

March 24, 2017

Volume XIII, Number 35

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Rod's Excellent Radio

The Receiver that Heard Amelia Earhart's Last Transmissions

The radio transmissions from Amelia Earhart heard by the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Itasca* were copied on a marvelous receiver designed and manufactured by RCA in about 1934. The model AR-60 was sold commercially when the Coast Guard wrote a procurement specification for a new HF receiver. RCA won



the contract based on the AR-60. Their new receiver was assigned the designation CGR-32-2. It was essentially identical to the AR-60-R (commercial rack-mount version) except for the addition of a small sub-chassis containing a noise limiter circuit and front panel noise limiter control.

The CGR-32-2 (AR-60) receiver design gave performance unequalled by any other commercially available receiver at the time. One only needs to spend time examining the quality of construction, component quality, workmanship, and advanced design features to fully comprehend what was achieved by RCA in the 1930's. It is thought that no more than 400 of these receivers were produced. It is little wonder, as the receiver sold for \$475 – a hefty sum in 1936, nearly the price of a new automobile.

After having searched for five years, I could identify only five of these receivers in existence today. Four are AR-60's and the fifth is a true CGR-32-2, serial no. 103 owned by The Hammond Radio Museum of Guelph, Ontario.

The museum has no record of where or how this receiver made its way into the extensive radio collection of Fred Hammond.

The CGR-32-2 Receiver at the Hammond Museum is identical to the *Itasca*'s which received the last words of Amelia Earhart as her engines sputtered to a stop over the ocean somewhere near Howland Island the morning of July 2, 1937. It was restored to operating condition on November 5, 2005 by Peter Shilton (VE3AX) and myself (Rod Blocksome, K0DAS). Significant help was given by Larry Drebert who machined replacement parts for the receiver and Art Shulman (VE3ZV) who loaned test equipment to make the performance measurements. Earlier we made the same performance tests on the AR-60 receiver owned by the Antique Wireless Museum in Bloomfield, NY.

In May 2007, Tom Vinson (NYØV) stumbled across a previously un-counted AR-60 receiver for sale at the Dayton Ham Convention. I was in Kentucky at the time, so Tom called me on the cell phone. My response was "Buy it! I'll pay you back later." The seller would not negotiate his asking price of \$800, so my remote purchase cramped Tom's purchasing power for the remainder of the convention.

Below is a photo taken when Tom delivered the receiver to my garage.

— Rod Blocksome



Plan of the Day March 24, 2017

1000 Daily Progress Meeting: Ops Ctr.
1500 Est. REMUS Recovery

Fred Noonan

Navigator

Frederick Joseph Noonan was born April 4, 1893 in Chicago, Illinois. He went to public school in Chicago, and as a teenager, went to sea as a sailor on sailing ships. While at sea, Fred came around Cape Horn several times. He spent about 15 years on ships and became a master mariner. Then, as new frontiers were opening, Fred decided to quit the sea and get into aviation.

Fred learned to fly in 1929 in New Orleans, and was issued his limited commercial pilot's license in January of 1930. That summer, he went to work for the New York, Rio & Buenos Aires Line just before Pan American Airways acquired it.



Fred worked as a station manager for Pan American in the Caribbean. By 1935, Pan Am decided to open flights across the Pacific Ocean to the Philippines and China. Fred was one of only two pilots doing all of the test flying and navigation for those flights. Fred eventually rose to be the chief navigator for Pan Am. He resigned in 1937 to find better opportunities and intended to open a school for aerial navigators. When Amelia Earhart asked him to join her as navigator on a flight to Honolulu and Howland Island, he took the opportunity. Noonan ended up staying on for the second around the world flight attempt.

Fred was known for being tall, handsome, and a great dancer. After being married for seven years to Josephine Sullivan, he filed for divorce in Mexico in March 1937. Two weeks later Fred married his



Fred and Mary, May, 1937

second wife Mary B. Martinelli in Yuma Arizona. His disappearance later that year brought heartache to both women.

MERMAID MARCH MADNESS

Exclusive Passages Updates!

CURRENT STANDINGS: After Round Two sailing ahead are:

- 1: Alan 53
- 2: Marika 51
- 3: Spence 50



The good news for the rest of us sporting wannabes is that no one is technically eliminated yet. Remember, you can't make an amazing comeback if you're not way behind! Compare yourself against the "Perfect" bracket:

"Perfect"	46	Jeff	42
Bryan	46	TomV	38
Dave	45	Greg	36
Mark	44	Neil	36
Pam	43	Bill	30
Sue	42	Cap'n Joe	28

Round Three is underway. Breaking news when it happens.

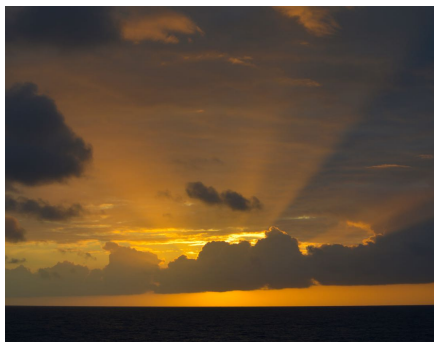
Astronomical Sightings

Now that the moon is rising late, we are looking for another opportunity to view the Large Cloud of Magellan, seen earlier in the expedition. The Magellanic Clouds are two galaxies visible as small, hazy patches of light. They are the galaxies closest to the Milky Way, "only" 160,000 light-years away

from the earth. (One light year is the distance light can travel in a year at a speed of about 186,000 miles/second = 5.88 trillion miles ... pretty far.)

The Magellanic Clouds are "irregular" galaxies because their distribution of the stars does not follow a pattern. They contain billions of stars, but are so far away they appear cloudy to the naked eye. Along with the Andromeda Galaxy, they are the only extra-galactic objects visible without aid.

Visible in the southern celestial hemisphere, they were first recorded in the early 1500's by Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan. It was not until the early 1900's that the clouds were recognized as galaxies outside the Milky Way.



MERMAID CLASSIFIEDS

PERSONALS 100

WANTED 200

PHOTOS! Dump your photos on NAS for sharing and backup. Pick a few select shots and save them aside so we can all admire them!

STORIES for *Meridian Passages*. Sea, land, or air stories welcome. Dave 4031.

LESSONS LEARNED. For *EEDE Final Report*. Spence 4051.

FOR SALE 400

Glass Hemispheres, slightly used. Great for popcorn bowls or lampshades. Also make great birdbaths. Use coupon code BENTHOS for discount. Greg 3051.

BRACELETS! Great selection of survival bracelets, all colors and sizes. Yes, I am obsessed. Marika 4062.

LOST & FOUND 500

LOST: Mostly clean blue, yellow, & white sock with logo "<d" sock. Free to a good home. See Bill 3071.

LOST: iPhone power cube. Was under the desk with the printer in Ops. Dave 3031.

Place New Ads by Friday – ed.