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Last meeting

By Bruce Brown

A North Bend Oasis

With the economy going to hell in a hand basket, an audiophile needs their little oasis away from the rat race we call life!

If you don't have your "man cave" you can always make an excuse to go visit your friends, especially friends with high-end systems and enough vinyl to make the Library of Congress envious!

The September meeting of the Pacific Northwest Audio Society was such an escape as it was held at Mike Lavigne's oasis. I've known

Mike probably 10 years or so. It always seems I'm a couple steps behind him, though I branched off a few years back into the Pro arena. He has been a mentor to others, and me, teaching us the finer points of listening and setting up a state of the art audio system.

If you missed last month's meeting, I'll send out my condolences later. Mike has always been trying to strive for the best sound available. We've known long ago that the room plays a major part of what the end product is going to sound like. Initially Mike had set up his den area in his old home to create a quaint lis-

tening room. With tube traps and such, the room had reached the end of its potential in providing Mike with his ultimate "man cave". Wanting to spread his wings, he and his wife set out on the adventure of a lifetime for an audiophile. He wanted to find a new home that would allow for an easy addition to build the ultimate listening room. After searching for about 6 months, he settled on a home with a detached barn. The barn had the potential of a no compromise build where the only limits were your pocketbook and local zoning laws!

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He contacted Richard Bird of Rives Audio and together with Chris Huston, started making plans for the ultimate listening room. After back and forth collaboration with Richard and Chris, they settled on a room that would be roughly 29' x 21' x 11'.

After months of having to deal with contractors, the room was finally finished. As we all know, just moving equipment into a new room isn't enough. It can take months and even years of endless tweaking, moving, listening, and more tweaking to finally arrive at a point where one can say, "It's close"!

For the full story of Mike's adventure with pictures, just go to:

<http://www.positive-feedback.com/Issue16/lavigneroom.htm>

Here is a full list of equipment that Mike uses, now. As we all know, audiophiles like to tweak and change around equipment so this list is subject to change without notice!

Speakers:

Evolution Acoustics MM3

Amplifier:

darTZeel NHB-108 stereo solid state.

Preamplifier:

darTZeel NHB-18NS with two internal phono stages and battery power

Digital:

Playback Designs MPS-5

Cables:

◆ Nordost Valhalla, single-ended 1m, and 1.5m



- ◆ Transparent Audio Opus MM2, single-ended 1.5m
- ◆ Transparent Audio Opus MM2 12' speaker cable
- ◆ darTZeel BNC 'zeel' , 8m from pre to amp, 1.5m from Playback Designs to preamp.

constrained layer plinth (built by Steve Dobbins) with Schroeder Reference SQ arm and Koetsu RSP cartridge

- ◆ Garrard 301 in custom constrained layer plinth (built by Steve Dobbins) with Triplaner Ultimate arm and Blue Angel Mantis cartridge.



Turntables:

- ◆ Rockport System III Sirius with vdH Colibri XCP cartridge
- ◆ Technics SP-10 Mk2 in custom

Tape decks:

- ◆ Ampex ATR-120 updated and re-conditioned by Jeff Gillman.
- ◆ Technics RS-1700 re-conditioned

and modified by Tim DeParavincini (EAR).

Power:

- ◆ 8 Jena Labs Fundamental One power cords with in-line conditioners.
- ◆ All outlets (13) Oyaide R-1 duplex outlets and WPC-Z faceplates.
- ◆ Loricraft PSU 301 AR power supply.

Rack system:

Grand Prix Audio Monaco SE shelves and amp stands with Formula shelves and Apex footers.

I would like to thank Mike and his wife for the hospitality over the years, and for hosting this meeting.

I think an award of merit should go to his and our wives for putting up with our neurotic behavior. What a great Oasis you've created, Mike!



'Puget Sound' speaker contest

By Jerry Pomeroy

Every other year our club sponsors the 'Puget Sound' speaker contest, and this year it was a dandy.

We had fifteen designs enter the fray, and although 15 entrees doesn't sound like many, at an average of 20 minutes per entry to setup and evalu-

ate, this is a total of 5 hours to complete the judging. It's a lot of work, and my hat goes off to the judges; Winston Ma, Bruce Brown, and



[top to bottom] Dave Rosgaard with entries # 01, # 03, and # 04; Todd Lee with entries # 06 and # 11; and Mike Curtis with entry # 08.

Terry Olson with entry # 02; Doug Nash with entry # 14; and John Noil with his entry # 09.

Terry Olson with entry # 16; Joe Pittman with entry # 13; and Chad Kirby with entry # 15.

Terry Olson with entry # 07; Howard Grim with entry # 10; and Jim Geblin with entry # 12

Mike Lavigne, who performed this task in the years past, and who returned this year as well to further hone their critical listening skills as judges.

This fact gives us something to chew on as we consider the rules for the next contest, in the summer of 2010.

We started setting up the room for the contest about 5PM the day before

every time, except in the first year.

Up in the next morning for a few last minute tweaks, and it was time to set up the first set of speakers. We got started judging about 10AM, and



Several years ago I was involved in a A:B:X blind test, myself. From that experience I learned that it is very difficult to evaluate things and even harder to establish a level playing field. What I am saying is, there is a great deal of effort put into keeping thing on a balanced scale.

Although the evaluations are tallied by category, all of the entrees are judged using the same criteria, and that means, among others, at the same loudness. In the history of the contest we only have had two exceptions to this; the first year we blew a driver by not having the tracks of the test CD normalized to similar volume, so this year, to avert a similar disaster it was determined that one entry just couldn't play as loud as others, so it was evaluated at a lower volume. This was done after consulting the builder, the technical staff of the contest, and after notifying the judges. I bring this up because in the last two years we have had increasing number of entrees designed as near field monitors for computer applications. Although it is I have been amazed at the output from these mini monitors, some with only 2" drivers, especially in a room 25 by 16 foot, this is not the environment in which they were built to perform.



Testing the capabilities of each entry

the contest. The room set up includes setting up the sound system and acoustic treatments in the room, evaluating it, and then installing "The Curtain" and the chairs for the judges. We used the club's system, but as always we made a few tweaks and upgrades. This year we exchanged the Isotek Sigmas for Isotek Titan and for benchmark reference speakers we used Genesis 7.1 and Joe Pittman's 1-way entry [see later comment]. So, the final system used for judging received its power from Isotek Titan, my Genesis I60 amp and Gary Koh's Sony SCD777ES with upgraded power supply. Interconnects were Oyaide PA-02, and the speaker cables were the RWA 10g cables. I use these in my own system at home. I think this was the best sounding system we have had to date; though, this statement is of little to no value as I have said this

it all went well, though we had a few exciting moments, the highlight, or greatest stress, for me came when a tube on the club's amplifier leaked air and put on a light show for all in the room.

When you stop and think of all the hours represented in manufacturing the test specimens, it is really an honor to put on the contest.

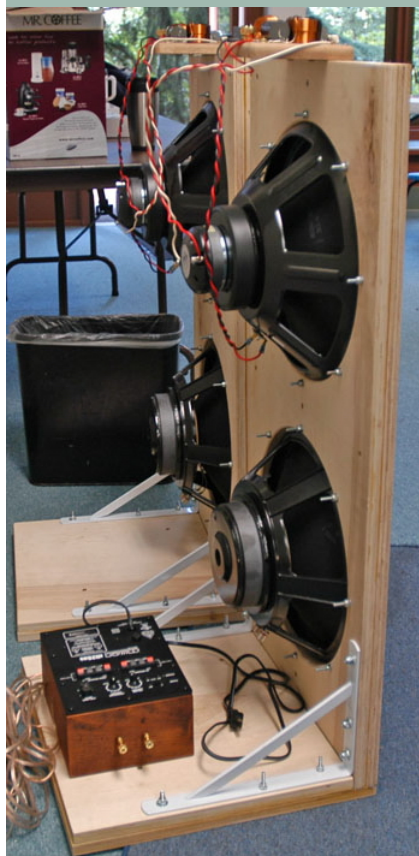
Like I said earlier the speakers are all judged by the same criteria. Each judge selects up-to, but no more than 3 minutes of material to be included on a test CD-R with not only the music but a calibration tone that is used to set the volume level of each speaker prior to judging. After the curtain is drawn, the judges enter the room, and the room is closed behind them. Inside the room, the judges then play a type of musical chairs as they change positions to the sweet seat as their selection is being played. Each judge fills out an evaluation form for each speaker and at the end the points are tallied.

Categories exist for 1, 2, and 3-way designs, and both low, and high budget in each category exists. There is also a category for speaker kits.

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Although not judged, there was quality cabinetry everywhere... As well as its absence.



The cost is calculated on the cost of drivers and crossovers only; i.e., cabinet cost, connectors, etc. is not a considered.

So, here, by class, are the winners of the 2008 contest:

1-way design under \$75—Howard Grim's Fostex Trapizoid TL/Horn @ \$71.

1-way design over \$75—Doug Nash's Fostex 108 Sigma Frugal horns @ \$170.

2-way under \$200—Mike Curtris with AR 5.25" driver and Tangaband Q1 dome tweeter @ \$128.

2-way over \$200—Jim Giblin's open baffle, Hawthorn Audio Silver Iris coax drivers, \$290

3-way under \$300—John Nail's "Purple Puppies" @ \$266, these also won *best-of-show*.

There were no entrants in the 3-way above \$300 category this year.

Kit under \$175—constructed by Terry Olson, the Dave Rosgaard 2-ways @ \$68

Kit above \$326—from Exodus Audio the Kepler kit was also built by Terry @ \$499

In closing, I just want to say that even if one didn't come away with a coveted certificate, we heard some great sounding speakers, had fun, and spent the day with our audio buds, so we all are winners as well. This contest takes a great deal of effort to stage, yet it is always worth it. There are always some great designs, and good sounding speakers. The most unique looking this year, I would have to say, was Joe Pittman's single driver Not-a-list speakers. Their unique cabinets were made from PVC pipe that rattled a bit but were a allot of fun.

To all the people who made this event possible; from PR, to setup, to clean up; those that loaned equipment, transported it, and did all other miscellaneous work; I want to give hearty thanks to you. We couldn't have done it without you!

See you at the 2010 contest!



John Nail's 'Purple Puppies' has won first place in the '3-way under \$300' category and 'The Best of Show' award.

Congratulations John!



- ◆ [On the cover] Wood thickness maps of the top (A) and back plates (B) of antique and contemporary violins. The contemporary violins are presented on the top row, and the antique ones on the bottom row.

In a unique collaboration between Dr. Berend Stoel of the Leiden University Medical Center, Netherlands and Terry Borman, luthier in the United States, the experiment put classical violins, including several made by Stradivarius, through a CT scanner. The homogeneity in the densities of the wood from which the classical violins are made, in marked contrast to the modern violins studied, may very well explain their superior sound production. [read more at <http://www.plosone.org/article/info:doi/10.1371/journal.pone.0002554>, via Science Daily, <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/07/080701221447.htm>]

- ◆ 'DivX' sounds like the defunct rental DVD format 'DIVX'; it isn't. DviX is a compressed video format based on MPEG-4 Part 2 codec that's used in many HD video cameras. This gaining in universal popularity format has been used in computers and video servers and is capable of resolutions up to 1920x1080. Some BD players are already capable of playing DivX formatted disks. This across-the-board acceptance of the DivX format is a relatively new development, and the concept of letting people play back and edit their videos in the camera's native format is just earth shattering. [ed. More information at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DivX_Media_Format]
- ◆ Matsushita changed their corporate name to Panasonic Corp.
- ◆ Outlaws new home theater processor is again based on a Sherwood. According to their website, it should be for sale in January of 2009 for around \$1300.
- ◆ Hauppauge HD-PVR, a weapon of choice for DIY HTPC builders, gets 5.1 Dolby Digital.

"Not since TiVo has an A/V product so blatantly risked alienating the *studio* HDCP establishment by providing consumers with the tools to do what they really want to do—record and consume high-def content when and where we really want. By sneaking through the analog (component) output of your HD set-top-box, the Hauppauge HD-PVR can record, pause and rewind programming on your PC. It stores all this audio/video as compressed H.264 on your computer's hard drive. Armed with a media extender like Hauppauge's own SageTV you can stream this HD goodness back to your Home Theater system." [<http://www.audioholics.com/news/industry-news/hauppauge-hd-pvr-1>]

- ◆ And lastly, from the "Heh, heh, your medium is dying" department. First a quote; "I think it [Blu-ray] has 5 years left, I certainly wouldn't give it 10." - Andy Griffiths, Director of Consumer Electronics, Samsung UK., and then another, "I'm fond of recalling the old visions of the past that the paperless office would completely obliterate the need for paper. It seemed like a very reasonable, logical prediction decades ago that turned out to be completely wrong." - Andy Parsons, Chair of Blu-ray Disc Association Promotion Committee; **and now**, a right-on comment from David Waratuke, via Audioholics, "Paper has lasted for thousands of years for its pure utility and ease of use. Imagine paper loaded with DRM; special inks that are illegible without the proper reading glasses, proprietary paper made only to absorb proprietary inks, and the capability to report improper mixing of brands back to the manufacturers so that they could sue users for intellectual property rights infringement for an improper, unlicensed paper/ink combination read with unauthorized glasses."

Too funny, except that it's so true. Will "they" learn, ever? Well, until then, suffer little children.

Upcoming events

October 9th, 2008

PNWAS Meeting - [Announcement](#): Lets spin some LPs! Unfortunately, Andrew got hung-up in Russia for longer than he planned, and he won't be back in time for the meeting. This means no tweak-themed meeting that we planned for October. Instead, bring music you would like to share with the other club members. If you know something about the recording we would love to hear about it, we will try and play as much music as we can.

November 13th, 2008

PNWAS Meeting

We are still on for Jerry's Hi-Def digital audio and video meeting. With the advent of Blu-Ray comes not only HD video, but more compelling is the uncompressed digital audio at a 24/192 resolution

December 11th, 2008

PNWAS Meeting

Christmas raffle and music sharing. Our annual party at which each of us can spread the joy by inflicting his/her musical tastes on others. Start planning your gifts now!

Classified Ads

Ads are free to members and will run for three consecutive issues unless renewed. Please limit ads to make, model, short description, condition, MSRP, asking price, contact information.

EMM Labs/Meitner DAC8 IV

8-channel DAC with ST Optical, SDIF and AES/EBU inputs. DSD or PCM up to 24/96. It will also do a D/D conversion up or down. Latest model in excellent condition. \$5000.00

Call Bruce at 425-369-1392

Gallo Reference 3.1 speakers

Black and stainless with black base. Great for 2 channel audio or home theatre.

Very good condition. New \$3400 asking \$1800

Call Ken at 425-785-7517

Genesis I60 integrated amplifier

This sold out and much sought after 60 watt stereo integrated tube amplifier is being offered at a special price [to PNWAS members only](#). This unit is brand new, in unopened box. It was recovered from a dealer. \$2250 or best offer. Submit your bids to garyk@audiosociety.org

Club discounts

Northwest Sinfonietta

The Northwest Sinfonietta (a classical chamber orchestra) provides discounts to members of our club for performances of the 2007-2008 season. The regular single ticket price of \$38 will be only \$20 per person per performance at the door (or by phone or mail). Just tell them or note on your order that you are a member of the PNWAS. Information and order forms are also available at their website: www.nwsinfonietta.org.

Kosmic

www.kosmic.us

Contact Joe Pittman

206-878-3833

Pro Sound and Vision

Contact George H. Pro

425-889-9499, 425-445-3308 (cell)

Revolution Power

Www.revolutionpower.com

Contact: Ken Garza

Visitors Welcome!

Meetings are held on the second Thursday of every month at 7:30 p.m. at 4545 Island Crest Way, Mercer Island, WA 98040.

PNWAS Mission Statement

- ◆ To bring together people with a common interest in music reproduced at its best, for their mutual edification and pleasure.
- ◆ To facilitate the exchange and dissemination of accurate data concerning audio equipment and musical recordings.
- ◆ To promote, sponsor, and cultivate the highest quality reproduction of music in the home.
- ◆ To encourage maintenance of high standards in the performance, recording and transmission of music.

PNWAS Objectives

1. Provide a forum for meeting other audiophiles and exchanging information on musical recordings and audio equipment.
2. Demonstrate and compare equipment and recordings.
3. Give members opportunities to become familiar with the techniques of audio manufacturing,

testing, repair, recording, broadcasting, etc.

4. Explore related avenues as the membership deems appropriate.

Club website

www.audiosociety.org

E-mail

info@audiosociety.org

U.S. Mail

Pacific Northwest Audio Society, P.O. Box 435, Mercer Island, WA 98040

Annual dues

\$60 due each January. New members pay a prorated \$5 per month for remainder of year.

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Editorial

Editorial submissions are welcome.

Content must be audio-related or of general interest to the club in plain text or Word document format without automation (macros or scripts). We reserve the right to edit for style, content, and length.

Editorial deadline: two weeks before meeting date.

Publishing any editorial material is contingent upon the approval of the Executive Committee.

Disclaimer

Opinions in this Audioletter are those of their authors; the Pacific Northwest Audio Society itself does not endorse or criticize products.

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**Pacific Northwest
Audio Society**

Bringing Audio Enthusiasts Together Since 1978

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