

TYGAbytes



E-NEWSLETTER OF DERWENT VALLEY COMMUNITY RADIO INC.

34 WINTER 2023

Our Announcer: Doug Smith

My father passed away recently, and thinking about what I would say at his funeral made me realise a number of things, not only about Dad, but our relationship, what I had learned from him, and my subsequent relationship with sound, music and ultimately community radio.

My father worked in valve radio repair before joining the PMG (then Telecom then Telstra) for the rest of his career. Through his employment, he learned a lot about electricity, amplification, and the characteristics and fidelity of sound. As much as he was able, he passed his knowledge onto me. Dad was also a self-taught cabinet-maker and loved making all sorts of furniture for our home.



Dad took this photo. The only time he joined me in the studio (when he visited in 2017).

One of my earliest recollections was Dad explaining how a crystal radio worked and he helped me construct my own. (A Crystal radio has no external power source – it relies on the power of the radio signal itself). The crystal radio consists of a wire to act as an antenna, a coil of wire and a variable capacitor to tune the radio to the relevant

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frequency, a “crystal detector”, thus the radio’s name (which was later replaced by an inexpensive “diode”) was used to decode the amplitude modulated (or AM) signal and a pair of headphones to listen to the sound. I remember spending hours (when I was about 8 years old) marvelling at the fact that I could listen to (AM) radio with a device that needed no external power source. It almost seemed like getting something for nothing!

Several years later, I was approaching my teens and getting interested in popular music. Dad had never shown any interest in popular music at all. I don’t think he even knew who **Elton John** was, although I suspect he had heard of **The Beatles**. We never discussed music. Dad was always interested in electronics and he was an avid reader of the then pre-eminent monthly magazine **Electronics Australia**, which I was also able to read after Dad was finished. I decided I wanted to make my own turntable to play pop music (which I had yet to buy). Dad advised that it was possible to purchase a “raw” turntable kit, pre-built with associated components (motor, power supply, pre-amp, etc) and that he could help me build a cabinet to house the kit. We used cheap plywood and then laminated it all with a dark veneer (possibly Jarrah) and applied clear varnish. It looked a million dollars! After popping in the turntable kit and

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building a separate amplifier from another kit into the cabinet, it was ready to try out. However, I didn't have any vinyl to play. Dad surprised me by coming home with a gift – he had bought me an album! He said up front that he didn't know what was popular, but he did his best. I'm not sure of the full title, but the cover said it included 20 top hits. Sounded good, but when I played the record for the first time, although I was amazed and overjoyed that the record player and all its electronic components worked, there was a little disappointment when I realised the songs didn't quite sound like the versions I heard on the radio. In the fine print on the album cover, it said something like "The Session Singers play 20 Top-10 hits...". I was very grateful anyway, but I realised then, that Dad really didn't follow popular music and he never did show much interest even in his latter years. At the time, I didn't know what "session singers" were, but I do now!

Dad did however teach me fundamentals about sound, frequency and frequency response, signal modulation and to value the fidelity of sound. This is why I generally prefer to listen to music with high quality headphones and I can be very picky about undesirable sound artefacts, such as wow and flutter, distortion, poor signal to noise ratios, etc.

So years later, I am married and my wife and I decided to move to Tasmania (from Canberra) where the roads were getting more congested and the presence of too many people was taking the enjoyment out of life. We discovered New Norfolk, essentially by chance and met some wonderful people while on a four-week holiday on the island. Some years later, we both managed to re-organise our lives so that we had local employment and moved permanently to the town. I wasn't immediately aware of TYGA FM, but I had noticed from time to time that either the radio at home or in the car would be tuned to a station that actually played all the music I loved from the 60s onward. It took a while before it dawned on me, that what was happening when I enjoyed the radio, was it was tuned to **TYGA FM**, the local community radio station. I really had no idea of what a community radio station was, but it sounded like ordinary people could become radio announcers (DJs by any

other name). This was an exciting prospect, but I feared it would be a bit daunting to learn a brand-new skill and wasn't sure I could pull it off, especially as I was still working full-time.

Well, in 2017 I finally found out whom I needed to contact and made a start. **Janet (Nanny Janny)** taught me everything I needed to know and then I was cheeky enough to ask for her Saturday morning timeslot as it was the most convenient for me while I was still working. Thanks so much **Janet** - I did feel bad about that! I've now been doing **Saturday Morning Breakfast** (6-9am) for almost seven years - how time flies! My father visited in October 2017 (from Perth) and it was the only time he saw me in the Studio. It was actually my very first day on my own (without **Janet's** support). Would you believe before I could even get started, I was confronted with a problem. Every time **Janet** had me in for training, the CD player just needed the CD I wanted to play, and I knew how to cue the track. Low and behold, on this first solo morning, the player wouldn't work and it appeared to have no power! How on earth do I turn on the CD player? It just goes to prove one universal rule that Dad had always taught me. According to Murphy, if something can go wrong, it will, at the worst possible moment!

TYGA on the Move

Part of the static problem in the temporary studio has been resolved by earthing the metal furniture components, however a permanent fix might be to replace the carpet tiles with an anti-static type.


The contract has been let for the conversion of the cleaner's room into a brand-new unisex toilet, with work expected to commence in this month (June).

We have also signed up with a supplier to provide heat pumps in the two new studios, although the timing for this work has not been confirmed yet.



There remains a lot of electrical work to be completed, and this is expected to be addressed at the same time as the heat pumps are installed.

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Entrance Door Concerns

A quick mention of a few issues regarding the main entrance doors to the new **TYGA** premises. We had a problem just after moving in, where the front door was not actually latching if just left to the door closer mechanism. Our very handy member Chris made an adjustment to the door closer which fixed the problem for a while. However, the real issue, as indicated by research on the Internet, is that the type of closer we have, requires an adjustment to the "latching screw". Unfortunately, this screw is impossible to adjust without taking the closer completely off the door. At this time, such drastic action has not been taken.

Could **TYGA** members accessing the Studio please ensure that you look behind you after entering and leaving through the front door, and ensure the door has properly latched.

On a second issue related to the front entrance doors, please be aware that Council staff may (accidentally) bolt the door from the inside, especially after they have been using the council chamber. If you find your door token activates the door lock, but the door won't open because it has been bolted from the inside, you can gain access via the rear door and then unbolt the front entrance doors from the inside. (No need to call Roz).

Have Your Say

If you have any news that you think worthy of inclusion in **TYGAbytes**, feel free to contact **Doug** at tygabytes@tygafm.org.au or by mobile on 0402 13 4474.


Coming Up


Next time **TYGA** at Market TBA



TYGAbytes Summer Edition..... September 2023

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