

driver, sealed in a box so you can't hear it with your ear. A piece of surgical tubing is connected to the driver output so that the guitar sound comes through the tubing. You hold the end of the tube in your teeth. The guitar sound then comes through the tubing into your mouth, pretty much like the artificial larynx that cancer patients use. Since it's an audio source in your mouth, you move your mouth as if you were speaking, but instead of using your vocal cords to produce the sound, the guitar supplies the sound. When I explain [to other hams] about modulation, the talk box is a great way to do it.

**CQ:** Do you think ham radio has been a defining factor in your life and your success as a musician?

**JW:** I think it was very constructive off time. It's a very constructive hobby. You come away knowing stuff—a foundation of ideas you can apply, like fixing electronic equipment and overall knowledge—so much more than a Gameboy or computer game that has nothing to do with the real world. I'm very grateful I had a good electronics foundation. That's really helped me in the recording part of my career, and it's helped me make the transition from analog to digital in the studio. I shudder to think how my life would be if I had never met Jim Walden. I'm so grateful to him.

**CQ:** Have you ever passed the torch of knowledge yourself, as Jim Walden did for you all those years ago?

**JW:** Yeah, one guy, Buddy Thornton. I Elmered him and gave him his Novice exam. He's an ex-NASA engineer from Houston and a great guy. He was the maintenance tech at the studio in Miami where we were recording *Hotel California*, fresh out of NASA. He always wanted to get into ham radio, but just like me he had never met anybody in the hobby and didn't know how, so I got him going.

**CQ:** Did 13 solo albums and your break-neck pace of superstar status with The Eagles allow any room for your radio interests?

**JW:** At the time, I had a huge tower and a great station, and I was on 2 meters a lot. When I got home from a tour I always got on the radio because I could talk to people and just be one of the boys. It really took the edge off touring. When I get home and off the road, I love getting on the air and just talking to people. It gives me a chance to get grounded and get my mind off the road, and also to meet people that I would never meet in any other way. I like when friendships are formed and long-term friendships result—kind of rewarding. I'm just Joe on the radio, and that's important. I really, really like that.

**CQ:** Did you ever take gear with you on tour?

**JW:** Several times, but it didn't work very well. Mostly we were in tour buses. I could never find a place on a tour bus to mount an antenna resonator. I must have left a trail of Hustler resonators across the country [he laughs]. One came off at every toll booth. I'd go out with about six of them and come home with none. It was fun, but it was a real pain in the neck carrying gear around, setting it up, and tearing it down. Eventually I just got discouraged. There weren't little QRP rigs then like there are now. I had to lug the whole thing around with a power supply and hang an antenna out the window. I used Atlas 210s, stuff like that, the first generation of solid-state rigs.

**CQ:** When did you upgrade to Extra class?

**JW:** Not too long ago—about a year ago. I wanted to get



*Joe Walsh with a stack of vintage receivers at a second basement operating position. Radios include a Technical Materials GPR-90, Hammarlund SP-600, National HRO-60, and an RCA AR-88.*

it before they changed all the rules. I wanted to take the actual exam and do the code.

**CQ:** How do you feel about the demise of Morse code as a means of communication globally, and the now-minimal requirements for amateur radio licensing?

**JW:** Oh, I think it's obsolete and [its demise] was inevitable. I am a traditionalist, though. In terms of the tradition, America is so starved for any kind of tradition whatsoever. Ham radio had a wealth of tradition going for it. I think any amateur who's worth a damn knows Morse code. I don't have much use for people who don't even attempt to learn it. But I'm kind of set in my ways a little bit, and I'm probably in the minority on that one.

**CQ:** What is your main radio line-up right now, your favorite radio to get on when you actually want to work someone? How often do you get a chance to get on the air?

**JW:** My Collins KWM-1. I prefer that over any of the Japanese stuff. I also have set up an HT-32 Hallicrafters and an SX-115, and of course I have the Gold Dust Twins [KWS-1 transmitter and 75A-4 receiver], the famous Collins stuff. Between those stations, that's what I use right now. I rotate