

Radio News' New Policy

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THE articles in RADIO NEWS are in my opinion “inspired” by your advertisers and of little value to your subscribers. Most radio magazines are similarly unreliable. Why don’t you occasionally publish something worth while? Your readers are not all morons. When and if you publish a radio magazine for the benefit of your subscribers rather than your advertisers, I will again subscribe. Who wants a catalog?

Yours very truly,

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WHEN the first number of RADIO NEWS was launched in July, 1919, I said as follows: “And here is the platform upon which RADIO NEWS stands. I pledge myself to a strict adherence to every plank:

“First: Only Radio—100% of it—nothing else.

“Second: An organ for and by the amateur. The amateur’s likes and wants will always come first in this magazine.

“Third: Absolute Independence. RADIO NEWS has only one Boss—its readers. This magazine is not, nor will it ever be, affiliated with any stifling, commercial radio interests whatsoever.

“Fourth: Truth—first, last and always. When you see it in RADIO NEWS you may be sure that it is so. Not being affiliated with commercial radio interests, this magazine will have no reason to suppress important articles, discoveries, etc.

“Fifth: RADIO NEWS is and will be the sworn enemy of all adverse and unfair radio legislation.

“Sixth: Instructive first and last. Up-to-date scientific articles for your instruction will always have first place in RADIO NEWS. We shall publish purely scientific articles every month, articles that on account of their length are often crowded out of other publications.

“Seventh: First in print with the news. You will find all important radio news in this magazine from one to three months ahead of all other publications—always.”

That was before the days of broadcasting and when radio fans were still “bugs” and transmitting amateurs; but, as a whole, the situation has not changed, nor has the platform of RADIO NEWS changed at all.

On the other hand, in an art that grows as rapidly as radio, changes occur overnight and it is necessary for any organization, whether a publisher or a factory, to conform itself to those changes. For instance, in 1919 there were some 10,000 amateurs, and not one of the so-called “broadcast fans,” because there was yet no broadcasting.

When broadcasting came along, it meant an important change, not only to the amateurs and fans, but to the radio industry as a whole. Changes came about with lightning rapidity, yet RADIO NEWS adapted itself to them to give the maximum service, not only to its readers, but to the whole industry as well.

RADIO NEWS has always been the largest of all the radio publications in point of circulation, and otherwise; and as such, it has a tremendous obligation to, not only the radio art itself, but all interests connected with it—readers, fans, amateurs or the industry. As the strongest and most representative of all the radio publications, RADIO NEWS has always valiantly striven to be of service to all concerned.

From 1919 to 1926, it was the policy of RADIO NEWS never to mention the name of any product within its text pages. RADIO NEWS has always maintained that the proper place to advertise a product is in the advertising pages rather than in the text pages. However, toward the end of 1926, it was seen that the radio parts industry was heading rapidly downward; and it became necessary, as it had been necessary before during similar changes, to recognize the altered conditions. During the radio boom, there were some 30,000 dealers in this country handling radio parts; at the end of 1926, this number had shrunk to no more than 2,500.

RADIO NEWS then was confronted with a most perplexing and difficult problem. Its readers always had been amateurs, fans, and constructors who built

their own, as well as custom builders. For that reason, many new and novel circuits were published in RADIO NEWS, such as the Tropadyne, Ultradyne, Strobodyne, Interflex, and many others of national and international importance. But RADIO NEWS also recognized the obligation to see to it that the man who wanted to build his own *could* do so. This, of course, is elementary: if you write a book on bridge, and it becomes impossible for the readers of that book to buy playing cards, the book is useless. If you publish a golf magazine and it is impossible for the readers to buy golf clubs and golf balls anywhere in the country, you will not stay in business long; neither will a publication advance the golf industry if it does not help create markets for the golf manufacturers. All this is self-evident; RADIO NEWS is in a position not at all different.

Since the radio parts dealers declined from 30,000 to 2,500 in a few years, if this decline were allowed to go on, it would soon be impossible to print RADIO NEWS; because the manufacturers of the radio material would have no longer an outlet, and the radio constructors and home builders would find it impossible to buy materials. It is true that a builder can wind his own coils, and drill his own panels; but certain articles, such as switches, condensers, tubes, sockets and others, he can never hope to make, and must buy.

Against its better judgement, RADIO NEWS, during 1927, endeavored to better trade conditions by publishing manufacturers' names and giving manufacturers' specifications in its text pages; because it seemed that it would thus be made easier for the reader to buy suitable material than if no names were given and he had to guess them. In doing so, RADIO NEWS honestly believed that not only would it serve its readers, as it had always done, but the radio trade as well.

It is, however, admitted now that this policy was wrong and, beginning with this issue, we revert to our former custom of not mentioning any manufacturers' names or trademarks of parts and circuits of any kind in the text pages of RADIO NEWS. In that respect, we go back to our former practice of the years previous to 1927.

It was soon found that readers of RADIO NEWS became suspicious and thought that advertisers were controlling the text pages; and it must be admitted that that is the way it often looked to the outsider.

At no time, however, did RADIO NEWS reap any material benefit from specifying manufacturers' names and materials. If any proof is wanted, the constant advertising shrinkage of RADIO NEWS during 1927 is glowing testimony of this fact. At no time did the trade (particularly the parts manufacturers) really support RADIO NEWS, in spite of its publishing their names and specifications quite freely. An intolerable situation was reached, since it was impossible to mention in one issue the products of all manufacturers and, wherever one friend was made among the parts manufacturers, many enemies were made.

But the worst part was that many readers became dissatisfied with seeing so

many circuits, which to them seemed sponsored by kit manufacturers; and some refused to read RADIO NEWS any longer. Letters like that printed here became numerous as time went on.

Yet it must be evident to every fair-minded reader that the publishers did not reap a harvest from the manufacturers. Quite to the contrary, the publishers lost heavily during the experiment. so, beginning with this issue, we revert to our former rule, as follows:

RADIO NEWS will no longer mention any radio material by a trademarked name; no manufacturers' names will be printed in an article on construction. Circuits originated by parts and kit manufacturers will not be given the manufacturers' names; if a worth-while circuit comes along, RADIO NEWS will bestow on it its own proper name.

An important new policy will be initiated, under which RADIO NEWS will *give away free* the blueprints that, for over two years, have been sold for from \$1.00 to \$2.00. These blueprints with full specifications will, however, contain the names of the parts which were used by the constructor who designed the actual assembly. On the blueprint will be mentioned the trade name and the manufacturers' names, so that the constructor who wishes to build the circuit can do so with the least amount of difficulty. But this information, as we have said, will *not* be published in the text pages of RADIO NEWS.

In all other respects RADIO NEWS' policy will be the same, except that hereafter only one featured constructional article will be published each month. This does not exclude the publication of constructional artifacts for beginners, describing circuits in which not more than three tubes are used. There will, therefore, be not more than two constructional articles describing receivers in RADIO NEWS monthly, although there may be an occasional description of a power pack, amplifier, etc.

It is hoped that, in making these changes, RADIO NEWS will continue to serve, as before, the entire radio industry; but, first and always, it should be understood that RADIO NEWS is published primarily for its readers. That has been its policy, and always will.

Mr. Hugo Gernsback speaks every Monday night at 9 P. M. from Station WRNY (326 meters) and 2XAL (30.90 meters) on various radio and scientific subjects.