

## Fun Finds: Futuristic Blue Light Radio

By FuMaku!

12/14/10

I love it when I run across a Fun Find: Defined as anything that is not usual and is usually rare. A Fun Find happens when you least expect it, too. Sure, I wander second hand stores and stop at garage sales, hoping to put myself in a better position to stumble on that great find, but I am generally numb to the banal tripe I run across. In this case I wasn't even at one of these places when I stumbled onto an excellent Fun Find; which is even better.

My parents moved into a new house over summer. I helped them move one day and after the moving was done I noticed a box of assorted junk I knew wasn't my parents. The first thing I saw was the blue light, K-Mart flashing in my mind. They said they found the box of stuff in the garage attic and didn't know what the blue light was. Looking at it closely, I realized it was an AM (Amplitude Modulation) Radio. I opened the bottom to find the odd radio had been powered by a 9volt battery. The battery was of an antiquated style I'd never seen before. It looked like a crude prototype compared to the current streamlined style I'd known all my life. How old was this thing? I guessed it was from the sixties. Psychedelic, Man! My parents concurred and let me have it. That's good because they would've had to pry it out of my cold dead hands!

It was a long ride home wondering if the Blue Light Radio still worked. Also, I eagerly awaited what I would find out about it on the InterWeb. I bought a new 9volt battery on the way home, just in case.

Once home, my first priority was to pull out the old battery, which looked corroded at the terminals. Not a good sign. But the battery looked intact, so maybe no acid got into the radio. Of course the radio may have been dropped and broken and wouldn't work regardless. Maybe that's why it was discarded? Gingerly, I wrestled the battery off. Despite this a corroded terminal still clung tenaciously to the receptor. Fuck! Not a good sign. With a multi-tool in hand and much care, I freed the offending battery. I carefully cleaned off the vintage battery receptor. I connected the new battery: Moment of Truth.

It worked! I tuned it to the only Am station of note, 700 WLW, and it worked. I paused and crossed my fingers and pressed the light button. It Worked! Hell, yeah!

After this I did a search and found the old magazine add, you see pictured, along with some other photographed photos posted by people selling the same light, or something similar. Apparently, there had been a few modifications made over the five or so years the light was produced. Some people still had the box the light had come in! The light had been available from the late sixties to the early seventies, at around the height of the Apollo era. I wonder if Kmart had implemented the Blue Light Special, illustrated by a Flashing Blue Light at the top of the mobile Blue Light Special cart, which highlighted on the spot in-store discounts?