

Cole's Music Store

The opening of Cole's Music Store was announced in the Marshfield News-Herald, November 18, 1938 by father and son, Guy and Forrest Cole. It became a familiar and popular storefront at several locations on Marshfield's Central Avenue for the next 75 years.

The store opened at 710 South Central Avenue and operated from that location until the Spring of 1944 when they moved two blocks north to their second location at 554 South Central Avenue.

While the store was at this location founders, Guy and Forrest Cole passed away. Guy dying at the age of 71 in 1956 and Forrest dying at the age of 56 in 1963.

Forrest's wife, Mabel, continued to operate the store with the help of her son, Terry. In 1975 Terry bought the business from his mother and continued to operate it as sole proprietor.



From the Marshfield News-Herald, Marshfield, Wisconsin, 18 Nov 1938, Fri • Page 5



Forrest Cole & Guy Cole in front of Cole's Music Store, May 22, 1952, located at 554 S. Central Avenue.

In 1980 the business again moved two blocks north to 413 South Central Avenue. Then in 1996 to make room for the planned Roger's Theater expansion project it moved again, this time to 148 South Central Avenue.

Cole's Music Store remained at this location until closing in January 2013. Ending a three generation, 75-year business history for Marshfield's Cole family.

No Shelving These Old-Time Gadget Gurus

Mr. Fix-Its

By Alex Hummel Of the News-Herald

If it is powered by electricity, broken and worth your time and money, Guy Boucher and Terry Cole, will take a crack at fixing it.

Just step into Boucher's Radio and TV Service, 107 W Third St., or Cole's Music Store, 148 S. Central Ave., explain the troubles ailing your radio, television or VCR and prepare for a swift diagnosis.

Small electric repair is a family tradition for both men.

Cole's expertise lies in radio and amplifier repair. Boucher will dig into just about anything with a cord and a plug.

"The only things I don't fix are toasters and telephones," said Boucher, who learned the electronic repair trade as a boy at his father Washington Boucher's small Third Street shop and through training in Army Radio School, where he graduated second from the top in 1955.

"I can't charge \$20 to fix a \$9 toaster," he said.

"I learned many years ago to avoid stressful jobs," Boucher said. "Its

hard to avoid stress and make a living. I said, I'm just going to tell the customer right up front what the deal is."

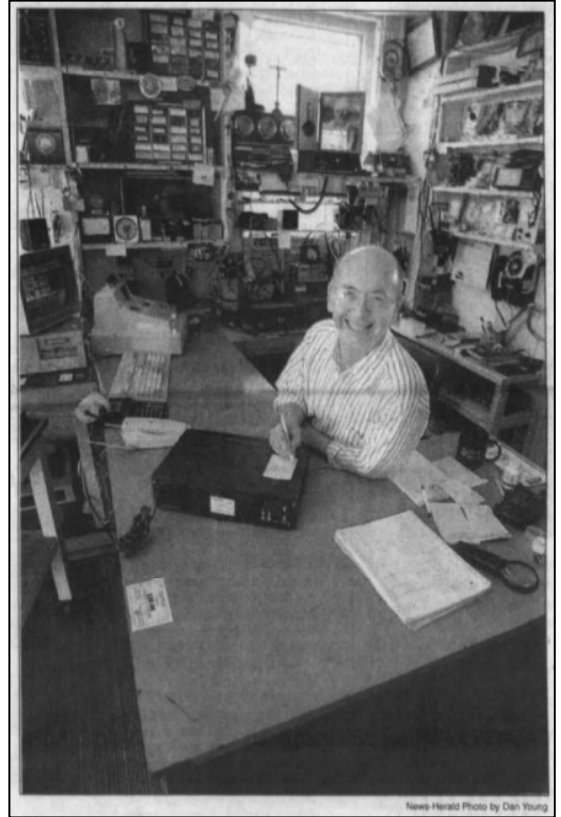
Boucher's shop is a museum of electric guts and gadgets and a Mr. Fix-it monument. It even incorporates a dash of the exotic with classic Boy Scout bugles resting on high shelves, old, elegantly styled Shure microphones standing in the windows and a mounted bear's head snarling over a backroom entrance.

But Boucher's brand of harmless, wise-cracking humor now, he admits, tempered with a much more customer-friendly sincerity -- may be the strongest spark keeping his business' watch wound. He opts to rely on a 50-year reputation rather than advertise.

"We aren't getting rich quick but we're sure having an awfully good time," the diminutive, electric whiz said after sharply bargaining with an acquaintance for a few parts. "I'll probably be here until I croak. I just love waking up in the morning and coming to work."

For Cole, repairs are made in the tool and vacuum tube-littered back room of his music shop, which opened in 1936(sic).

Although musical instrument sales and repairs get top billing, he still tinkers with radios.



GUY BOUCHER, owner of Boucher's Radio and TV Service, 107 W. Third St., is one of a handful of knowledgeable Mr. Fix-its still in operation. Boucher's father started up the shop more than 50 years ago



TERRY COLE, owner of Cole's Music Store, became interested in radio repair as a child and later spent summers working as a roving repairman for church organ companies.

"I was always hanging around in Washington Boucher's radio shop," he recalled with a laugh. "He always had time for pesky kids."

Cole, too, learned bits and pieces of the repair trade from his father. Summer stints working for church organ companies as a local repair man also fine-tuned his craft, which spilled over into piano tuning and violin repair.

"A roofer would put in a new roof on a church, but then he would forget to put the lightning rods back on. Then you get sparks in the church organ...", Cole said. "I always had to do the repairs in the evening. I'd work for two hours and talk for five."

But it was the lessons and exchanges at Boucher's Third Street brick-and-plate glass hut as a young boy that Cole most fondly recalled.

"I remember going into that shop and asking for a diagram of a crystal radio set. I wanted to build one. 'Well, Washington -- 'Wash' they called him -- took a piece of paper and drew it out for me off the top of his head."

Like Boucher; Cole, as he reproduced the crystal radio diagram from memory on the back of an envelope, said he has no plans to wind down.

"Everybody is getting old nowadays and talking about retirement. But that gets old pretty fast," he said.

Both repairmen agree that despite cheaper, ever-improving technology, there will always be customers that haul in their old Philcos and Sylvania's for fine-tuning or major operations.

"I don't really see many abused things," Boucher said. "Sure, you'll get the kid who stuck a piece of jelly toast or coins or little red men in the VCR. I've only had to remove a few dead rodents over the years."

"There is a nostalgic kick with old radios right now," Cole said while recalling a giant Philco dinosaur he repaired for a Sparta man who wanted to listen to Milwaukee Brewers games. "A lot of these radio tubes aren't available anymore so you've got to improvise."

"A lot of old stuff is being tossed," he said. "Rather than taking a chance on unsuccessful repairs people throw stuff away. A lot of it goes with the economy. When times get tough people are more inclined to fix the old."

From the Marshfield News-Herald, Marshfield, Wisconsin, 26 Sep 1998, Sat, Pages 1 & 4



Cole Music Store at 148 South Central Avenue.

Old Photos at Music Store Reveal Heritage

Marshfield Arts Scene
Mark T Nelson

In downtown Marshfield last week I stopped into a page from my own past and, perhaps, yours.

Visiting Cole's Music Store, I noticed a display that caught my eye. There on the wall, above an accordion and some amplifiers waiting for repair, was a collection of old photos and yellowed clippings of local bands.

"Where did these come from?" I asked Terry Cole.

"Oh, people give them to me and I put them up here," replied the third-generation store proprietor.



Bands from several decades are portrayed on Terry Cole's wall.

In a 1953 photo, Terry's grandfather, Guy Cole, plays fiddle for square dancers at the Central Wisconsin State Fair. His trio includes WSAU farm director Buck Leverton on bass and Gene LaFond, guitar.

Gene was famous in my eyes. His day job was at a clothing store where I was outfitted with my first suit. But at night he played guitar with a variety of combos. I knew him best, on TV with Howie Sturtz's Dairyland Jubilee Orchestra. Gene, who still lives in town, also taught guitar and played violin in the University of Wisconsin-Marshfield/Wood County orchestra.

Looking rather serious, Wally Ives and the Jolly Dutchmen are pictured at the grand opening of WDLB in 1947. Terry's father, Forrest Cole, sits beside a high-tech device called a record player surrounded by other band members, following their live performance in the capacious, new studio. Both Wally Ives and his brother, Lovell, appear, along with Wayne Jaeckel, Bill Gorke and Lynn Winch.

I recall Winch and trumpeter Russ Lewallen as our musicians union officers when I started gigging in the 1960s. At the time, I couldn't imagine how guys "that old" could be out having fun like us in a band.

Now, I look at these photos and realize how music binds us together. Guys in bands -- gals, too -- always have had fun "playing out" regardless of the musical style or decade.

A 1964-1966 photo of The Phantoms with tall, slicked back hair jumps out at me. Warren Mittelstadt, Dave Lewer, Jim Olsen, John Eckes and Du Wayne Gust look fresh-faced in their skinny ties and collar-less suits.

Space Cadet poses in 1972, revealing younger, shaggier versions of Thorn Clement, Mike Bruskv. Wally and Paul Thorn, Jeff Weichelt and Bob Rowe.

Knowing Rowe is now a music professor in New York, I think of how far music can take us.

As I leave the store, I'm delighted to imagine the five young bands who'll have a good time playing the "Literacy Rock" benefit on Tuesday at Chestnut Center.

I hope they -- and you, my dear readers -- will bring your band photos to Terry Cole.

Mark T. Nelson is board president of Chestnut Avenue Center for the Arts, celebrating its fifth anniversary in downtown Marshfield.

From the Marshfield News-Herald, Marshfield, Wisconsin, 26 Dec 2008, Fri • Page 3



Guy Cole, Jean Eckes, Forrest Cole, Jim Rhodes and Harold Steltenpohl. (photo from Terry Cole)



Maldon Plank (at organ) and Forrest Cole at the Marshfield Home Show out at the Oak Street Armory, ca. 1948-1949. (photo from Terry Cole)