Chad Phillips, owner of For Your Listening Pleasure, checks the circuit board of a 1933 Atwater Kent radio.

ON THE WEB

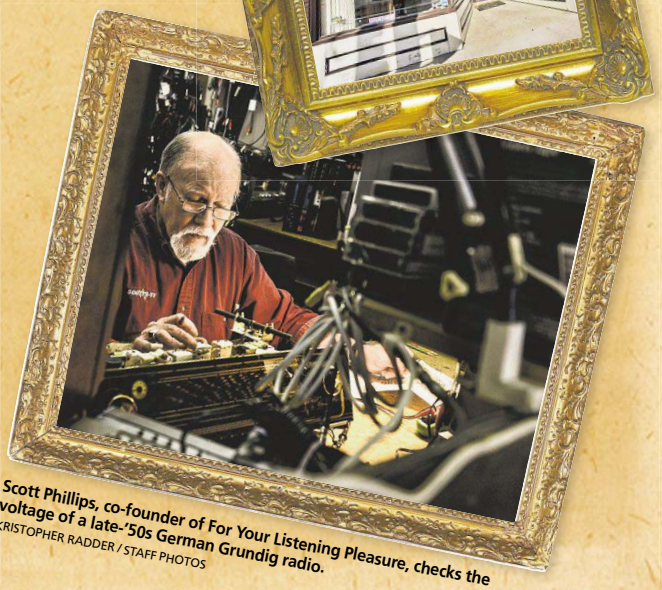
See more photos and watch a video of For Your Listening Pleasure owner Chad Phillips at work restoring electronics with this story at **pressconnects.com**.

THE STORE

For Your Listening Pleasure is located under the Scott's Radio and Television sign at 368 Clinton St. in Binghamton. Contact them at **everythingradio.com**, (607) 797-0066 or (800) 314-3957).

CARING FOR THE • classics

Shop earns global reputation for repair, restoration of antique electronics



Scott Phillips, co-founder of For Your Listening Pleasure, checks the voltage of a late-'50s German Grundig radio.
KRISTOPHER RADDER / STAFF PHOTOS

By Valerie Zehl
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When Bruce Roloson of Apalachin drives by Scott's Radio and Television in Binghamton, he slows to a crawl so he can peer in the window.

He's intrigued by the 1939 RCA console radio he sees. As curator of the Antique Wireless Association Museum of Electronic Communication, near Rochester, he knows it's a piece museums would covet.

At first glance, the business — complete with a circa-1980s "Scott's Radio and Television" sign — looks like just another neighborhood fix-it shop, struggling in the face of modern gadgets and technology. But here, work to restore the old treasures to like-new condition has brought in customers from across the country and as far as Japan and Spain and attracted Hollywood's attention as well.

The business is owned by Chad Phillips, 41, and run with the help of his parents and co-founders, Scott Sr. and Sue; and Chad's wife, Jessica, 40. The company has evolved over four decades from "Scott's" into "For Your Listening Pleasure L.L.C." It's known for its expertise and painstaking precision, with bedraggled antiques limping in and operational, gleaming models marching out.

Collectors, too

For Your Listening Pleasure lends its own authentic relics to Hollywood movie sets — such as "Liebestraum" and "The Lost City," which takes place in late 1950s Havana, Cuba — as well as "The Collectors Guide to Antique Radios" book series, plays, museums and TV shows.

Last year alone, the company had a steady flow going to the

See ANTIQUES, Page 6E

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Antiques

Continued from Page 1E

STARZ Magic City props people. In season two, the show featured a few reel-to-reel recorder players, turntables and other circa-1950s devices, thanks to the Phillips family.

They provided the Roberson Museum and Science Center with a 1950s Zenith TV about 15 or 20 years ago, they said.

An exceptional find came their way recently, thanks to a Binghamton resident whose family didn't want his late-'30s Philco. In excellent condition, its original equipment allowed it to record on vinyl, catch shortwave signals and program in station stops.

"It's hard to believe something like this could go in a landfill," Chad said. "But it happens."

Sue Phillips, co-founder of For Your Listening Pleasure, goes through the paperwork for old supplies that the shop uses. KRISTOPHER RADDER / STAFF PHOTOS

Wide repertoire

They take in their share of ailing flat-screen TVs and on-the-blink DVD players, too, but the shop's mainstay comes in the form of pieces dating from the early 1900s to the late '70s — right now, as often, lined up like shining wooden soldiers in the roughly 4,200-square-foot store and shop.

They even tackle old car radios, as well as Victrolas, arcade games, jukeboxes, pinball machines, camcorders, amplifiers and lots more — including a Bratz car for one steady customer.

"I'll be working on a Samsung TV from 2009," Chad said. "Then two seconds later, on a radio from 1920."

The oldest piece he ever set his hands on was a 1901 Edison gramaphone.

And one of the coolest? An undated doll with a broken leg and a "voice box" inside, so she could talk at the press of a button. Chad's mom, Sue — trained as a dollmaker — took the moppet under her wing while Chad repaired the innards.

Time-consuming occupation

Even giving a price estimate can take an hour or more, so the company charges $85 that goes toward the repair bill.

"If it has 12 tubes, I have to test each one," Chad said.

He generally estimates antique jobs to take at at least 30 weeks, but not if he has to locate parts — or if it needs exceptional TLC.

That's how it is with the radio Aaron and Sarah Locke of Williamsburg, Va., brought in.

Sarah's great-grandparents, who reside in Salt Lake City, bought the Philco in the late 1940s. It moved with her family to Boise, Idaho, 45 years ago, then to Kansas City, Mo. A year ago, Sarah's parents gave it to her and Aaron.

"I believe it had been in storage when a roof leaked on it in the 1970s," said Aaron, who grew up in Oxford and had driven past the business in his youth. Coincidentally, Sarah located the shop via its website, foryourlisteningpleasure.com.

The innards might be hopeless and the cabinet had to be completely reworked — and even then the piece might not be stable, Chad told them. But what he could do is find a better version of the same model and incorporate elements of that family heirloom into it.

That worked for Sarah.

"That's the neatest part of what we do," said Chad's wife, Jessica, "the family history. You really want to do right by them."

Practicality motivated Dr. William C. Stevens of Ooltewah, Tenn.

When he bought a Girard turntable in the '70s, it was near top of the line. "They don't make them anymore," he said.

He had kept 200-300 vinyl records in pristine condition and didn't want to subject them to lesser equipment. So he surfed until he found a website that impressed him, everythingradio.com, and followed the shipping instructions that landed his turntable in Binghamton — then back again, in great shape.

Shipping can be an issue when the radio/turntable console weighs some 200 pounds and must be transported cross-country.

Pete Paul of Jamesville lucked out: His 1908 Philco clocked in at only about 2 pounds.

"It was the old tube style versus resistors and all that stuff," he said. "He changed some of the tubes and got it working for me."

Chad Phillips, owner of For Your Listening Pleasure, removes the solder so he can take out the voltage regulator on a 2006 Toshiba flat-screen TV.

Repairs can be that simple — or not.

For one recent job, Chad had to make his own 67 ½-volt battery.

"My kids call him the ultimate overachiever," Jessica said. "They used to bring home broken pens and pencils from their friends, saying, 'My dad can fix that.'"

Aside from their extensive training and knowledge, their secret is an old radio schematic library. Their website offers a Schematic Reading 101 class of sorts, for those who like to tinker themselves, noting that FYLP has "schematic diagrams available for just about every make and model antique radio, phonograph or television, with well over 250,000 prints in stock." They're also among the few such businesses to have many original manufacturers' data books, which were given to only authorized technicians.

When Gerald Smith, Broome County historian, comes across items in the Phillipses' field of expertise, he picks up the phone.

"Scott has given us some guidance on radio stuff in years past," Smith said. "On local radio personalities and equipment, he'd be the one we'd call and ask."

Though most of their subjects are outmoded in today's digital age, the shop offers ways to incorporate new technologies. "Connect your iPod to your vintage German tube radio and play all your favorite songs through (it)," suggests their website.

Old, new, rare or commonplace — it's all in a day's work for the Phillipses.

"Last fall, we got a call from a company in Los Angeles who does work for American Restoration on the History Channel. They don't do phonographs, so they wanted to know if they could send work our way," Jessica said. " That's quite a compliment."

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