

# Antique TVs given new home in museum

By Gregory L. Jones  
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In an age where most men drool over the prospect of owning a 42-inch plasma-screen television, surround sound, a progressive-scan DVD player and a Playstation 2, a Hilliard man has focused on the nostalgia of televisions from the 1930s, '40s and '50s.

Soon after selling his cable TV company, Steve McVoy, the president of the Early Television Foundation, started collecting old televisions and opened the Early Television Museum.

"I opened the museum with my own collection in 1999," McVoy said. "I never collected anything before that."

From the outside, the museum could be confused with an auto repair shop with its aluminum exterior but once inside the nostalgic looking paneling and carpet transports the visitors to the time when these televisions were new.

McVoy said they had to remodel the building to make the place look vintage.

The televisions range from 1928 to 1957, and the collection includes 50 of the 400 remaining televisions produced before World War II, McVoy said.

The museum also offers education about early television through framed advertisements, how-to articles, pictures and biographies of the people who pioneered the industry.

The museum is the only one in the United States dedicated to television equipment.

"There are museums that deal with TV programming but none that deal with equipment," McVoy said. "There's one in Canada and a couple in England."

The museum averages about 100 visitors each month with half of them going through in tour groups.

"I have three groups of 80 or 90 kids coming through next



Steve McVoy poses with one of the two remaining RCA 1939 Iconoscope Cameras. This second generation remote camera was the first that could be transported by one car. The original cameras took two trucks to move.

GREGORY L. JONES/THE LANTERN

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month," McVoy said. These children are students from the local schools in Hilliard.

Although McVoy has a passion for the old televisions, he actually uses modern sets at home.

"The pictures on (the museum pieces) are terrible — you wouldn't really want to watch them," McVoy said. "Some of them are decent but they're nothing compared to modern television."

The museum is open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends and is free to the public 12 to 5 p.m. on Sundays, but a donation is appreciated — half of the museum's operating cost is paid by donations.

The museum will host the Early Television Foundation's second annual convention of vintage collectors Saturday and Sunday. The event features a flea market, an auction and presentations. There is a registration fee for the convention, but the museum will be free to the public during the event.

The museum is located at 5396 Franklin St. in Hilliard. More information about the Early Television Foundation and the Early Television Muse-

um can be found at its Web site, [www.earlytelevision.org](http://www.earlytelevision.org).

The Web site offers a classified index for those with items for sale. Craig Roberts of Greenbelt, Md. has used the classified section of the site to sell his collected items.

"I have a full-blown entertainment system that cost \$2,100 new, in the late '40s," Roberts said. The price of the television was what two luxury automobiles would cost at the time, he said.

*"The pictures on are terrible — you wouldn't really want to watch them,"*

**Steve McVoy**

President of the Early Television Foundation