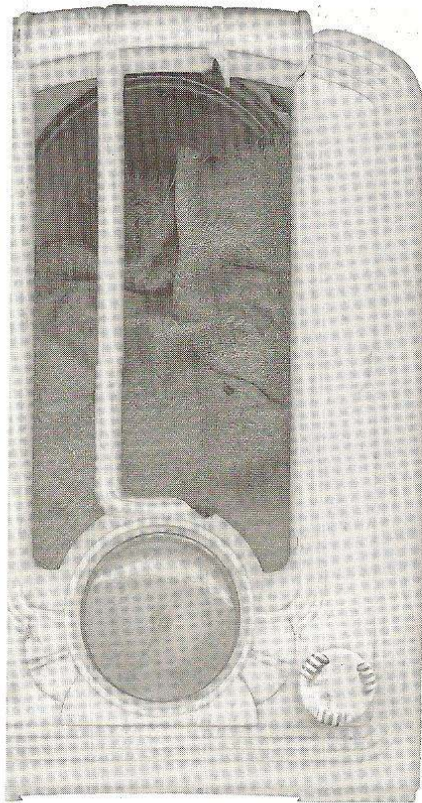


Replacing speaker grill cloth

By Herb Brams



The speaker grill cloth on many old radios is often worn or tattered to the point where it must be replaced. Replacing the cloth is not a difficult job but some care should be taken to give good results. The steps given below should simplify the job and give professional looking results.

Select a material that has a fairly open weave to let the sound through. Fabric shops are a good place to find such material [e.g., check out Antique Electronics Supply]. Also, have on hand a large smooth flat surface such as a laminate-covered board or a sheet of glass.

Remove the speaker board from the cabinet and remove all of the old cloth. Scrape or sand off the old glue as well. If the wood beneath is light colored, it may show through the new cloth so stain the wood dark and let it dry. The surface of the wood must be smooth, clean, and dry.

Cut a piece of the new cloth about four inches wider and longer than the speaker board and lay it on the smooth flat surface. The back of the cloth should face up. Using pieces of masking tape, stretch the cloth evenly in all directions and tape it down. Stretching the cloth is necessary to eliminate wrinkles and sags.

Spray the front of the speaker board with spray adhesive (available at art or hardware stores) and allow the adhesive to become tacky. Hold the board a few inches above the cloth, align it with the pattern in the cloth, then carefully place the board on the cloth. Press the board down to stick it to the cloth. Add weights and let the assembly sit for an hour to allow full adhesion.

After the glue has set up but before moving the board, lift up the tape holding the cloth. Lift the board and carefully cut off any excess material overhanging the edges of the board, being careful not to pull the cloth away from the board.

Before the speaker board is mounted back in the cabinet, all screw holes for remounting the board must be cleared of cloth. Otherwise, the screws may twist the cloth out of position from the board. Carefully cut the cloth covering the screw with a pair of nail scissors, or burn it away with a piece of coat hanger wire heated red-hot. I prefer the latter method as it leaves a clean hole without any ragged edges to catch on the screw threads.

The newly covered board may now be reinstalled in the cabinet. With some sets, the speaker must be mounted on the board first. To avoid poking holes in the speaker cone, carefully align a second hole with another screw. The speaker can usually then be pushed down over the remaining screws without damaging the cone.