

NEW YORKER
New York, NY

WEEKLY

924,765

APR 14, 2003



M15346

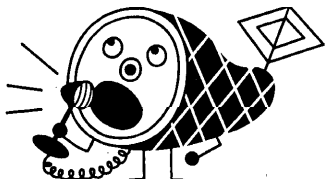
LUCE

PRESS CLIPPINGS

BOOK CURRENTS

With Some Frequency

"CQ, CQ, CQ, this is W2OJW, calling CQ. Whiskey Two Oscar Juliet Whiskey in Hackensack, New Jersey, standing by for a call." For seventy-four years, before his "key went silent," in 2001, this was the nightly appeal of Jerry Powell, an aeronautical engineer, amateur trombonist, and avid ham-radio operator. Powell's devotion to vacuum tubes, multiband yagis, parallel RLC cir-



cuits, and midnight conversations with fellow-hams from Moscow to Montevideo is celebrated by Danny Gregory and Paul Sahre in the colorful **HELLO WORLD: A LIFE IN HAM RADIO** (Princeton Architectural Press). Hams, as Gregory and Sahre discovered, "come in all shapes and sizes and live all over the world." Although ham radio is generally considered an arcane pastime reserved for microhenry-obsessed nerds, recent estimates put the number of worldwide hams at more than two million, including such devoted practitioners as Marlon Brando (ham call sign FO5GJ), Donny Osmond (WD4SKT), George Pataki (K2ZCZ), and King Juan Carlos of Spain (EA0JC).

The first hams, or narrowcasters, pop up in Edward D. Miller's **EMERGENCY BROADCASTING** (Temple University Press), a rumination on the nature and meaning of early radio. Miller, who likens radio in the nineteen-thirties to the Internet in its first decade, gives us the untamed era of Herbert Morrison's broadcast of the Hindenburg disaster and Orson Welles' "War of the Worlds." In those days, voices in the ether inspired utopian visions, prompting *Collier's* to assert that radio would create a "strong and well-knit people." It's a notion that today's hams—ensconced in the purple glow of their transmitters—continue to broadcast.

—Mark Rozzo