



# Newsletter

## September 2024

### President's Message

By AAVC President John Harvell

As we approach the 4th quarter of 2024, I have been thinking about how to make the Arizona Audio Video Club (AAVC) better, stronger, and even more enjoyable. I started thinking about what we could all do to help move the club in that direction. Here are my thoughts/recommendations to all members:

1. Actively participate in Club events
  - a. Monthly meetings
  - b. Friday Zoom calling - see [club website](#) for details
  - c. Member Listening Sessions - consider hosting a session in your home
2. Share your interests in new and old music
  - a. Identify what draws you in
  - b. What do you find to be quality recordings
  - c. What music stirs up your emotions - touches you
  - d. Contribute your thoughts to the Club Newsletter via a record review (contact the Newsletter editor at [catchgroove@gmail.com](mailto:catchgroove@gmail.com))
3. Talk about your experiences investigating and evaluating new equipment
  - a. Summarize experiences at audio shows around the country
  - b. Share the new and novel aspects regarding new equipment you bump into
4. Bring a friend to a club event as a guest
5. Make suggestions/recommendations for future events (see next article below)
6. Submit your name for a club officer position or join the steering committee. November is the month to submit your name; positions available include:
  - i. President
  - ii. Vice President
  - iii. Treasurer
  - iv. Secretary
  - v. Newsletter Editor
  - vi. Website Editor
  - vii. Steering Committee Member

Ultimately, all these things and more can help make this club better, stronger, and more enjoyable for all of us. So, help out by checking a few of these boxes. By doing so, you will find new friendships, learn more about this hobby, and help educate other members on their path to better, more enjoyable music and video experiences.

## Future Meetings

**September 28, from 10 am to 4 pm:** [Amp Off!! - Amplifier Challenge 2024](#) - At Greg's Audio Shrine. See the [club's website](#) for more details. RSVP to Joe Goswami at [rajugsw@gmail.com](mailto:rajugsw@gmail.com), and we'll provide you with directions if you don't already have them in your GPS from the DAC it Out Event earlier this year. We are also planning a Dolby Atmos Music Only Day at Greg's Audio Shrine on Saturday, December 6th, 2024 - more details to follow.

**October 17 at 7:00 PM:** [Dan D'Agostino Master Audio Systems Factory Tour](#) (5855 E Surrey Drive, Cave Creek, Arizona, 85337). Please RSVP to Jim Welby at [catchgroove@gmail.com](mailto:catchgroove@gmail.com). See the [club's website](#) for more details.

We have several club meeting ideas in the works, but we don't have these nailed down yet. But as a tease, here are some of the ideas we are working on:

- [USA Tube Audio](#) meet and greet
- Speaker designer extraordinaire Andrew Jones
- Focused listening session
- [Musical Instrument Museum](#) (MIM) tour and concert
- DIY—We would love to have a member coach other members through a do-it-yourself audio/electronics project

If you have an idea for a club meeting, please share it with the club's president, John Harvell ([jharvell\\_1@cox.net](mailto:jharvell_1@cox.net)), or the Newsletter Editor, Jim Welby ([catchgroove@gmail.com](mailto:catchgroove@gmail.com)).

## Member's Corner

[Paul Johnson](#), an AAVC member, shared this link to an amusing video. Per Paul, "*A good strategy for convincing someone else to approve of your purchase is humor; if that does not work, there is always panic:*"

• [Audiophile Forced To Sell His Entire System - "The Audiophile Song" - High End Audio Is Over!](#)

Paul also enjoys [Leonid & Friends](#), a Russian-based Chicago (the band) tribute band. Paul would like to share a couple of videos of the band:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9\\_torOTK5qc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_torOTK5qc)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEDatFQ3m98>

## **The Long and Winding Road - Living with Audiophilia**

Chapter Two: Tech Hifi Dreams Lost to Good Intentions

By AAVC Member Barrett Strong

I don't remember where I got it 45 years ago, but in 1979, the Tech Hifi catalog changed my life as much as any printed document before or after. Gorgeous photography, exotic locations, sexy adult women reclining in front of awesome systems—this is what I wanted.

I was 13 and washing dishes at a Chinese restaurant. The money slowly grew in my bank account. 100, 200, 300. But I was also a realist. Of course, I wanted the Infinity QLS-1's with their 8 EMIT tweeters in the catalog's flagship \$10K system. I also wanted to hang out with the dancer in the black leotard. But the Infinity Qe's that I could soon afford had the same EMIT technology, and she was way out of my league, for now.



So it was a complete surprise when my Dad came home with an entire stereo system he bought me at Radio Shack (Radio Shack!).

On the one hand, I knew how lucky I was to have my dad spend almost \$300 on a stereo for me comprised of a Realistic STR-62 receiver, Nova 7B speakers, and a Realistic turntable. I set it up, and it sounded incredible. The receiver was

beautiful, heavy, and glowing with a magical light. The switches felt solid and precise. The 12 watts per channel through the Nova's 10" woofers and dual 3" tweeters was clean and powerful. The turntable was light years ahead of the white plastic one I had been using.

My pictures from that period are bad; these internet ones are better. You get the idea.



[www.hifiengine.com](http://www.hifiengine.com)

But on the other hand, it wasn't what I had dreamed about. I thanked him and was happy. I spent the money I had saved from not buying the system on a Sankyo STD-1810 top-loading cassette deck so I could make tapes of my albums so I wouldn't wear them out, and I started buying music with some of my paycheck.



Stereophile Magazine



A few years went by. I was driving now and began working in a custom van shop in High School. The money now went to my truck and its sound system: 6" x 9" Panasonic Coaxial Sound Pumps with a Kenwood head, 100-watt graphic eq amp, and a 40-channel CB so my friends and I could communicate in those primitive pre-cellphone days.

I don't have a good picture of this under the dash of my 1984 Toyota pickup, but suffice it to say it barely fit and was a pretty decent system in its day.



Along with putting together my two systems, I discovered all kinds of great music. Genesis, Talking Heads, Frank Zappa, Peter Gabriel, Dire Straits, Steely Dan, Yes, Kate Bush, DEVO, Laurie Anderson, The B-52's, King Crimson, Robert Fripp, Brian Eno, Sinéad O'Connor, and of course more Pink Floyd. I bought every album by Floyd and solo albums, especially Syd's. We even held a FloydFest at my friend Mark's house on a 4-speaker setup I put together in his basement that lasted over 24 hours. We played every album in order. We only really left once to wander around at 2 in the morning on a nearby Convents grounds, but the mushrooms on the pizza likely inspired that. Good times.

So my Tech HiFi dreams had not followed the path I had planned. I didn't have Infinity speakers with the EMIT tweeters. I certainly didn't have a dancer in a black leotard. But what I had put together was a blast and my long and winding road was really getting started. It wasn't until I walked into an audio store on Woodward Avenue in 1988 that I discovered the speakers that would keep me happy for 31 years.

This all kept me very happy, but the Tech HiFi bug slowly returned, and I found myself at age 23, shopping the two audio stores on Woodward Ave. My budget was only about \$500, but I wanted better speakers. For me, it's mainly about the speakers.

I don't recall the brand, but at the first store, the highest-rated speaker they carried was half the size I had, and I didn't think it sounded any better.

Disappointed, I went to the store that said Magnepan out front, which I had never heard of. The salesman had a small room with the bookshelf speakers I had just listened to on stands next to a pair of SMGas, which cost the same. I brought my Pink Floyd CD, and he switched back and forth between the two, and I couldn't believe my ears. When he switched to the traditional speakers after the dipoles, it sounded like you put a refrigerator box over the Maggies. I bought them on the spot!

Not the originals I bought, but a photo from the internet.



The next AAVC Newsletter will include Chapter 3: Refrigerator Boxes and Epiphanies.

### **I Wish I Still Had That...**

By AAVC Member Scott Cohen

Most of us have a car we owned when we were much younger that we wished we had kept. Maybe it was a '68 Camaro Rally Sport or an early '60s Corvette that we had to sell once we got married and had a kid....I am guessing the same could be said for a piece of audio gear we parted with many moons ago. For me, it is a pretty easy pick - a Soundcraftsmen MA5002 amplifier:



I was an engineering coop student on a “working tour” in Germany in 1980. I had base privileges, and my group always checked out the Army PX or Air Forces BX when we had a chance- mainly for audio stuff or camera gear. While running my portable DJ system, I wanted to replace my Carver M400 cube amp with something that could withstand long periods of playing load. Toward the end of the tour, we were at the Mannheim PX in Heidelberg, and I came across the MA5002. This looked like it would do the job- it was rated at 250w/8ohms and had ample heatsinks, plus it could be rack mounted. It also weighed 55lbs. They only had the display model left, and I managed to talk the guy into selling that one to me for \$630- they were usually \$680 (they retailed stateside for \$800). He had the manual and box. It would have to be re-wired for 120v when I got stateside. So, on June 20th, 1980, I purchased it. In case you are wondering why I had such a detailed account of this, I kept a diary back then.

The nice thing was that the team I was on brought over cases of black & white Polaroid film, which we left there for the next team. We had plenty of room in the empty cases for things like my power amp and all the LPs I purchased (mainly disco 12” pressings, though I did manage to buy a KRAFTWERK Computer World LP, which I still have and is somewhat collectible). We were a government team, so the equipment boxes

were not checked when we got to JFK airport on our return home (the day of the Air Traffic Control Strike). Here are the equipment boxes at JFK:



I had the amplifier rewired for 120vac by a shop in Phx—it was beyond my skillset at the time. I used it for many years, and it worked just fine. It never shut down during any parties I DJed at. I sold the Carver 400 cube at a slight loss.

I married and had two kids later. In the early 1990s, I sold my MA5002 to an audiophile neighbor. Then I had an electronic repair business and must have picked up something to power my Klipsch LaScala's, although I have no idea what that was. Today, these can be found for between \$500 and \$1500, depending on the condition. A few years ago, I picked up a similar Soundcraftsmen amp, an RA7501, which utilizes many of the same circuitry but does not have power meters or Vari-Proportional LEDs. If one came around at a reasonable price, I probably would pick it up.... So, what piece of gear did you wish you still had?

*Editors Note: Please contact me ([catchgroove@gmail.com](mailto:catchgroove@gmail.com)) if you want to provide an audio memoir to share with members via the Newsletter. The editor can help you write this up if you are uncomfortable doing it yourself.*



"Ok, last night you washed dishes,  
today you are folding laundry.  
You bought more speakers, didn't you?"

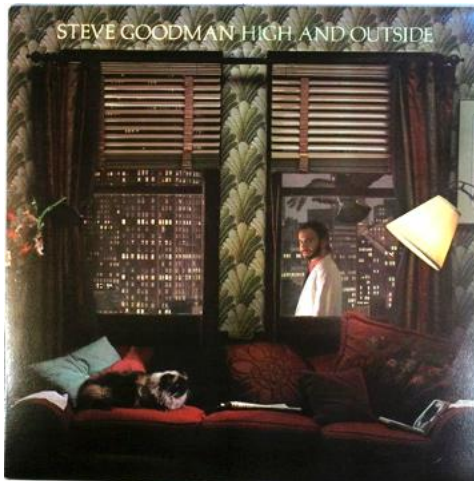


## **Dave's Record Reviews**

By AAVC Member Dave Hjortland

**Editor's Note:** *Dave Hjortland has been providing record reviews to the AAVC Newsletter for many years (this is his 19th submission) and plans to have a review or two for us in each Newsletter. Here is his latest:*

Steve Goodman  
**High and Outside**  
(Electra/Asylum, 1979)



So, when (OK – if) you are asked to come up with the names of really talented American singer-songwriters capable of combining wry observations of life with comic sensibilities and even social commentary, all combined with great musicianship, who you gonna name? Well, there are a few, to be sure. But if you can come up with more than two or three, or four at most, I suggest that Steve Goodman should at least be on your shortlist. In keeping with my orientation of lifting up worthy artists and albums from the past, I suggest that here is a candidate for rescue from undeserved obscurity.

Goodman (1948-84) had a relatively brief career; his life was cut short by losing a courageous battle with leukemia. In 1971, he persuaded Arlo Guthrie to listen to him sing “*City of New Orleans*,” which Arlo then recorded and became a huge hit and was done by several artists. Goodman’s career took off, and his songs were

recorded by many others. He released nine albums while he was alive, and I am aware of seven more that have been released posthumously.

His music fits most easily into the broad category now known as ‘Americana,’ though it was often labeled as folk, pop, and even country when his records were originally released. His albums were received well by critics and enthusiastically by his fans, though they never sold well enough to propel him into the ranks of real stardom.

There is good stuff on all of Goodman’s albums – especially those released while he lived – but **High and Outside** is my favorite. It opens with “*Just Lucky I Guess*,” in which he counts himself fortunate for his narrow escape not to have fallen for the woman of the song. “*The One That Got Away*” is a Goodman classic, which is the reflections of middle-aged men and women on “trying to figure out what it all means,” with vocals shared with Nicolette Larson, a great singer/performer who also left us too early. “Luxury’s Lap” is an up-tempo piece that commiserates with “Oh, those poor rich people” who struggle with wealth problems. “Men Who Love Women Who Love Men” is a humorous, tongue-in-cheek send-up of sexual variety. “What Have You Done for Me Lately?” is a well-known song co-written by Shel Silverstein.

The album features varied and capable backing musicians on piano, horns, synthesizers, drums, guitars, and more. I don’t keep track of side people very well, but I do recognize the name of Corky Seigel, who is listed as contributing harmonica and electric piano. Goodman is credited as the producer and seems to know what he was doing, as the production is very good. There are a couple of turkeys on the album, to be sure, but on the whole this is a most worthwhile listen and one of Goodman’s most enjoyable.

I note on Amazon that there was a “Remastered” CD release of this album in 1999. I have not heard the CD and therefore cannot make any statements comparing differences between the two formats. However, I have the LP, and I find that I am not curious about the CD in the slightest.

Goodman’s albums are available cheap from Discogs, eBay, and are often found in used bins at the local record stores. By all means, try one out if you come across it. (Of course, I would recommend actually seeking them out...) They may not be quite to everyone’s taste, but they are good music and a good listen.

ALSO RECOMMENDED: **Somebody Else’s Troubles** (1972), Goodman’s third album, also has great songs. Several well-known backing musicians include David Bromberg, Maria Muldaur, and would you believe Bob Dylan on piano for one cut?

An aside: I count myself fortunate to have seen Goodman live in concert in about 1980, on a double bill with Emmy Lou Harris no less. I may not remember the date, but the concert was memorable indeed.

*Editors Note: Please contact me ([catchgroove@gmail.com](mailto:catchgroove@gmail.com)) if you want to provide an album or artist review to share with members via the Newsletter.*

## Listen To My System Event (Jeffrey Behr)

By AAVC Member David Das

I enjoyed auditioning **Jeffrey Behr's** latest high-end setup, which features the [Sound Lab Majestic](#) 745 dipole electrostatic loudspeakers driven by a pair of [Pass Labs](#) X260.8 monoamps. This past summer, the club hosted several "Listen To My System" events, where members invited fellow members to their homes to enjoy their systems. I wanted to share my review of Jeffrey's system with you.

These speakers are 7 feet tall and 40" wide and weigh 168 pounds each. The panels are 6" thick and extend to 25" with the connected electronics cabinet. They have a wide dispersion angle of 45 degrees and a sensitivity of 89 dB. These are full-range speakers that can play down to 26 Hz.



The power amps operate in Class A/B mode. They deliver 260 watts into 8 ohms and can scale to supply a kilowatt into 2 ohms.





Jeffrey drives his multichannel setup with a stack of [PS Audio](#) DACs, a [Marantz AV10](#) Reference 15.4 Channel 8K AV Processor, [an Oppo UDP-205](#) Ultra HD Blu-ray player, and a PS Audio DirectStream Power Plant 20.





The massive SoundLab 745 panels created an expansive soundstage that spanned horizontally from the outer edges of each panel and vertically between the floor and the ceiling.

When Jeffrey played a few SACD tracks from the Eiji Oue Minnesota Orchestra, I felt like I was listening to a live orchestra in a symphony hall. The sound was coherent from top to bottom, with effortless dynamics. You can feel the depth and power of the bass drums as the panels played down to 26 Hz, obviating any reinforcement from a sub.

The Pass Lab X260.8 power amps were the perfect match. They imparted a tube-like warmth while retaining the resolution and microdynamics.

Jeff demoed a few tracks from the [Diana Krall Live in Rio](#) Blu-ray disc to show his system's performance in multichannel mode with his new 4K Epson laser-based projector.



The results were equally impressive. I was part of the audience listening to Diana Krall in an intimate setting while hearing every instrument around me. This is as real as it gets for bringing a live concert experience into your living room.

This is the best audio/video presentation I have ever heard at Jeffrey's home. This culmination of 64 years of passion and endless experimentation helped him strike the optimal synergy between all his high-end components in his living space.

How does this compare to his previous setup, which used Vandersteen Model 7 Mk II loudspeakers and matching Vandersteen M7-HPA power amps?



What was remarkable about this setup was the magical experience of listening to a pair of speakers that are both *time-coherent* and *phase-coherent*.

Everything snapped into focus, making you believe you could reach out and touch every player positioned precisely around you. The presentation was effortless, with extreme dynamics with no compression.

The Model 7's built-in amps drive the 12-inch bass drivers, while the M7-HPA high-pass power amps drive the upper-bass, midrange, and tweeter drivers.

The power amps blend aesthetically with the speakers.

The Model 7 is Richard Vandersteen's best design. He designed the complex crossovers for this 4-way speaker system. The speaker cabinets are internally and externally reinforced with carbon fiber for exceptional rigidity.

The rear has myriad bass-equalization controls to tailor each speaker to your room's acoustics. This allows you to dial in the sound according to your personal taste. The bass was tight, well-defined, authoritative, and fast.

The [Vandersteen Model 7 Mk II](#) retailed for \$67 K a pair, while the [M7-HPA](#) Liquid Cooled High Pass power amps retailed for \$79K a pair, bringing the system price to \$146K.

The Sound Lab 745 electrostatics speakers with the Pass Lab X260.8 monoamps are much more affordable than the Vandersteen combo.

Both systems perform neck to neck in every aspect except two.

The Vandersteen system outperforms the Sound Lab system in terms of razor-sharp focus and precise placement of every instrument along the soundstage.

The Sound Lab system, on the other hand, throws a massive soundstage that just feels taller and wider. The imaging is not as precise but feels more realistic thanks to the multiple room reflections coming from the floor-to-ceiling dipole electrostatic panels.

In the end, it comes down to personal choice. You may prefer the Vandersteen setup if you want to hear Diano Krall at her finest in an intimate jazz setting. If you enjoy listening to orchestral music, the Sound Lab system will transport you to a symphony hall.

Before Jeffrey assembled the Vandersteen setup, I had the privilege of listening to his previous setup using the [PS Audio FR20 speakers](#) and [PS Audio Stellar M1200](#) monoamps.

This was an audiophile-grade system with effortless dynamics, imaging, resolution, tonal balance, and smoothness in the treble. What stood out was the speed and tightness of the bass. I could hear the texture on every bass note.

A pair of Rythmik F18 sealed servo-controlled subs delivered the right amount of extra visceral impact for movies without adding muddiness to the low registers.

The precision and clarity of the sounds within the 360-degree sound field were breathtaking.

The Martin Logan center-channel was a match made in heaven.

The system came to life when Jeffrey played the [\*Master and Commander\*](#) Blu-ray disc. The multichannel sound was better than most would hear in a movie theater.

As good as it was, the Vandersteen setup outclassed this system in every category, albeit at a much higher price point.

I was surprised to hear Jeffrey play the acoustic bass along with a jazz band music track. He is not only an audiophile but also a musician.



Jeffrey has all his previous speakers and amps for sale at bargain-basement prices.

Please contact Jeffrey at [jeffreybehr@cox.net](mailto:jeffreybehr@cox.net) if you want to hear his newest system or buy any of his used gear.

I had a terrific time listening to and watching his system evolve and, to a certain extent, learning the science behind every component that helped create this audio magic in his living space on all three occasions.

*Note from Jeffrey: The main reason I replaced the V-steen 7.2s is their relatively short, top-to-bottom, soundstage. Tall, especially dipole-line-source speakers throw a tall soundstage, and I much prefer that huge soundstage for the large-scale*

*Classical and film music I love so much. Also, I've since replaced the Pass X260.8 monoamps with PS Audio BHK600 monoamps.*

**Next Month's Member's Corner** AAVC member Rick Rachkofski will have an article titled: *"Thoughts from a Quiet Room - The process and the far-reaching effects of acoustically treating your listening space."*

*Editors Note: Please contact me ([catchgroove@gmail.com](mailto:catchgroove@gmail.com)) if you want to provide "Listen To My System Notes to share with members via the Newsletter.*

## **Dealers Corner**

As always, we want to recognize and thank the local retailers who graciously support our club.

### Equipment Dealers:

Acoustic Designs Group <https://www.adgroupaz.com/>

Arizona HiFi <http://tubeaudio.com/>

Audio Video Excellence <https://www.audiovideoexcellence.com/index.html>

Dedicated Audio <https://www.dedicatedaudio.com/>

LMC Entertainment <https://www.lmche.com/>

Woolson Audio <https://www.woolsonaudio.com/>

USA Tube Audio <https://www.usatubeaudio.com/>

Mythic Home Theater <https://mythicsls.com/>

### Vinyl/CDs:

In-Groove Records <https://www.theingroove.com/>

They also sell audio equipment per the store's website.

Zia Records <https://www.ziarecords.com/> Zia has several stores throughout The Valley.

Stinkweeds <https://www.stinkweeds.com/>

**Repair Work:** The editor recently contacted these repair providers to confirm they are still in business. As of the newsletter's publication, he has not heard back from any companies.

[James Koch - emailed 9/9/24](mailto:james@highendrepair.com)  
[james@highendrepair.com](mailto:james@highendrepair.com)

[Audio Doctor emailed 9/9/24](mailto:Audio Doctor)  
<http://www.audiodoctor.biz/>  
[602-741-0730](tel:602-741-0730)

[Jeff's Professional Audio Repair, Also Car Stereo work](mailto:Jeff's Professional Audio Repair) [emailed 9/9/24](mailto:emailed 9/9/24)  
[602-274-0794](tel:602-274-0794)

[jparepair@yahoo.com](mailto:jparepair@yahoo.com)  
[Re-foaming Speaker Surround Service:](#)  
[Michael Mitchell 480-749-7003](mailto:Michael Mitchell)  
[mmiller43228@yahoo.com](mailto:mmiller43228@yahoo.com) [emailed 9/9/24](mailto:emailed 9/9/24)

[Turntable Set-up and record cleaning:](#)  
[Richard Jensen](mailto:Richard Jensen) [emailed 9/9/24](mailto:emailed 9/9/24)  
[602 717 2399](tel:602-717-2399) | [worksbau@gmail.com](mailto:worksbau@gmail.com)



**There's something happening here,  
for what it's worth.**