

On Sunday, April 17, 2016, the monthly meeting of the Audio-Video Club of Atlanta was held at the Virtual Properties Realty offices in Duluth. This meeting featured a presentation by a member on how to build your own equipment from currently available kits, including how he built his three latest kits. There were over 25 folks present.

Up first was John, president, who welcomed and thanked all the members for coming to the meeting. He first talked about the upcoming Canlanta 2016 "show" on May 21. He asked folks to watch the club's website for continued updates to the show, and the show's own website, canlanta.org. He asked that folks who would like to volunteer to help at the show (ticket takers, etc.) to contact Joe Saxon or himself. He asked members to get the word out about the show. The club held a quick birthday celebration for Dwana (this secretary's wife), and then it was time for our presenter, Gary Young.

The meeting did start a little late due to a couple of issues with the equipment Gary had transported from his home. One was that the power amp "sparked" and died (resistor shorted out on the chassis), and the other was one of the speakers needed to be reconnected to get all the drivers going. I mention this not to "embarrass" Gary but to drive home his point that if you build your own you can probably fix it yourself. The club certainly thanks Gary for bringing his equipment to the meeting to demo it, especially because transporting equipment you make yourself can be a problem since it has no special packing boxes to protect it, which is what caused the issue with the power amp. In the end we used his speakers (the XTZ 99.36 MK II floor standing speaker in piano black) and his tube phono stage, the club's turntable, and the club's integrated amp. Gary's tube power amp costs about \$1200 plus tube cost as a kit, the preamp was a Beta model (no set cost yet), and the phono stage is about \$3000 assembled or about \$1200 plus options as a kit. The amp is rated at 14 watts per channel in triode mode.

First, Gary gave a presentation on the items he built, where he got them, and what was involved in building the kits. His kits came from Kevin Carter (kandkaudio.com) who designs the equipment and hand picks the parts to use in them. There are other kits offered by Kevin in addition to the ones Gary built. These kits are "high end" components with very high sound quality. Gary built his power amp, then the phono stage, and finally his line stage (preamp) in that order over the last 15 months. He also added to the kits, for example, having a custom chassis built for the preamp and phono stage by a local shop after Gary designed it, and adding cherry wood faceplates. During his talk, Gary showed us photos of his work, and gave advice to potential kit builders.

Gary then described the sequence of what you need to do to have a successful build.

1. Discuss with Kevin what you need (your requirements) for the piece you are ordering.
2. Buy the kit and have it shipped to you.
3. Buy a soldering station and practice soldering before starting. Lee Tingler of the club wrote a guide to soldering, and Gary showed us another internet article on how to solder.
4. Take a detailed inventory of all the parts to make sure they are all there and even more important to understand where they go. Kevin's instructions include hi-res digital photos of where parts are to go.
5. Follow the instructions very carefully, making sure you have the parts properly placed.
6. Check all your solder joints!
7. Utilize the test points in the circuit to make sure all test correctly before powering it up.
8. Power it up, and if it works, you have the great satisfaction of a job well done!

After Gary's presentation, the next hour and a half was spent listening to music on this great system. We also had our typical raffle of CD's donated by Phil Muse. Everyone won a CD!

Again, the club thanks Chuck, Sam, Steve, and Jim for bringing equipment, and special thanks to our presenter Gary Young, especially given the issues we had. Happy listening to all, and see you at Canlanta on May 21!

Thomas Horner
Secretary, A-V Club of Atlanta