

Don Lancaster's

# RESOURCE BIN

number eighty nine

Boatanchors and those who sink them.

To really stop a ship in a hurry, you take an old piece of klunky surplus electronics, tie a sturdy chain to it, then heave it overboard. So, sometimes distinctions are drawn between boat anchors and *boatanchors*.

The latter being any ancient piece of electronics whose shipping charges exceed its value. These remain quite popular. For hams, collectors, home labs on a super tight budget, or those who feel they "sure don't make 'em like they used to".

Or the "Iffen you cain't fix it with a Simpson 260, then it ain't worth fixin'" crowd. Or retired "for all the hours I slaved over that sucker" types.

Boatanchor enthusiasts often end up with exceptionally long arms.

Strangely, there's people out there that actually seek out the hum, noise, and distortion that vacuum tubes will invariably use to trash otherwise clean audio. To others, something just don't seem right if a radio does not have its own internal dynamotor hissing and sparking and grinding away.

"Portable", of course, simply means that handles are provided. Preferably more than four. What better or more convenient way to burn your elbows than removing some stuck tube deep in the innards of your latest treasure? Such as those wonderful loctals after the socket spring corrodes shut.

Yeah, I've been there.

Some boatanchors might work just fine and keep running forever. Others may end up fairly simple and easy to repair. Sadly, there often may be one key part that you flat out cannot get at any price. But, besides sheer bulk, the usual problem with older test gear is that it sort of works but keeps drifting on out of spec. Way out.

There's great heaping quantities of boatanchor info now on the web and elsewhere. Let's start off our survey of boatanchor treasures with this oldie but goodie...

### Fair Radio Sales

The granddaddy of all boatanchor suppliers is still at their same old stall after all these years. I've gotten stuff from them for much longer than I care to remember.

One of my very first *money machine* ventures involved buying wierd mil surplus castings from them, adding walnut bases, and making them into decorator lamps.

Boatanchor items that Fair seemed to do well on included fighter aircraft command receivers. One of these in particular made a fine low cost if strip for homebrew ham receivers.

Current stock includes radios, test equipment, antennas, vacuum tubes, cases, field phones, and more. They advertise in most of those electronics and ham mags, offer a free catalog, and a website at [www.fairradio.com](http://www.fairradio.com)

### Boatanchor Classifieds

This site seems to be online central for all boatanchor enthusiasts. Up at [www.dealamerica.com/deal/cgi-bin/ads/bcads.cgi](http://www.dealamerica.com/deal/cgi-bin/ads/bcads.cgi) The buyer and seller classified subjects cover ham, military, antique,

**NEXT MONTH: Don looks into GPS and its associated nav stuff.**

vintage audio, broadcast, and a dozen more. They've got a fine boatanchor history and scads of links.

Plus their great boatanchor forum is up at [www.dealamerica.com/deal/cgi-bin/lite/forum.cgi](http://www.dealamerica.com/deal/cgi-bin/lite/forum.cgi)

### Surplus Al

A superb supplier for hard-to-find mil technical manuals and replicas, Surplus Al also offers other manuals, crystals, connectors, antennas, control boxes, microphones, and much more.

Plus bunches of expertise. All of the stuff you will need to restore or keep alive classic military electronics.

His website is [www.qsl.net/w3ugd](http://www.qsl.net/w3ugd)

### Antique Radio Classified

This seems to be the leading print shopper for boatanchors, classic and antique radios, other older ham gear, wireless collectibles, telegraph keys, club announcements, and for original or replica parts.

The cost is \$20 for a six month trial. Free sample issues are available when you visit their website you will find at [www.antiqueradio.com/toc.html](http://www.antiqueradio.com/toc.html)

### Heathkit

Heath, of course, was once the main source for all electronic kit builders everywhere. One rather useful site for just about anything Heath related is [members.accessus.net/~dwentz/kb9jja/heathkit](http://members.accessus.net/~dwentz/kb9jja/heathkit) An active Heath newsletter and message board is reached here.

Further Heath support is now up at [epsilon.cs.unc.edu/~nick/hobbies.html](http://epsilon.cs.unc.edu/~nick/hobbies.html) or [home.earthlink.net/~docky/doc.html](http://home.earthlink.net/~docky/doc.html)

### Tek Doghouses

Giant vacuum tube oscilloscopes such as the *Tektronix* 545A were once the ultimate state-of-the art. But these days, you are much better off picking up a 2213 or 2215 instead.

Nonetheless, there still seems to be a lively market in old Tek doghouse scopes. In both the German Shepard and Poodle sizes.

There is an online museum of older Tektronix scope up at [margo.student.utwente.nl/~wel/tek.htm](http://margo.student.utwente.nl/~wel/tek.htm)

The definitive book is Stan Griffiths *Oscilloscopes - Restoring a Classic*. This details pretty near every model and option early Tek scope. And includes street prices and insider info on all of the avoidable pitfalls.

More on this and similar books at [www.tinaja.com/amlink01](http://www.tinaja.com/amlink01)

## Straight From the Horse's Whatever

You can eliminate the middleman by buying your boatanchors directly as military surplus. Prices are often under one penny per dollar of their original cost. Recent changes let you conveniently bid and pay online.

Sometimes, they will even deliver for a flat \$50. Of particular interest to boatanchor enthusiasts, this charge is independent of weight or distance!

More on buying mil surplus is in [RESBN81.PDF](#), [RESBN82.PDF](#), as well as in [AUCTION.PDF](#)

Examples of the kinds of electronic goodies you can score are located in [www.tinaja.com/bargte01.html](#)

## Newsgroups

Your most obvious newsgroup here is [rec.radio.amateur.boatanchor](#) A few others of interest...

[rec.radio.swap](#)  
[rec.audio.pro](#)  
[rec.antiques.radio+ph](#)  
[rec.radio.amateur.boatanchor](#)  
[alt.guitar.amps](#)  
[sci.electronics.repair](#)  
[sci.electronics.equipment](#)

There's also a boatanchors mailing list that should be reachable through [www.theporch.com/shimshon](#) A lot of boatanchor related items are starting to appear on [www.ebay.com](#) and all the other auction sites as well

## Boatanchor FAQ's

There is a rather good *Frequently Asked Questions* site at [www.primenet.com/~rfwatts/boatancr.faq](#)

The boatanchor newsgroup also has a [www.cs.unc.edu/~nick/rrab.faq.htm](#)

You can also access the *Boatanchors Web Ring* through this same site. This ring gives you access to dozens more sites than I was able to feature here. You should find a lot of "nice but not spectacular" places to visit here.

## Hamfests

Hamfests, of course, are your prime place to gather up boatanchors of all shapes and sizes. A Saturday or full weekend tailgating market is usually an important part of any hamfest. Yes, non-hams are usually welcome. We saw more on this in [AUCTION.PDF](#), or in [RESBN73.PDF](#)

Useful hamfest directories appear in [www.arrl.org/field/hamfests](#) and in [www.vartel.com/hamfest.htm](#)

Be early for the best buys.

## The Rest of the Gang

**AM North America**– Bills themselves as the website for the amateur radio nostalgia enthusiast. Yesterday, today, tomorrow. [www.bigcountry.com/w5ami](#)

**The AM Window**– This one is mostly links to people using older AM ham gear. Along with events, frequencies, nets, and other resources. Find this at [www.thebizlink.com/am](#)

**Antique Electronic Supply**– Which is one of the leading sources for vacuum tube gear and all those other bits and pieces needed to restore or maintain vintage equipment. Their website is [www.tubesandmore.com](#)

**Antique Radio Collector Links**– These few dozen links are a service from the Northlake Amateur Radio Association of Mandeville, Louisiana. Find this at [www.communicue.net/~zydeco](#)

**Boatanchor Pix**– Interesting image site offers Hammuarlund, Eimac, Heath, National, and military schematics. At [oak.cats.ohiou.edu/~postr/bapix](#)

**Boatanchors.com**– This nice site from WB7AWK includes his photo gallery, trading post, and a history of classic ham communications gear. At, of all places, [www.boatanchors.com](#)

**Collins Journal**– Dedicated to their preservation of *Collins* radios. A print pub plus useful Collins web links. At [www.pixi.com/~jenkins/collins](#)

**Hallicrafters Collectors Association**– Claim they are the largest boatanchor site in the world. For promoting and preserving classic *Hallicrafters* radios. Found at [www.hallicrafters.org](#)

**Heavy Metal Radio Page**– No, the old Hallicrafters BC610 has not yet gone platinum. But you'll find scads more details on these huge 600 pounders at [www.kong.net/radio](#)

**Military Equipment List**– Has online manuals and links to related sites. At [www.telalink.net/~badger/millist/mi.html](#)

**Military Telephone Site**– FM 24-24 and other manuals plus military, vintage, and ham links. Up at [www.nashville.net/~badger/millist/mi.html](#)

**The Radio Room**– Photos of classic ham gear are combined with links to similar sites. Up at [www.mindspring.com/~johnmb/radio\\_rm.htm](#)

**Old Time Radio Page**– Lin Robertson site about vintage radio collecting at [www.arrowweb.com/M1/otr/](#)

## new from DON LANCASTER

### ACTIVE FILTER COOKBOOK

The sixteenth (!) printing of Don's bible on analog op-amp lowpass, bandpass, and highpass active filters. De-mystified instant designs. **\$28.50**

### CMOS AND TTL COOKBOOKS

Millions of copies in print worldwide. **THE** two books for digital integrated circuit fundamentals. About as hands-on as you can get. **\$28.50** each.

### RESEARCH INFOPACKS

Don's instant cash-and-carry flat rate consulting service. Ask any reasonable technical question for a detailed analysis and complete report. See [www.tinaja.com/info01](#) for specifics. **\$75.00**

### INCREDIBLE SECRET MONEY MACHINE II

Updated 2nd edition of Don's classic on setting up your own technical or craft venture. **\$18.50**

### LANCASTER CLASSICS LIBRARY

Don's best early stuff at a bargain price. Includes the CMOS Cookbook, The TTL Cookbook, Active Filter Cookbook, PostScript video, Case Against Patents, Incredible Secret Money Machine II, and Hardware Hacker II reprints. **\$119.50**

### LOTS OF OTHER GOODIES

Tech Musings V or VI . . . . .	\$24.50
Ask the Guru I or II or III . . . . .	\$24.50
Hardware Hacker II, III or IV . . . . .	\$24.50
Micro Cookbook I . . . . .	\$19.50
PostScript Beginner Stuff . . . . .	\$29.50
PostScript Show and Tell . . . . .	\$29.50
Intro to PostScript Video . . . . .	\$29.50
PostScript Reference II . . . . .	\$34.50
PostScript Tutorial/Cookbook . . . . .	\$22.50
PostScript by Example . . . . .	\$32.50
Understanding PS Programming . . . . .	\$29.50
PostScript: A Visual Approach . . . . .	\$22.50
PostScript Program Design . . . . .	\$24.50
Thinking in PostScript . . . . .	\$22.50
LaserWriter Reference . . . . .	\$19.50
Type 1 Font Format . . . . .	\$16.50
Acrobat Reference . . . . .	\$24.50
Whole works (all PostScript) . . . . .	\$380.00
Technical Insider Secrets . . . . .	FREE

### BOOK-ON-DEMAND PUB KIT

Ongoing details on Book-on-demand publishing, a new method of producing books only when and as ordered. Reprints, sources, samples. **\$39.50**

### THE CASE AGAINST PATENTS

For most individuals, patents are virtually certain to result in a net loss of sanity, energy, time, and money. This reprint set shows you Don's tested and proven real-world alternatives. **28.50**

### BLATANT OPPORTUNIST I

The reprints from all Don's Midnight Engineering columns. Includes a broad range of real world, proven coverage on small scale technical startup ventures. Stuff you can use right now. **\$24.50**

### RESOURCE BIN I

A complete collection of all Don's Nuts & Volts columns to date, including a new index and his master names and numbers list. **\$24.50**

### FREE SAMPLES

Check Don's Guru's Lair at [http://www.tinaja.com](#) for interactive catalogs and online samples of Don's unique products. Searchable reprints and reference resources, too. Tech help, hot links to cool sites, consultants. email: [don@tinaja.com](#)

FREE US VOICE HELPLINE VISA/MC

## SYNERGETICS

Box 809-NV  
Thatcher, AZ 85552  
(520) 428-4073

FREE Catalogs: [http://www.tinaja.com](#)

## SOME ONLINE BOATANCHOR RESOURCES

AM North America nostalgia site	<a href="http://www.bigcountry.com/w5ami">www.bigcountry.com/w5ami</a>	Heathkit collector resource	<a href="http://home.earthlink.net/~docky/doc.html">home.earthlink.net/~docky/doc.html</a>
The AM Window	<a href="http://www.thebizlink.com/am">www.thebizlink.com/am</a>	Heathkit ham radio pages	<a href="http://members.accessus.net/~dwentz/kb9jja/heathkit">members.accessus.net/~dwentz/kb9jja/heathkit</a>
Antique Electronic Supply	<a href="http://www.tubesandmore.com">www.tubesandmore.com</a>	Heathkit restoration/trading site	<a href="http://epsilon.cs.unc.edu/~nick/hobbies.html">epsilon.cs.unc.edu/~nick/hobbies.html</a>
Antique Radio Classifieds	<a href="http://www.antiqueradio.com/toc.html">www.antiqueradio.com/toc.html</a>	Images of classic ham gear	<a href="http://www.geocities.com/Paris/1769/boatanchor01.html">www.geocities.com/Paris/1769/boatanchor01.html</a>
Antique Radio collection	<a href="http://www.communique.net/~zydeco">www.communique.net/~zydeco</a>	InfoPack custom research services	<a href="http://www.tinaja.com/info01.html">www.tinaja.com/info01.html</a>
Antique radio links	<a href="http://www.antiqueradio.com/radiolinks.html">www.antiqueradio.com/radiolinks.html</a>	Military equipment lists & links	<a href="http://www.telalink.net/~badger/millist/mi.html">www.telalink.net/~badger/millist/mi.html</a>
Boatanchor classifieds	<a href="http://www.dealamerica.com/deal/cgi-bin/ads/bcads.cgi">www.dealamerica.com/deal/cgi-bin/ads/bcads.cgi</a>	Mil manuals, crystals, and parts	<a href="http://www.qsl.net/w3ugd">www.qsl.net/w3ugd</a>
Boatanchor FAQ Questions #1	<a href="http://www.primenet.com/~rfwatts/boatancr.faq">www.primenet.com/~rfwatts/boatancr.faq</a>	Military telephone info site	<a href="http://www.nashville.net/~badger/millist/mi.html">www.nashville.net/~badger/millist/mi.html</a>
Boatanchor FAQ Questions #2	<a href="http://www.cs.unc.edu/~nick/rfab.faq.htm">www.cs.unc.edu/~nick/rfab.faq.htm</a>	Old time radio page	<a href="http://www.arrowweb.com/M1/otr/">www.arrowweb.com/M1/otr/</a>
Boatanchor forum	<a href="http://www.dealamerica.com/deal/cgi-bin/lite/forum.cgi">www.dealamerica.com/deal/cgi-bin/lite/forum.cgi</a>	Oscilloscope & other book access	<a href="http://www.tinaja.com/amlink01">www.tinaja.com/amlink01</a>
Boatanchor schematics & manuals	<a href="http://oak.cats.ohiou.edu/~postr/bapix">oak.cats.ohiou.edu/~postr/bapix</a>	Tektronix doghouse museum	<a href="http://margo.student.utwente.nl/~wel/tek.htm">margo.student.utwente.nl/~wel/tek.htm</a>
Boatanchor mailing list	<a href="http://www.theporch.com/shimshon">www.theporch.com/shimshon</a>	The Radio Room	<a href="http://www.mindspring.com/~johnmb/radio_rm.htm">www.mindspring.com/~johnmb/radio_rm.htm</a>
Boatanchor web ring	<a href="http://www.cs.unc.edu/~nick/rfab.faq.htm#web_ring">http://www.cs.unc.edu/~nick/rfab.faq.htm#web_ring</a>	BA Receiver images	<a href="http://www.connix.com/~provero/rovero.htm">www.connix.com/~provero/rovero.htm</a>
Classic ham photos and trades	<a href="http://www.boatanchors.com">www.boatanchors.com</a>	Surplus electronic bargains	<a href="http://www.tinaja.com.barg01.html">www.tinaja.com.barg01.html</a>
The Collins Journal	<a href="http://www.pixi.com/~jenkins/collins">www.pixi.com/~jenkins/collins</a>	Vacuum tube history & links	<a href="http://www.primenet.com/~rfwatts/tubes.html">www.primenet.com/~rfwatts/tubes.html</a>
Fair Radio Sales	<a href="http://www.fairradio.com">www.fairradio.com</a>	Vintage ham manuals	<a href="http://www.w7fg.com">www.w7fg.com</a>
General online auction site	<a href="http://www.ebay.com">www.ebay.com</a>	Virtual Collins museum	<a href="http://www.wa3key.com/collins.html">www.wa3key.com/collins.html</a>
Hallicrafters collectors assn	<a href="http://www.hallicrafters.org">www.hallicrafters.org</a>	Web access tools	<a href="http://www.tinaja.com/webwb01.html">www.tinaja.com/webwb01.html</a>
Hallicrafters mil BC610 site	<a href="http://www.kong.net/radio">www.kong.net/radio</a>	Wireless Museum images	<a href="http://www.vistech.net/users/w1fji/museum.html">www.vistech.net/users/w1fji/museum.html</a>

**Rovero's Radio Page**– His nice image collection of boatanchor radios is up at [www.connix.com/~provero/rovero.htm](http://www.connix.com/~provero/rovero.htm)

**Tubes to Go**– A vacuum tube history site with many images and links. At [www.primenet.com/~rfwatts/tubes.html](http://www.primenet.com/~rfwatts/tubes.html)

**Vintage Manuals**– Site run by W7FG stocks 5000+ older manuals for most classic ham gear. At [www.w7fg.com](http://www.w7fg.com)

**Virtual Collins Museum**– Images and history of classic Collins ham gear hosted by WA3KEY Find this one up at [www.wa3key.com/collins.html](http://www.wa3key.com/collins.html)

**Wireless Museum**– This vintage ham image site is run by W1FJI [www.vistech.net/users/w1fji/museum.html](http://www.vistech.net/users/w1fji/museum.html)

**W1UX Boatanchor Radio**– An image collection of vintage ham gear found at [www.geocities.com/Paris/1769/boatanchor01.html](http://www.geocities.com/Paris/1769/boatanchor01.html)

**WA4KCY Site**– Nice grouping of links and images for boatanchor, vintage radio, E.F.Johnson, homebrew gear, military, and broadcast radio. Up at [ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/sw eetbay](http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/sw eetbay) A nicely done site.

### For More Help

To explore boatanchors further, use the [Boatanchors Web Ring](#) or the pair of extensive link pages up at [Boatanchor Classifieds](#) Your usual search engines are also good for hundreds of hits. Start with [hotbot](#) or the web engines and access tools I've made available at [www.tinaja.com/webwb01.html](http://www.tinaja.com/webwb01.html)

Live links to most mentioned sites appear in the sidebar when viewed online at [www.tinaja.com/resbn01.html](http://www.tinaja.com/resbn01.html).

We saw more info on finding test equipment and other manuals back in [RESBN80.PFD](#) A used test equipment

tutorial appeared as [RESBN87.PDF](#)

Custom [InfoPack](#) research on any tech topic, boatanchor or otherwise is available at [www.tinaja.com/info01.html](http://www.tinaja.com/info01.html) This is a superbly economical way to get yourself up to speed on most any technical topic.

I've got lots of boatanchors for sale. Some of them are off real boats even. Such as Navy antenna switchers or dual channel weather recorders. I've also got missile range gear. Or 60 KW load banks. Or outstandingly rugged 1 HP motors. Classic mauve HP tube instruments. Or rare TV7-DU working military tube testers.

Or look at the super rugged classic AN/USM-223 multimeters. Or a 55 kilovolt electrostatic voltmeter that is perfect for your 1950's sci-fi lab video. Black wrinkle, of course.

All at [www.tinaja.com/barg01.html](http://www.tinaja.com/barg01.html) ♦

PLEASE CLICK HERE TO...



Get a Synergetics [catalog](#)



Send Don Lancaster [email](#)



Start your [tech venture](#)



Pick up surplus [bargains](#)



Sponsor a display [banner](#)



Find out what a [tinaja](#) is



Find [research solutions](#)



View recommended [books](#)