

By Dan Henderson, N1ND

Birth of the Southern Appalachian Radio Museum

Old-time radio finds a home in Asheville, North Carolina.

In an age where the latest DSP, digital display and high-tech gizmo are featured in almost every shack, anything that highlights the historical roots of our hobby seems to be out of favor.

But don't tell that to Carl Smith, N4AA.

In the early 1990s Smith and his wife Miriam, KB4C (SK), were attending the Rock Hill (SC) hamfest and happened on an old general purpose receiver from the mid-1930s. Miriam insisted on having it. While she refinished the cabinet, Carl worked on getting the electronics working. When it was reassembled, it worked perfectly. And as the tubes started to glow, Carl started to dream about setting up a museum of antique gear.

What started as a dream a decade ago has become reality. Working with mem-

bers of the Smoky Mountains Chapter of QCWA (#145) and officials at Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College in Asheville, North Carolina, Smith has spearheaded the formation of the Southern Appalachian Radio Museum (SARM). The museum is open for visitors in the Elm Building on the campus of AB-Tech.

Incorporated with the state of North Carolina as a nonprofit organization, the SARM finalized an agreement for space on the AB-Tech campus and began setting up its displays in June. Since opening its doors, the SARM has received an influx of inquiries, and many offers of vintage equipment to be donated. "It has almost taken on a life of its own," says Smith.

While exhibits include both amateur and non-amateur gear, the focus remains on Amateur Radio. "Asheville is a great location for the museum," Smith adds.

"Hammarlund had a major facility in the area at one time. We are also close to the Ten-Tec factory (in Sevierville, Tennessee). Radio has a strong heritage in western North Carolina, and we are planning on showcasing those ties as we develop exhibits."

The SARM has established a club station and is in the process of upgrading it with new gear and antennas for all bands, including satellite operation. Bill Hayes, W4AFM, had been a member of the QCWA chapter, but became a silent key during the spring of 2001. With the assistance and support of Hayes' son and to honor their longtime friend, the museum was able to secure the W4AFM call sign for their station. Contacts with the W4AFM club call were first made in August, the very first being with Hayes's son Bill, Jr, W4ABM.

A formal dedication of the museum was



SARM President Carl Smith, N4AA, makes the first contact from W4AFM. He worked Bill Hayes, Jr, W4ABM, son of the original licensee Bill Hayes, Sr (SK), who held the museum station call sign. Looking on during the first contact are Gaylen, Katherine and Dustin Ehrlichman, the granddaughter and great-grandchildren of Bill Hayes, Jr.



ARRL Roanoke Division Vice Director Les Shattuck, K4NK, and his wife Joyce, N2PTW, tour one of the first exhibit areas with SARM President Smith.



K4NK and QCWA National Treasurer Duke Kneif, W4DK, chat before the July 2001 dedication ceremony.



Smith listens as Frank Miceli, chairman of the electronics department at Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College, greets those gathered at the dedication.

held July 27, 2001. Among the 60 attendees were invited guests ARRL Roanoke Division Vice Director Les Shattuck, K4NK; QCWA National Treasurer Duke Kneif, W4DK; Frank Miceli, chairman of the electronics department at AB-Tech and the author (an Asheville native). In their comments, Vice Director Shattuck and SARM President Smith emphasized the desire of both the ARRL and SARM to work together to encourage sharing this valuable resource with the community.

From its modest roots, the SARM appears to have a great future. "As we grow, we envision having displays showing the evolution of the electronics industry—from early radio and television to today's latest technology," Smith said. "Hams have been behind so much of the development of electronic technology, and this is a great opportunity for us to be able to highlight our hobby's contributions to the electronics industry."

John Travis, W4QCF (SARM secre-

tary/treasurer), has created a Web site and is constantly updating it to show the latest happenings in the museum. For more information on the Southern Appalachian Radio Museum, visit their Web site at www.SARadiomuseum.org or e-mail Smith at N4AA@dxpub.com.

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NEW BOOKS

THE HANNIBAL FILES

By Bryan A. Bisley, VE7FH

Published by Innisfree Publishing, 281 James St, Parksville, BC V9P 2R9, Canada. First edition, 495 pages. ISBN 0-9688613-0-X. Available from ARRL, 225 Main St, Newington, CT 06111-1494, USA. ARRL Order No. 8635, \$16.50 plus shipping/handling. Order toll-free 1-888-277-5289 or **QUICK ORDER** online at www.arrrl.org/shop/?item=8635.

Reviewed by Steve Ford, WB8IMY
QST Editor

♦ The problem with reviewing a work of fiction is that I can't reveal too many elements of the plot, lest I spoil it for the reader. This is particularly true of *The Hannibal Files* by Bryan A. Bisley, VE7FH.

The Hannibal Files is a mystery, filled with various surprises, plot twists and intrigue. The story begins in India in March 1940 when the *Hannibal*, an Imperial Airways airliner, takes off on a long, multi-

stop journey to England. Among the VIP passengers is a diplomatic courier carrying sensitive files.

The flight doesn't get very far before encountering an enormous cloud of locusts. Bisley does an outstanding job painting a horrific picture of the doomed aircraft as the crew realizes that what they thought was a thunderstorm is actually an unimaginably dense swarm of insects. Unable to climb above the living maelstrom, the *Hannibal* loses power and ultimately plunges to Earth. A search is undertaken in vain; the *Hannibal* seems lost forever.

Fast forward to 1960.

Another aircraft is down in the same area, this time an Indian DC-3. While recovering the DC-3, the rescuers discover the 20-year-old remains of the *Hannibal*. This ignites an investigation that quickly spins out of control, taking Alec Perkins,



a radio officer, and his companions on a wild ride through a web of espionage that even includes the kidnapping of Alec himself. (He is pressed into service as a reluctant radio engineer for a band of Kurdish rebels.) Of course, radio in general (and Amateur Radio in particular) plays a prominent role as the plot unfolds.

Bisley brings considerable experience to *The Hannibal Files*. He served with British European Airways and several BOAC Associate Companies in the Persian Gulf area, Lebanon and Ireland during the 1950s and '60s. His Amateur Radio experience is equally extensive. Bisley taps both sources to add a credible, realistic tone to the book.

The writing is terse. So, despite the 495-page length of the novel, it carries you along rapidly. Be forewarned that *The Hannibal Files* is a novel for an adult audiences; it contains some mildly explicit sexual content. But if you're comfortable with adult material, you won't find anything offensive in *The Hannibal Files*. On the contrary, the book is compelling and the Amateur Radio dimension is a terrific bonus.

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