davidsonville Family Recreation Center
- Sully Station Community Center

one point MAARC's officers met with officials of Capitol College, a small school that specializes in instruction in electronics. The College was building a new library building, and for a time it looked as though MAARC might be able to get a room in the new building for antique radio displays. This opportunity did not work out, but MAARC continued to think about creating a museum. In June 1993 a planning committee was formed. The committee realized that to qualify for IRS 501(c)(3) status, so that donors could receive a tax deduction, a separate corporation was needed. Late in 1993 the Radio History Society, Inc. (RHS) was formed. At first RHS did temporary exhibits—for example, a several-months-long exhibit at City Place Mall in Silver Spring, Maryland. RHS began to grow. RHS learned of a vacant city-owned building in Bowie, Maryland, presented a proposal to the Bowie City Council, and late in 1998 negotiated to lease the building to create a museum. June 12, 1999, was the grand opening ceremony for the Radio & Television Museum. Thus, as MAARC celebrates its 25th anniversary, the museum that MAARC created celebrates its tenth. The Museum has been highly successful, and without MAARC, would not have happened.

Radio Age has become one of the most respected journals in the antique radio field. RadioActivity is not the largest annual meet in the country, but it is definitely one of the largest. MAARC's monthly auctions are probably the largest monthly meeting auctions of any U.S. club.

So, it has been a splendid quarter century. Thanks to all those who have volunteered to help with MAARC activities and have made the club such a success. ■