

John Bayusik Interview – 3-13-2016

VRCM: Briefly tell me about your background, what you did for a living and how you got involved with the radio museum.

JB: Well I started getting interested in radio when I was a kid because my grandparents lived with us and they had this huge Zenith console with the “green eye” and it was fascinating that you could listen to all these places all over the world. And radio was always kind of... I had other interests but radio was always in the background.

For a living, I had been working in chemistry for the last 49 years as a lab technician but electronics came in handy from time to time to get the equipment running again.

VRCM: When did you join the radio museum?

JB: I became aware of the museum probably around 1993 or 4. John Ellsworth called the local radio stations and mentioned that the museum was closing because of the weather. And I heard that and thought, “*what* radio museum?” And it took me quite a while to figure out where it was because at that point they didn’t even have a phone. So I finally tracked down the museum and the rest, as they say, is history.

I think the first volunteer job I had with the museum actually was helping them move out of Arch Street and moving everything into John Ellsworth’s barn. And I’ve been volunteering ever since.

VRCM: So you’ve been on a number of moves.

JB: Oh yea, every one! (Laughs)

VRCM: How many have there been?

JB: Well, let’s see. There’s Arch St. to John’s barn, and then John’s barn to the Comstock Building in East Hartford and from there to the I-Hop building, from the I-Hop building to the hardware store building, from there over to Mechanic St. and from Mechanic St. to here.

VRCM: You mentioned you were a lab technician in chemistry. Did you get involved with the Eppley collection when it came over here?

JB: I helped move it, but besides that, I didn’t.

VRCM: I see that you started a program to get rid of some of the old consoles.

JB: Consoles are kind of an acquired taste; they take up so much room, and most collectors, they like having one or two consoles. But to have a lot of them, you have to have a lot of room. So a lot of the ones we have are probably only good for parts so I would like to try and move them along as parts sets and as we move things out we can sell off some of the duplicates or ones we feel we don't really need. Our primary driver on that is that we need the space.

VRCM: Have you had much success with the program?

JB: Some. We've had a couple of calls and guys have come in and seen the items on the website. Also people at swap meets will make mention that these are available and we've sold a few that way.

VRCM: Obviously you get something out of being a volunteer at the museum. How would you express what pleasure you get?

JB: When I give the tours... in a sense its teaching. People are unaware of a lot of the history. And just working with people toward a common goal to keep the museum running.

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