

# The 45rpm Phono Gazette

## *Ristaucrat 45 rpm tabletop Jukeboxes*



**Rochester AWA  
Conference a great  
meeting place for  
45 phono  
collectors.  
See page 2!**

## The Workbench



**Ristaucrat Nonselectible Jukebox**



**Ristaucrat Selectible Jukebox**

In 1952 the Ristaucrat company of Wisconsin manufactured its first tabletop jukebox. It was designed to allow smaller businesses that could not afford a full size jukebox, to offer their customers music right on the counter top. Actually, it was a far cry from what you got with a full size juke. The first model would accept a nickel and play the next record on its stack. You wouldn't know what the names of the records on the stack were either, except for the top record, which was in plain sight. So you could look at this as a 'pot luck' selection.

Although the record changer looks very much like an RCA Victor, it is not. The only RCA parts are the tonearm and the idler wheel. Mechanically these units are quite complicated compared to the RCA changers. Part of the reason for the added complexity is the ability to raise the stack of records to the top of the spindle automatically once the last record is played. This is accomplished using a horseshoe shaped gizmo, which spends most of its time at the bottom of the spindle doing nothing. But when it's time to raise the stack of records, it begins to rise and take the stack with it. After the records have cleared the spindle

shelves, the horseshoe drops back to its idle position at the bottom of the spindle. Meanwhile the records now stay on top of the spindle because of the shelves. Like many other jukeboxes, the tonearm manages to go by a needle cleaning brush while it is rejecting.

For their next model, Ristaucrat added the very important missing piece from their first model, the ability to select a song. Twelve selections were available and the selection would be made from the front panel buttons as shown in the picture above. If selection 2 is playing and you want to hear selection 1 next, the changer would reject each record 3 through 12, one at a time, then lift the stack, drop record one and then play it. As the records are dropping from the spindle, the tonearm stays out of the way until the required number of records are dropped.

Watching these units operate is quite a sight. Sound quality is not the best, especially if you compare it to a full sized juke. One mechanical problem that you have to watch out for is a mechanism jam. This can occur if the record is too thick. Unfortunately there are quite a few (continued on Page 2)

### **Stalling problems with the RP-168 record changer.**

Most of these changers will stall when you press the reject button. This is especially true when you first turn on the machine and reject it when the tonearm is on the armrest. This position causes the most load to appear at the surface where the smaller idler rubber meets the turntable edge. All you need is a brand new idler wheel with nice soft, gripping rubber. But let's get back to reality, how can we get enough grip with the older, harder idler that works just fine except for this scenario. Roughing the wheel surface with sandpaper can help along with tightening the return spring. If it still stalls after these measures are taken, I coat the turntable rim with liquid rosin (phono no slip compound). Make sure it is thoroughly dry before inserting the spindle and engaging the idler wheel. I have phonos that have held up for years with just one application of the liquid rosin. Just make sure you apply a thin even coating so it will not affect the turntable speed or introduce flutter.

Next issue I will discuss other RP168 adjustments including the "star wheel".

The trusty picture scanner is out of commission, so you'll have to depend on my description of these oddball machines for now!

### Destination: Rochester!

This year we planned ahead and rented a van. Three of us diehard radio and phono collectors were to share the driving over the 700-mile round trip. Marv Beeferman, Dan Saporito, and myself started out at 10:20 am on Tuesday morning, stopped for burgers, stopped for gas, and stopped for Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream. Boy that was good ice cream! I was nursing a bad back over the last four days, but Marv saved the day by bringing along a heated back messenger which connected up right into the cigarette lighter. I vibrated from New Jersey to Rochester New York and was ready for hours upon hours of walking through the Marriot parking lot (flea market area) the next morning. By the way, the power connector for the vibrator would not stay in the cigarette lighter outlet. After we all watched it pop out about 25 times, one of us finally woke up and fashioned a piece of cardboard inside the outlet to provide a friction fit and there were no more interrupted vibrations! We arrived at 5:30pm, checked in to our motel and had dinner. Then it was time for our first evening get together. We met phono collectors Ray Tyner and Bob Havalack in Doug Houston's hotel room. Doug has been collecting radios, TV's, and phonographs for fifty years. He especially likes to collect consoles. He had his house custom built to accommodate his hobbies. He has over six hundred pieces in his collection. Another passion of Doug's is antique cars. He has 10 of them garaged at his house. But that's a whole other subject that we won't get into here. Doug has a very rare and unique 45-rpm phonograph. The cabinet is made of Plexiglas and is transparent so you can see all the inner workings. Apparently RCA Victor built a few of these to showcase the new 45-rpm record and playing system in 1949. Doug found it about 5 years ago sitting on a blanket at a flea market. When Doug asked how much the phono was, the owner said "one dollar". Doug almost ripped his pocket out of his pants getting the dollar out and whisked it under his arm. Doug was good enough to bring the unit with him so that we could see it first hand and up close. Doug has also made a video of his collection and we all watched it intently marveling at the physical size of the collection.

Wednesday morning 5:30am. We arrive at the flea market area and we're off and running. Everywhere there are flashlights flipping back and forth. During the first half-hour there is no sign of a 45-rpm phonograph. Then they start popping up one here, one there. At first they are the run of the mill attachments. As the sun comes up we start seeing some amplified units (45EY2, 45EY3). Then Bob Havalack has the good fortune of finding a Ding Dong School Slideomatic in very nice condition. Then an Alice in Wonderland appears and is sold before I can get a glimpse of it. I managed to pick up 4 parts machines and a 45EY3. By later in the afternoon, there were at least a dozen 45 players still scattered throughout the flea market. Marv picked up a beautiful RCA 103 speaker in its original box. It must have been kept in there most of its life because the flower pot embroidery and colors are in excellent condition.

Later in the morning we were able to meet two more phono collectors Tom Paruta and Joe Centanni. During a short interval of rain we talked in the Marriot and Joe mentioned he had a couple of odd ball 45 phonos. He agreed to bring them to the flea market the next day. Ray Tyner had also brought along an interesting phono made by Admiral. It looks like your typical 45 phono but the spindle comes out and you can also play 7 inch 33 rpm records. The easiest way to spot this machine is noticing the capital "A" for Admiral on the top of the spindle. Ray also showed us a Westinghouse 45 phono, which was apparently made in 1959. It appears that Westinghouse was the last company to manufacture the 45 phono along with RCA.

The AWA conference had some interesting talks. Wednesday evening some of us attended the talk on Zenith transistor radios. Part of the talk showed a video showcasing the transistors with radio station jingles playing in the background. Then it was time for a couple of our workshops. Ray Tyner showed us his technique for cleaning 'yellowed' decals. I provided a junky 45EY15 case that sported Disney characters. Ray had successfully removed the yellow from three other Disney players using Castrol Superclean and a wet sponge. Unfortunately, this set of decals reacted differently than the other ones he had cleaned. Once the yellow started to dissolve so did the

cartoon characters! The results of the workshop were, some decals can be cleaned this way and some can't! And you can't tell which way the results will go until you try it! We also discussed what lubricants we use when tearing apart a record changer. For parts that required a light machine oil, SuperOil by Solder Seal was recommended. Where grease was needed, Molly Graphite high pressure grease was recommended.

Thursday morning we hit the Flea Market again but there were very few new faces among the vendors. We watched the prices start dropping and by the end of the day some prices were cut in half. Marv picked up a Tektronics 540 dual trace scope with 2 and 4 channel plug-ins and a cart for a really good price. It looks like new too. He also picked up a Clapp Eastham RH one tube regenerative receiver from the 20's. Joe Centanni made good on his promise to bring some interesting 45 machines, so at 10am we had our own little tailgate party. Joe showed us what looked like a spice chest made of wood. Opening the front doors revealed a radio dial and three knobs. Opening the top revealed an rp-190 phono. The name on the back of the cabinet says Concord, made in Los Angeles, California. Joe also brought an Emerson model with a wooden case. I took pictures of all these odd machines and had planned to include them with this article. However, Murphy's law has set in and our picture scanner is out of commission. Thursday evening we attended an interesting talk about radio cabinet refinishing. Many of the "before" and "after" pictures were amazing to see. (Continued on page 4)

### Ristaucracs continued

45's that are not within specs for thickness. When the separators come out of the spindle, they can get wedged into the oversized record and what you hear is the unit's motor groaning away against some of the gears. Other than this mechanical shortcoming, they are quite a conversation piece and usually command higher prices than your typical RCA 45 player. Both units feature a plastic dome to protect and keep prying hands away from the record playing mechanism. I removed the dome from the non-selectible model because of a glare problem with the picture.



Courtesy of Phil Vourtsis Collection

Turn over page for your very own 45 rpm strobe disk. You can make a copy of the disk, cut it out, and paste it onto an old 45 rpm record.

