



# to the editors

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*This column is open to your considered comments. Opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of Monitoring Times. Your letters may be edited or shortened for clarity and length. Please mail to Letters to the Editor, 7540 Hwy 64 West, Brasstown, NC 28902 or email editor@monitoringtimes.com*  
**Happy monitoring!**  
**Ken Reitz, Editor**

## MT Final Issue to be December, 2013

MT Publisher, Bob Grove W8JHD, announced July 25, in an online statement, that the magazine would cease publication as of the December 2013 issue. Bob Grove noted,

"After 33 years of publishing the most informative and lauded magazine on monitoring the radio spectrum, Judy and I are finally going to retire. We are grateful for the dedicated efforts of our fine staff of writers for the excellent work which has kept MT alive for all these years. While we know this will be a disappointment to our readers and writers alike, we realize that a combination of a poorly performing economy, as well as the ready availability of free listening and technical information on the Internet, has reduced sales and subscriptions throughout the market place. I would like to thank our staff personally for their knowledge, dependability, and professionalism in making MT the publication that is most often referred to in the radio monitoring hobby. It is a legacy that we have all inherited.

"Any readers concerned about their subscription refund merely needs to contact us by phone (800) 438-8155 or email belinda@grove-ent.com. We will then confirm the subscription expiration date and refund the difference by check or credit card, depending on how it was originally paid."

Bob Grove also explained that the Grove Enterprises catalog will also close its doors at the end of the year. (See related ads in the issue.)

## The Heathkit Legacy

Longtime reader, Jon Koons, writes:

"I enjoyed the article on Heathkits (MT July, 2013, 'The Heathkit Legacy' by Rich Post KB8TAD). Among other Heathkits I built was the GC-1005 electronic clock in 1973, which has been running (except for a short time in storage when moving) ever since. Forty years...not bad, Heathkit, you were a class act! By the way, I have been a subscriber to *Monitoring Times* since January 1985. Like my Heathkit clock, you just keep delivering!"



Lou Axeman N8LA writes:

"I enjoyed reading the two *Monitoring Times* articles about Lafayette Radio (MT December, 2012, '60 Years of Lafayette Radio,' and MT April, 2013, 'The Lafayette Surprise: Political Intrigue and Radio' both by Rich Post KB8TAD), but your Heathkit article in the July issue really blew me away!

"In 1956, a friend and I, who were 13 years old at the time, both bought AR-3 kits, including

cabinets. We both assembled them – he with a soldering gun, I with a wood burning tool – and took them to the ham father of another friend for alignment. His worked perfectly after alignment; mine would not work even after many attempts at re-soldering cold soldered joints, etc. My AR-3 sat in the attic of my parents home until 1964 when an uncle, who was a ham from Pennsylvania and had recently married my mother's sister, took it and finally got it to work, according to some of my relatives.

"I don't recall ever hearing of the 'We won't let you fail' motto before reading your article today. I sort of wish I had heard of it then. My friend, who built the other AR-3, went on to a PhD in physics from Harvard and a career as a physics professor at the University of Chicago. He never became an amateur radio operator. I went into the U.S. Air Force and a career as a tradesman at an auto plant in my home town of Lansing, Michigan.

"I was something of an SWL for decades and finally became a radio amateur in 1976. I have built a few Heathkits that worked: a 1410 keyer and a variable voltage 500 ma power supply. I own a number of pieces of Heathkit equipment: HW-8, HW-9, DX-35, a code practice oscillator that arrived in the mail yesterday, and other pieces in various states of repair. Anyway, your Heathkit article really moved me. Thank you very much!"

Author Rich Post KB8TAD responds:

"Many thanks for your comments, Lou! As Mark Twain once said, 'I can live for two months on a good compliment.' I'm glad you enjoyed the article, especially our shared experience with an AR-3. I'm currently playing with a Heathkit EK-2. Not wanting to use its parts but wanting to experience an earlier stage of that learning kit, I just finished cloning the EK-2A one-tube regenerative circuit. It's just as much fun as I remember of the AR-3."

Don Ramos writes:

"Thank you for the nice article about the legacy of the Heathkit brand in the July issue of *Monitoring Times*. I never built a Heathkit product but I did build several kits sold by Radio Shack back in the 1970s. I built one of their five-tube AM radios and a few transistor 'wireless mike' transmitters. I learned a lot about tuning capacitors and coils by using these kits. I was just a teenager when all this was going on and was not aware of the Heathkit brand since I was restricted to the local stores of the day (Radio Shack, a Lafayette store and a local store called Net Electronics in a small city 10 miles south of downtown Los Angeles where I lived with my parents until I moved away in 1980). No doubt if I knew about Heathkit, I would probably have a few of their kits in my parts boxes today.

"Too bad the kids of today are not more technically-minded and not into building kits. They would learn about the easy-to-understand nature of radio, where your communications can be point-to-point or peer-to-peer, not rely-

ant on telephone central offices or computer servers. You can communicate when cell telephone service is nonexistent or the main power is down. Steve Jobs, as stated in your article, learned electronics this way and one can wonder where the next Mr. Jobs will come from."

Author Rich Post WB8TAD responds:

"Thanks for your note on the Heathkit article. I built a couple of the little 'P' box kits from Radio Shack and made sure my sons had lots of access to the Shack's 100 and 200-in-one project kits when they were growing up. (I enjoyed those too!) With the new emphasis on do-it-yourself clubs springing up, I think there will be a resurgence of kits especially for kids.

## More KCBS vs. KBRT Reception Fallout



Cris Alexander, Director of Engineering, Crawford Broadcasting Co., Denver, Colorado, responds to our on-going debate about AM reception in southern California.

"In response to Kriss Larson's missive and [MT Broadcast Bandscan columnist] Doug Smith's reply in the July 2013 issue, we offer the following: KBRT has indeed long had a low-power nighttime authorization from its old island site. Because the resulting coverage reached neither the mainland nor the town of Avalon on the island, we did not use it. The new mainland site and antenna system, however, presents an entirely different situation.

"With 190 watts from the new site in eastern Orange County, KBRT is able to overcome the skywave interference from KCBS and provide a good, listenable nighttime signal into much of eastern Orange County as well as Corona, Riverside and other Inland Empire communities. Our loyal listeners in these densely populated areas have appreciated the new 24-hour local coverage.

"While I do not doubt that the result is a 'mish-mash' up in Los Angeles and points north and west, it is anything but in many areas.

"Mr. Smith is correct that KCBS is licensed as a class B station. However, such stations are protected at night to their groundwave contour corresponding to the 25 percent exclusion root sum square of the interfering signals, not the daytime groundwave coverage as he indicated. In the case of KCBS, this value is 4.39 mV/m with the interference coming from a number of full-time U.S. and Canadian stations. That groundwave contour does not get within 300 miles of Los Angeles. There is no protection afforded the skywave signals of any class B station, including KCBS.

"While we regret that some Southern California nighttime KCBS listeners are no longer able to hear that station interference-free, we share the FCC's view that local service has priority. We are pleased that KBRT is now able to provide that service 24 hours a day."