

New Column! Ham Notebook

Amateur Radio

<http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com>

COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY

MARCH 2010

CQ

1945

Our
65th
Anniversary

2010

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On the Cover: Jon Hamlet,
W4ZW, of Nokomis, Florida,
works on his antenna
overlooking the Gulf of Mexico.
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*****AUTO**5-DIGIT 23117
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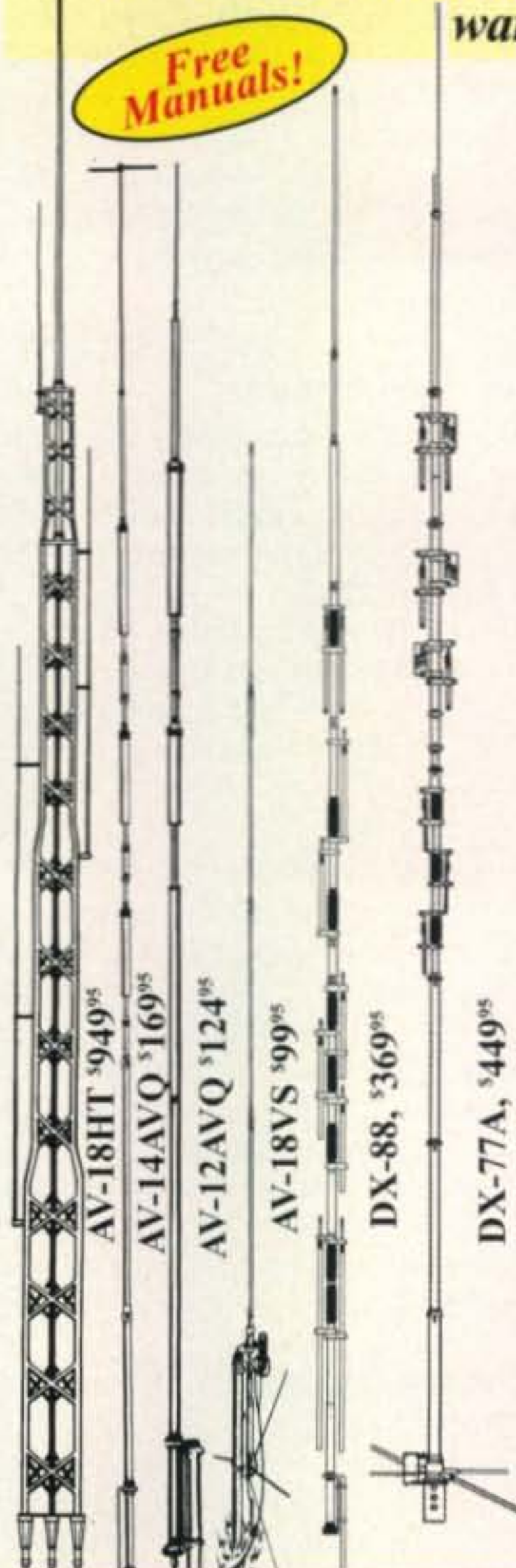


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18 ft., 9 lbs. The Hy-Gain AV-14AVQ uses the same trap design as the famous Hy-Gain Thunderbird beams. Three separate air dielectric Hy-Q traps with oversize coils give superb stability and 1/4 wave resonance on all bands. Roof mount with Hy-Gain AV-14RMQ kit, \$89.95.

AV-12AVQ, \$124.95. (10, 15, 20 Meters).

13 ft., 9 lbs. AV-12AVQ also uses Thunderbird beam design air dielectric traps for extremely Hy-Q performance. This is the way to go for inexpensive tri-band performance in limited space. Roof mount with AV-14RMQ kit, \$89.95.

AV-18VS, \$99.95. (10,12,15,17,20,30,40,80 Meters). 18 ft., 4 lbs. High quality construction and low cost make the AV-18VS an exceptional value. Easily tuned to any band by adjusting feed point at the base loading coil. Roof mount with Hy-Gain AV-14RMQ kit, \$89.95.

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| Model # | Price | Bands | Max Power | Height | Weight | Wind Surv. | Rec. Mast |
|----------|----------|----------------|------------|---------|------------|-----------------------|------------|
| AV-18HT | \$949.95 | 10,15,20,40,80 | 1500 W PEP | 53 feet | 114 pounds | 75 MPH | --- |
| AV-14AVQ | \$169.95 | 10,15,20,40 | 1500 W PEP | 18 feet | 9 pounds | 80 MPH | 1.5-1.625" |
| AV-12AVQ | \$124.95 | 10/15/20 M | 1500 W PEP | 13 feet | 9 pounds | 80 MPH | 1.5-1.625" |
| AV-18VS | \$99.95 | 10 - 80 M | 1500 W PEP | 18 feet | 4 pounds | 80 MPH | 1.5-1.625" |
| DX-88 | \$369.95 | 10 - 80 M | 1500 W PEP | 25 feet | 18 pounds | 75 mph _{avg} | 1.5-1.625" |
| DX-77A | \$449.95 | 10 - 40 M | 1500 W PEP | 29 feet | 25 pounds | 60 mph _{avg} | 1.5-1.625" |

hy-gain[®] PATRIOT

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Earthquake in Haiti

Ham radio was able to play only a limited role in getting communications into and out of Haiti in the immediate aftermath of the massive earthquake there in January. This was due primarily to the small number of resident amateurs. Ham activity by relief organizations appeared to be picking up at press time. KI6SN has early information in his Public Service column this month (see page 50), and will follow up in future issues as developments warrant.

ARRL Elects First Female President

The ARRL Board of Directors in January elected First Vice President Kay Craigie, N3KN, as the organization's new President, succeeding Joel Harrison, W5ZN, who did not seek re-election. Craigie is the first woman to hold the League's top position. According to the *ARRL Letter*, Rick Roderick, K5UR, is the new First Vice President; Midwest Division Director Bruce Frahm, K0BJ, was elected an additional vice president and Dakota Division Director Jay Bellows, K0QB, is the new VP for International Affairs. Their respective vice directors moved up to the directors' seats, and Craigie will appoint new vice directors. In addition, Technical Relations Manager Brennan Price, N4QX, was named ARRL Chief Technology Officer.

W7HAS in Charge of Federal Computer Security

Howard Schmidt, W7HAS, has been named White House Cybersecurity Coordinator by President Obama. According to the White House, he is one of the world's leading authorities on computer security and will be a key member of the President's national security staff. Schmidt told the ARRL that amateur radio got him started in the world of computers. A former police officer and computer security advisor to the FBI and the Department of Defense, "Newsline" reports Schmidt has also worked in the private sector at eBay and as Microsoft's first Chief Security Officer.

CQ Columnist K4TWJ Silent Key

Dave Ingram, K4TWJ, a *CQ* columnist for nearly 30 years, passed away on January 20 as a result of complications from a massive heart attack that he suffered on New Year's Eve. Dave was best known for his monthly "World of Ideas" column. He also wrote *CQ*'s "How it Works" and "QRP" (low power) columns. His family asks that any contributions in his memory be made to the American Heart Association. See this month's "Zero Bias" editorial for more about Dave.

KI6SN Named Editor of *WorldRadio Online*

Richard Fisher, KI6SN, of Riverside, California, has been named Editor of *WorldRadio Online* magazine, succeeding Nancy Kott, WZ8C, who resigned. A veteran journalist and writer, Fisher is already familiar to many readers of *CQ* publications. He is *CQ*'s Public Service Editor and writes the "Trail Friendly Radio" column in *WRO* as well as the "Washington Beat" column in *Popular Communications*. He plans to continue writing those columns in addition to his editing duties. Fisher takes up the reins at *WRO* as of the magazine's April issue.

Genachowski Looking to "Reboot" the FCC

FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski is asking for input on ways to improve the functioning of the government's main communications regulatory agency. According to "Newsline," Genachowski has set up a website called "Reboot.fcc.gov" and is seeking suggestions from the public on how the FCC can better serve the American people.

CQ Expands Web Presence

CQ's presence on the World Wide Web is growing. In addition to the long-standing websites for each of our magazines, we now have Facebook pages for *CQ*, *CQ VHF*, and *Popular Communications* (tnx to NW7US, who is posting regular propagation updates), to be followed soon by one for *WorldRadio Online* as well. In addition, the *CQ WPX Contest* website at <www.cqwp.com> now has all line scores going back to 1991 (for CW) and 1985 (for SSB), with additional years to follow, as well as contest rules in 14 languages. Finally, *CQ* Public Service Editor Richard Fisher, KI6SN, has set up a website for material that would not fit in his monthly print column. "CQ Public Service on the Web" may be found at <www.CQPublicService.blogspot.com>.

Hamvention® Sticking With Hara

The Dayton Amateur Radio Association says the annual Dayton Hamvention® will remain at Hara Arena for at least the next three years. Organizers of the world's largest hamfest have reached an agreement to keep the event in place at least through 2013.

Nominations are open for Dayton's annual awards—the Amateur of the Year, Special Achievement, and Technical Excellence awards—and are due in by March 15th. For information, see the DARA website at <www.hamvention.org>.

N. Korea Remains at Top of Most-Wanted List

The DX Magazine's annual Most Wanted countries list is out, with North Korea (P5) remaining at the top for yet another year. Major DXpeditions to Desecheo Island (K5D) and Willis Island (VK9/W) knocked both of those entities from near the top of the list clear out of the top 100 DXCC entities needed by the world's DXers. Rounding out the top five worldwide for 2009 are Navassa Island (KP1), Marion Island (ZS8), Bouvet (3Y/B), and Yemen (YO). For additional listings and regional breakdowns, see the January/February 2010 issue of *The DX Magazine*.

MARS Gets a New Name and a New Mission

The Military Affiliate Radio System has been renamed the Military *Auxiliary* Radio System by the Department of Defense and given a new primary role in providing backup communications to the military and to civil authorities at all levels of government. The new "instruction," the first major revision of the MARS mission in over 20 years, also lays to rest fears that Navy-Marine Corps MARS might be eliminated. See this month's "Public Service" column for additional details.

Ham Ranks Keep Growing

The ARRL/VEC reports that more than 30,000 new people entered the Amateur Radio Service in 2009, nearly double the number of new hams who joined the fraternity five years earlier. The numbers have been climbing steadily since 2005, when only 16,000 newcomers joined our ranks, hitting 21,000 in 2006, nearly 27,000 in 2007, and 28,000 in 2008. Overall, more than 122,000 new people have become hams in the past five years ... not bad for a hobby that some of us continue to insist is dying!

(Continued on p. 10)

Additional and updated news is available on the Ham Radio News page of the *CQ* website at <<http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com>>. For breaking news stories, plus info on additional items of interest, sign up for *CQ*'s free online newsletter service. Just click on "CQ Newsletter" on the home page of our website.

HC-1.5KAT

HF 1.5kW Auto Tuner

HL-2.5KFX Auto Band Set and QSK

Solid-state HF 1.5kW Linear Amplifier



Photo : From left HC-1.5KAT (HF 1.5kW Tuner with Auto Band Set Feature), HL-2.5KFX (HF 1.5kW MOSFET Linear) and IC-7700 Transceiver



For DXpeditioners

HL-1.1KFX

HF 600W Linear



HL-1.2KFX

HF 750W Linear



HL-1.5KFX

HF / 50MHz 1kW Linear
(650W PEP on 50MHz Band)



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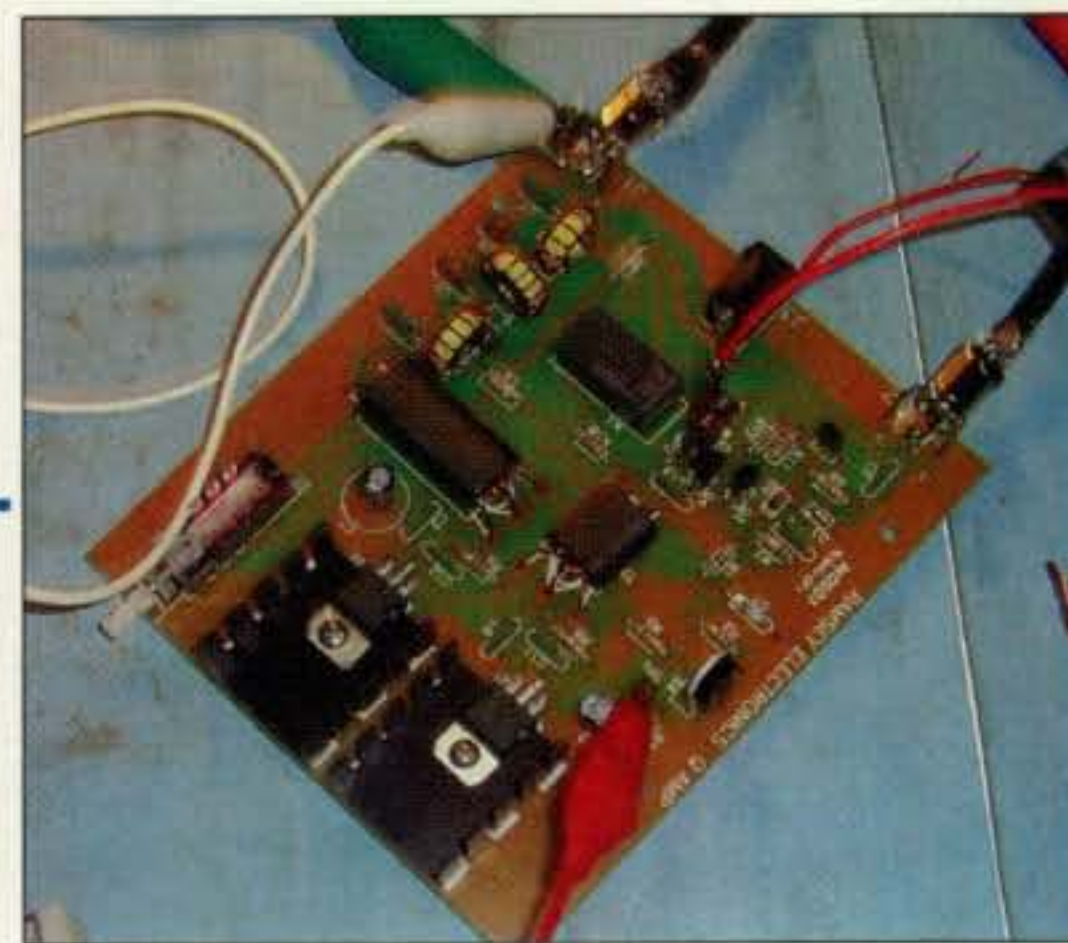
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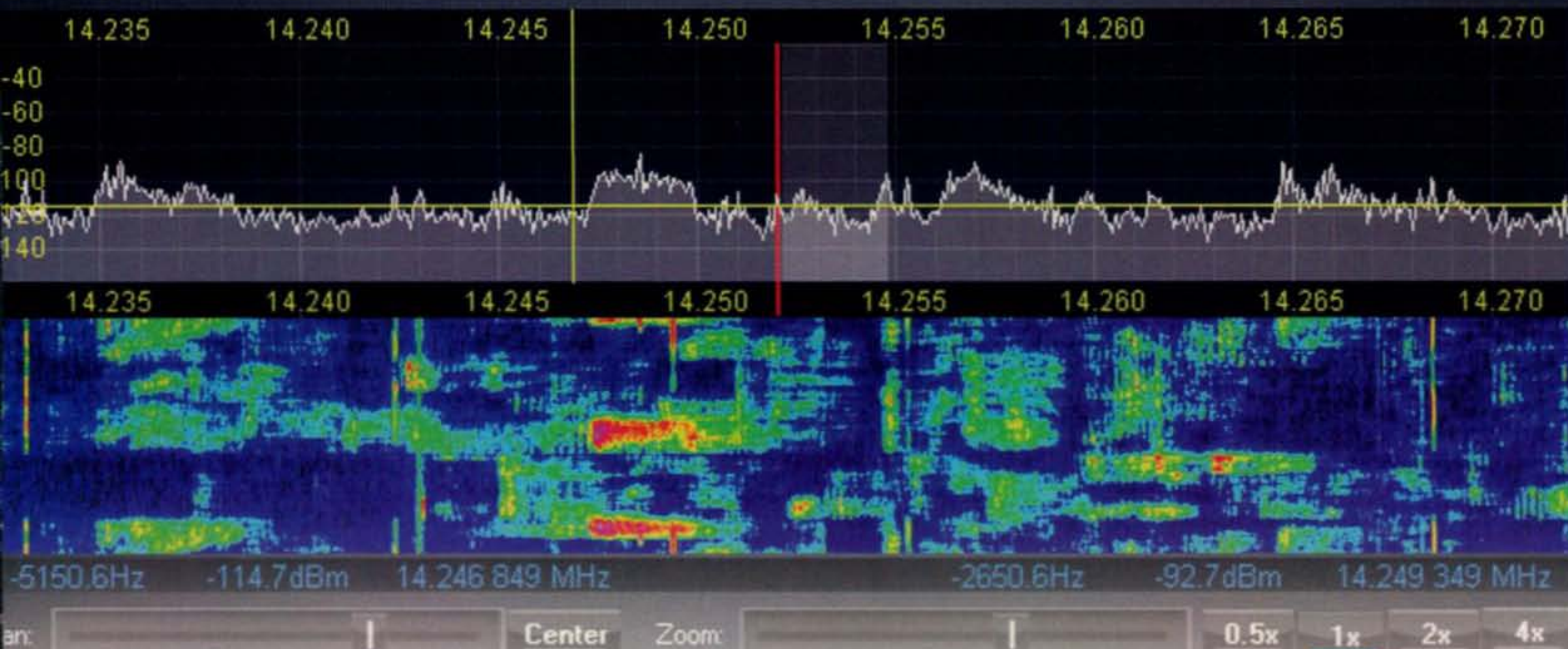
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FLEX-5000A

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+2M&70CM

FLEX-3000

HF-6m Transceiver

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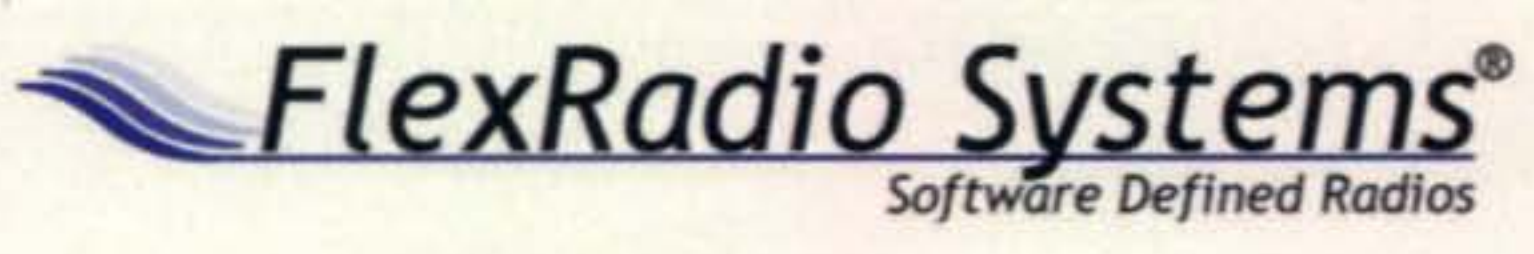
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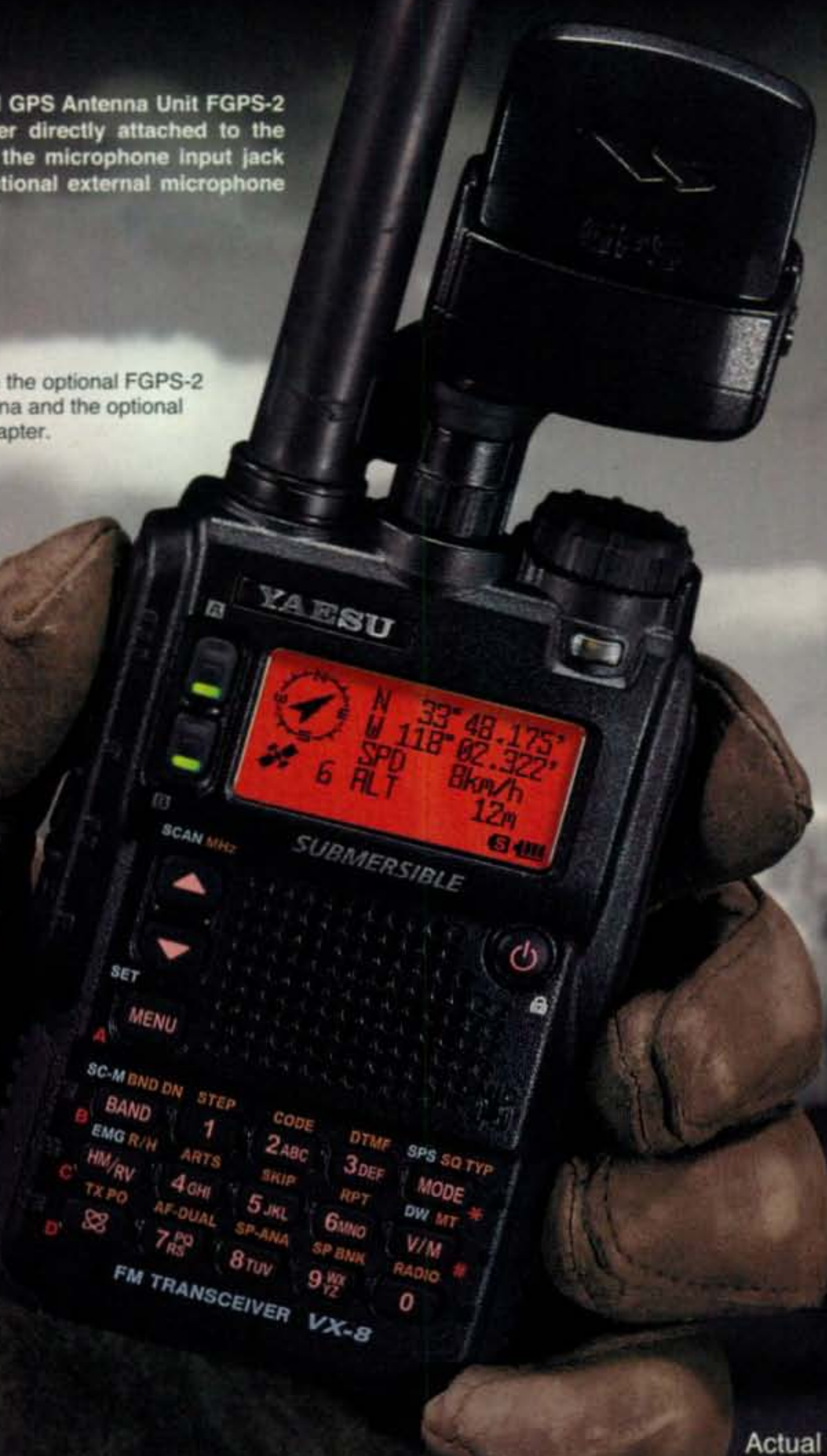
The optional GPS Antenna Unit FGPS-2 can be either directly attached to the radio using the microphone input jack or to the optional external microphone MH-74A7A.

• Shown with the optional FGPS-2 GPS Antenna and the optional CT-136 Adapter.

Key Additional APRS® Features of the VX-8DR include

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- The Message received LED flashing rate is selectable.

* SmartBeaconing™ from HamHUD/Nichotronic



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- Barometric sensor included.
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NEW Huge memory channel management capability!
500 Independent Memory channels
+ 9 Programmable Band Limit Memory Scan channels
+ 1 Rewritable Preferred channel for each L and R Band

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(including Built-in Dual Speakers on the rear of the Control Head for FM Broadcast in Stereo!)

Exclusive Dual Band AF Monitor for listening to FM/AM broadcast and monitoring ham bands as well

Built-in Barometric Pressure Sensor

Screen Example



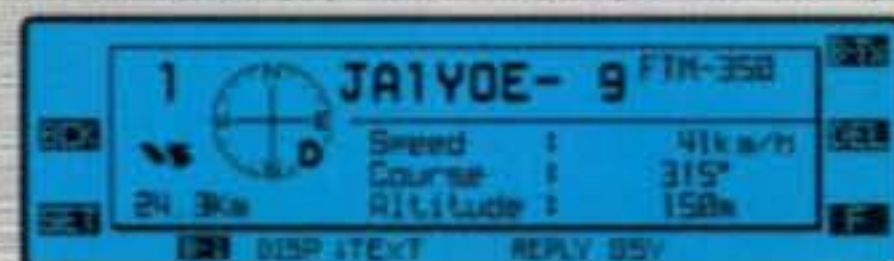
Dual Band (Spectrum Scope function)



Navigation (with GPS antenna unit attached)



Mono Band (Spectrum Scope function)



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Barometer



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K4TWJ, W2FMI . . . and a Message for the Rest of Us

I am writing this on January 20th, a little more than a week after the earthquake in Haiti and the day that our good friend and longtime colleague, Dave Ingram, K4TWJ, became a Silent Key. Dave has been a fixture on the pages of *CQ* for nearly 30 years. His byline first appeared on an antenna review back in 1981. The following year, he began writing an amateur television column called "The World of Video." Over the years, Dave broadened the column's focus and it transformed into "The World of Ideas," his signature monthly column. For the past decade, Dave has also been our QRP Editor and anchored the bi-monthly "How it Works" column. (This month's columns were off to the printer before Dave's passing.)

Dave suffered a massive heart attack on New Year's Eve, but appeared to be recovering steadily if slowly. At one point, he was even able to enjoy some of the many cards that well-wishers had sent him at the hospital. But it seems that the damage to his heart was just too great, and Dave slipped away in the early morning hours today, with Sandy, WB4OEE, his wife of 47 years, by his side.

Anyone who ever met Dave came away amazed at the amount of energy and enthusiasm that he seemed to just radiate, especially for anything that had to do with ham radio. The law of conservation of energy says that energy may neither be created nor destroyed, so that means that in Dave's absence, there is now a tremendous amount of ham-radio-focused energy floating around, waiting for others of us to harness it and put it to use to promote all of the wonderful things about our hobby. Dave's favorites, of course, were QRP, CW, code keys, and projects—especially tube-based projects. And he had enough energy and enthusiasm for 100 "normal" hams, so feel free to make some of that energy your own, and use it to show your fellow hams and others just what it is that makes your favorite part of ham radio so special. No need to worry about that energy supply running out . . . and it will be a fitting tribute to Dave as well.

"From Phys. Ed. to Physics"

Dave is the fourth ham radio friend I've lost in the last few months. Two were personal (non-*CQ*) friends, but the other is someone whose name and callsign graced these pages many times: Jerry Sevick, W2FMI. Jerry was "the man" when it came to transmission line transformers, also known as baluns and ununs, and he wrote several books on the topic for us and other publishers. His *Understanding, Building and Using Baluns and Ununs* and *The Short Vertical Antenna* continue to be among our most popular titles. Those books got their start as a series of articles on the topic that ran here in *CQ* in the 1980s. Jerry was 90 when he became a Silent Key last fall, but had remained active on the air nearly to the end. He was a regular check-in on his local club's weekly 2-meter net until about two weeks before his passing.

Jerry's story illustrates the power of ham radio to change lives. He grew up in a working-class family in Detroit, where he excelled in athletics (he turned down an offer to play for the Detroit Lions football team) and planned to become a Phys. Ed. teacher and high school coach. But after joining the Army Air Corps during World War II, the fact that he had a ham license got him sent off to study a newfangled device called radar at a little college in Massachusetts called Harvard. After the war,

Jerry realized it was possible for a working-class kid from Detroit to have a career in science and technology. He returned to his alma mater, Wayne State University in Michigan, to get a Master's degree in physics, followed by a Ph.D. from Harvard, all paid for by the G. I. Bill.

He taught briefly at Wayne State, did a stint as a TV weatherman in the mid-1950s, and then was hired by Bell Laboratories to work on transistors and semiconductor reliability. In his spare time, he worked on antennas, transmission lines, and transmission-line transformers, taking advantage of the test equipment available at work to make measurements.

"Although this work was outside of my responsibility," he wrote in a memoir titled *From Phys. Ed. to Physics*, "Bell Labs was glad to measure my transformers because they thought of it as good science." Jerry retired from Bell Labs in 1984 as Director of Technical Relations, after which he began writing and publishing his books for hams. Jerry's depth of knowledge in his very specialized area of expertise will be missed as much as Dave's broader enthusiasm for all things relating to ham radio.

Devastation in Haiti

Just over a week ago, a massive earthquake shook Haiti and its capital city, Port-au-Prince. Early indications are that over 100,000 lives may have been lost. As soon as the news of the quake became known, hams all over the U.S. and around the Caribbean went into "disaster mode," monitoring the bands for any possible word from the affected area. Some ham radio activity was reported (see box in this month's Public Service column), but Haiti has very few hams to begin with, so there has not been much. We will be following the story and if there is more to report in the coming weeks, KI6SN will cover it in his April column.

A Matter of Perspective

Reflecting on these losses, both personal and communal (be it the ham radio community or the world community), and on the fragility of life, should make us pause to take a look at our own priorities and try to put things in their proper perspective.

The bottom line is that life is short and unpredictable. It can change dramatically in a matter of seconds. Are we making the best use of whatever time we are given? Since this is a hobby magazine, it is appropriate to ponder whether we are using our leisure time to fully enjoy our hobbies or wasting much of that time quibbling with each other over matters that, in the long run, are of little importance? Are we trying to make sure that we *have* some leisure time and family time blocked into our always-busy schedules? An unknown writer once remarked that "No man on his deathbed ever looked up into the eyes of his family and friends and said, 'I wish I'd spent more time at the office.'"

Let us honor the memories of people like Dave and Jerry* by enjoying our hobby to the maximum, and by making it a source of lifetime learning and accomplishment, and most of all, fun. Dave and Jerry, may peace be with you and may your memories be a blessing to all who knew you. We will greatly miss you both. 73, W2VU

**Dave's family requests that donations in his memory be made to the American Heart Association. Jerry's family has asked that those wishing to make contributions in his memory direct them to their local YMCA, another of Jerry's long-time loves.*

*e-mail: <w2vu@cq-amateur-radio.com>

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HAM-IV
\$649⁹⁵



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T-2X
\$799⁹⁵

T-2XD
\$1229⁹⁵
with DCU-1



CD-45II

For antenna arrays up to 8.5 sq. feet mounted inside tower or 5 sq. ft. with mast adapter. Low temperature grease good to -30 F degrees. New Test/Calibrate function. Bell rotator design gives total weather protection, dual 58 ball bearing race gives proven support. Die-cast ring gear, stamped steel gear drive, heavy duty, trouble free gear train, North center scale, lighted directional indicator, 8-pin plug/socket on control unit, snap-action control switches, low voltage control, safe operation, takes maximum mast size to 2 1/16 inches. MSLD light duty lower mast support included.

CD-45II
\$449⁹⁵



| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Wind Load capacity (inside tower) | 15 square feet |
| Wind Load (w/mast adapter) | 7.5 square feet |
| Turning Power | 800 in.-lbs. |
| Brake Power | 5000 in.-lbs. |
| Brake Construction | Electric Wedge |
| Bearing Assembly | dual race/96 ball bearings |
| Mounting Hardware | Clamp plate/steel U-bolts |
| Control Cable Conductors | 8 |
| Shipping Weight | 26 lbs. |
| Effective Moment (in tower) | 2800 ft.-lbs. |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Wind load capacity (inside tower) | 20 square feet |
| Wind Load (w/ mast adapter) | 10 square feet |
| Turning Power | 1000 in.-lbs. |
| Brake Power | 9000 in.-lbs. |
| Brake Construction | Electric Wedge |
| Bearing Assembly | Triple race/138 ball brngs |
| Mounting Hardware | Clamp plate/steel U-bolts |
| Control Cable Conductors | 8 |
| Shipping Weight | 31 lbs. |
| Effective Moment (in tower) | 3400 ft.-lbs. |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Wind load capacity (inside tower) | 8.5 square feet |
| Wind Load (w/ mast adapter) | 5.0 square feet |
| Turning Power | 600 in.-lbs. |
| Brake Power | 800 in.-lbs. |
| Brake Construction | Disc Brake |
| Bearing Assembly | Dual race/48 ball brings |
| Mounting Hardware | Clamp plate/steel U-bolts |
| Control Cable Conductors | 8 |
| Shipping Weight | 22 lbs. |
| Effective Moment (in tower) | 1200 ft.-lbs. |

HAM-V

HAM-V
\$1099⁹⁵
with DCU-1

For medium antenna arrays up to 15 square feet wind load area. Similar to the HAM IV, but includes DCU-1 Pathfinder digital control unit with gas plasma display.

Provides automatic operation of brake and rotor, compatible with many logging/contest programs, 6 presets for beam headings, 1 degree accuracy, auto 8-second brake delay, 360 degree choice for center location, more!

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Digital Automatic Controller



DCU-1
\$749⁹⁵ choice for center of rotation, crisp plasma display. Computer controlled with many logging/contest programs.

Automatically controls T2X, HAM-IV, V rotators. 6 presets for favorite headings, 1° accuracy, 8-sec. brake delay, choice for center of rotation, crisp plasma display. Computer controlled with many logging/contest programs.

AR-40

For compact antenna arrays and large FM/TV up to 3.0 square feet wind load area. Dual 12 ball bearing race. Automatic position sensor never needs resetting. Fully automatic control -- just dial and touch for any desired location. Solid state, low voltage control, safe and silent operation. 2 1/16 inch maximum mast size. MSLD light duty lower mast support included.

AR-40
\$349⁹⁵



| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Wind load capacity (inside tower) | 3.0 square feet |
| Wind Load (w/ mast adapter) | 1.5 square feet |
| Turning Power | 350 in.-lbs. |
| Brake Power | 450 in.-lbs. |
| Brake Construction | Disc Brake |
| Bearing Assembly | Dual race/12 ball bearings |
| Mounting Hardware | Clamp plate/steel bolts |
| Control Cable Conductors | 5 |
| Shipping Weight | 14 lbs. |
| Effective Moment (in tower) | 300 ft.-lbs. |

HDR-300A

King-sized antenna arrays up to 25 sq.ft. wind load area. Control cable connector, new hardened stainless steel output shaft, new North or South centered calibration, new ferrite beads on potentiometer wires reduce RF susceptibility, new longer output shaft keyway adds reliability. Heavy-duty self-centering steel clamp and hardware. Display accurate to 1°. Machined steel output.

HDR-300A
\$1499⁹⁵



| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Wind load capacity (inside tower) | 25 square feet |
| Wind Load (w/ mast adapter) | not applicable |
| Turning Power | 5000 in.-lbs. |
| Brake Power | 7500 in.-lbs. |
| Brake Construction | solenoid operated locking |
| Bearing Assembly | bronze sleeve w/rollers |
| Mounting Hardware | stainless steel bolts |
| Control Cable Conductors | 7 |
| Shipping Weight | 61 lbs. |
| Effective Moment (in tower) | 5000 ft.-lbs. |

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For UHF, VHF, 6-Meter, TV/FM antennas. Includes automatic controller, rotator, mounting clamps, mounting hardware. 110 VAC. One Year Warranty.

AR-35
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RBD-5
\$29⁹⁵

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• The following special event station is scheduled for early April:

N4C, from the 38th Annual Raleigh (NC) Hamfest & ARRL State Convention, Raleigh ARS; 8 AM to 3:30 PM EST April 3 on SSB approximately 7.235 or 14.235 MHz. QSL information at <www.rars.org/hamfest>.

• The following hamfests, etc., are slated for March and early April:

March 13–14, **2010 Charlotte Hamfest**, Cabarrus Arena & Events Center, Concord, North Carolina. For details go to: <<http://www.W4BFB.org/hamfest>>. (Talk-in 146.665 [-600 kHz], 146.94 [-600]; exams 12:30 Saturday)

March 20, **Charleston, WV Hamfest**, Coonskin Armory, Charleston, West Virginia. Contact Jim Damron, N8TMW, e-mail: <n8tmw@arrl.net>; phone 304-965-5349; <www.w8gk.org>. (Exams 12:30)

March 20, **Middle Tennessee ARS Hamfest**, First Methodist Church Center, Tullahoma, Tennessee. For general information contact via e-mail: <KR4OJ@bellsouth.net> or <KE4KMG@edge.net>. Tables contact KB4JD at <hlpratt@bellsouth.net>. <<http://www.qsl.net/mtars>>. (Talk-in 146.10 / 70 repeater)

March 21, **Contoocook Valley Radio Club Hamfest**, Henniker Community School, Henniker, New Hampshire. Contact Donn, N1ZIH, phone 603-717-2086, or go to: <www.k1bke>. (Talk-in 146.895 [-600 Hz offset 100.0 Hz PL]; exams)

March 27, **Columbus (IN) ARC Hamfest**, Bartholomew County 4H Fairgrounds, SW of Columbus, Indiana. Contact Marion Winterberg, WD9HTN, phone 812-342-4670, e-mail: <Carc_in@bcremc.net>. (Talk-in 146.790/146.190 PL 100.0; exams 11 AM contact Dave Wendt, KA9OOH, phone 317-881-6531, e-mail: <veteam@midstatehams.org>)

April 3, **Raleigh ARS 38th Hamfest, ARRL NC State Convention, & Electronic Fleamarket**, Expo Center Building, North Carolina State Fairgrounds, Raleigh, North Carolina. Contact Steve Farrarini, KJ4BX, e-mail: <steve.kj4bx@gmail.com>, phone 919-247-8690; <www.rars.org/hamfest>. (Talk-in 146.64; exams WA4GIR phone 919-387-9152)

April 3–5, **China International Ham Radio 2010 Expo & Festival**, INTEX, Shanghai. For details go to: <<http://www.chinahamexpo.com/>>.

April 16–18, **61st Annual International DX Convention**, Holiday Inn Hotel & Conference Center, Visalia, California. Early registration suggested. For details go to: <<http://www.dxconvention.org/>>.

Ham Radio News (from page 2)

New Tech Class Question Pool Released

The National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC) has released the new pool of questions from which Technician Class license exams will be assembled for the next four years. The new pool contains roughly 400 questions, of which 35 will be selected for each Tech exam. For the first time since volunteer examining began in the 1980s, the Element 2 exam will contain questions based on graphics and diagrams. These questions will be used between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2014.

Handiham System Moves to New Home

The headquarters of the Courage Handiham System has moved from the main Courage Center complex in Golden Valley, Minnesota, a Minneapolis suburb, to Camp Courage in rural Maple Lake, about 45 miles away. The move appears to be part of an overall move by Courage Center, in the wake of the nationwide downturn in philanthropic giving, to concentrate more of its resources on its core rehabilitation services. For more information, go to <www.handiham.org>.

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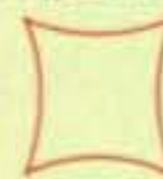
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SixPak 6X2 RF Matrix Antenna Switch

The SixPak is designed to switch 6 antennas to radios. It can be mounted inside the shack or outside up on the tower. Electro-mechanical fail-safe interlocking ensures that neither radio can feed power into the other.



TenPak Shack-LAN 2x10 Matrix Antenna Switch

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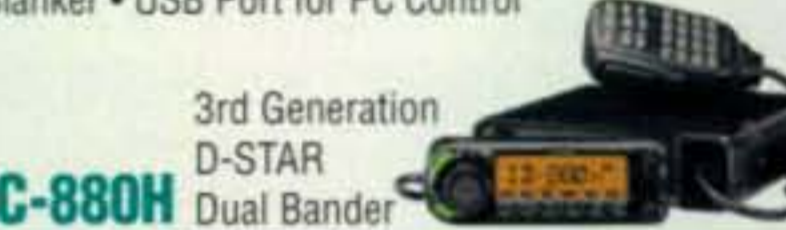
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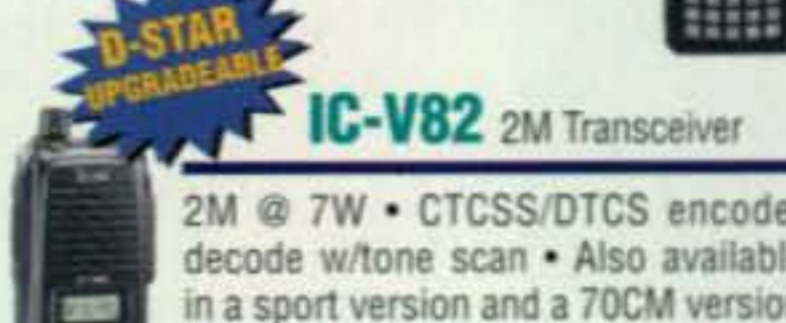
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(D-STAR repeater) mode • Free software
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Submersible*** • Optional GPS speaker
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operation

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Ein Funkamateurl in Deutschland (A Radio Amateur in Germany)

BY NICHOLAS M. ELIAS II,* N3AIU

I've spent all of my professional life as an astronomer or a systems engineer working in astronomy. Shortly after I landed my first job, a scientist from Germany joined our group. As colleagues, we did research and published papers together. After three years, he left for other employment in the U.S. and Europe. Nine years after that, I changed jobs as well.

Two years ago, I bumped into my friend at a conference. He had just become the director of an observatory in Heidelberg, Germany. We exchanged the usual pleasantries and talked for a while. I mentioned that I was very happy with my present position, but I was looking for a change. He answered that he was looking for someone to lead the data-reduction software¹ team for an interferometric instrument² designed to search for planets orbiting other stars. Such a nice coincidence! A few days after a telephone interview with the management, I was offered the job.

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I had experience writing data-reduction software, and I had been involved with other interferometer and planet-detection projects. The prospect of using this instrument for my own research appealed to me as well. Taking the job, however, meant putting my life in the U.S. on hold for a few years. Plus, the only words of German that I knew were *ja*, *nein*, and *Gesundheit*. Also, what about my passion, amateur radio?

I was very excited, but at the same time I agonized over whether to accept. Should I take advantage of an excellent opportunity overseas, or should I wait several years for a similar opportunity to appear in the U.S.? Sometimes posing the correct question leads to the obvious answer: Go to Germany.

Getting Organized

Travel is the norm for many astronomers, but this time was different. I was actually going to live in a foreign country for two or three years. Granted, Germany is not the most exotic of locales, but a lot of questions needed to be answered quickly. Should I ship my furniture or get new furniture after I arrive? Should I ship my car, purchase a pre-owned one when I'm settled, or just use public transportation? What ham



Photo A— The view toward the west of Gauangelloch from my balcony. Note the tile roofs, the green fields, the power lines, and one of the footpaths leading to the village of Ochsenbach.



Photo B— My Amateurfunkstelle, or “amateur radio station,” in Gauangelloch. The transceiver and impedance matcher are on the left, station accessories are on the right, and the power supply is on the lower shelf.

equipment should I bring or buy? How do I obtain permission to operate an amateur radio station in Germany?

I handled the non-ham questions quickly. I shipped the furniture from the condo, not the vacation house. Public transportation is quite good in Germany. Unfortunately, the observatory is located on top of the *Königstuhl*, which is a hill outside of Heidelberg with no nighttime bus service (remember, I'm an astronomer). I was tempted to buy a used Mercedes for my daily commute (also for warp-speed travel on the *Autobahn*), but I had already bought a hybrid car the previous year. Shipping cost less than the loss incurred by selling a low-mileage car, so I did the former. The flexibility of having my own car in Germany would definitely come in handy. Besides, a hybrid car matched well with the high gasoline prices in Europe.

I could have bought a new transceiver, but I wasn't going on a DXpedition, so I decided to economize. I'd been using an ICOM IC-706MkIIIG in my condo because it was a lot of radio in a compact package. I originally intended to install it in my car and eventually buy a larger radio that was more ergonomic for CW, but I never got around to it. I expected that my apartment in Germany would also be small, so the '706 was a good choice.

I toyed with the idea of building or buying a multiband vertical antenna for HF operation, but I wanted a stealth antenna that I wouldn't have to explain to the neighbors (or a policeman!) with my broken German. I'd been using hidden and not-so-hidden wire antennas throughout my ham career, so I packed several spools of wire.

It was likely that my antenna would be non-resonant, so an impedance matcher would definitely be required. I've had an MFJ-969 for many years, and that would work just fine. I have

a personal laptop that I use for work, but it does double duty as a logger and digital-mode generator. I typically operate 80–90% CW, so I needed keyer paddles. My Bencher would be perfectly adequate. Fortunately, the '706 has a built-in electronic keyer. The SM-20 desk-top microphone, lightweight headphones, low-pass filter, RIGblaster-plus digital interface, and a small toolbox rounded out the equipment list. Since commercial power is 240 volts in Germany, I would have to buy a new 12-volt power supply there.

I allowed the moving company to pack my gear. After all, they're experts. I must say that they did a very good job. The individual components were padded and packed into small boxes, and then all of the small boxes were padded and packed into a single large box. I was concerned about the keyer paddles, since they are delicate. I packed them in bubble wrap inside of a Tupperware® plastic container before giving them to the movers. *Note:* Make sure to accurately describe the equipment and its monetary value on customs and insurance forms, just in case your equipment is lost or damaged in transit.

Obtaining permission to operate an amateur radio station in Germany is relatively straightforward. I found most of the information I needed on the internet. For a limited time after I arrived, I could operate as DL/N3AIU/P. That's a long call to send on CW, especially in a pile-up. Since my stay would be an extended one, I would have to apply for a German license after I established my place of residence. Germany is a CEPT signatory, which means that my U.S. Extra Class license made me eligible for a German Class A license. I was ready to go.

Finding a Place

When I arrived in Germany, I was very fortunate that a colleague volunteered to drive me to the various government offices (my car did not arrive for six weeks) plus interpret for me. I can definitely appreciate the difficulties faced by foreigners who move to a new country.

She also helped me find an apartment. We checked out three places, but I was not satisfied. I wanted something small and inexpensive, but I also wanted a place where I could set up my station. Finally, we located a small flat in the village of Gauangelloch, the name of which is reminiscent more of Scotland than southwest Germany. Roughly translated, the name means “remote fishing hole.” It has 2000 inhabitants, a town hall, a small bakery, two churches, two branch banks, three restaurants, and no gas station. It is located on the side of the *Königstuhl* opposite from Heidelberg, only nine kilometers (five miles) from the observatory. The little road to work, which carries almost no traffic, runs through a dense and picturesque forest.

The apartment was the perfect size, perched on the third and top floor of a six-unit building. It was located on a street called *Schöne Aussicht*, which means “beautiful view.” As you can see in photo A, the name is very appropriate. I thought it was perfect, and said that I'd take it. As I walked out the door to leave, I looked to my left at a horrifying spectacle—high-voltage lines about 100 meters (328 feet) from the apartment, hidden in plain sight. I had visions of continuous S9 + 20 dB noise on all bands. I was about to change my mind about the apartment, but other than the towers it was the perfect place and I didn't want to impose on my colleague for any more driving. I would just have to do the best I could with station design and hope for the best.

Setting Up My Station

A few days later, I began searching for a 40A switching power supply. Some friends recommended a German company

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called *wimo* (www.wimo.de). It sells ham gear and accessories and is located about 60 km (36 miles) southwest of Heidelberg. I called and tried to speak some German, but mercifully I found that they spoke English very well. Within a few days, the company shipped a Diamond Antenna GZV4000 switcher to me. My furniture and station arrived on the day I moved into my flat. After unpacking the sundries, I began thinking about where to set up the station. I had a choice of several locations. I chose the nook between the living room and the dining area. As you can see in photo B, the console table fit perfectly. My office recliner provided real arm-chair copy. I even had some room on the wall to hang my licenses and reminders of home.

Before I could get on the air, I had to install an antenna. I thought about hanging a thin wire from my balcony to one of the trees in the backyard, but I decided against it. The distance was relatively short, plus I was sure that it would eventually be discovered. I pondered slinging a thin wire up and over the roof. Without thinking, I climbed up the clay tiles to the peak of the building to check the feasibility. I'm not the biggest fan of high places, but I've climbed many roofs and trees before. Then I looked down and experienced a "weak in the knees" feeling. The roof was a bit steeper than those I had climbed back in the U.S. One slip and I would have fallen 14 meters (43 feet) to my doom. Please! Make sure that you never do anything this stupid!

Not wanting to spend time devising a safe roof-climbing protocol, I settled for an indoor antenna. My apartment was small, but I could certainly string up a significant length of wire. Plus, the high-peaked roof had provided me with a sizable attic. I considered a G5RV antenna, which is center fed with a length of about 31 meters (102 feet). If I fed the antenna directly to the impedance matcher without standard the open-wire transmission line, it just might make a workable indoor antenna. I decided to give it a try. I cut the wire to the required lengths. Before tacking the antenna around the apartment and the attic, I decided to load it up on 40 meters with the wire partially coiled up on the floor. I made contacts with DJ2CV, LY4BR, and EU3DN using the temporary call DL/N3AIU/P. I then performed the final installation and made a few more European QSOs on 80, 30, 20, and 17 meters. It even loaded on 15, 12, 10, and 6 meters. I'd be the first to admit that these were not the most earth-shatter-

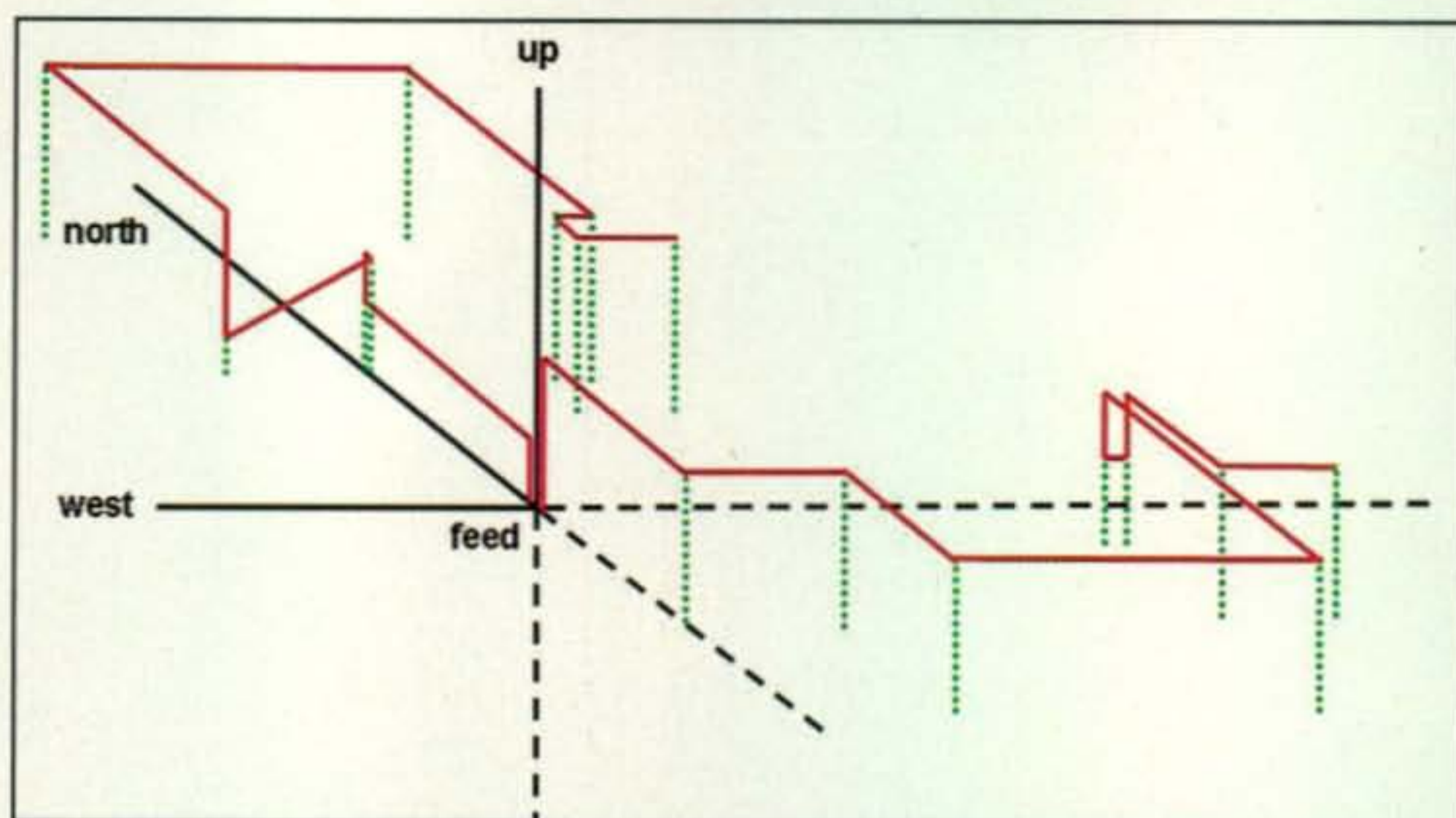


Fig. 1—The DL1NE compromise indoor antenna—a G5RV without the feed line. Each arm is 15.5 meters (51 feet) long. The red lines are the antenna wires, the black lines are the isometric coordinate system, and the dotted green lines aid the viewer to understand the 3D shape.

ing QSOs in amateur radio history, but I was cautiously optimistic for the future.

I'd like to show the antenna to you in its full glory, but there is no way convenient way to fit all of it in a single picture. The solution? A drawing, of course. In fig. 1 you can clearly see how irregular it is. How well would such an antenna work, especially during the low part of the sunspot cycle? I must say that I have been pleased and even surprised with the results.

On the Air

I was relieved to find that my location was relatively quiet, in spite of the nearby high-voltage lines. Occasionally, very high noise levels would suddenly appear on 80 and 40 meters late at night, but then just as suddenly they would disappear. I have never been able to locate the source of this QRN, but I suspect it comes from an appliance used sporadically by one of my neighbors. During the day, I would sometimes find high noise on 20 and 17 meters. I did manage to find the cause of that noise ... my laptop's power supply.

The bands acted just as one would expect near the sunspot minimum. There were occasional openings on 15, 12, and 10 meters. Short skip within Europe was much more frequent compared with long skip to other continents. Es openings on 6 meters were infrequent. I spent most of my time on 20 and 17 meters in the early mornings and on weekends. As on the higher bands, the skip could be short or long, but long was somewhat more frequent. If I stayed up late at night, I would definitely try 80 and 40 meters.

While in Germany, I didn't actively participate in contests, but did use them to hunt for new DXCC entities and U.S. states. I really enjoyed the Worked All Germany (WAG) contest every October, which is similar to the ARRL International DX Contest. It is sponsored by the Deutscher Amateur Radio Club (DARC), the national amateur radio society of Germany. In this contest everyone must contact German stations, which made even modest stations like mine very popular.

By June 2009 I had made nearly 3,200 QSOs using DL/N3AIU/P and DL1NE, not including 653 QSOs with the DARC/Heidelberg callsign DA2U during the CQ WW DX CW Contest in November 2008. Most of them were on CW, but I occasionally made some on SSB, PSK31, PSK63, and RTTY. I have confirmed 165 DXCC entities and 505 band-entities. I have confirmed QSOs on all continents except Antarctica. I have also confirmed 24 U.S. states, all on CW and mostly on 20 and 15 meters. Most of these QSOs were with stations on the East Coast, but I've worked stations out west as well. Not too bad for an indoor antenna, eh?

I wish that I could share all of my QSOs with you here, but that's not possible. When I return to the U.S., I plan to put my logs on the web for my friends to view. Some QSOs, however, were especially memorable and worth mentioning here. For example, Montenegro became a DXCC entity immediately after I arrived in Germany, and I've worked it a number of times. I've also made contact with Rodriguez Island, Iraq, São Tome and Principe, Mozam-

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| <p>wird hiermit gemäß § 3 Abs. 1 des Gesetzes über den Amateurfunk vom 23. Juni 1997 (BGBI. I S. 1494) i.V.m. der Verordnung zum Gesetz über den Amateurfunk (APuV) vom 15. Februar 2005 (BGBI. I S. 242) unter gleichzeitiger Zuteilung eines Rufzeichens zur Teilnahme am Amateurfunkdienst zugelassen.</p> <p>is hereby admitted to, and at the same time assigned a call sign for, participation in the amateur service pursuant to section 3(1) of the Amateur Radio Act of 23 June 1997 (Federal Law Gazette Part I page 1494) in conjunction with the Ordinance concerning the Amateur Radio Act (APuV) of 15 February 2005 (Federal Law Gazette Part I page 242).</p> <p>est admis à participer au service d'amateur en vertu de l'article 3, paragraphe 1, de la Loi sur les radiocommunications d'amateur en date du 23 juin 1997 (Journal officiel de la République fédérale d'Allemagne, partie I, p. 1494), en liaison avec le Décret relatif à la Loi sur les radiocommunications d'amateur en date du 15 février 2005 (Journal officiel de la République fédérale d'Allemagne, partie I, p. 242), un indicatif d'appel lui étant parallèlement assigné.</p> | |
| Rufzeichen / Call sign / Indicatif d'appel DL 1 NE | CEPT-Amateurfunkgenehmigung CEPT radio amateur licence Licence CEPT de radioamateur gemäß/pursuant to/ selon CEPT TR 61-01 |
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| Raum für weitere amtliche Eintragungen / Space for additional official entries / Espace pour d'autres inscriptions officielles Der Zulassungsinhaber ist verpflichtet, jede Änderung seiner Aufenthaltsverhältnisse in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland sofort der Bundesnetzagentur mitzuteilen. Die Zulassung ist unter dem Vorbehalt des jederzeitigen Widerrufs gültig bis zum 05.07.2008. Sie kann widerrufen werden, wenn der Zulassungsinhaber die fälligen Beiträge gemäß der einschlägigen Rechtsverordnungen nicht entrichtet. Diese Zulassung wurde aufgrund der Anerkennung einer US-amerikanischen Amateurfunkgenehmigung/Prüfungsbescheinigung ohne Teilnahme an einer deutschen Prüfung erteilt. | |
|  | |

Fig. 2— My first formal permission to operate an amateur radio station in Germany. My callsign appears in the lower left. I renewed this CEPT license when my job contract was extended.

bique, Ethiopia, St. Kitts, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Cambodia, Rwanda, Uzbekistan, Galapagos Islands, Chagos Island, Libya, Martinique, Guinea, Surinam, The Sovereign Military Order of Malta, Mali, Gibraltar, Nigeria, Indonesia, Monaco, Burkina Faso, Jordan, Djibouti, Malawi, Willis Island, Botswana, Vatican City, Uganda, Grenada, Sierra Leone, and Bhutan. The pile-ups for Rodriguez, Libya, SMOM, and the Vatican were especially exciting.

My operations have yielded other surprises. For example, I worked several stations on the U.S. east coast on 80 meters CW, including the big-gun station K3LR. Even with their superior stations, I never would have expected to work them on this band with my contorted little antenna. I worked a number of stations in the Caribbean and South America on 40 meters CW, VY2ZM on 40 meters SSB, and P49X on 40 meters RTTY. Again, these QSOs were completely unexpected. The 6-meter Es season in 2007 was somewhat disappointing throughout Europe, but one summer day I noticed that HB9SIX (a beacon two grid squares to the south) was much stronger than normal. I tuned around a little, found EA9IB, and worked him on SSB. That was fun!

Off the Air

Since DL/N3AIU/P was only a temporary callsign, I applied for a CEPT license. Actually, in Germany there is no such thing as an amateur radio license; it is formally called an *Amateur-*

funkgenehmigung, or "amateur radio permission." I found the form online and submitted it along with a copy of my U.S. amateur license and *Aufenthalts-erlaubnis*, or "work/residence permit," that was affixed within my passport. I was later billed for 100 Euros. A few days later (that's right, days!) my callsign arrived, DL1NE, valid through 31 December 2009. The document appears in fig. 2. I was amazed, because the callsign contained my initials. I certainly did not apply for it. Did a kind *Beamtler*, or "civil servant," specifically assign it, or was it assigned randomly? I'll never know.

Now that I had a callsign, I needed QSL cards. I shopped around using the internet. Many companies offered beautiful cards, but I've always preferred the minimalist QSL containing the required information for awards. I finally decided on HappyQSL.com, a printer in the Czech Republic. The cards

were relatively inexpensive and were of reasonable quality (fig. 3). I've already placed two additional orders.

Autoschilder, or "license plates," are a big deal in Germany. Depending on how much space is available on the car, they can have different numbers of characters or even different fonts! My Honda has only a small recess for the license plate, so I was given a very short one, "HD-F2," shown in photo C. The HD stands for Heidelberg, and the F2 is very symbolic for a DXer who is waiting for the next sunspot maximum. That was quite a coincidence.

I wanted to meet other hams while I lived in Germany, so I joined the Heidelberg chapter of the DARC, which is equivalent to the ARRL. In the *Clubheim*, or "club room," there is an entire wall of pigeon holes, one for each member, representing the incoming QSL service. There is another wall of pigeon holes, one for each DXCC entity that has a QSL bureau. Each member has to fill those with his/her outgoing cards.

There are informal meetings every week. Afterwards we go to a local restaurant for dinner. This wonderful custom, which is common among many German social clubs, is called a *Stammtisch*, or "regular table." We talk a little about amateur radio, but we also talk about more mundane things such as the weather, travel, and politics. And of course, the beer is always excellent.

No article about amateur radio in Germany can be written without a brief mention of the Friedrichshafen hamfest called, coincidentally, "Ham Radio." It is the European equivalent of the Dayton Hamvention®, and is held every year at the end of June. Friedrichshafen is a picturesque little town on Lake Constance (called *der Bodensee* in German), with many orchards and vineyards in the outskirts. I went there in 2007 and met hams from all over the world. I tried the latest Hilberling trans-

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|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| WAZ 14 | GERMANY | ITU 28 |
| DL1NE | | |
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Fig. 3— My functional QSL card.



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ceiver and the Begali Sculpture keyer paddles. I even saw many of the "ARRL gang." I had a lot of fun.

Epilogue

For those of you who live in locations where HF antennas are difficult to install, don't lose hope! No, I didn't have a huge signal from my station in Germany, but with a little patience and skill, I worked some good DX. I know that you can, too. It can be frustrating sometimes, but keep at it! I'm sure that many of you would even enjoy the challenge, and don't for-



Photo C— The ionospheric license plate on the back of my hybrid car.

get that the sunspot maximum will be back soon. When 15 and 10 meters regularly open for F-layer propagation, you can work the world using almost any piece of wire.

My entire experience in Germany was wonderful. It was a little hectic in the beginning, but I believe that I made the right choice when I decided to go. I hope that I have been a good ambassador for both amateur radio and the United States. I have come to appreciate Germany and Germans. Not surprisingly, I have also come to "re-appreciate" America and Americans, and through amateur radio, I have made friends for life.

Toward the end of my sojourn in Germany, I was becoming very homesick for the United States. However, now that I've returned to new professional challenges³, I find myself missing Germany. I'm torn, but in a good way. Would I live in another country for an extended period? Maybe, but probably not right away. And I'd want to set up a small station ...

Notes

1. "Data reduction" means processing raw data from an instrument so that the results can be used by scientists.

2. Optical/Near-infrared interferometry is combining the light from two separated telescopes. It is analogous to radio interferometry (e.g., performed with the Very Large Array near Socorro, NM). Interferometry is used for high-resolution imaging and measuring precise stellar positions. The planets are too faint to image directly, but we see them tug on their parent stars as they orbit (Newton's Third Law). When we measure the positions of the stars as a function of time, we can solve for the orbit of the planet.

3. After three years in Heidelberg, I accepted an associate scientist position at the National Radio Astronomy Observatory in Socorro, NM. I am the new supervisor for the data-reduction software of the EVLA (Socorro, NM) and ALMA (Atacama, Chile) radio interferometers. See <www.nrao.edu> for details.

Results of the 2009 CQ WW WPX CW Contest

BY RANDY THOMPSON,* K5ZD



Bodo, DL3OCH, used this impressive curtain array of 16 dipoles as 5N00CH during the contest. This antenna will be used for commercial broadcasting once it is put into service.

The 51st running of the WPX CW Contest on May 30–31, 2009 fell on a rare fifth weekend in the month of May. This moved the contest away from its usual conflict with bank holidays in Europe and the Memorial Day holiday in the United States, enabling many contesters to participate without having to share their time with holiday or family activities. The result was a record number 3,649 log submissions and 44 new World or Continent records!

Big scores result from big multipliers. The multi-operator team at UU7J surpassed all others with 1311 prefixes (just two short of the all-time record set by DR1A last year). They were followed by WE3C (1274) and NR4M (1267). Among the single operators, the top prefix hunters were CU2X with 1066 and VY2TT with 1054. There were 60 entries with 1000 or more prefix multipliers—almost double last year!

Conditions were much better than for the WPX SSB contest. Some participants reported conditions as only being fair, while others raved about excellent over-the-pole openings. UP2L worked 940 North America stations on 20 meters, a direct polar path from Kazakhstan. Sporadic-E provided excitement on both 10 and 15 meters, with double- and triple-hop contacts providing score-boosting DX contacts. KD4D reported 21 contacts with Europe on 10 meters. The low bands experienced QRN in both Europe and North America. Top band winner LY2IJ was only able to work 15 stations outside Europe.

Many competitors find it helpful to set a goal for their operation. KH7XS had high expectations with his goal to “break the old Oceanic record set near the top of the last solar cycle.” He did it by a comfortable margin. N1LN

defined his effort from NC4KW very clearly: “Goal 1 was to make 1M points. Goal 2 was to log 1000 Qs.” Mission accomplished. NG7Z’s goals were more modest: “Break 200 Q’s and get at least one contact on every band.” He did it in less than five hours of operating time. Regardless of goals or expectations, WO1N is probably not the only one to feel “...a bit of contestant’s remorse. When it was over I was bummed I didn’t spend more time...”

Not everyone in the contest was measuring their success by the numbers. For KE1HA, “This was my first CW contest ever.” The multi-op team at NM7D reported: “We all had fun and learned a lot in our first try at this operation.” KL8DX summed it up this way: “Limited time but unlimited fun.”

Single Operator, All Bands

The Single Operator High Power category pitted two experienced contesters in locations with access to Europe on all bands. Valery, RD3AF, operated EF8M to a new World record score, narrowly taking the victory over Hrane, YT1AD, operating as 3V9A. Slightly more contacts on 40 meters made the difference. Hrane did earn the trophy for top combined score from both modes.

The surprise performance of the weekend was the third-place finish of Ken, K6LA, operating from VY2TT. Making the world top three from Canada is a rare accomplishment. Ken also broke the North American record set way back in 1999! In fourth place, with a new Asia record, was Andy, UU0JM, operating from 4L0A. Toni, OH2UA, made another trip to the Azores to set a new European record and sixth place overall.

In the USA, Alex, LZ4AX, piloted the KC3R station to ninth place in the world and a new

USA record. Randy, K5ZD, at AK1W and Dick, WC1M, were close behind, with logging accuracy determining the order of finish between them. Bud, AA3B, and Kamal, N3KS (operating WM3T), rounded out the USA top five. Kamal’s score, plus his victory on SSB, earned him the trophy for top USA combined score.

On the European continent, Serge, RA3CW, operated RS3A to a nice finish, while Tine, S50A, finished a comfortable third. The next seven places in the European Top Ten were all grouped within 10 percent of each other. Andy, DL3YM, moved to the top of the group by having a very accurate log. RM3F (Andy, UA3DPX) ended up just a few points ahead of another Russian special call RG6G (Alexey, RW6HX).

Single-Operator All-Band Low Power

The Single Operator Low Power category offered an interesting mix of expeditions and home stations. Yuri, VE3DZ, visited Bermuda to take the top spot after finishing second in 2008. Yasar, TA3D, used the special call YM3D to take second. Eric, K9GY, went back to Nicaragua, this time with the call YN2GY, and worked around thunderstorms that impacted his operating plans.

Ed, N1UR, operated as NV1N to take fourth in the world and his third USA victory in four years. Maury, W3EF, took his first try at the WPX contest. Family obligations prevented Maury from operating the full 36 hours, but he still finished second in the USA. Will, WJ9B/4, moved down a spot from last year to take third. John, K9QVB, did a great job from Illinois to finish fifth. Peter, K2PS, finished sixth in his last contest before moving to a new location.

The race for top low power score in Europe was among three stations. Gedas, LY9A, had

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TROPHY WINNERS AND DONORS

SINGLE OPERATOR ALL BAND

WORLD: Steve Bolia, N8BJQ Trophy. Won by: **EF8M** operated by Valery Komarov, RD3AF
WORLD Low Power: Caribbean Contesting Consortium Trophy. Won by: **VE3DZ/VP9** operated by Yuri Onipko, VE3DZ
WORLD QRP: Bill Parker, W8QZA Trophy. Won by: **Dragan Djordjevic, 4O4A**
USA: Dennis Motschenbacher, K7BV Trophy. Won by: **KC3R** operated by Alexander Avramov, LZ4AX
USA Low Power: Ken Boasi, N2ZN Trophy. Won by: **NV1N** operated by Edward Sawyer, N1UR
USA QRP: John T. Laney, K4BAI Trophy. Won by: **Gary Hembree, N7IR**
USA Zone 4 High Power: Society of Midwest Contesters Trophy. Won by: **KT5J** operated by Steve London, N2IC
USA Zone 4 Low Power: Society of Midwest Contesters Trophy. Won by: **John F. Meyer, K9QVB**
USA Zone 3 High Power: Northern California Contest Club Trophy. Won by: **NY6N** operated by Daniel M. Craig, N6MJ
USA Zone 3 Low Power: Arizona Outlaws Contest Club Trophy. Won by: **WV7Q** operated by Michael Dinkelman, N7WA
EUROPE High Power: Ivo Pezer, 5B4ADA/9A3A Trophy. Won by: **CU2X** operated by Toni Lindén, OH2UA
EUROPE Low Power: Vitor Santos, PY2NY Trophy. Won by: **Gediminas Lucinskas, LY9A**
EUROPE QRP: Julius Fazekas, N2WN Trophy. Awarded to: **Antonin Bechyna, OK7CM**

AFRICA: Chris Terkla, N1XS Trophy. Won by: **3V9A** operated by Hranislav Milosevic, YT1AD
ASIA: Rick Tavan, N6XI Trophy. Won by: **4L0A** operated by Andy Kazantsev, UU0JM
NORTH AMERICA: Louisiana Contest Club Trophy. Won by: **8P5A** operated by Tom Georgens, W2SC
NORTH AMERICA QRP: Dale Martin, KG5U Trophy. Won by: **Doug Ferris, VA3DF**
OCEANIA: Lloyd Cabral, KH6LC Trophy. Won by: **Bill Kollenbaum, KH7XS**
SOUTH AMERICA: David Kopacz, KY1V Trophy. Won by: **PJ2T** operated by Jim Fitzpatrick, WI9WI
SOUTHERN CONE (CE,CX,LU): Tom Morton, K6CT Trophy. Won by: **Daniel Neves, CX9AU**

CANADA High Power: Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC) Trophy. Won by: **VY2TT** operated by Ken Widelitz, K6LA
CANADA Low Power: Contest Club Ontario Trophy. Won by: **Alexey Yushin, VE2XAA**
JAPAN: Simone Candotto, IV3NVN Trophy. Won by: **Masaki Okano, JH4UYB**

SINGLE OPERATOR, SINGLE BAND

WORLD 28 MHz: Steve Hodgson, ZC4LI Trophy. Won by: **UP6P** operated by Yuri Loparev, UN6P
WORLD 21 MHz: Andrei Stchilenok, NP3D Memorial (W3UA/RA3AA sponsor) Trophy. Won by: **ZX5J** operated by Carl Cook, AI6V
WORLD 14 MHz: Gene Walsh, N2AA Trophy. Won by: **UP2L** operated by Vladimir Umanets, UA9BA
WORLD 7 MHz: 6Y1V Contest Station Trophy. Won by: **YW4D** operated by Paolo Stradiotto, YV1DIG
WORLD 7 MHz Low Power: Neal Campbell, K3NC Trophy. Won by: **9A7T** operated by Zlatko Maticic, 9A2EU
WORLD 3.5 MHz: Ranko Boca, 4O3A Trophy. Won by: **9A1CCY** operated by Sasa Pokorni, 9A3NM
WORLD 1.8 MHz: Dusko Dumanovic, ZL3WW Trophy. Won by: **Arunas Vaglys, LY2IJ**
USA 28 MHz: Paul Beringer, NG7Z Trophy. Won by: **WN1GIV/4** operated by Bob Patten, N4BP
USA 21 MHz: Charlie Wooten, NF4A Trophy. Won by: **Eric Silverthorn, NM5M**
USA 14 MHz: Kansas City DX Club Trophy. Won by: **Robert L. Shohet, KQ2M/1**
USA 7 MHz: Darin Divinia, WG5J Trophy. Won by: **Mike Tessmer, K9NW**
USA 3.5 MHz: Wes Printz, W3SE/ZL3TE Trophy. Won by: **Steven Sussman, W3BGN**
EUROPE 28 MHz High Power: SKY Contest Club Trophy. Won by: **UW1M** operated by Victor Yarovoj, UR5MW
EUROPE 21 MHz High Power: SKY Contest Club Trophy. Won by: **Milan Milovanovic, YT0Z**
EUROPE 14 MHz High Power: SKY Contest Club Trophy. Won by: **IU9T** operated by Fabio Grisafi, IT9GSF
EUROPE 7 MHz High Power: SKY Contest Club Trophy. Won by: **CT1JLZ** operated by Jiri Pesta, OK1RF
EUROPE 3.5 MHz High Power: SKY Contest Club Trophy. Awarded to: **RW2F** operated by Dmitri Gorshkov, UA2FB
EUROPE 1.8 MHz High Power: SKY Contest Club Trophy. Awarded to: **OL1A** operated by Vladimir Sladek, OK1CW

SINGLE OPERATOR ASSISTED

WORLD: D4C Station Trophy. Won by: **CN3A** operated by Stefano Brioschi, I2KQEI
USA: Ron Sigismondi, N3RS Trophy. Won by: **WK1Q** operated by Michael Keane, K1MK
EUROPE: Martin Huml, OL5Y Trophy. Won by: **IR4X** operated by Matteo Marzilli, IZ3EYZ

OVERLAY CATEGORIES

WORLD Tribander/Single Element: Helmut Mueller, DF7ZS Trophy. Won by: **VC2A** operated by Lali Laki, VE3NE
USA Tribander/Single Element: Paul Newberry, N4PN Trophy. Won by: **KR4Z** operated by Paul Newberry, N4PN
EUROPE Tribander/Single Element: WPX Contest Committee Trophy. Won by: **Matija Brodnik, S53MM**
WORLD Rookie: Val Edwards W8KIC Memorial (K3LR sponsor) Trophy. Won by: **Sergej Volkov, RN3DBA**
NORTH AMERICA Rookie: Val Edwards W8KIC Memorial (K3LR sponsor) Trophy. Won by: **David Davison, AF6EV**

MULTI-OPERATOR, SINGLE-TRANSMITTER

WORLD: Steve Miller, N0SM Trophy. Won by: **CS9L** operated by DL5AXX, DL8WAA, SV1RP
USA: Phil Allardice, KT3Y Trophy. Won by: **K1LZ** operated by K1LZ, K1VR, K1ZM, W1UE, K3JO
ASIA: W2MIG Memorial (NX7TT Sponsor) Trophy. Won by: **C4N** operated by 5B4AGM, 5B8AD, UA9CDV
EUROPE: Andy Ruse, YO3JR/YR1A Trophy. Won by: **RU1A** operated by RW1AC, RA1AIP, RA1AR, UA1CUR, UA9MQR, RU4HP, UA1AKC
NORTH AMERICA: Jim George, N3BB Trophy. Won by: **HQ2R** operated by UA3AGW, HR2J

MULTI-OPERATOR, TWO-TRANSMITTER

WORLD: UA1DZ Memorial (W3UA Sponsor) Trophy. Won by: **OL0W** operated by OK1WMV, OK1VVK, OK1DSZ, OK1HRA
USA: Florida Contest Group Trophy. Won by: **KD4D/3** operated by N6CY, N8II, K3MM, K3RA, K3WI, NA3D, KD4D
EUROPE: Tom Georgens, W2SC Trophy. Awarded to: **9A800VZ** operated by 9A3TR, 9A3OS, 9A5X, 9A7V

MULTI-OPERATOR, MULTI-TRANSMITTER

WORLD: Steve Merchant, K6AW Trophy. Won by: **WE3C** operated by K3CT, K3TEJ, K3TUF, N3RD, NN3Q, W3FV, W8FJ, WE3C
USA: Jim Reisert, AD1C Trophy. Awarded to: **NR4M** operated by K1SE, K4EC, K4EU, K4GM, K4GMH, K4IA, K4ZW, K7SV, KC4D, N2YO, N4NW, NR4M, W3YY, WA4JUK
EUROPE: David Robbins, K1TTT Trophy. Won by: **UU7J** operated by UU6JJ, UT3UA, UT5UGR, UU4JMG, UU0JX, UU1AZ

CONTEST EXPEDITION

WORLD: Phil Goetz N6ZZ Memorial Trophy. Won by: **YN2GY** operated by Eric Hall, K9GY

COMBINED SSB/CW

WORLD Single Operator: Yuri Blarovich, K3BU Trophy. Won by: **Hranislav Milosevic, YT1AD**
USA Single Operator: Bill Fisher W4AN Memorial (KM3T Sponsor). Won by: **Kamal Sirageldin, N3KS**
WORLD Club Score: CQ Magazine trophy. Won by: **Bavarian Contest Club**

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Dave, K5GN, hands out multipliers from the A73A multi-single in Qatar.



Bob, KQ2M, is USA winner and new record holder for single band 20 meters.

a very accurate log to finish first in Europe and fifth overall. Pert, OK2WTM, operated as OL6P to finish eight overall and second in Europe. GJ3WW was the third European in the world Top Ten. Long-time WPX contesteer Franci, S51F, easily took fourth. EU2MM and UT7NW finished just 10k apart for the next two spots.

Single Operator, Single Band

UP2L, operated by Willy, UA9BA, had the top single band score in the world. Willy set a new world record not only for 20 meters, but for all single band entries. Vaho, 4L8A, finished a strong second, but was unable to defend his 20-meter record. Jovica, 6W1SJ, survived some equipment damage the day before the contest to finish third and set a new African record. Bob, KQ2M/1, matched his USA victory and record-setting effort on SSB with one on CW. Fabio, IT9GSF, used the special call IU9T to take the top 20 meter score for Europe.

Competition was fierce on 40 meters with both of the top finishers having a world record as their goal. When it was all done, the winner was Paul, YV1DIG, operating as YW4D from the station of YV5AMH. Paul overcame amplifier problems the first night. Perennial 40-meter champion ZM3A (Dule, ZL3WW) broke his own Oceania record on the way to second place. Dule had to operate the first 6 hours using low power until he was able to get a power generator, but it was low activity on the second day that hurt his score the most. Jiri, OK1RF, operated from CT1JLZ to finish a close third. Bernd, VK2IA, visited the Northern Corridor Radio Group in Perth (VK6AA) and enjoyed their new three-element Yagi on his way to a sixth place finish.

Eighty meters was dominated by Europeans. Sasa, 9A3NM, celebrated the 35th year

of club station 9A1CCY with the top 80-meter score. RW2F, operated by Dmitri, UA2FB, was unable to match his victory on SSB but finished second. Milan, OK2BYW, finished a close third. The only non-European score in the Top Ten was by Mike, KH6ND, who finished ninth while setting a new Oceania record. This is an impressive score from such an isolated location. In the USA competition, Steve, W3BGN, won for the fourth year in a row. Chuck, KØRF, put up a nice score from out west in Colorado to finish second.

The 160-meter competition was among Arunas, LY2IJ, Vladimir OK1CW at OL1A, and Bela, HA8BE. Paul, K8PO/1, was the only score outside of Europe in the Top Ten.

With sporadic-E providing propagation, we don't need sunspots to have fun on 10 meters. Yuri, UN6P, took advantage of band openings to Europe to put UP6P in the top spot. Second place UW1M (op Victor, UR5MW) made 170 more contacts than Yuri, but most were with 1-point Europeans. Third and fourth place was a close race between Meho, E73O, and Mersudin, E73C, who finished only 50k points apart. Bob, N4BP, used the call WN1GIV/4 to finish sixth overall and first in the USA.

Carl, AI6V, returned to Brazil to pilot ZX5J to his second victory in a row on 15 meters. The next three places were incredibly close with only 70k points between them. Raimundo, PT7CG, grabbed second place over Joe, W5ASP, who operated from ZF1A. Jesus, LU5FC, used the special call AY5F to finish fourth. The top European score was Milan, YTØZ, who finished fifth, just ahead of Laszlo, HA3NU at HG3R. Seventh went to the top USA score of Eric, NM5M, operating from the NR5M superstation.

The top low power single band score was also on 20 meters. Miro, YU2A, took the victory over Aleksey, RV9JR, and Brian, 5B4AIZ at C4Z. Top USA score on 20 meters was by Carol, N2MM. The second highest Low Power single band score was on 40 meters by Zlatko, 9A2EU, operating as 9A7T. His competition was from Anatoly, ER3DX. The top USA 40-meter score was by Richard, W2EG.

The lower bands had some exciting races. On 80 meters Zeljko, E77C, finished only 4k points ahead of OL4W (operator Milan, OK1IF). On 160 meters it was Szabo, HA8IB, finishing ahead of Ozer, TA2RC. YT4A and E79Z were less than 2k points behind in third and fourth!

The higher bands are always a bit easier and more popular for the low power ops. On 10 meters, Matija, 9A3VM, had the high score over Victor, US5XD, and Neacsu, YO8AXP (operating YR8A). In the USA, only 800 points separated winner NA4W (Courtney, K4WI) from Julius, N2WN! Scores were higher on 15 meters, with Franceso, YV1FM, getting the category win over Valery, UA9FGJ. YR8B (Mancas, YO8DOH), had the top European score. Andy, WB4TDH, was the high USA scorer on 15 meters.

QRP

The single operator all band QRP competition was extremely close. The winner, Dragan, 4O4A, made this comment: "This was my first WW QRP contest. I accidentally discovered QRP two weeks ago... I felt like a kid, and every QSO was like a gift." Just 11k points behind in second was experienced QRP op Antonin, OK7CM. Ludek, OK2ZC, operating as OK3C, finished third.

In the USA, it was a race between two veteran QRP contesters. Gary, N7IR, was happy with his victory: "A combination of good propagation on 20 and 40 plus a new off-time strategy made this the highest score for me since 2002 and a fourth place personal best all-time in this contest." Phil, NØKE, used the call NAØCW for his second-place finish. He lost time to thunderstorms and only operated 29 hours. Dave, WA8WV, beat Tim, KT8K, for third place.

Single-Operator Assisted

The top Assisted all band score was from Stefano, IK2QEI, operating as CN3A. This was a new all-time record for the category. Matteo, IZ3EYZ, operated from IR4X to take second and set a new European record. Yuri, UA9AM, activated the call RG9A to finish third.

The Assisted single band record book was almost completely rewritten this year. Luciano, PY8AZT, won 20 meters from ZY7C and set a new world record. Second-place RZ9HT set a new record for Asia. Ivan, YU1LA, set a new record on 40 meters. S56X did the same on 80 meters. S57M set a new record on 160 meters.

In other parts of the world, John, ZL1BYZ, set a new all band record for Oceania. Gary, ZL2IFB, established the Oceania record for 10 meters. Ramon, LU5HM, operated as LP1H to set a new South American record for all bands.

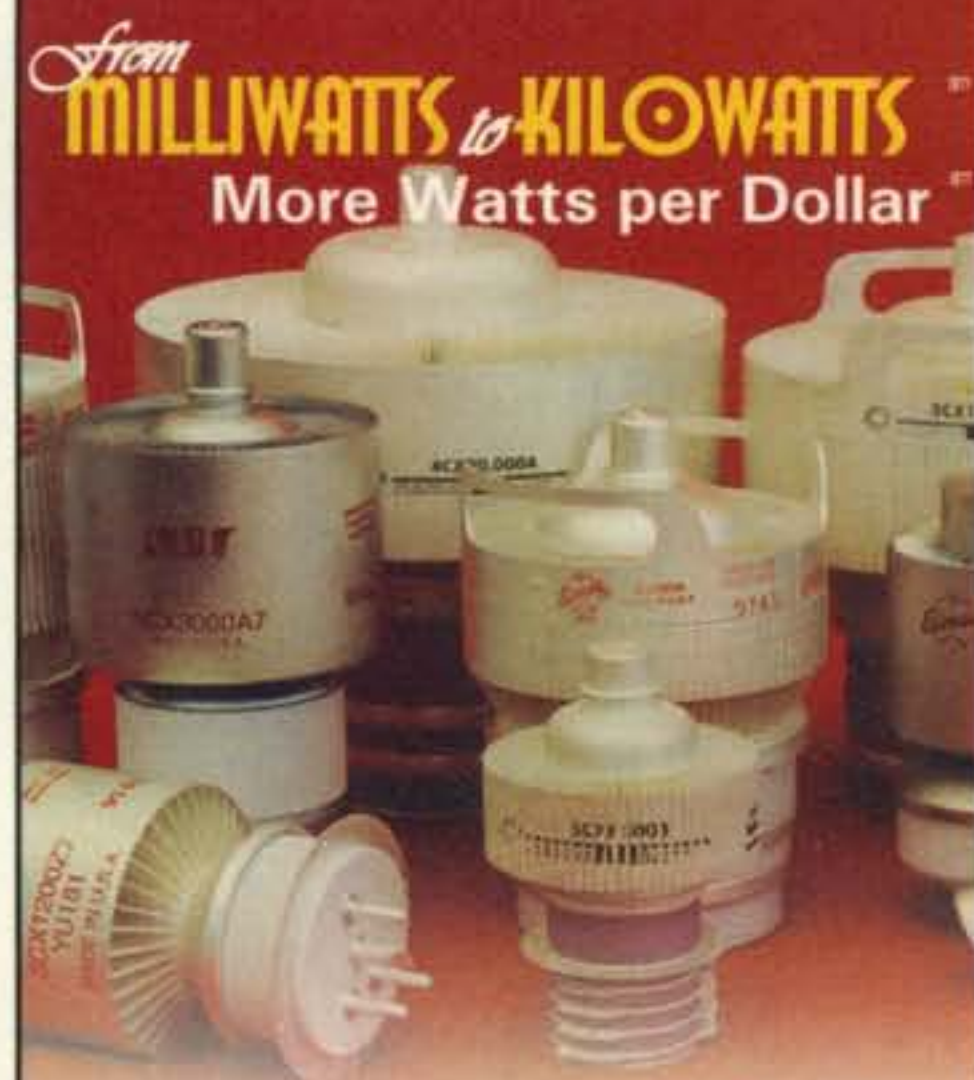
There were 645 entries in the Single-Operator Assisted categories, an increase of 50% over last year. It is interesting to note that none of the Assisted category winners had a higher score than the single operator for the same category. The large number of multipliers and emphasis on QSO points seems to limit the advantage of using the DX spotting networks. A survey of over 4000 WPX Contest participants conducted in August 2009 revealed that 40% feel the categories should be combined, while 46% are against this. No rule changes are currently planned.

Overlay Categories

The Tribander/Single-Element (TB/SE) category provides a separate competition for stations using only a tribander for 10-15-20 meters and single elements for the other bands. Lali, VE3NE, drove 17 hours north to Zone 2 and operated as VC2A using a tribander and vertical antennas to win the TB/SE category and place seventh in the world overall. Pertti, OH2PM, operated TC4X from Turkey using a two-element tribander and wire antennas from the roof of a building to finish a close second (and tenth overall). Both of these scores prove that you don't need giant antennas to do well—if you can put them in the right place. UP4L and S53MM were only 10k points apart for third and fourth place.

On low power, VE3DZ/VP9 dominated the TB/SE competition by a wide margin. Second place went to Dez, G3WW, who took advantage of a family vacation to operate from Jersey as GJ3WW. Yuri, UA9SP, activated the special call RT9S to take third.

The Rookie category is for operators who have been licensed less than three years at the time of the contest. There were 40 entrants, up slightly from last year. The Rookie category winner was 13-year old Sergej, RN3DBA, who moved up from his third-place finish last year. Second place with a very nice score was Igor, EW1IP. Third place finisher David, AF6EV, shows the right spirit with his comments: "I set



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USA TOP SCORES

SINGLE OPERATOR - HIGH POWER ALL BAND

| | |
|-----------------|-----------|
| KC3R (LZ4AX) | 9,597,400 |
| AK1W (K5ZD) | 9,260,843 |
| WC1M | 9,103,680 |
| AA3B | 7,373,940 |
| WM3T (N3KS) | 7,151,560 |
| AD4J (K3ZM) | 6,384,784 |
| KT5J (N2IC) | 6,352,988 |
| NY6N (N6MJ) | 6,104,797 |
| NY4A (N4AF) | 6,011,330 |
| KM7W (N6TR) | 5,421,090 |
| 28 MHz | |
| WN1GI/V4 (N4BP) | 296,485 |
| W5VX | 28,290 |
| 21 MHz | |
| NM5M | 969,285 |
| NJ4U | 594,450 |
| KZ5J | 170,100 |
| N6ND | 27,750 |
| 14 MHz | |
| KO2M/1 | 5,348,477 |
| W0UA | 3,139,745 |
| NR5M (K5GA) | 3,060,828 |
| K9DM | 2,119,019 |
| N8BJQ | 2,050,428 |
| AB7E | 1,558,050 |
| K4FJ | 1,207,568 |
| N8AT | 971,432 |
| KR2AA | 951,096 |
| N2NC | 860,700 |
| 7 MHz | |
| K9NW | 2,331,744 |
| WA1Z | 1,344,234 |
| W9UY5LW | 1,169,649 |
| WX9U | 968,072 |
| W7IJ | 757,358 |
| AB9H | 535,074 |
| K9MUG/4 | 416,353 |
| 3.5 MHz | |
| W3BGN | 419,869 |
| K0RF | 330,624 |
| W3NO | 154,400 |
| 1.8 MHz | |
| K8PO/1 | 12,449 |

SINGLE OPERATOR - LOW POWER ALL BAND

| | |
|---|-----------|
| NR60 (N6RO) | 9,240 |
| W9IND | 1,860 |
| SINGLE OPERATOR - LOW POWER ALL BAND | |
| *NV1N (N1UR) | 3,592,587 |
| *W3EF | 2,950,275 |
| *WJ9B/4 | 2,738,694 |
| *K9QVB | 2,494,410 |
| *K2PS | 2,306,963 |
| *WK2G/4 | 2,047,104 |
| *NR3X/4 (N4YDU) | 1,752,894 |
| *WD4AHZ | 1,689,540 |
| *WD5K | 1,582,105 |
| *WV7Q (N7WA) | 1,340,583 |
| 28 MHz | |
| *NA4W (K4WI) | 8,908 |
| *N2WN/4 | 8,120 |
| *N3UA/4 | 2,184 |
| 21 MHz | |
| *WB4TDH | 252,800 |
| *KU5B | 119,475 |
| *KE7DX | 12,905 |
| *K7MH | 7,704 |
| 14 MHz | |
| *N2MM | 1,098,045 |
| *WA1FCN/4 | 982,311 |
| *NG9T/8 (K8IR) | 382,660 |
| *K7HBN | 315,076 |
| *KM6Z | 252,492 |
| *K3GW | 178,461 |
| *NW0DX (K0IO) | 120,085 |
| *WA2VQV/3 | 105,222 |
| 7 MHz | |
| *W2EG | 1,008,830 |
| *WB8JUI | 435,015 |
| *AB1J | 241,542 |
| *AA5B | 105,608 |
| *KA90 | 84,900 |
| *KE1F/4 | 36,340 |
| 3.5 MHz | |
| *K130/4 | 4,606 |
| *N9TF | 2,484 |
| 1.8 MHz | |
| *WI4R | 962 |
| *K4WI | 725 |

SINGLE OPERATOR - QRP ALL BAND

| | |
|---|-----------|
| N7IR | 597,893 |
| NA0CW (N0KE) | 474,456 |
| WA8WV | 408,640 |
| KT8K | 357,557 |
| AA1CA | 291,760 |
| W4QO | 264,470 |
| NN7SS (K6UFO) | 221,496 |
| K1SM | 216,591 |
| W11G | 109,025 |
| W5JBV/4 | 93,939 |
| 28 MHz | |
| N6WG | 1,508 |
| 21 MHz | |
| WA6FGV | 10,218 |
| 14 MHz | |
| K3TW | 82,782 |
| NU4B | 81,030 |
| NT1A | 38,088 |
| N5WLA | 37,204 |
| W8EH | 36,400 |
| 7 MHz | |
| NE6M | 30,076 |
| 3.5 MHz | |
| W8QZV/0 | 2,880 |
| SINGLE OPERATOR ASSISTED HIGH POWER ALL BAND | |
| WK1Q (K1MK) | 5,796,895 |
| K3WW | 5,484,950 |
| WW2DX | 5,397,492 |
| W8MJ | 4,465,120 |
| NN3L (N3RS) | 3,768,720 |
| NS1S/4 (K1ZZI) | 3,220,480 |
| W5WMIJ | 2,798,643 |
| W2YC | 2,732,240 |
| NO2R | 2,700,130 |
| ND9E | 2,552,000 |
| 28 MHz | |
| W9SE | 8,614 |
| 21 MHz | |
| KC4HW | 19,278 |

14 MHz

| | |
|---|-----------|
| W4CU | 672,819 |
| N6JV | 293,094 |
| K0BX | 15,540 |
| K4EDI | 7,224 |
| 7 MHz | |
| NN4N (W4ARM) | 341,784 |
| AA4VV | 215,922 |
| K3MQ | 181,196 |
| W2IRT | 85,644 |
| SINGLE OPERATOR ASSISTED LOW POWER ALL BAND | |
| *N2BA | 1,666,170 |
| *W3FW | 1,160,082 |
| *NS4SN (W4IX) | 960,890 |
| *AA4FU | 719,831 |
| *K4FPF | 692,265 |
| *WK5X/4 | 621,338 |
| *K3WJV | 447,913 |
| *WA3KYY | 405,854 |
| *N4KG | 332,123 |
| *KZ3M | 280,194 |
| 28 MHz | |
| *N4NM | 7,504 |
| 14 MHz | |
| *KJ9A | 349,125 |
| *WM6A (K6TA) | 114,898 |
| TRIBANDER/SINGLE ELEMENT HIGH POWER ALL BAND | |
| KR4Z (N4PN) | 3,908,800 |
| K4BAI | 3,277,260 |
| WN20 (N2GC) | 3,248,232 |
| W1CU | 2,593,020 |
| KN6DV/2 | 2,517,798 |
| AB3CX/2 | 2,442,242 |
| NM50 (N5NU) | 2,128,780 |
| N1WR/3 | 2,081,340 |
| NF4A | 2,050,272 |
| N3UM | 2,004,080 |

TRIBANDER/SINGLE ELEMENT LOW POWER ALL BAND

| | |
|---|------------|
| *NR3X/4 (N4YDU) | 1,752,894 |
| *WD4AHZ | 1,689,540 |
| *N2BA | 1,666,170 |
| *WD5K | 1,582,105 |
| *KZ90 | 1,287,018 |
| *NA4K | 1,218,474 |
| *K4IE | 1,097,577 |
| *KV8Q | 1,084,824 |
| *NO3M | 1,074,479 |
| *WN6K | 840,042 |
| MULTI-OPERATOR SINGLE-TRANSMITTER ALL BAND | |
| K1LZ | 12,754,560 |
| NG3R | 9,072,530 |
| KT3Y/4 | 9,010,276 |
| KY4F | 6,632,016 |
| NQ2F | 6,543,449 |
| KX7M/6 | 6,488,498 |
| WR3Z | 6,044,074 |
| W7VJ | 5,165,370 |
| NM7D | 4,329,133 |
| AJ9C | 3,846,964 |
| MULTI-OPERATOR TWO-TRANSMITTER All BAND | |
| KD4D/3 | 13,809,375 |
| NN5J | 11,152,400 |
| WW4E | 10,047,840 |
| NZ1U | 7,451,520 |
| WX5S/6 | 5,777,880 |
| NK7U | 4,852,802 |
| MULTI-OPERATOR MULTI-TRANSMITTER ALL BAND | |
| WE3C | 21,910,252 |
| NR4M | 18,863,096 |
| N8NI | 8,390,088 |
| WX3B | 3,814,290 |
| WQ2N | 3,054,854 |

*Low Power

a pre-contest goal of 500 Qs and I'm really happy I made it. This is my second WPX CW and I feel I improved a lot since last year." The trophy for top USA Rookie is sure to look good on his shack wall.

The overlay categories were open only to single operators this year. For 2010 they will return to allowing both single operator and single operator assisted entries.

Multi-Operator

As always, the Multi-Operator Single-Transmitter category produced some impressive scores. The three-operator team of DL5AXX, DL8WAA, and SV1RP operated CS9L to first place with over 20-million points. Another three-op team (5B4AGM, 5B8AD, UA9CDV) operated from C4N on Cyprus to finish second. The group at RU1A had over 2300 QSOs on 20 meters on their way to breaking the European record set back in 2001 by over 20%. Fourth place went to the team at K1LZ, who replaced the USA record also set back in 2001. The battle for second place in Europe was very close with ES9C, E7DX, OM7M, and OL3Z all within ten percent of one another.

The Multi-Operator Two-Transmitter category pitted two very strong teams against each other. The claimed scores between OL0W and 9A800VZ were less than 0.1% apart! When the log checking was done, the OL0W group came out on top by just 100k points. Both groups did a fantastic job with just four operators each. Third place went to C4I, who set a new Asia record. KD4D/3 in fourth was the top USA score. NH7O, KL7RA, and XM7SV all had great efforts to make the Top Ten box.

WE3C set a new USA record on the way to the world high score for the Multi-Operator Multi-Transmitter category. The only other time this has happened from the USA was in 2003 by NY4A. The team at ZW5B struggled with poor conditions to finish a close second. UU7J had the highest number of contacts and prefixes in finishing third. EA8URL replaced the record score for Africa established back in 1997.

Club Competition

There were 124 clubs from around the world that met the requirement of three or more logs to be listed in the results. The highest club score came from the Bavarian Contest Club (BCC) in southern Germany. Its 204 entries help generate lots of activity on the bands for all of us. The Rhein Ruhr DX Association (RRDXA) passed the Araucaria DX Group from Brazil for second place by only 300k points!

The Potomac Valley Radio Club (PVRC) scored an impressive win over the 56 USA clubs that submitted three or more member logs. The Yankee Clipper Contest Club (YCCC) took second over a strong points-per-log effort by arch rival Frankford Radio Club (FRC).

There were more than 190 other clubs that did not meet the three-log minimum to be included in the listing. Some club scores were lowered this year as the new distance rule was enforced. A full breakdown of all club scores can be found on the <cqwp.com> website.

Final Thoughts

We are pleased to announce that the results now include separate listings and awards for each Russian call area. This is in recognition of the increase in participation and log submissions from Russia.

There are a lot of people working to help make the CQ WPX Contest such a success. Thanks to K2DSL, N8RA, NJ1F, W1KM, W1KQ, W1TO, W1UE, W1ZT, W2JU, WA1Z, and WO1N for their help in typing all of the paper logs. F6BEE maintains the score records. W5GN does a great job handling the certificates and K1DG does the same for the plaques. The quality of the results wouldn't be possible without the software talents of K1EA.

For expanded results, including operators of multi stations and expanded QRM, visit the CQ website at :<www.cq-amateur-radio.com>.

The 2010 WPX CW Contest will be held on May 29 and 30. There are a number of rule changes for the 2010 contest, so please read the rules very carefully. Visit the frequently-

asked questions page on the CQ WPX Contest website (www.cqwp.com). Please submit your WPX CW logs by e-mail to <cw@cqwp.com> before June 27, 2010.

73, Randy, K5ZD

QRM

I was using for this contest a 4-el OWA Yagi but condx were very very poor. Most of the time I was listening to 20 meters waiting for band opening on 15. ... **3G1X**. Radio finals got busted due to old age. Although SWR is 1.2 to 10-40 meters. ... **4D1N**. Working Australia 10,000 miles with only 2 watts. That's wow! TNX, mate. ... **5Q8A**. FT-840 (50W), whip at 11-floor balcony of apartment. Cycle 24 may be started slowly! ... **7K1EQG**. Excellent propagation on 40 meters, but with lot of statics. ZL stations were workable at least 3 hours after sunrise and 3 hours before sunset. ...

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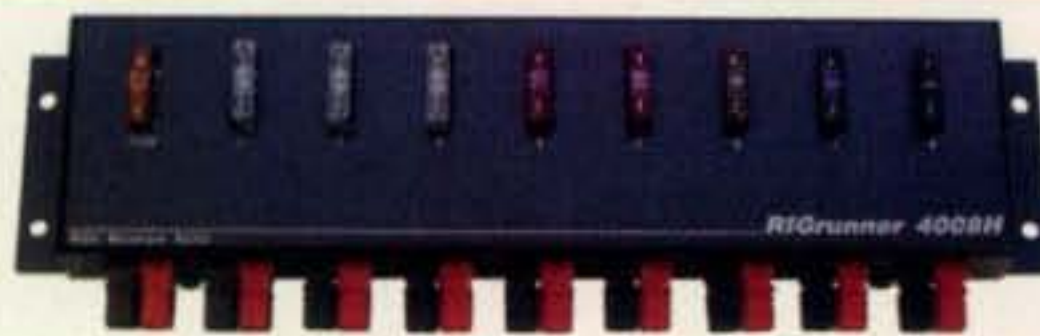
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SSB & CW COMBINED CLUB SCORES

UNITED STATES

| Club Name | Entries | Total Score |
|--------------------------------------|---------|-------------|
| POTOMAC VALLEY RADIO CLUB | 122 | 167,011,655 |
| YANKEE CLIPPER CONTEST CLUB | 87 | 116,545,547 |
| FRANKFORD RADIO CLUB | 44 | 106,819,493 |
| NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CONTEST CLUB | 106 | 85,833,623 |
| FLORIDA CONTEST GROUP | 55 | 67,654,685 |
| SOCIETY OF MIDWEST CONTESTERS | 78 | 48,517,984 |
| CENTRAL TEXAS DX AND CONTEST CLUB | 26 | 35,378,854 |
| SOUTH EAST CONTEST CLUB | 32 | 31,264,576 |
| ALABAMA CONTEST GROUP | 30 | 30,443,131 |
| TENNESSEE CONTEST GROUP | 55 | 26,392,619 |
| SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CONTEST CLUB | 37 | 24,363,959 |
| WESTERN WASHINGTON DX CLUB | 28 | 22,933,111 |
| MAD RIVER RADIO CLUB | 31 | 20,087,650 |
| WILLAMETTE VALLEY DX CLUB | 26 | 18,242,752 |
| MINNESOTA WIRELESS ASSN | 32 | 16,175,532 |
| CENTRAL ARIZONA DX ASSOCIATION | 28 | 15,627,209 |
| CTRI CONTEST GROUP | 8 | 15,477,308 |
| HUDSON VALLEY CONTESTERS AND DXERS | 21 | 12,836,478 |
| NORTH COAST CONTESTERS | 6 | 12,344,039 |
| GRAND MESA CONTESTERS OF COLORADO | 16 | 8,994,031 |
| IOWA DX AND CONTEST CLUB | 3 | 8,476,674 |
| OKLAHOMA DX ASSOCIATION | 4 | 7,570,026 |
| LOUISIANA CONTEST CLUB | 7 | 7,480,302 |
| NORTH TEXAS CONTEST CLUB | 11 | 6,700,995 |
| BORING AMATEUR RADIO CLUB | 4 | 6,533,055 |
| MOTHER LODE DX/CONTEST CLUB | 12 | 4,372,821 |
| THUMB AREA CONTESTERS | 4 | 4,081,803 |
| SOUTHWEST OHIO DX ASSOCIATION | 4 | 4,018,411 |
| KANSAS CITY DX CLUB | 8 | 3,517,979 |
| TEXAS DX SOCIETY | 6 | 3,401,727 |
| NORTHERN ARIZONA DX ASSN | 5 | 2,669,769 |
| SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DX CLUB | 4 | 2,291,677 |
| MISSOURI DX/CONTEST CLUB | 7 | 2,257,284 |
| UTAH DX ASSOCIATION | 11 | 2,070,233 |
| KENTUCKY CONTEST GROUP | 7 | 1,934,515 |
| SPOKANE DX ASSOCIATION | 7 | 1,865,285 |
| ORDER OF BOILED OWLS OF NEW YORK | 8 | 1,690,487 |
| SKYVIEW RADIO SOCIETY | 6 | 1,506,766 |
| NORTHERN ROCKIES DX ASSOCIATION | 3 | 1,468,381 |
| STERLING PARK AMATEUR RADIO CLUB | 6 | 1,339,808 |
| BERGEN ARA | 9 | 956,315 |
| FALMOUTH ARA | 3 | 737,866 |
| MAGNOLIA DX ASSOCIATION | 4 | 576,448 |
| WESTERN NEW YORK DX ASSOCIATION | 3 | 500,383 |
| ALLEGHENY VALLEY RADIO ASSOCIATION | 4 | 490,305 |
| WEST PARK RADIOPS | 9 | 459,290 |
| REDMOND TOP KEY CONTEST CLUB | 6 | 457,001 |
| ROCHESTER (NY) DX ASSN | 8 | 400,039 |
| CAROLINA DX ASSOCIATION | 7 | 394,671 |
| LOW COUNTRY CONTEST CLUB | 6 | 350,721 |
| SOUTHEASTERN DX CLUB | 4 | 314,230 |
| CAROLINA SHINE | 5 | 296,779 |
| METRO DX CLUB | 3 | 168,958 |
| GREAT SOUTH BAY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB | 3 | 142,238 |
| PORTAGE COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO SERVICE | 4 | 137,237 |
| HAZEL PARK AMATEUR RADIO CLUB | 3 | 127,867 |

DX

| | | |
|--|-----|-------------|
| BAVARIAN CONTEST CLUB | 204 | 194,450,401 |
| RHEIN RUHR DX ASSOCIATION | 137 | 145,429,515 |
| ARAUCARIA DX GROUP | 49 | 145,147,549 |
| CONTEST CLUB ONTARIO | 66 | 110,133,167 |
| CONTEST CLUB FINLAND | 30 | 103,654,341 |
| UKRAINIAN CONTEST CLUB | 84 | 89,902,276 |
| URAL CONTEST GROUP | 34 | 89,027,286 |
| BLACK SEA CONTEST CLUB | 67 | 87,267,345 |
| CROATIAN CONTEST CLUB | 32 | 85,611,579 |
| LU CONTEST GROUP | 40 | 70,720,515 |
| SLOVENIA CONTEST CLUB | 36 | 69,256,103 |
| YU CONTEST CLUB | 26 | 61,764,741 |
| BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA CONTEST CLUB | 18 | 61,102,475 |
| KAUNAS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY RADIO CLUB | 36 | 54,818,685 |
| LZ CONTEST TEAM | 4 | 48,939,072 |
| RUSSIAN CONTEST CLUB* | 29 | 47,940,030 |
| SP DX CLUB | 70 | 42,414,003 |
| LATVIAN CONTEST CLUB | 36 | 40,658,367 |
| SKY CONTEST CLUB | 8 | 36,592,649 |
| LITHUANIAN CONTEST GROUP | 19 | 36,401,292 |
| BRITISH COLUMBIA DX CLUB | 14 | 35,291,788 |
| HUNGARIAN DX CLUB | 11 | 33,829,896 |
| TARTU CONTEST TEAM | 4 | 30,297,528 |
| CARIBBEAN CONTESTING CONSORTIUM | 3 | 26,477,143 |
| WORLD WIDE YOUNG CONTESTERS* | 28 | 23,478,055 |
| RIO DX GROUP | 24 | 21,669,287 |
| BELARUS CONTEST CLUB | 14 | 20,041,105 |
| SOUTH URAL CONTEST CLUB | 11 | 19,672,456 |
| CHILTERN DX CLUB | 21 | 17,470,711 |
| MARITIME CONTEST CLUB | 16 | 16,902,647 |
| ARIPA DX TEAM | 3 | 16,485,898 |
| CONTEST GROUP DU QUEBEC | 11 | 13,998,961 |
| BELOKRANJEC CONTEST CLUB | 8 | 13,770,670 |
| VRHNIKA CONTESTERS | 14 | 12,139,217 |

| Club Name | Entries | Total Score |
|--|---------|-------------|
| CENTRAL SIBERIA DX CLUB | 7 | 9,442,123 |
| VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY RADIO CLUB | 11 | 9,193,849 |
| UA2 CONTEST CLUB | 12 | 8,114,434 |
| CANTAREIRA DX GROUP | 25 | 8,097,908 |
| DANISH DX GROUP | 9 | 7,562,028 |
| FOX CONTEST CLUB | 5 | 7,432,173 |
| VK CONTEST CLUB* | 13 | 7,281,367 |
| STAVROPOL REGION RADIO CLUB | 6 | 7,175,253 |
| MICHURINSK CONTEST GROUP | 3 | 6,939,863 |
| LYNX DX GROUP | 3 | 6,428,296 |
| TEMIRTAU CONTEST CLUB | 7 | 6,394,915 |
| GIPANIS CONTEST GROUP | 5 | 6,314,780 |
| LES NOUVELLES DX | 4 | 6,041,517 |
| IZMAIL RADIO CLUB | 8 | 6,005,654 |
| NOVOSIBIRSK CONTEST CLUB | 5 | 5,579,830 |
| GRUPO DXXE | 10 | 5,523,460 |
| TOP OF EUROPE CONTESTERS | 5 | 5,173,683 |
| MOSCOW RADIO CLUB | 7 | 4,846,983 |
| LOW LAND CRAZY CONTESTERS | 4 | 4,343,444 |
| HAROS RADIO CLUB | 5 | 4,330,270 |
| KEMEROVO RADIO CLUB | 4 | 4,272,671 |
| ALRS ST PETERSBURG | 12 | 3,871,703 |
| CE CONTEST GROUP | 5 | 3,684,602 |
| DNEPR CONTEST GROUP | 3 | 3,666,615 |
| ARCK | 9 | 3,477,212 |
| SASKATCHEWAN CONTEST CLUB | 3 | 3,418,206 |
| PERM RADIO CLUB | 3 | 3,392,760 |
| WEST SERBIA CONTEST CLUB | 4 | 3,014,280 |
| YAROSLAVL CONTEST CLUB | 10 | 2,996,452 |
| STRUMBLE HEAD DX AND CONTEST GROUP | 3 | 2,989,700 |
| AUSTRIAN CONTEST CLUB | 5 | 2,880,475 |
| RU-QRP CLUB* | 13 | 2,798,749 |
| CSM BAIA MARE | 4 | 2,792,667 |
| GRUPO PORTUGUESE DX | 3 | 2,740,130 |
| SP CONTEST CLUB | 12 | 2,544,689 |
| SPORT CLUB MIERCUREA-CIUC | 4 | 2,522,190 |
| SHAKHAN CONTEST CLUB | 5 | 2,374,610 |
| YO DX CLUB | 17 | 2,249,276 |
| SIAM DX GROUP | 7 | 2,115,832 |
| RADIOCLUBUL RADU BRATU | 3 | 2,050,873 |
| TORRENT CONTEST CLUB | 4 | 1,956,453 |
| KIEV CONTEST GROUP | 4 | 1,919,815 |
| NOVOKUZNETSK RADIO CLUB | 8 | 1,910,114 |
| AMSTERDAM DX CLUB | 4 | 1,834,923 |
| BASHKORTOSTAN DX CLUB | 6 | 1,757,861 |
| ATCC | 5 | 1,709,584 |
| POISK | 4 | 1,527,254 |
| MARCONI CONTEST CLUB | 5 | 1,473,743 |
| GUARA DX GROUP | 8 | 1,391,923 |
| CSTA SUCEAVA | 4 | 1,301,327 |
| ARGO | 3 | 1,081,317 |
| SAMOTLOR | 3 | 936,360 |
| MAYCOPSKIJ RADIO CLUB | 5 | 933,093 |
| UNION FRANCAISE DES TELEGRAPHISTES | 6 | 913,727 |
| JABLANIK BEARS CONTEST CLUB | 3 | 874,211 |
| PODOLSK | 8 | 859,205 |
| 599 CONTEST CLUB | 4 | 801,275 |
| SPEKTR | 3 | 769,016 |
| IRKUTSK RADIO CLUB | 7 | 709,537 |
| BALKAN CONTEST CLUB | 3 | 628,624 |
| BEEMSTER CONTEST CLUB | 3 | 603,571 |
| KKKK CONTEST CLUB KRASNODARSKOGO KRAYA | 8 | 598,826 |
| MEDITERRANEO DX CLUB | 3 | 595,326 |
| IVANOVO DX CLUB | 3 | 582,656 |
| OBNINSK QRU CLUB | 5 | 571,879 |
| RADIOCLUBUL NOSTRU DIN CONSTANTA | 3 | 565,171 |
| ACTIVITY GROUP BELARUS | 3 | 545,773 |
| DONBASS | 5 | 520,980 |
| SVARK | 3 | 516,039 |
| R4F-DX-G | 4 | 499,958 |
| SMOLENSK CONTEST CLUB | 3 | 464,121 |
| VLADIMIR RADIO CLUB | 8 | 454,486 |
| VORONEZH RADIO CLUB | 3 | 406,826 |
| VU CONTEST GROUP | 3 | 364,652 |
| VOLYN CONTEST GROUP | 6 | 354,239 |
| CS PETROLUL PLOIESTI | 3 | 331,833 |
| LKK LVIV SHORTWAVE CLUB | 3 | 328,952 |
| KRIVBASS | 5 | 308,713 |
| DUBNA DX CLUB | 7 | 282,795 |
| CSM CLUJ-NAPOCA | 6 | 248,701 |
| NANAIMO AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION | 3 | 206,779 |
| SERPUKHOV RADIO CLUB | 4 | 170,179 |
| VERENIGING VAN RADIO ZENDE AMATEURS | 5 | 170,080 |
| GRUPO ARGENTINO DE CW | 4 | 153,150 |
| TUPY DX GROUP | 4 | 141,430 |
| SOUTH GERMAN DX GROUP | 4 | 138,551 |
| R3L-CC | 3 | 128,797 |
| SP-CW-C | 3 | 106,947 |
| WAIKIKI AMATEUR RADIO CLUB | 3 | 91,618 |
| RADIO KLUB BAGDALA | 4 | 62,228 |

* Club does not meet distance rule for all scores.

K3MJW. The Russian UA/RV/RW stations really saved the day. ... **KC0MO.** I'd like to thank all the ops who took the time to get a QRP station, especially ZW5B and AY5F, who patiently pulled my numbers out of the ether. ... **K16OFN.** Great contest. Had a bunch of fun and learned a lot. Also greatly improved my skills. ... **KJ4HYG.** Thanks to CQ. This was truly as good as it gets. Forget worrying about sunspots. Worry about something else. Condx were outstanding and how long has it been since 20m stayed open 24-hours a day? ... **KR4Z.** Who needs sunspots anyway? Maybe it's just a new antenna, but this is my best score ever with QRP. 20m just wouldn't quit in the evenings. It seemed easier to work the Europeans than to get a response from domestic CQers. ... **KX7L.**

Summer opening for 10 and 15m bands made contest more enjoyable. 80 and 160m bands were a disappointment All in all: Very enjoyable! ... **LA2AB.** Wow! Europe QRP at the bottom of the sunspot cycle! Cool! ... **N6RV.** This was my seventh try at this great contest, and I always have a great time. 20 meters even opened to western Asia for a couple hours. CU next year! ... **N7EIE.** Good conditions for QRP operating. My best ever for QRP in a contest. ... **NF0N.** A great BBQ, plenty of Bud Lights, and oh yeah, a good 10 and 15 meter opening! What could be better? Thanks to "Webmaster Mike" (N2MG) and Scott "The Machine" (N2QF) for getting us on the board. See you next year! (N2QF@KD2RD) ... **NQ2F.** Most things that are as much fun as this contest was are illegal! The

OLD CQ WW WPX CW CONTEST ALL-TIME RECORDS

The contest is held each year on the last full weekend of May. The All-Time Records are updated and published annually. Data shown below is: callsign, year of operation, total score, and number of prefix multipliers.

| WORLD RECORD HOLDERS Single Operator | | | U.S.A. RECORD HOLDERS Single Operator | | |
|--|---------------|-----------------|--|------------|-----------------|
| 1.8 | IH9/OL5Y('98) | 341,068 182 | 1.8 | K1ZM('95) | 40,446 107 |
| 3.5 | TM5Y('08) | 1,983,366 567 | 3.5 | W3BGN('08) | 641,092 332 |
| 7.0 | LU1IV('97) | 7,671,456 702 | 7.0 | KG1D('05) | 3,594,822 651 |
| 14 | UP2L('09) | 7,928,886 1043 | 14 | N2NC('06) | 5,418,630 915 |
| 21 | ZX5J('05) | 7,061,000 920 | 21 | NU5A('99) | 4,411,299 789 |
| 28 | ZX5J('02) | 6,787,440 857 | 28 | WW4M('01) | 2,547,046 674 |
| AB | D4B('04) | 16,619,000 1000 | AB | KC3R('09) | 9,597,400 806 |
| Multi-Operator Single Transmitter | | | Multi-Operator Single Transmitter | | |
| CT9M('08) | | 24,125,802 1182 | K1LZ('09) | | 12,754,560 1120 |
| Multi-Operator Two Transmitters | | | Multi-Operator Two Transmitters | | |
| EF8M('07) | | 33,324,192 1256 | KM4M('04) | | 16,283,745 1095 |
| Multi-Operator Multi-Transmitter | | | Multi-Operator Multi-Transmitter | | |
| HC8N('99) | | 54,697,072 1264 | WE3C('09) | | 21,910,252 1274 |

| CLUB RECORD | WPX (Prefix) RECORD | QRP/p RECORD |
|---|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Northern Calif. Contest Club('02).....253,543,497 | DR1A('08).....1313 | P40W('97).....4,018,208 |

CONTINENTAL RECORD HOLDERS

| AFRICA | | | SOUTH AMERICA | | |
|--------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|----------------|
| 1.8 | IH9/OL5Y('98) | 341,068 182 | 1.8 | YV1OB('86) | 11,550 35 |
| 3.5 | 7X0RY('08) | 1,701,260 407 | 3.5 | YX3A('89) | 1,004,060 305 |
| 7.0 | IG9B('04) | 5,187,819 613 | 7.0 | LU1IV('97) | 7,671,456 702 |
| 14 | 6W1SJ('09) | 6,755,364 924 | 14 | YW1A('91) | 4,617,456 732 |
| 21 | 5X1Z('01) | 6,362,352 782 | 21 | ZX5J('05) | 7,061,000 920 |
| 28 | ZS4TX('01) | 4,602,028 722 | 28 | ZX5J('02) | 6,787,440 857 |
| AB | EF8M('09) | 17,288,864 1037 | AB | P40W('94) | 14,168,115 845 |

| ASIA | | | MULTI-OPERATOR SINGLE TRANSMITTER | | |
|------|---------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| 1.8 | 4X4NJ('96) | 259,420 170 | AF | CT9M('08) | 24,125,802 1182 |
| 3.5 | TA0/Z33F('02) | 1,452,552 348 | AS | P33W('08) | 21,314,175 1145 |
| 7.0 | 9K2HN('06) | 4,541,970 606 | EU | RU1A('09) | 13,838,256 1236 |
| 14 | UP2L('09) | 7,928,886 1043 | NA | 8P4A('02) | 18,516,960 1056 |
| 21 | A45XR('99) | 6,557,697 843 | OC | AH2R('01) | 11,541,420 957 |
| 28 | HZ1AB('02) | 3,669,994 659 | SA | P49V('01) | 19,760,744 1034 |
| AB | 4L0A('08) | 11,213,664 888 | | | |

| EUROPE | | | MULTI-OPERATOR TWO TRANSMITTER | | |
|--------|-------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|------------|-----------------|
| 1.8 | SN7Q('08) | 339,542 307 | AF | EF8M('07) | 33,324,192 1256 |
| 3.5 | TM5Y('08) | 1,983,366 567 | AS | C4I('09) | 14,632,800 1005 |
| 7.0 | CT1JLZ('09) | 6,075,936 816 | EU | ES9C('08) | 18,557,028 1266 |
| 14 | 4O3T('06) | 5,313,554 986 | NA | 6Y1V('08) | 20,507,972 1108 |
| 21 | 9H0A('02) | 5,389,008 933 | OC | ZL6QH('05) | 13,312,768 952 |
| 28 | 9H0A('01) | 3,965,315 841 | SA | HC8N('03) | 30,928,268 1187 |
| AB | CU2X('09) | 10,208,016 1066 | | | |

| NORTH AMERICA | | | MULTI-OPERATOR MULTI-TRANSMITTER | | |
|---------------|------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 1.8 | VA1A('99) | 103,680 120 | AF | EA8URL('09) | 10,543,122 906 |
| 3.5 | FM5BH('97) | 833,490 315 | AS | A61AJ('02) | 42,766,232 1244 |
| 7.0 | V26BA('97) | 6,227,550 659 | EU | DR1A('08) | 24,285,248 1313 |
| 14 | N2NC('06) | 5,418,630 915 | NA | 6Y2A('02) | 38,821,328 1274 |
| 21 | ZF1A('99) | 5,330,129 799 | OC | ZL6QH('04) | 16,143,840 1010 |
| 28 | FM5GU('01) | 2,849,769 621 | SA | HC8N('99) | 54,697,072 1264 |
| AB | VY2TT('09) | 12,878,826 1054 | | | |

| OCEANIA | | | QRPp | | |
|---------|------------|---------------|------|------------|---------------|
| 1.8 | KH6ND('07) | 22,100 50 | AF | 5Y4FO('92) | 649,057 311 |
| 3.5 | KH6ND('09) | 596,673 231 | AS | ZC4BS('02) | 2,515,388 521 |
| 7.0 | ZM3A('09) | 6,437,695 737 | EU | LY5A('01) | 2,331,414 646 |
| 14 | KH6ND('03) | 4,126,690 730 | NA | TI5X('01) | 2,568,470 615 |
| 21 | KH6ND('99) | 6,107,256 813 | OC | FO8JP('86) | 572,131 259 |
| 28 | KH6ND('00) | 1,523,008 424 | SA | P40W('97) | 4,018,208 632 |
| AB | KH7XS('09) | 9,124,899 879 | | | |

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crew had a great time with one equipment failure. It seems like having the contest on a non-holiday weekend drew out more US and prefixes. Kudos to K5ZD and the cast that supports the WPX CW! ... **NR4M**. Good contest. 20 the main band and Europe signals most of the day. Thanks to all for a good time. CW rocks! ... **NR7DX**. Worked a few North American stations on 10m. Wondering if the frequency readout of my rig was erroneous, hi. It's been a long time, guys! Had some family obligations so had to go QRT the entire (local) Sunday afternoon; attended a horse-training show while browsing the DX Cluster on my mobile phone on the sly. Darn ... another multi missed, hi. Is ham radio just a hobby? I ain't to me; it's an addiction. CUAGN 2010! ... **ON4CAS**. Fine to hear so many FB CW operators ... **PA0WKI**. I like contest. Many USA stations and Russian stations. Tnx all QSOs. See you in the next contest. ... **PD5CW**. Thank you for the nice contest! I used portable field transceiver PFR-3, only 5 watts, and portable antenna G5IJ. Thanks to all hams who heard and worked me. All the best from Russia and 73! ... **RA3XEV**. 20m open 24 hours, 1350 NA stations (300 on 40m) from 5200 QSO, 250 JA, 1270 mults. Thanks RU4HP and UA1CUR; they have considerably strengthened our team. ... **RU1A**. 20m

was great here. 866 Q's include 22 Q's by CQ mode is new record for my QRP. 10m was open here first time this year. QSOed 40 southern neighbours mostly. Enjoyed contest. Thanks for all. ... **RW4AA**. First time on the contest. Worked few hours, enjoyed my few contacts very much. Also enjoyed SD logger. Thank you ... **SV1AAK**. Hello Contesters! First participating to CQ Contest from Erzincan city. ... **TA7KI**. First QSOs on 10 meter in new solar cycle 24. New step in our growth score when break 10M points ... **TM0R**. It was a really great weekend! 20m band conditions on Sunday were amazing. I improved my last year result from 1.2 to 1.7 million points. ... **UR3IQO**. My first CW contest. The speed, I can't believe it. ... **VE5AE**. A difficult operation with excessive noise levels of S8+ on the low bands, with low power and a low antenna. A bit of fun and it was great to put another VK8 signal onto HF! ... **VK2GR**. Who needs sunspots? Very hard for VK to break into EU on 40 through QRM. ... **VK3TDX**. Enjoyed another WPX Contest. Conditions were quite erratic. ... **VU2UR**. Now we know what it must be like to run EU from the East Coast. Incredible conditions on 20. ... **W7VJ**. Wow, so many UA9/UA0. Nice propagation over the poles. Still I long for these conditions on 10/15. Glad I'm young

enough (61) to see this cycle peak. ... **WA1FCN**. Always a pleasure to work the WPX Contest in any mode. Been doing it for more than 30 years. 10 and 15m wide open for hours, but very little activity. Give it a try guys! ... **WE6EZ**. Good fun with the CW contest. Most of the time I use more S&P, because with 100W not always hear you and the big guns are powerful. ... **XE1AY**. Great conditions to EU for a change. ... **XM7GL**. Great contest from ZL2JU's QTH in outside garage. Freezing weather around 0°C, but plenty of signals on the bands to keep us busy. Difficult to break the EU wall from way down under here, but we had lots of fun. ... **ZL2AGY**. The worst 40m propagation ever for WPX. I was beaming to the sun, but no improvement in sunspot numbers. See you all next time in the log. ... **ZS4JAN**.

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Check out the March issue of *WorldRadio Online*! Featured articles include:

- Helping a (Ham) Friend in Need
- Foundation for Amateur Radio 2010 Scholarships
- CW Skimmer and the Reverse Beacon Network
- Kurt N. Sterba on Verticals and Short Dipoles

WorldRadio Online is available online *only*, in PDF format. View or download the issue at <<http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com>> and sign up for our e-mail alert list at <<http://mailman.sunserver.com/mailman/listinfo/WorldRadio-L>>.

Where Do Errors Come From?

We began the WPX CW Contest log checking with 3,649 received logs containing 2,224,164 total QSOs. The computer was able to cross check 82.8% of these QSOs against another log. Of those, 94.9% checked good for both callsign and serial number. Rather amazing accuracy when you consider the challenge of weak signals, QSB, QRM, QRN, and other vagaries of real world radio communication. Contesting really is a training ground for improving communication skills.

Of the 35,451 different calls found in the logs, there were 20,273 (57.1%) of them that were only logged one time (so-called "unique" QSOs). Approximately 14,000 of these unique calls were computer cross-checked against other logs and found to be errors. A second manual cross-check process was applied to the remaining calls, which identified an additional 3,500 calls as being incorrect. The end result was that 84.6% of the unique calls were found to be errors. Yes, there are people who get on the air and make only one QSO, but this really doesn't happen very often.

The most common source of errors was from incorrect copy of calls containing lots of dots, such as the letters S and H, or number 5. One great example is the call KH7XS, which was logged incorrectly 93 times in 17 different variations. Another problematic combination was calls containing V and 4 or B and 6. Rare or unusual calls that have extra numbers in the prefix are also sources of errors. Some of the callsigns generating the most errors (with number of times incorrectly logged) included HF94KE (405), OL25LP (205), ES9C (201), HG1S (136), VC2A (117), NH7O (113), EE2W (111), AB1HZ (103), NV1N (102), RZ9HT (96), HG6N (97), S52ZW (83), and 9A800VZ (70). In many cases the errors matched bad callsigns spotted on the DX Cluster. Caveat emptor! It is your responsibility to confirm the call of each station in your log.

Even with the deep log checking, there were still 131 stations that produced logs with no score reductions. The top golden logs (with number of QSOs) were: LY1CX (523), N9CK (300), K0CF (250), RA0AY (201), SP4GFG (241), N9LYE (236), E21YDP (234), KA6NGR (214), AD5Q (210), and PA5TT (201).

The average score reduction for all single operator entrants was 13.9%. For the top 20 single op scores, the average reduction was only 5.5%. Detailed log-checking reports are available for every submitted log and may be requested by sending an e-mail to <k5zd@cqwp.com>.

(Continued on page 105)

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A new entry in the ham transceiver market with a unique receive circuit gets the once-over—and a thumbs-up—from Gordo.

CQ Reviews:

The Jetstream JT-220M 222-MHz, 50-Watt Mobile

BY GORDON WEST,* WB6NOA

It is good to see new manufacturers entering the ham radio transceiver market. The new entry product may be something entirely new, a product that takes up where another manufacturer stopped, or a product priced substantially lower than the competition, hoping to get into the ham transceiver marketplace.

A new entry is best launched by a marketing expert well-established within the ham radio industry. This is *exactly* how Jetstream enters the ham transceiver market with its 50-watt 222-MHz mobile radio, with marketing direction from Evelyn Garrison, WS7A. Evelyn is one of the ham industry's pioneers in innovative marketing strategies, having directed amateur radio sales at ICOM America, Alinco, and now Jetstream.

Evelyn points out that even though Jetstream is not yet a household name among hams (something she aims to change), the Ohio-based company has actually been in business for 15 years, focusing until now on antennas and accessories, as well as "private label" products that bear a retailer's brand name.

It wasn't until last year's Dayton Hamvention® that I realized how many products Jetstream was offering:

- Dual-band and tri-band VHF/UHF fiberglass base antennas
- Scanner discones
- Coax cable and coax switches
- Fan dipoles
- A full line of power supplies, including repeater battery-backup supplies
- Cross-needle SWR bridges and speakers—and now...
- A new 50-watt, 99-channel, 222-MHz FM mobile radio, the JT-220M.

*CQ Contributing Editor, 2414 College Dr., Costa Mesa, CA 92626
e-mail: <wb6noa@cq-amateur-radio.com>



Jetstream's JT-220M 50-watt mobile rig for 222 MHz. The display is very bright, and this is at the low brilliance level!

Actually, the JT-220M is a mobile or base station, using one of Jetstream's power supplies and its JTB 5 tri-band base antenna 144/222/446 (or the power supply and antenna of your choice). The radio is manufactured in China, and while we've all heard stories about quality issues with Chinese radios, Evelyn says the person in charge of manufacturing the JT-220M is someone with whom she has worked for more than 30 years, while at both ICOM and Alinco, and that she has full confidence in the quality and workmanship behind this transceiver.

A Heavyweight Mobile

This mobile is no lightweight; it weighs over two and a half pounds, with most

of the weight in the heavy upper and rear heat sink. The 10-foot power cord will get you into the engine compartment for a direct battery or near-battery hookup. We measured nearly 10 amps on transmit, and you don't want to continuously pull this much current through an accessory socket in the mobile. If you are paying the money for a high-power 222-MHz mobile, go direct to the battery for a full 50 watts out!

Our testing was first conducted on the bench, and there are enough repeaters on 222 MHz here in southern California to judge voice quality on transmit, as well as distant repeater and simplex receiver capabilities. We had no problem with 50 watts output, and our IFR gave us 0.25 μ V, 12 dB SINAD, nice and hot sensitivity, dual conversion, although we



Gordo takes the Jetstream for a spin in his dune buggy, and can easily hear the volume over the loud engine!

seldom had much interference on this band, even in southern California.

Front-Panel Controls and Readout

On turn-on, the bright-blue display was so bright that we immediately went to the instruction manual to find the display dimmer. There are only two levels, too bright at night, or just right. I would have liked one more level down, but only two levels are offered at the moment.

The JT-220M's mobile display characters are black on a blue background. During the day, in the bright sunlight,

they showed up just fine. These aren't the skinny little characters, nor are they big and bold either. They are right about in the middle.

The large channel-changing knob has a nice feel, and the same with the upper-right *large* volume control. However, there is no squelch knob. Squelch set is a menu item, and on the 222-MHz band this is no big deal because the background noise level doesn't change all that much, as it might on 2 meters or low band. But many of us like to reach over and "crack the squelch," giving us an audible check of where we have set the volume. You can still do this by



The front panel is connected to the rest of the radio by just one ribbon cable, suggesting possible remote applications in the future.

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Here the JT-220M undergoes a "cat scan" on WB6NOA's specially-equipped test bench!

pushing the squelch *button* for one second, disabling squelch completely.

Next to the volume is the data input jack for cloning and connecting the security alarm cable (more on this later). I'm not sure why this seldom-used jack would be on the front; if a jack on the front, I would have preferred an audio-out jack for an earphone for when I'm rolling down the beach in the WB6NOA dune buggy. Yes, there is a speaker jack on the rear, and on my test radio it was the lower jack, which in the instruction manual is marked "external power jack," to be used with your vehicle's ignition circuit. Just eyeball the two rear jacks, and later on the instruction book will show the jacks properly marked.

The instruction book is humorous to read, in their best attempt at translation. However, this unit is so simple to operate and program that you really don't need the book, and any goofs lost in translation can easily be overlooked.

Frequency Selection

You can dial in specific frequency information or you can program the 50-watt mobile with Jetstream's software and optional programming cable. Memory channel readout is either alphanumeric or by frequency (your choice for each memory channel). However, if you're a new ham or other hams are likely to use your rig, don't become too dependent on the alphanumerics. During the recent California wildfires, many new

hams with alphanumerics on their displays were stymied when told to go to a specific frequency such as 446 MHz simplex, as they had no idea where to find it in alphanumeric memory.

Each memory channel holds a frequency, selectable offset, offset direction, CTCSS and DCS tones, and narrow or wide FM. While we don't have any 2.5-kHz narrow-band FM activity on 222 MHz here in southern California, it's good to know that we can switch from 5-kHz deviation down to 2.5-kHz deviation.

The offset is not automatic. If you go to 223.500 MHz simplex, and forget and leave the minus offset showing, indeed you won't be transmitting where you are listening! Also, if that negative offset would take you out of band, "ERROR" will show up on the display, with an accompanying "raspberry" sound on transmit.

On the Air

Transmit is unique. The microphone "push to talk" goes click, letting know you are transmitting, and when released, the transmitter drops audio but remains keyed up for about 500 ms. The sound on the air would be a "kerchunk," similar to some RadioShack sets you might hear on the 2-meter band. This could slow things down a bit in a fast-paced net operation, but should not pose a problem in any other setting.

Everyone gave us excellent signal reports. The microphone cord was ultra

heavy. The backlit keypad on the mic itself was easy to see at night. There are up/down buttons for changing channels or frequencies, a switch to lock out DTMF, and a lock button that locks the keypad, but does *not* lock the up/down buttons. I'll modify this soon, to keep new students from accidentally popping off channel when they tap the up or down buttons on the top of the mic.

During prolonged base-station transmit this 50-watter didn't even work up a sweat! It got a little warm after 10 minutes of continuous transmit on a net at 50 watts, but not hot.

Favorite repeater and simplex channels are easily memorized, but power levels remain global for all channels. If you leave it at 50 watts and you take your 222 HT just down the street, your licensed better half will still be pumping out 50 watts on simplex (*unless, of course, s/he turns down the power level!—ed.*).

It's quick to drop in memory channels, and the friendly display lets you know which channels are already occupied with saved information and which ones are free. If you *do* decide to go with alphanumerics, best do it on the computer, as it's tedious with any radio loading it from the front panel letter by letter!

Additional features! Yes, tone decode is included as well as encode. A vertical bar graph shows relative signal strength on receive, as well as relative transmitter power out. However, there is no indication of high VSWR, so every now and then do an antenna check.

There are also lots of scanning types, beeps, adjustable timeout timer, automatic power off, busy channel lockout, and check this—a burglar alarm! "This alert uses a beep sound when the unit is about to be removed in an unwarrantable way," says the instruction book. The book then spends an entire page on how the alarm sounds off, how to shut it down, and if you read the fine print, you see the alarm plugs into the front-panel data jack, even though the book shows it going somewhere else. I would think your car alarm would be a great warning before they get their hands on the equipment! Nonetheless, I suppose it would cause a burglar to think twice.

A Unique Receive Circuit

We ran the JT-220M 50-watt mobile for a solid week, in mobile as well as base-station use, and it gave us great performance, nice signal reports, and an interesting receive mode called "compander." This circuit may be switched

on, and magically a mobile station coming in 50% quieting will now come in 100% quieting. All the background mobile noise seems to disappear when the compander function is turned on. You will need to crank up the volume all the way, because the circuit cuts the speech audio level by about 3 dB. Nonetheless, it's an interesting circuit that I have not found in other mobile transceivers—and it's not DSP, but rather voice companding, a noise-reduction system similar that used in Dolby® noise reduction for music recordings.

The overall operation of the Jetstream 222-MHz transceiver was great, with extra loud audio in the noisiest of vehicles, good transmit audio, and the backlit microphone keypad doubles for frequency input as well as DTMF dialing.

The removal of four screws opens up the Jetstream, and the circuit boards look professional and tidy. A single plastic ribbon cable electronically connects the head to the body, and who knows if Jetstream may soon offer a separation kit. Also, I spotted an accessory plug on the circuit board. Might this be a hint it will accept digital options in the future?

The equipment is warranted for one year, and in speaking with a few of Jetstream's 37 US dealers, all reported great success with the product.

Since the 222-MHz band is usually a "next band to do" for operators already on 2 meters and 440, those operators have a good idea regarding mobile-radio programming, features, and splits, and will quickly understand the operation of the Jetstream 222-MHz gear.

It was seen selling for an average price of \$245, on a par with the only other single-band 222-MHz transceiver currently on the market, the 25-watt DR-235 MK II from Alinco. You'll find additional company on the band from folks who have 222-MHz handhelds from Alinco, Kenwood, and Yaesu.

It is quite a radio, and with Evelyn Garrison's backing, the future for Jetstream looks good! "Jetstream is working hard to have quality products at great prices. We feel we are never done and are always striving to improve on existing products and continue to introduce more items, including additional transceivers. We have over 100 years of combined experience in the amateur radio industry," states Evelyn.

For more information on the complete line of Jetstream products and a dealer listing, go to <www.Jetstream-USA.com> (remember the dash), or e-mail <sales@Jetstream-USA.com>.

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Experimental Transmission Project (continued)

Last month we built the transmitter portion of the FM-modulated communications system. This month we will concentrate on the receiver. For reference, fig. 1 is the block diagram of the complete system. The transmitter accepts audio from a microphone, amplifies it, and then drives a 75-kHz (nominal) voltage-controlled oscillator. This produces an output pulse stream that is FM modulated by the incoming audio. The pulse stream is then used to drive a transmitting source (in the original system this was a light-emitting diode). At the receiver, a photodiode (in the original system) converts the modulated light pulses into tiny current pulses (if light is used), amplifies them, and then limits them to eliminate any residual AM. The amplitude-limited pulses are then demodulated by an FM detector and converted back into audio. The resulting audio is then amplified and applied to a small speaker or pair of headphones.

Fig. 2 is a schematic of the receiver's front end. The first stage is a current-to-voltage converter using a high-speed op-amp. This device can be almost any voltage-mode op-amp with an open loop bandwidth of at least 10 MHz or higher, such as (but not limited to) the type indicated on the schematic. Since the received carrier is at 75 kHz, the wide bandwidth of this stage will assure that a clean square-wave signal with good rise and fall times is reproduced. Tiny current from the photodiode is converted to a voltage by this stage in

accordance with a transfer function of anywhere from 10,000 to 110,000 times depending on the setting of the 100K potentiometer. This means that an input current of 10 microamperes (corresponding to 20 microwatts of light at 850 nm, for example) will produce an output in the range of 10 to 100 millivolts (again determine by the setting of the pot). This signal is then applied to an LM311 comparator. The signal itself is applied to pin 2, while a differentiated version of the signal is used as a reference and connected to pin 3. Since the input is roughly a square wave (at 75 kHz), regardless of the degree of modulation the capacitor across pin 3 will always charge to approximately 50% of the peak-to-peak amplitude of the input. This forces the comparator to switch at or close to the center of the square wave, with the result that a minimally distorted 5-volt pp signal will appear at the output (pin 7) of the LM311. In addition, since any variation in the amplitude of input signal will also result in a similar variation in amplitude of the reference voltage (at pin 3), the comparator will always readjust itself to switch at (or close to) the 50% point. This feature neatly eliminates any AM component that might be present, which is, of course, what the limiting function in an FM receiver is supposed to do. If you have a scope, you can see how this works by comparing the signals on pins 2, 3, and 7 of the LM311 while you vary the input signal level.

Now that we have produced a constant-amplitude signal, it is time to convert it back into audio. Fig. 3 is the schematic of the FM detector and the audio output stage. An LM568 phase-locked loop

*c/o CQ magazine

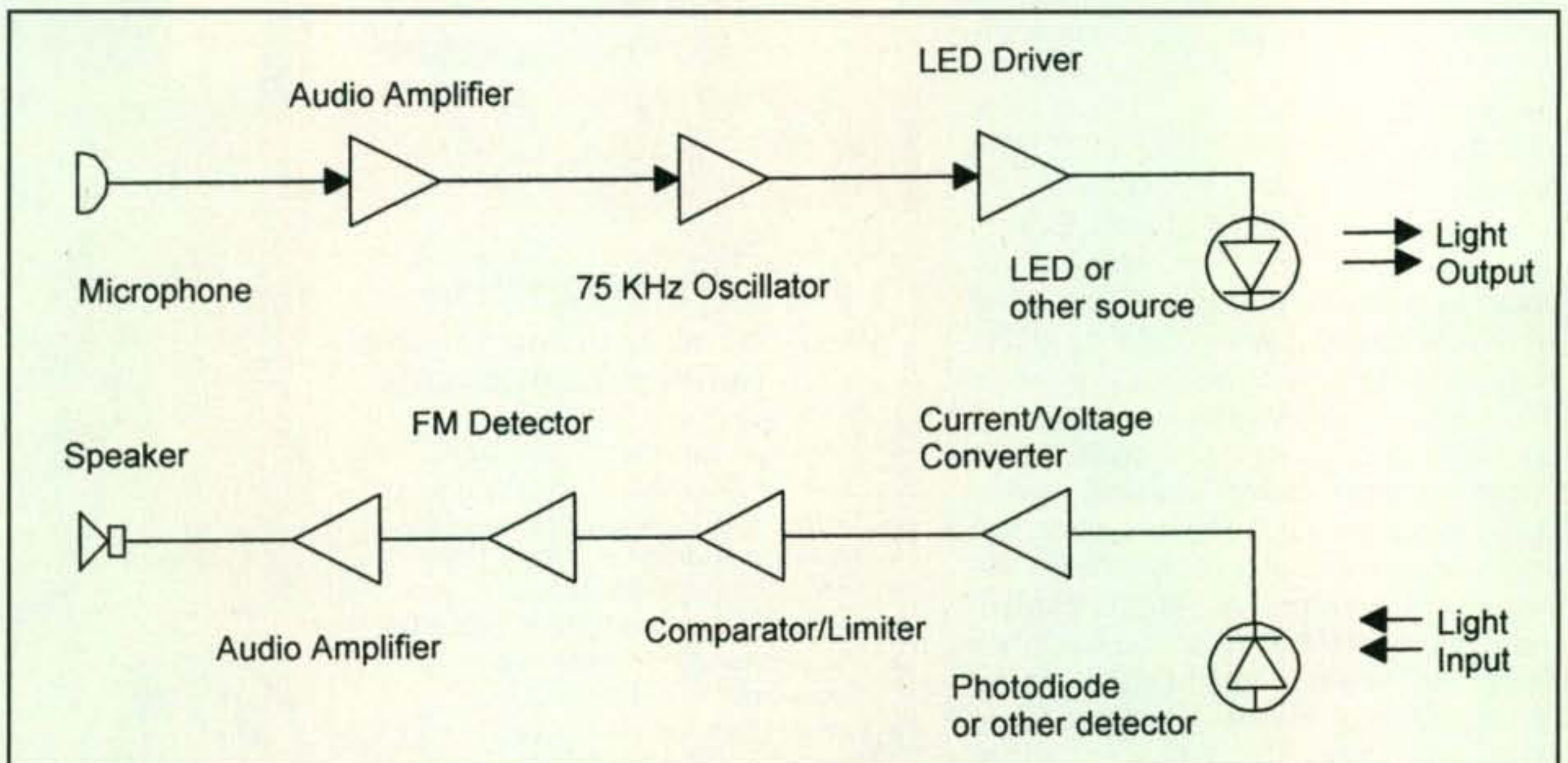


Fig. 1—Block diagram of FM transmitter/receiver.

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is used here as the FM detector. The 10K pot is used to tune the detector to the frequency of the incoming signal, and when properly adjusted, the resulting output will be low-level audio. A simple 1K resistor and 0.01- μ F capacitor form a low-pass filter in series with the output to remove any residual 75-kHz carrier but still allow the recovered audio to pass. The final stage is our favorite, the LM386 audio amplifier. It provides enough gain to drive a small loudspeaker or pair of headphones.

Adjusting the detector involves setting the 10K pot to twice the expected received signal frequency (in this case 150 kHz) as measured at pin 5 of the LM568. The best way to do this is with a frequency counter connected to pin 5 through a common low-capacitance (10 pF or less) 10X oscilloscope probe. The capture range of the LM568 is pretty wide, however, so this setting is not especially critical. If you do not have a scope, you can simply adjust the 10K pot for the best overall recovered audio. Power for the entire optical receiver is provided by the same simple regulated power supply described last month.

After all is built and the various stages "smoke" tested, it is a good idea to do a preliminary overall system check. This will give you the assurance that every-

thing is working properly before you start on the "antenna" portion of the project. For preliminary testing purposes any high-output, visible red LED and silicon photodiode will do. When connecting the photodiode, however, be sure to keep the lead going to pin 2 of the op-amp as short as possible. Because of the high gain and wide bandwidth of this stage, the input lead can easily act as an "antenna," and if it is too long, noise and other extraneous signals will be picked up, interfering with normal operation. A lead length of 1/4 inch or less is ideal.

To begin, first place the transmitter's microphone next to a continuous source of audio such as the output of a radio or stereo. Next temporarily connect the transmitting LED to a couple of wires and arrange it so that it is pointed directly toward the receiving photodiode and about 6 inches away. Now adjust the various pots until a clear, undistorted signal is received. Slowly move the transmitting LED out of the direct path of the photodiode (to reduce the received signal level) and readjust all of the potentiometers again until maximum sensitivity is achieved. If you are careful, you may actually be able to receive signals reflected off a wall at the far end of the room in which you are



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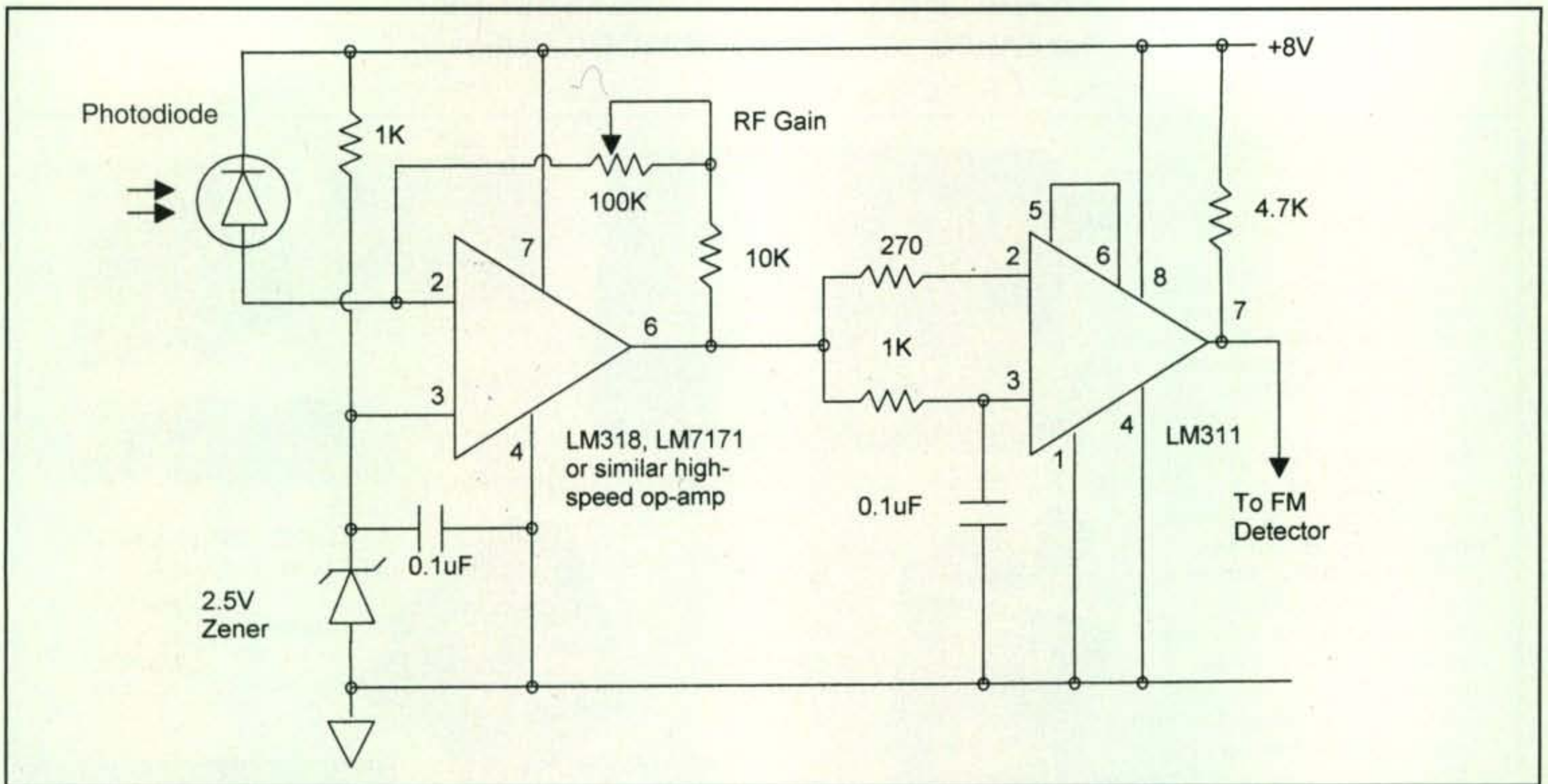


Fig. 2—Optical “front end.”

working. If you have any problems along the way, use a scope and probe all stages, one at a time, starting with the transmitter, until you find the stage with the problem.

When all is operating properly, you can replace the test LED and photodiode with the final source and detector devices with which you want to experiment. You will have to modify the transmitter driver to match your source, as

well as probably change the front-end sensitivity to match your detector.

Some possibilities are to use ultraviolet LEDs and detectors to experiment with non-line-of sight systems as discussed a couple of months ago. Another possibility is to configure an array of LEDs with a suitable high-current driver for increased range. You could even drive a laser salvaged from a laser pointer or an RGB combination

LED for a pseudo tunable system as also previously discussed. For a real change, you could try to build an ultrasonic transmission system using common 40-kHz transducers or even stereo tweeters. If you do, you may have to change the operating frequency from 75 kHz to 40 kHz. The field is only limited by your imagination. Who knows what you might come up with!

73, Irwin, WA2NDM

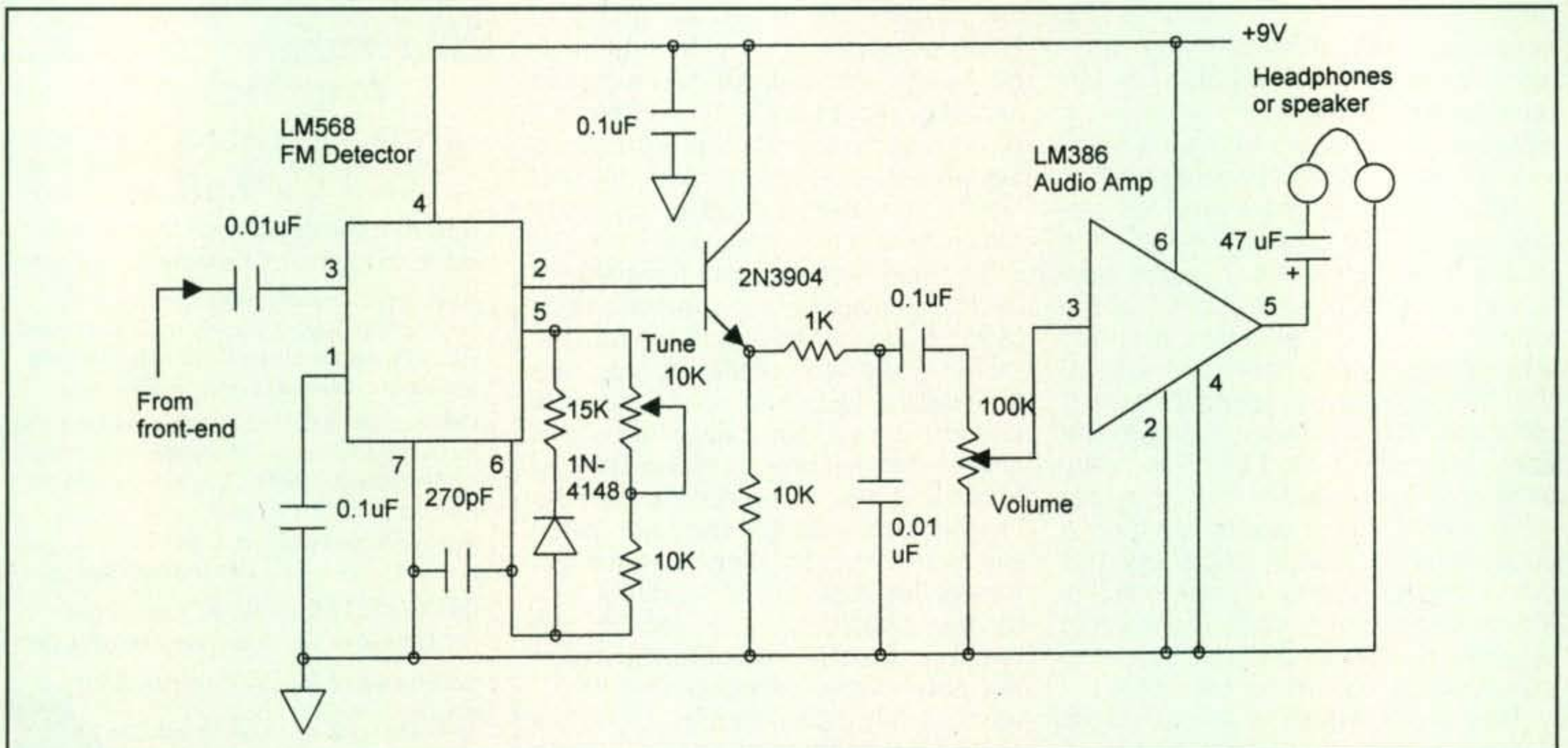


Fig. 3—FM detector and audio output.



What You've Told Us...

Our October survey asked for your views regarding online publications. To start with, 92% of the readers who responded have internet access at home, and 91% of them have broadband. Most of the respondents (57%) do not currently read any online magazines, but a healthy 42% do. On the other hand, two-thirds of you read magazines that offer both print and online versions. Of that group, a large majority (71%) reads only the print version, while 22% read both versions and 7% read the online version only.

Asked how you approach reading online magazines, after factoring out the 48% who say they don't, 46% download and save the issue, either to read later onscreen (23%) or to print out (23%). Another 40% read directly from the website while 14% print selected pages directly from the magazine's website. On the question of your comfort level with reading online magazines, 54% of those offering an opinion are either somewhat or very uncomfortable while 46% are either somewhat or very comfortable.

Three-quarters of the respondents do not currently pay for reading online magazines, and two-thirds say they would not do so, while 30% say they would pay for an online subscription but would expect a reduced rate over the cost of a printed and mailed magazine and 3% said they would pay the same regardless of format. Finally, we asked what you thought would be a reasonable subscription rate for an online magazine, and 59% of you said (again) that you would not pay for online content. Of the rest, 29% said \$10-\$15 per year, 26% said \$5-\$10/year; 19% said \$15-\$20, and 8% each said less than \$5, \$20-\$25 or \$25-\$30.

This month's free subscription winner is R. Reams of Wendell, North Carolina.

Reader Survey March 2010

We'd like to know more about you—about who you are, where you live, what kind(s) of work you do, and of course, what kinds of amateur radio activities you enjoy. Why? To help us serve you better.

Each time we run one of these surveys, we'll ask a few different questions and ask you to indicate your answers by circling numbers on the Survey Card and returning it to us. As a bit of incentive, we'll pick one respondent each month and give that person a complimentary one-year subscription (or subscription extension) to *CQ*.

This month, we'd like to find out more about your personal copy of *CQ* magazine.

Please answer by circling the appropriate numbers on the reply card.

1. How did you get this copy of *CQ*?

- Subscription copy delivered to me by mail1
- Purchased at ham radio store or hamfest2
- Purchased at newsstand or bookstore3
- Passed along to me by a fellow ham.....4
- Reading a library copy.....5

2. What is your usual reading pattern for *CQ*?

- Read entire issue, front to back.....6
- Read entire issue, starting with favorite column.....7
- Read articles/columns of interest first, then read the rest later8
- Read articles/columns of interest only.....9
- No particular pattern; varies with each issue.....10

3. What will you do with this copy of *CQ* when you're finished with it?

- Save it for future reference.....11
- Save it for collection purposes12
- Pass it along to another ham.....13
- Pass it along to a club library14
- Recycle it.....15
- Throw it in the trash.....16
- Return it to the newsstand.....17

4. Which ham radio-related magazines do you read regularly?

- Amateur Television Quarterly.....18
- AMSAT Journal19
- CQ*20
- CQ VHF*21
- CQ Radio Amateur (Spanish CQ)*22
- DX Magazine*.....23
- Monitoring Times*.....24
- National Contest Journal (NCJ)*.....25
- Popular Communications*26
- QCWA Journal*27
- QEX*.....28
- QST*29
- WorldRadio Online*30
- Other31

Thank you for your responses. We'll be back with more questions next month.

Top Ham Radio Stories of the Past Decade

I am writing this on the final day of 2009. Another decade has passed and 2010 is upon us. From 1999 to 2009, the amateur radio world changed dramatically. The Amateur Radio Service of today is quite different from that of the 1990s. The following is what I believe are the most important amateur radio events of the 2000s. They impacted just about every current and future ham radio operator.

Amateur Radio Restructuring

Before the new decade, the last major restructuring of the Amateur Radio Service rules had taken place in 1989 (PR Docket No. 88-139) when the Commission eliminated unnecessary rules and simplified complex terminology. The classes of operator licenses and examination requirements to obtain these licenses, however, remained the same. That changed in 2000.

The new decade started out with the FCC releasing a 70-page Report and Order (WT-Docket 98-143) restructuring the Amateur Service into three license classes. At the time there were six: Novice, Technician, Tech Plus, General, Advanced, and Amateur Extra Class. This was accomplished by "grandfathering" the Novice and Advanced Class operator licenses and combining the Technician and Technician Plus into a single class. This in effect phased out the Tech Plus Class.

The only difference between the Technician and Tech Plus Class was that a Tech Plus operator

had passed a five words-per-minute (wpm) telegraphy examination. Tech Plus operators still retained credit for the 5-wpm code exam indefinitely. Their authority to operate HF was conveyed by the Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination (CSCE) received from the VE team when they passed the 5-wpm code exam.

All six classes remained in the FCC's Amateur Service database, however, to this day. Novice and Advanced Class amateurs would be able to modify their licenses (that is, change their name, address, and callsign) and renew their tickets indefinitely.

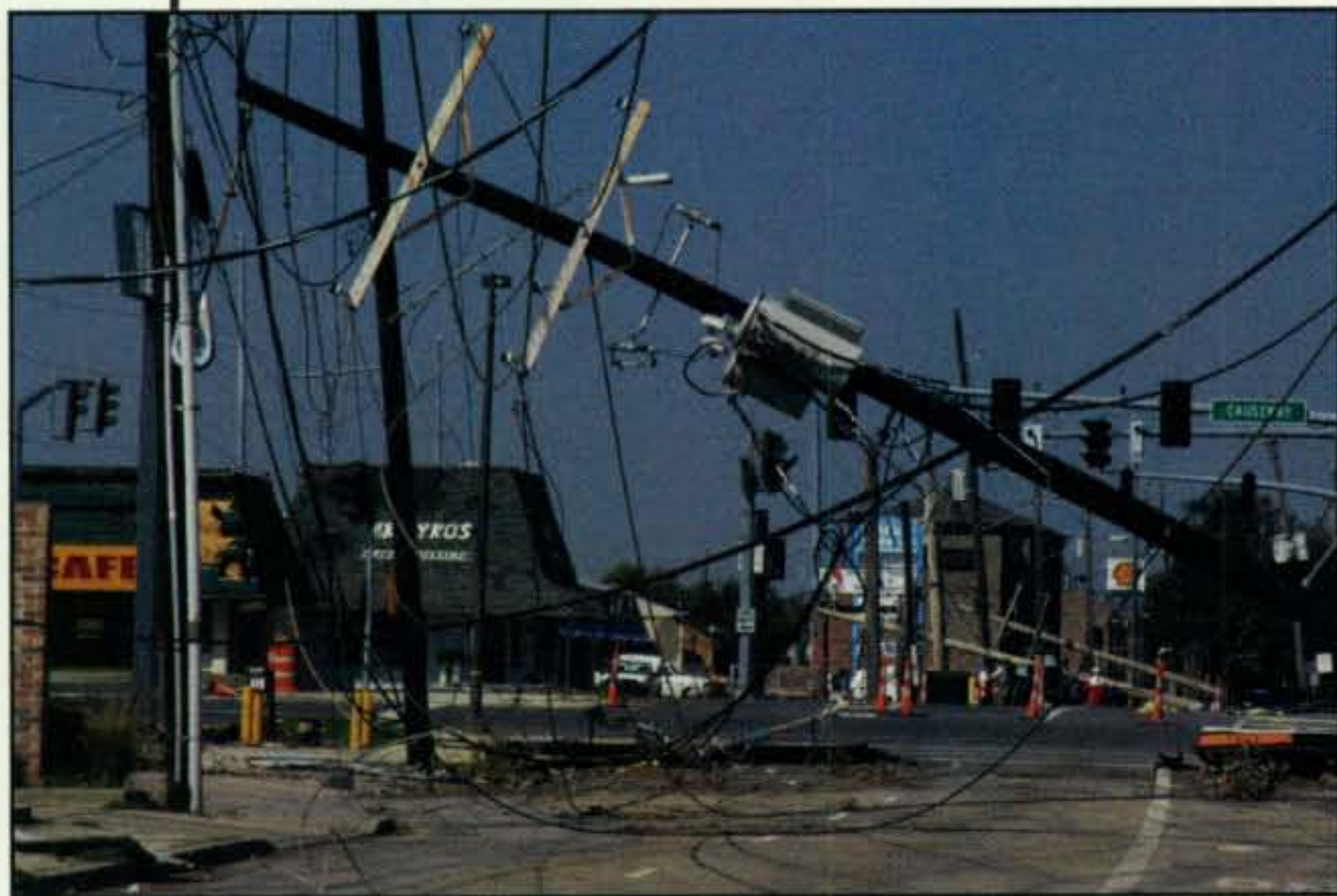
Effective April 15, 2000, applicants would only be able to be examined for three classes: Technician (the VHF/UHF entry level); General (the HF entry); and Extra, a technically oriented senior license. The Technician Class continued as a "no code" ticket. No new Novice, Tech Plus, or Advanced Class licenses have been issued since April 15, 2000, and only one Morse code examination at 5 words-per-minute (wpm) remained at the time. The number of license exams was reduced to four. There had been eight, the most of any country in the world.

The FCC said the Amateur Radio Service fundamentally is a technical service and it "... believed that an individual's ability to demonstrate increased Morse code proficiency is not necessarily indicative of that individual's ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art." As a result, the 13-wpm (Element 1B) and 20-wpm (Element 1C) were discontinued. The FCC declined, however, to abolish all CW exam speeds until the international radio regulations were changed to eliminate the mandatory telegraphy proficiency requirement in the Amateur Service worldwide.

The FCC-mandated ten written exam topics were also eliminated effective April 15, 2000. The VECs' Question Pool Committee (QPC) would now have free rein to decide on the content of each of the three written examinations. Both the Technician Class multiple-choice written exam (now called Element 2) and General Class written exam (now Element 3) would contain 35 multiple-choice questions. The Extra Class written Element 4 test, would have 50 questions. The question-pool system remained intact, and each of the three remaining question pools were still required to contain at least ten times as many questions as would appear on an examination.

Technicians licensed before March 21, 1987 retained exam credit for both the 5-wpm code and the new General Class Element 3. They were eligible to upgrade without further examination and were the only group of radio amateurs to achieve additional frequency privileges as a result of the Report and Order. Thousands of Technicians ap-

*1020 Byron Lane, Arlington, TX 76012
e-mail: <w5yi@cq-amateur-radio.com>



With telephone and power lines down throughout the Gulf Coast area after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, amateur radio was there to provide communications. (Photo by Liz Roll/FEMA)

plied for a "paper upgrade." General and Advanced Class radio amateurs could upgrade simply by passing Element 4 without passing an additional code exam. There was an unprecedented mad rush to upgrade.

In addition, station licenses in the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) were eliminated as being unnecessary for amateurs to provide emergency service. However, the RACES service remained. The new Part 97 rules also required that club and military recreation station licenses be modified or renewed through a Club Call Sign Administrator (CCSA) who would electronically submit the information to the FCC.

It was particularly difficult for the Volunteer Examiner Coordinators' Question Pool Committee, which had to revise all three written examination pools at once ... and in only 30 days. The number of questions in the five Novice (Element 2), Technician (Element 3A), General (Element 3B), Advanced (Element 4A), and Extra Class (Element 4B) question pools were reduced and folded into three pools: Elements 2, 3, and 4. Element 1 was the 5-wpm code exam.

The new (Element 2) Technician pool consisted of questions from the Novice and Element 3A pool. The new (Element 3) General pool primarily came from the old Element 3B pool. Also, the new Element 4 (Extra Class) pool consisted of questions from the old Element 4A (Advanced) and 4B (Extra Class) pools. Several questions were revised or added to the pools to reflect the new restructuring rules. All three question pools were released to the public on February 1, 2000 by the Question Pool Committee. On April 15, 2000, the VEs began using the new question pools.

Morse Testing Made Optional at WRC-2003

World Radio Conferences used to be held every 20 years by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the worldwide body governing telecommunications. However, with the rapid development of technology and its associated demands on spectrum, WRCs are now convened much more frequently ... about every two or three years.

Each International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) region also conducts a triennial conference of national amateur radio societies that lie within their borders. The IARU is a federation of national amateur radio societies from around



The graphic features the year '2010' in large, stylized black numbers with a white outline, set against a background of bare trees. A small cartoon hamster wearing a red scarf is walking in the snow. Below the trees, the text 'Winter Savings' is written in a decorative, serif font. At the bottom, a red banner contains the text 'January 1 thru March 31' in a white, serif font.

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the world. Region 1 consists of Europe (including China and Russia) and Africa; Region 2, North, Central, and South America; and Region 3, the Middle East, Asia, Australia, and the South Pacific.

During the early 2000s, the IARU developed a position regarding future amateur radio qualifications that are embodied in the international Radio Regulations: ITU Article S.25. At the time, the international amateur service rules required demonstrated Morse code proficiency in order to operate on the HF frequencies.

Article S25 of the Radio Regulations stated in part: "2735/S25.5—Any person seeking a license to operate the apparatus of an amateur station shall prove that he is able to send correctly by hand and to receive correctly by ear, texts in Morse code signals. The administrations concerned may, however, waive this requirement in the case of stations making use exclusively of frequencies above 30 MHz."

Updating the Amateur Radio Service regulations was on the agenda to be considered at WRC-2003. The various IARU regional meetings agreed to support lowering the amateur license Morse code test speed as a temporary measure, with the ultimate removal of Morse code requirement being an ITU license requirement.

The IARU's Administrative Council met in October 2001 in Guatemala City, Guatemala. The Administrative Council is responsible for the policy and management of the IARU. Representatives of all three IARU Regions were in attendance.

At that meeting, the IARU Council adopted a landmark resolution: "... recognizing that the Morse code continues to be an effective and efficient mode of communication used by many thousands of radio amateurs, but that the position of Morse as a qualifying criterion for an HF amateur license is no longer relevant to the healthy future of amateur radio." Member societies were "... urged to seek, as an interim measure, Morse code testing speeds not exceeding five words per minute."

The resolution further said, "IARU policy is to support the removal of Morse code testing as an ITU requirement for an amateur license to operate on frequencies below 30 MHz." That resolution was not publicized very well in the U.S. because the ARRL and a good many of its members still felt that demonstrated manual telegraphy proficiency should be mandated in the international Radio Regulations.

The World Radiocommunications Conference (WRC-03) was held beginning June 9, 2003 at the ITU in Geneva, Switzerland. It ended on July 4. The 189 countries affiliated with the ITU sent delegations to the conference totaling more than 2600 participants. Each country had one vote.

Although amateur radio matters were but a small part of the conference, several items on the conference agenda were of importance to radio amateurs. The most important was Agenda Item 1.7, the revision of Article 25, the international regulations governing the amateur and amateur-satellite services.

In the last 50 years, the ITU has reviewed and relaxed the amateur Morse requirement at every international conference capable of doing so. WRC-03 was no exception. In 1947 (Atlantic City), the ITU member states agreed that Morse proficiency should only be required when the operation took place on frequencies below 1000 MHz (1 GHz). At WARC-59, the 1959 World Administrative Radio Conference, this level was dropped to 144 MHz. A further reduction was made at WARC-79 to 30 MHz.

At WRC-2003, the USA proposed to simplify Article 25 and to totally "... eliminate the requirement to prove Morse code ability and to leave this matter to administrations." The nations of the world agreed that Article 25 of the Radio Regulations should be amended to allow a country to determine for itself whether the manual Morse code requirement should be continued.

Article S25.5 now reads: "Administrations shall determine whether or not a person seeking a license to operate an amateur station shall demonstrate the ability to send and receive texts in Morse code signals." The effect of this revision was to eliminate the mandatory requirement that a person seeking an amateur radio operator license had to demonstrate manual code proficiency. Dozens of countries immediately responded by dropping their Morse code examinations.

End of an Era: FCC Drops All Morse Testing

In the summer of 2003, right after WRC-03 ended, Petitions for Rulemaking started rolling in to the FCC. Most of the petitioners wanted the FCC to entirely or partially eliminate the international Morse code requirement.

Some two years later, on July 19, 2005, the Commission finally addressed the 18 petitions it had received

by releasing a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (WT Docket No. 05-235.) In it the FCC said that it had previously considered the need for Morse proficiency and concluded that code testing should be reduced to the minimum required to satisfy the international Radio Regulations.

It pointed out that as of July 4, 2003 the Radio Regulations now only requires that countries "... verify the operational and technical qualifications of any person wishing to operate an amateur station." The Commission said this requirement can be satisfied by requiring applicants to pass written examinations covering relevant subject matter.

The FCC also said in the NPRM that it believed "... the public interest will be served by revising the Amateur Service rules to eliminate the telegraphy testing requirement" for all classes and asked for comment on this premise. Thousands of pages of comments were submitted by the amateur community.

On December 19, 2006, nearly two-and-a-half years after the NPRM was issued, the FCC released a historic Report and Order eliminating the remaining 5 words-per-minute Morse code examination requirement for General and Amateur Extra licensees.

The FCC said the R&O "... comports with revisions to the international Radio Regulations resulting from World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03). At that gathering, delegates agreed to authorize each country to determine whether or not to require that applicants demonstrate Morse code proficiency in order to qualify for an amateur radio license with privileges on frequencies below 30 MHz." The Commission called telegraphy testing "... an unnecessary regulatory burden."

The R&O was 41 pages long—with more than half being devoted to a listing of everyone who submitted comments on the proceeding ...nearly 4,000 names! The Commission wanted the amateur radio community to know that their comments on the volatile Morse testing issue were indeed received and considered. The new rules took effect on February 23, 2007. It took nearly seven years to end telegraphy testing in the U.S. Amateur Radio Service.

WT Docket 04-140

The Omnibus Report and Order became effective on December 15, 2006. It was called "Omnibus" because it was a "catch-all" rulemaking impacting several amateur radio rule sections.

Its most significant feature is that it expanded the HF phone segments for

General, Advanced, and Extra Class amateurs, and allowed Novice and Technician Class licensees (with Element 1 code credit) to operate in the General Class CW sub-bands on 80, 40, 15, and 10 meters. There were no changes on 20 meters.

Among other things, it also permitted radio amateurs to designate (or "will") their callsign to a specific amateur radio club upon their death; relaxed certain restrictions on the sale of external amateur radio power amplifiers; deleted the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) frequencies; prohibited the filing of multiple "vanity" callsign applications for the same callsign, and eliminated the requirement to publicly announce amateur radio examination locations and times.

Hurricane Katrina, August '05

Federal regulations governing our hobby specifically state that one of the reasons that amateur radio exists is to provide the public with "... a voluntary noncommercial communication service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications."

It had long been known what would happen if a large hurricane hit Louisiana and the levees failed in New Orleans, a city that lies below sea level. On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina smashed into the Gulf Coast and the sea walls crumbled, submerging the city. Tens of thousands of people were stranded and waited for help, some for days.

Louisiana was ill-prepared to deal with Katrina. Supposedly, preparations for Hurricane Katrina were to have begun by the city and state at least three days before it made landfall, but it didn't happen. Mandatory evacuation was not ordered until less than a day before Katrina hit, and FEMA officials were supposed to have had critical resources in place before landfall. They didn't. The storm hit Monday at 8:00 AM.

Although for the most part preventable, what happened was a disaster of unprecedented proportions. There can be no doubt that it is the worst catastrophe in U.S. history. The chaos that followed was almost unimaginable. Looters, unhampered by police, stripped the city's retail businesses dry. FEMA Director Michael Brown was relieved of his duties by President Bush. He subsequently resigned, as did the New Orleans police chief.

Hurricane Katrina was the costliest hurricane and one of the deadliest in the history of the United States. Damage

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estimates were well in excess of \$100 billion. Nearly 2,000 people lost their lives in the actual hurricane and in the subsequent floods, and 270,000 were homeless. An estimated 3-million people were without electricity. Years later, thousands of displaced residents in Mississippi and Louisiana were still living in government-supplied trailers. Katrina redistributed over 1 million people from the central Gulf Coast elsewhere across the United States.

Hurricane Katrina caused a virtual communications blackout in the region, knocking out some 2.5-million Bell-South Corp. telephone lines and disabling more than 1,000 cell-tower sites operated by Nextel and Cingular Wireless. People calling into southern Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama got constant busy signals or announcements that "... all circuits are busy." The outage completely disrupted the public's ability to communicate with police, fire, hospitals, relief agencies, and other emergency-care providers. Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco blasted telecommunications providers for the collapse of the state's wireless and telephone networks. For more than two weeks after the storm amateur radio was the only reliable means of communications in and out of the three states hardest hit by Hurricane Katrina. Even one of President Bush's messages to the New Orleans Mayor had to be relayed by ham radio.

The American Red Cross's frantic call for emergency communications help

"The American Red Cross's frantic call for emergency communications help was answered by hundreds of amateur radio operators from all over the nation."

was answered by hundreds of amateur radio operators from all over the nation. The plea for assistance, transmitted through the ARRL, met with a huge response. A volunteer army of ham operators descended on the Gulf Coast.

Operators were asked to work in severe conditions throughout the devastated region. They found victims trapped in attics and on roofs who needed to be rescued, many desperate for food, water, and medicine. Many rescues were coordinated using ham radio systems that worked during the widespread power and communications outage.

Radio amateurs deployed several hundred thousand dollars worth of equipment and resources to the area. Several amateur-owned self-contained communications vans and trailers were effectively utilized in the disaster area. During the storm amateur operators gave weather reports to the National Hurricane Center in Florida using HF radio.

Amateur radio communications were established among hospitals, evacuation centers, and emergency operations centers. Ham radio volunteers all over the country manned health and welfare message networks to advise loved ones of the fate of evacuees.

The government made some funding available to reimburse radio amateurs for some of their expenses, up to \$25 a day. The grant, administered by the ARRL, was made through the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), an independent U.S. agency created in 1993 to support volunteer services.

In many cases, ham radio operators provided the only communications into or out of the area, and even served as 911 dispatchers. The old-fashioned ham radio proved its usefulness in the high-tech world of computers, the internet, and cell phones. "When all else fails, Amateur Radio..." is a lot more than a slogan.

The recovery effort lasted for months. It has taken years to rebuild the New Orleans infrastructure destroyed by the storm, and they are not done yet.

73, Fred, W5YI

On the Cover

Cover photographer Larry Mulvehill, WB2ZPI, found Jon Hamlet, W4ZW, of Nokomis, Florida, overlooking the Gulf of Mexico, out on his roof adjusting his SteppIR antenna when he came to shoot pictures, but nowadays you're most likely to find Jon at one of the three schools where he helps run amateur radio clubs and licensing courses. Since late 2008, he and Dave Brandenburg, K5RQ, with the help of several local radio clubs, have licensed more than two dozen young people and have two more groups signed up for Technician classes as well as a General Class course that was scheduled for February.

Jon and Dave have outfitted each of the schools at which they volunteer with a complete club station. In addition, they donate a handheld for each student who earns his or her license. (Jon notes that the HTs are actually donated to the school club, which then lends them to the students, who have the option of purchasing them for whatever they can afford to pay.) Local clubs have stepped in with additional donations as well as volunteers and the use of club repeaters for training and youth nets.

Jon has been licensed since 1955 and says he's tried just about everything ham radio has to offer over the years. Currently, his main interests are contesting and CW, and he tries to involve his students in contesting efforts as well. Jon is a retired businessman who has owned a computer company and a telephone company, built cars and owned the RadioShack franchise in Russia for six years. He credits ham radio with leading him into the telecommunications business and helping him meet a lot of very interesting people, noting that "hams tend to be a cut above average to begin with." We couldn't agree more! (Cover photo by Larry Mulvehill, WB2ZPI)

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Big Changes at MARS, plus Early Reports from Haiti

The acronym is conveniently staying the same, but much is different at MARS. With a distinguished history dating decades before its being named the Military Affiliate Radio System in 1952, the program has undergone its first major charter revision in more than ten years with a change to its name, mission, and top-tier management structure.

Two days before Christmas 2009, the Department of Defense issued an Instruction establishing the Military *Auxiliary* Radio System with added focus on United States homeland security and a directive calling for MARS managers to report to a trio of DoD officials. Consisting primarily of licensed radio amateurs, MARS is a civilian auxiliary that assists the military and other government agencies with communications on a range of designated frequencies.

December's Instruction now assigns the program responsibility of providing "contingency radio communications" to support U.S. government operations, "DoD Components," and "civil authorities at all levels," including those related to national security and emergency preparedness. To view the Instruction's full text on the Internet, visit:

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Deborah Ava, KJ6CRZ, and Karl Tso, KI6PCW, were honored by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors for their life-saving efforts in the rescue of a severely injured man on Catalina Island off the coast of southern California. The duo used 2-meter FM repeater communications to summon help. (Courtesy of KI6PCW)

<<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/465002p.pdf>>.

MARS leadership previously answered to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence, as defined in the 1998 charter. With the 2009 charter changes, leaders will now report to three DoD officials: The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs has chief responsibility for the MARS Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) mission. Additionally, MARS leaders will report to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Networks and Information Integration/DoD Chief Information Officer and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Logistics and Material Readiness.

The announcement puts to rest recent concern that Navy/Marine Corps MARS was being targeted for abandonment. Along with Army and Air Force MARS, the Navy/Marine Corps component is well-established in the document's vision for the future. Left unclear in the December directive is which MARS element will take the lead during a domestic emergency. Proposed language designating Army MARS reportedly did not survive the Pentagon drafting process. Health and welfare communications will continue to be provided by MARS units "to military members, civilian employees and contractors of DoD components, and civil agency employees and contractors, when in remote or isolated areas, in contingencies or whenever appropriate," the Instruction said.

The new MARS mission calls for its components to establish means for reliable radio-only communications, without reliance on landline services or the internet. It must also have a dependable emergency power contingency and have mobile communications components for on-the-spot deployment. In the eyes of DoD, a military auxiliary is "an organized body of volunteers prepared to supplement the uniformed services or any designated civilian authorities by provision of specialized autonomous services when called upon or when situations warrant (e.g., Civil Air Patrol, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary)."

Involvement in MARS, the Instruction says, is to be encouraged "by establishing and funding an active MARS program within each military department, which shall then assign a MARS-licensed staff representative to manage operations, readiness, planning, procedural and technical development, documentation, standards, training, equipment, program and membership administration, and other matters necessary for mission accomplishment." The DoD has called upon the secretaries of the Army, Air Force, and Navy to support this initiative. Further, the secretaries are expected to develop plans to "promote civilian interest, recruit

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KJ6CRZ and KI6PCW Honored for Rescue Assistance

On the 30-mile catamaran trip from Marina Del Rey on the coast of southern California to Catalina, Deborah Ava, KJ6CRZ, and Karl Tso, KI6PCW, made it a point to scope out the 2-meter repeaters accessible from the island. After all, they said, you never know when you might need to rely on amateur radio to get you out of a jam.

The Topanga couple was accompanying their sons Stephan, 8, and Julian, 6, on a weekend Cub Scout campout in late October. Having completed an EmComm training class just two days earlier, 'CRZ and 'PCW knew the importance of communications preparation, even though they had no hint of what a huge role it would play in the coming hours.

After arriving at Catalina's Emerald Bay at about 8 PM, the family got their cabin assignment and joined other Scouts for a campfire session—complete with Smores—at 8:30. At

about 9:30 PM, as others were heading back to their cabins, the couple "wanted to check out the Catalina repeater," Tso said. They hiked up a trail overlooking a cove "to check out the view," Ava said. "It was indeed beautiful," but there was a "really gnarly drop-off."

Then, "we hear this moaning sound," Ava said. "What is this sound?" At first they thought it might be a bison or some other animal in this dark, remote area of the island. Shining a powerful flashlight down the cliffside, though, they saw a man sprawled at the base of jagged rocks some 40-feet below. "He was in a pretty strange position, clearly bleeding from the side of his face, lying flat and moaning," she said.

"We were completely stunned for the moment," Ava said, but it was immediately clear this was a serious emergency situation. "We yelled, 'We know you're down there. We're going to get help,'" she said. They would learn later that 59-year-old southern California resident Peter Conn, who was also part of the Cub Scout excursion, had fallen from the trail down the rocks, sustaining potentially life-threatening injuries.

"We screamed for (Cub Scout) counselors to come," Tso said, unsure if anyone hearing their shouts made a call to 911. "They never confirmed communication." Pulling out his ICOM IC-92AD VHF/UHF handie-talkie, Karl made a distress call on 2-meter FM answered by Scott Bastian, KD6QZX, of Fullerton and Joyce Wood, KD6HYO, of Costa Mesa, both on the mainland. Bastian, an off-duty LA Sheriff's deputy, put the process of contacting emergency personnel into motion, while Wood stood by as needed.

Amateur Radio's Life Link Amid Death and Destruction in Haiti

Radio amateurs around the world stood poised to provide emergency communications to the people of Haiti, devastated by a 7.0-magnitude earthquake on the afternoon of Tuesday, January 12.

At press time, precious few signals were being copied from the crippled nation, where many thousands of deaths were reported; residences, businesses, and infrastructure destroyed; and communications at all levels crippled.

HH2JR: "I'm probably one of the very last communications out of Haiti."

With one of the earliest descriptions of the magnitude of devastation in Haiti, Jean-Robert Gaillard, HH2JR, of Port-au-Prince, put out a call on 14.300 MHz for a phone patch into the U.S. Wednesday morning, less than 24 hours after the initial 7.0 shock.

Fred Moore, W3ZU, in Inverness, Florida, stepped forward, moving HH2JR to 14.313, and telling him: "We can run you any traffic you need, anywhere worldwide, toll free."

"Fred, I appreciate that," Gaillard replied. "I'm a bit nervous . . . we've had 30 aftershocks since 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon."

In the next 20+ minutes, Gaillard, operating using a borrowed generator, would emotionally describe a scene of destruction and death, having himself seen at least 200 fatalities.

"No internet, no cell phone communication, no regular telephone," he said. With communications crippled throughout the country, Gaillard said, "I'm probably one of the very last communications out of Haiti. There's nothing coming out."

"It's chaos, I'm telling you," he said. "Real chaos."

In subsequent days, two VHF repeaters were reported operational, one in Port-au-Prince and another on a mountain near the Dominican Republic border. Both were being used by Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network (SATERN) and IARU operators.

HH6JH: "On battery power, hoping to get a generator."

Fr. John Henault, HH6JH, in Port-au-Prince, was one of the first stations heard, making contact Wednesday on 14.300 MHz, the IARU Global Centre of Activity frequency for emergency communications.

Based on relays monitored by CQ magazine editor Rich Moseson, W2VU, Fr. Henault reported he was safe, but had no power and no phone service.

HH6JH was operating on battery power and hoping to get a generator running later in the day. He asked Bill Sturridge, KI4MMZ, in Flagler Beach, Florida, to telephone relatives with information he was OK.

Nets And Operators: Quick Action Sets the Stage for Haiti EmComm

Within moments of the Haitian earthquake, radio amateurs in the region were on the move, activating emergency communications plans and stations to render aid.

Arnie Coro, CO2KK, IARU Region II Area C Emergency Coordinator and member of the Federacion de Radioaficionados de Cuba, quickly filed a report documenting the quick action and early efforts of operators in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Venezuela, and the United States.

"A few minutes after the earthquake was felt in eastern Cuba's cities, the Cuban Federation of Radio Amateurs Emergency Net was activated," he said, "with net control stations CO8WM and CO8RP located in Santiago de Cuba, and in permanent contact with the National Seismology Center of Cuba.

"Stations in Baracoa, in Guantanamo province, were also activated immediately as the earth movements were felt even stronger there due to its proximity to Haiti. CO8AZ and CO8AW went on the air immediately, with CM8WAL following.

"Baracoa could not contact Santiago de Cuba stations on 40 meters due to long skip after 5 PM local time, so several stations in western Cuba and one in Florida provided relays."

Frequencies requested to be kept clear for earthquake-related traffic included: 14.300 MHz (IATN), 14.265 (SATERN); 7.045 (IARU Region II), and 3.720 (IARU Region II).

We will have updates next month when and if there is additional amateur radio communication related to the disaster in Haiti.

—KI6SN

Bastian had been "driving home on the eastbound 60 Freeway through the City of Industry monitoring the Catalina Island Repeater (CARA), as I do while traveling in the LA basin . . . when I heard the call from Karl" at about 9:45 PM. "He explained he had discovered an injured male adult hiker . . . this person was badly injured and he had no cell phone service and was requesting rescue personnel. Both Joyce and I answered his call."

Bastian said he advised both of them of his LA Sheriff's deputy experience and would check on the rescue status. He contacted the Los Angeles County Communications Center in East LA. Even though off duty, he has "a direct number to them being a deputy," he said.

"The Radio Transmission Operator (RTO) had me stand by and he made contact with the Avalon Sheriff's Station Desk (on Catalina Island). I could hear them relay information that both Sheriff's Rescue as well as Bay Watch had just been dispatched to the downed hiker at Emerald Cove.

"The RTO relayed this to me and I in turn advised Karl via amateur radio of the responding rescue efforts," Bastian said. "I dropped the connection to the Sheriffs Communications Center and advised Karl that I would stand by on his frequency pending the rescue response arrival.

". . . It took approximately one hour for them to extract the injured man and get him en route to a hospital. After Karl's last update of the outbound injured male, I thanked him for his efforts and he did the same. He told me he was very moved by being able to have communications in an emergency with a remote location."

Bastian's mobile station is in a 2009 Jeep JK Unlimited 4x4. "I am using a Yaesu FT100D radio and have a matching Yaesu ATAS100 antenna with a duplexer for HF/VHF/UHF frequencies."

Back at the rescue scene, Tso and Ava assisted emergency personnel as they maneuvered to reach the injured hiker. "We were the only ones with a functioning flashlight," Ava said, giving them her headlamp. Conn was airlifted to a mainland hospital where he was treated for injuries to his hand, pelvis, legs, foot, and ankle, the couple said. "He had broken his jaw in four places." Tso said the experience reminded him of how vital it is to have "multiple layers of ways to communicate" and how important training and preparedness are for radio amateurs to efficiently step in during EmComm situations.

For their remarkable rescue efforts, Tso and Ava were honored by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in a December ceremony. "Karl Tso and Deborah Ava exemplify how dedicated volunteers can empower themselves to help others in times of emergency, and even save lives," Third District Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky said in his citation.

According to the county supervisor, "The (Conn) family is grateful for Tso's and Ava's quick thinking. 'We owe them everything,' says Gail Conn, who says her husband could well have bled to death had he not been rescued quickly. 'He was very lucky to be found when he was.'"

Ava and Tso are Technician class licensees and members of the Topanga Disaster Radio Team (DRT), which is part of the Topanga Coalition for Emergency Preparedness (T-CEP). Amateur radio is an avid hobby for Tso, who is an architect in home construction and Ava, who is a creative packaging designer for Mattel Toy Corp. Tso said amateur radio

provides a necessary "comfort zone" in times of emergency, "one of the many layers of defense."

FM Simplex Key In Idaho Op's Aid To Stranded Men

A routine maintenance excursion to a repeater site at the 9,000-foot level of southern Idaho's Mount Harrison was spiced with a generous helping of drama when two radio amateurs found themselves stranded by a fierce storm around New Year's.

Terry Fletcher, K7THF, of Twin Falls, was monitoring the 146.52-MHz 2-meter FM simplex national calling frequency when he heard a call from Bliss Wheeler, W7RUG, and Vance Hawley, WA7FDR, that whiteout conditions were preventing them from coming down the mountain. The men were warm and dry in a communications building, Fletcher said, but cell phone communication had failed and amateur radio would be their only connection to the world below. A combination of

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Terry Fletcher, K7THF (right), looks over EmComm equipment with Lee Kelly, K6ZVA, during ARRL Field Day 2009. Fletcher recently acted as the communications link between rescue authorities and two men stranded on southern Idaho's Mount Harrison. (Courtesy of K7MVA, Magic Valley Amateurs and KC7QR)

lousy weather and increasing medical concerns for one of the men created a situation that called for the help of volunteers and professionals in assuring the men would be safely returned home.

This mountain repeater building is "about 40 to 45 miles from me—line of sight," Fletcher said. But from that height, 144-MHz communication was not a problem, even on simplex using a handie-talkie with a rubber duck antenna.

"The big trick is that people need assurance that (other) people know where they are," Fletcher said. After hearing the distress call, he notified the Cassia County (ID) Sheriff's Department, who assessed the situation and put together a rescue plan.

"I told them I am in contact with (the two men)," Fletcher said, and offered "to be their link" to rescue authorities. They took Fletcher up on his offer. For the next 12 hours, K7THF kept both the stranded men and officials apprised of each one's status. "There was enough conversation," Fletcher said, "that we were talking at least every 20 to 30 minutes."

Wheeler is from Idaho Falls and Hawley lives in Howe. Fletcher, who spent 35 years with the U.S. Forest Service principally as a landscape architect, had some USFS communications background as a dispatcher in incident management during wildfires. "That mountain top was part of the realm in which I worked," he said. So "incident management" in this case came somewhat naturally to Fletcher, who after retirement got his Technician license in March 2009. Using his Yaesu FT857D transceiver and $5/8$ -wave J-pole, Fletcher said the trick in emergency communications is not to get "emotionally involved. Just work the conversations."

According to a report published by the Times-News on

MagicValley.com, "Mini-Cassia Search and Rescue was called out shortly after 4 PM . . . when Wheeler's medical condition deteriorated and required attention.

"Because of the white-out on the mountain, search crews were unable to reach the pair until midnight . . . Pomerelle Mountain Ski Resort Manager John Burrows used the ski resorts' Sno-Cat to tamp down the snow in front of the rescuers as they went in, Hawley said.

"Hawley was able to ride his snowmobile back out, while a search and rescue member brought out Wheeler's machine. Wheeler was transferred to Life Run Ambulance, then transported to Cassia Regional Medical Center. 'They took him to the hospital to be checked out,' Hawley said. 'I talked to him this morning and he's home, warmed up and feeling better,'" the Times-News story reported.

Fletcher said routinely monitoring the 2-meter FM simplex national calling frequency, 146.52 MHz, was key to hearing the radio amateurs' call for help. "It should be on everyone's scan list," he said, adding that reliable VHF simplex communication was crucial to the story's happy ending.

We'd Like to Hear Your Stories

The actions of Deborah Ava, KJ6CRZ, Karl Tso, KI6PCW, and Terry Fletcher, K7THF, are great examples of how radio amateurs take decisive action to fulfill our fraternity's obligation as public servants.

Do you know of other operators who chose to get involved during times of need? Please let us know, and we'll feature their stories in an upcoming column. Just drop an e-mail to: <ki6sn@cq-amateur-radio.com>. 73, Richard, KI6SN

CQ Public Service On The Web

For amateur radio public service updates, more photographs from this month's column, and other information, please visit CQ Public Service On The Web at: <<http://www.cqpublicservice.blogspot.com/>>.

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Hamming from the Shadows – Part 8

Your interest in our previous “Hamming from the Shadows” series in *CQ* continues to grow, indicating we are filling a definite need and addressing an area of widespread concern. That makes sense, as more and more people are living in confined spaces, and modern consumer-installed TVs, surround-sound systems, stereos, etc., are noticeably more susceptible to RFI than those simple-to-connect electronic setups of past times. Discouraged by the combined results, a number of radio amateurs have downsized to using only a 2-meter or dual-band FM handie-talkie for hamming. Once again I say, “Don’t give up!” Amateur radio is one of the world’s greatest hobbies/pursuits, and our globe-spanning HF bands are the glitz and glamour area we need to experience first hand to fully appreciate it.

Looking at station photos in radio magazines may give you the impression that everyone on HF has a super-tall tower and monster antenna system, but such is not the case. Many amateurs, and

I emphasize *many* amateurs, are having a ball QSOing friends and working the world using only a 100-watt HF transceiver and a vertical or horizontal wire antenna. You can do it, too. Remember, where there is a will, there is a way. Need more thought-whetting ideas and encouragement? Read on!

Radiating Gutters

After highlighting the house-gutter antenna used by Jeff, K8CQ, in last year’s “Shadows” column, Dave Winkle (Wink), WA8KOQ, stepped up and reported using a similar setup with good results (Winky Dink ‘Tenna?). Thinking back a few years, I recall several other friends using gutter antennas. Apparently, loading up the old metal gutter is a popular “secret solution” for amateurs living in ridiculously restricted areas. Don’t sneer: When we briefly lived in a townhouse several years ago, I gamma-matched and loaded up our (second story) metal bed frame on 17 meters and worked stations coast to coast (and some DX) with it.

Details of Wink’s invisible antenna and rigs are shown in photos A and B and fig. 1. An SGC-239

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Photo A— Can you spot the multiband antenna at this QTH of Dave Winkle, WA8KOQ? Neither can suspicious eyes. It is comprised of dual rain gutters on each side of the house front, with a white-insulated wire attached to the eaves of the peaked section, connecting the sides. An auto tuner is located out of view at the feedpoint, which is at base of the downspout. Photo courtesy of WA8KOQ)

auto tuner is installed at the feed point, and the pair of radials alongside the house serves as a ground system. Initially, Wink used the left-side downspout and gutter to the base of the roof peak (11 feet plus 26 feet, or 37 feet total) and found it worked quite well. A couple of years later, he added a 16-foot strip of wire along the roof peak and connected it to the 16-foot gutter plus 11-foot downspout on the right side of the house. Wink reports the resultant 80-foot antenna (with SGC-239 tuner at base) works 160 through 10 meters and outperforms all the indoor antennas he has tried. There are some good lessons here: Outdoor antennas, even those comprised of thin wire with buttons for insulators and clear nylon fishing line beat dipoles strung indoors around a room. The radiation pattern resulting from "bent to fit available space or supports" antennas may be distorted, but it works—and a distorted-pattern antenna beats no antenna. A low gutter antenna may have a high angle of radiation (translation, better for close-in rather than farther-out QSOs), but low-angle radiation from the vertical downspouts can "take up the slack." Limited room for a large 130-foot doublet or horizontal loop antenna? Use insulated wire placed around roof edges and zigzagged toward the roof middle as necessary. Our thanks to Wink, WA8KOQ, for sharing his views of his hidden antenna.

Hamming from Fantasyland

Now looking in the opposite direction, Howard Hawkins, K6BYU, enjoys hamming from the shadows with one of the most elaborate undercover antenna farms we have seen (photos C through F). Living amidst strictly enforced CC&Rs, Howard has a 28-foot tall "flagpole" vertical with 80 radials, a G5RV on a 32-foot fiberglass mast, a 43-foot "Zero-Five" vertical, and a 2-element SteppIR beam on a motor-raised 50-foot tower. Howard's indoor setup (photo G) is capable of running full legal power and he says RFI is not a problem. His elaborate 80-radial ground system and buried-in-conduit coax cables obviously helped to ensure radiation is confined to the antenna proper. We also note neighboring houses are a fair distance from Howard's antennas and his house is situated above street level and peppered with foliage, so spotting anything inside the fenced back area (without being considered a prowler) is difficult.

The 28-foot flagpole was considered patriotic and approved by the neighborhood Home Owners Association.


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Howard installed its base radial plate, radials, coax, and feed line below ground level and even added a drainage system with a base of rocks, so no one realized it was a vertical. Howard says the verti-

cal is his main antenna, because it blends with the landscape and is always up and ready for use.

The G5RV is supported by a 32-foot fiberglass mast that Howard lies flat on



Photo B— A heartwarming pair of classic R. L. Drake twins from the good old days plus a Yaesu FT-857D for "modern day flavor" grace the shack of WA8KOQ. A hidden antenna is definitely easier to accept with a setup like this!

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Z-817

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KT-100

LDG's first dedicated autotuner for Kenwood Amateur transceivers. Easy to use - just right for an AT-300 compatible Kenwood transceiver. The KT-100 actually allows you to use the Tune button on the radio. The LEDs on the front panel indicate tuning status, and will show a match in seconds, or even less if you've tuned on or near that frequency before. Has 2,000 memories for instant recall of the tuning parameters for your favorite bands and frequencies. If you have an AT-300 compatible Kenwood radio, you can simply plug the KT-100 into your transceiver with the provided cable; the interface powers the tuner, and the Tune button on the radio begins a tuning cycle. The supplied interface cable makes the KT-100 a dedicated tuner for most modern Kenwood transceivers. **Suggested Price \$199.99**



AT-200Pro

The AT-200 features LDG's new "3-D memory system" allowing up to eight antenna settings to be stored for each frequency. Handles up to 250 watts SSB or CW on 1.8 - 30 MHz, and 100 watts on 54 MHz (including 6 meters). Rugged and easy-to-read LED bar graphs show power and SWR, and a function key on the front panel allows you to access data such as mode and status. All cables included.

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Suggested Price \$229



radio not included

NEW! AT-897Plus for the Yaesu FT-897

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M-7700 For IC-7700. It will display S-meter on receive, or power out, SWR, ALC level or supply voltages, all selectable from the radio's menu. What's more, the M-7700 and the virtual meter on your radio can work together.

Suggested Price \$79.99



See

**AT-1000Pro Review
in Nov. '08 CQ**

AT-1000Pro

The AT-1000Pro has an Automode that automatically starts a tuning cycle when the SWR exceeds a limit you set. Operates at any power level between 5 and 1,000 watts peak. RF Relay protection software prevents tuning at greater than 125 watts. Tunes from 1.8 to 54.0 MHz (inc. 6 meters), with tuning time usually under 4 seconds, transmitting near a frequency with stored tuning parameters, under 0.2 seconds, 2000 memories. 2 Antenna connections. All cables included.

Suggested Price \$599



NEW! YT-100

An autotuner for several popular Yaesu Radios. An included cable interfaces with your FT-857, FT-897 and FT-100 (and all D models) making it an integrated tuner, powered by the interface. Just press the tune button on the tuner, and everything else happens automatically: mode and power are set, a tune cycle runs, and the radio is returned to its original settings. It's the perfect complement to your Yaesu radio.

Suggested Price \$199.99



NEW! Z-100Plus

Small and simple to use, the Z-100Plus sports 2000 memories that store both frequency and tuning parameters. It will run on any voltage source from 7 to 18 volts; six AA batteries will run it for a year of normal use. Current draw while tuning is less than 100ma. The Z-100Plus now includes an internal frequency counter so the operating frequency is stored with tuning parameters to make memory tunes a blazingly fast 0.1 seconds; full tunes take an average of only 6 seconds.

Suggested Price \$159.99



**LDG recommends
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Photo C—A first view of the hidden antenna farm at QTH of Howard Hawkins, K6BYU. The 2-element SteppIR beam with olive-green elements and boom plus motorized tower, also painted green, is lowered and nesting in foliage while 32-foot pole supporting a G5RV is raised. All antennas are behind the house and inside gated yard. (Photo courtesy of K6BYU)



Photo D—Looking in the opposite direction and past the nested SteppIR beam of photo C, we see the other end of the G5RV antenna at or slightly above roof level and a 43-foot vertical quickly raised into the operating position. A view of the city below is in the distance.

the ground and/or raises/lowers as required. Several companies (MFJ, DX Engineering, Zero-Five, and possibly others) are producing 43-foot verticals,

and all the reports on them I have heard have been very good. Howard says his vertical is made by <www.zerofive-antennas.com>, is connected to the flag

pole's 80 radials system, and it is light enough so he can quickly raise and lower it as needed. He often serves as NCS for a 40-meter net, and net members consistently rate the Zero-Five several dBs above his flagpole or G5RV. The antenna is painted a sky-blue color so it blends with its background, and it lies flat on the ground—undetected inside his gated back area—when the rig is not in use.

The biggest surprise at the CC&R restricted QTH of K6BYU is the 2-element SteppIR Yagi on a power-raised Force 12 tower. The beam and tower nest amidst foliage at 12 feet and pass unnoticed to untrained eyes, and then quickly rise to 50 feet at the push of a button. The antenna also spends much of its life nested, which blends with the most non-retired amateurs' career-oriented lifestyle—that is, most daytime hours are devoted to business/career pursuits and only night hours are free

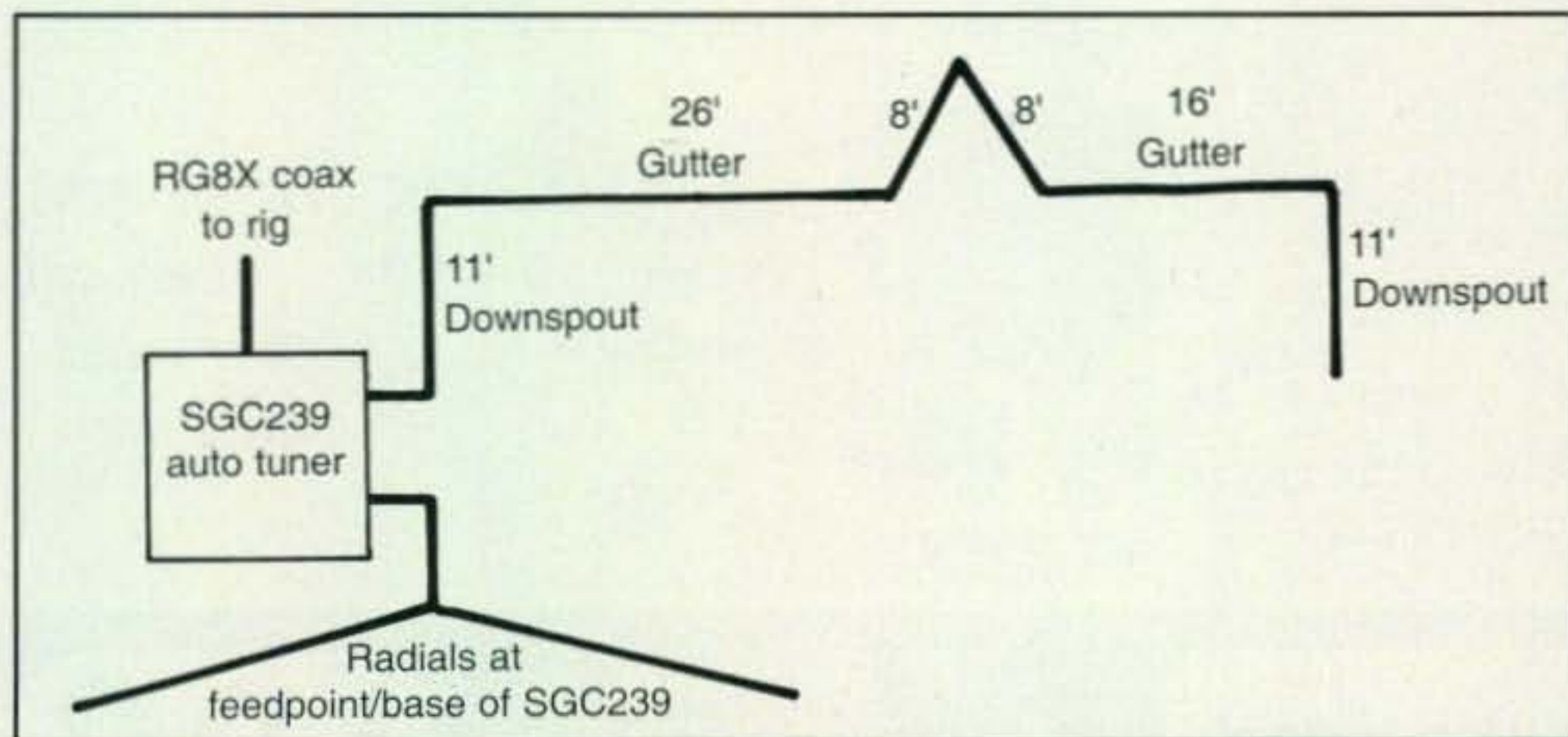


Fig. 1—Outline of the dual rain-gutter antenna system at WA8KOQ. The combination of vertical and horizontal radiating sections proves beneficial for working both near and distant stations.



Photo E— A couple of minutes later, the SteppIR beam has been raised to nearly 50 feet (magnificent little gem, isn't it?) and the 32-foot vertical has been tilted down out of sight.



Photo F— Proceeding through a second gate and around a corner, we find Howard's main antenna, a 28-foot tall flagpole vertical with 80 radials ready for action.

for hamming. Our special thanks to Howard, K6BYU, for sharing details of his low-profile setup.

Shadow Talk

A number of friends say they follow my "Hamming from the Shadows" series here in *CQ* in hopes of acquiring one or two ideas they, too, can use for undercover hamming. Jolly good! Once again, however, I must emphasize that one idea or solution does not necessarily fit all circumstances, but seeing how others have overcome the handicaps gives all of us hope and inspiration. Combine that with some helpful notes to kindle your own thoughts and creative thinking plus some tips for minimizing RFI and presenting a good-neighbor attitude, and your odds for success increase tenfold. Let's cite some examples.

Your available area for installing a dipole may be limited, but folding each side or element as illustrated in fig. 2A or 2B may be a previously unrealized

solution. The resultant radiation pattern may not be ideal, but it works and it definitely beats no radiation pattern and no on-the-air operations.

Going mobile or routing a rollup coax cable (or AC extension cord) to your vehicle's mobile setup is another alternative worth pursuing. Look back in November 2009 *CQ* (pages 13, 14, and 16) and read how K7FF had a ball in the 2008 *CQ* World-Wide DX Contest using an FT-450AT and tall whip from his truck

that he parked in an open field adjacent to his apartment complex. He used a couple of externally charged batteries for full weekend hamming and hopped back home for bed and breakfast breaks. Expanding on that idea, I visualize installing a really tall and snap-together vertical or a Super Antennas snap-together minibeam on a tilt mount in the truck bed. That would give it almost "home rig clout" and, being independent of home or apartment fixtures,

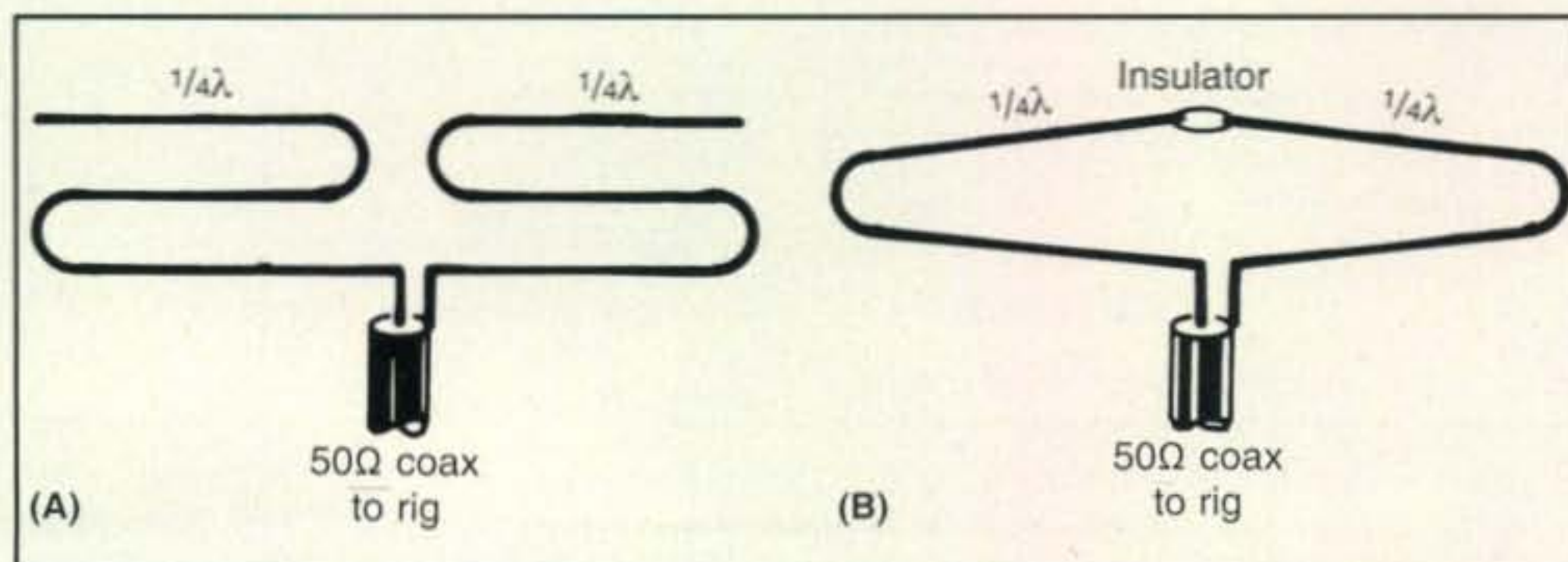


Fig. 2— Outline of how a dipole may be bent to fit within a confined space.



Photo G— Indoor station at K6BYU has it all: deluxe transceiver, high-power amplifier, tuner, remote controls, and junior ops.

should skirt CC&R entanglements. My apologies for suggesting such naughty but clever ideas.

Finally, remember diplomacy and standing ready to assist your community when needed are invaluable assets. When I moved to a near coastal area five years ago, I ended up teaching the local power company why and how to find and fix power-line noise (photo H). When I moved back to central Alabama a year later, my budget necessitated moving into a gated community with a 200-page book of CC&Rs. I explained the benefits of having a ham with emergency and global communications capabilities in the community, shared pictures of my neatly installed vertical, and described by plan for making it transparent to untrained eyes (and I also hid my prized crank-up tower under the house).

After moving in, I held output power to 100 watts, met neighbors, and (unbeknownst to them) evaluated their electronic appliances from the “susceptible to RFI” standpoints. I even sneakily added clamp-on toroids to cable TV distribution lines as a safekeeping measure to avoid TVI. A little later I began using my “occasional” maximum power of 500 watts and continue holding at that maximum level today. I am also literally working the world with 100 to 500 watts: XU, 3B8, 9K2, VK, ZL, and more.

A couple of months ago, vicious QRN almost annihilated my DXcapades. I drove around the community checking with my mobile rig and narrowed the source to a neighbor’s house. I then introduced myself and explained the arcing from within could be a fire hazard. The neighbor asked what to do, so I sequentially switched off each of the house circuit breakers and found the culprit was a 220-volt arcing heater contactor lying on a piece of dry carpet—a fire waiting to happen. The lady had the contactor replaced and I was hailed as a hero in the community’s next month’s bulletin. Hopefully that will help justify my vertical antenna’s existence, but I continue to look for an alternate QTH just in case the old knife-in-back syndrome surfaces.

Conclusion

That overflows column space for this month, friends, but more views and tales of amateur successfully hamming from the shadows, plus more tips on staying low profile (avoiding discovery) are coming soon. Watch for them and do whatever you need to do to keep on hamming. 73, Dave, K4TWJ

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Volume VI Issue X

Ham Radio Saves local Resident

In a less than neighborly society, one man goes above and beyond.

- Johnny Rye



The following is a true story and I hope you find it as fulfilling as I did.

2009... a far cry from 1959, when being a neighbor was like being a part of the family. When you were doing something you knew mama wouldn’t want you to do, you had better make sure that Neighbor Nancy was watching through her kitchen window, not because she would tell mama, but because she would take you out behind the woodshed herself. If someone in the family was hurting, well, neighbors were the first ones to show up with a warm dinner to keep mama from having to cook. Many recall that was a smaller world then.

But in 2009, most folks don’t even know their neighbor’s names. But one man, that finds pleasure and excitement in what most don’t understand, was about his normal routine of monitoring his ham radio. Now I can’t tell you the details about radio frequencies or bandwidth or any other technical terms involved, but the next part of this story tells, in plain English, how Dave used his unique ability to “hear” a problem and solve it.

Dave said he could hear what seemed to be

interference from a possible exposed power line. He checked a vacant lot nearby, where he was certain the “noise” was coming from, but quickly discovered it was not the source of the problem.

Now any average neighbor would have stopped there, but not Dave. He searched around until he confirmed the source of the interference, which was coming from a nearby neighbor’s home. He approached the neighbor’s door, knocked, introduced himself, and continued to explained the situation and the potential danger. She allowed him in and within a few moments and series of “breaker flipping”, he discovered the problem was in her furnace.

The lady quickly called a her son that discovered an exposed wire that was arcing. Had the problem not been discovered, the electrical problem could have easily resulted in a house fire.

The woman was very appreciative and Dave... well he is probably sitting at his ham radio right now, communicating with people overseas or astronauts in space. It may seem hum drum, to you, to sit for hours on end in from of a radio, instead of a television, but for one resident, she is thankful Dave does.

Photo H— Accepting a ham with a tall vertical antenna in my CC&R community became easy after I tracked down a case of severe power-line noise (details in text). I also tracked down a case of power-line noise at my earlier QTH and found the problem was a red-hot doorbell transformer in a neighbor’s attic.

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MFJ-886
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MFJ-888 covers 1 MHz to 3 GHz with 300 MHz direct count, 0.1 Hz resolution, 4 gate times. 10-digit high-contrast 3/4 inch LCD display. Lock display button. Bargraph shows RF field strength. Includes rechargeable Ni-Cad batteries, charger, telescopic antenna. Black anodized aluminum. 2 3/4" x 2 1/4" x 1 1/4" inches. **MFJ-888**, like MFJ-886, but covers 10 Hz-3 GHz. Measures frequency/period, has 50/1M Ohm input, auto hold, LED backlight, beeper. 2 3/4" x 4 1/4" x 1 1/4" inches

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Scratching the Surface of Surface-Mount

We hams have seen tremendous changes in the way we build electronics. We have gone from wiring point-to-point from tube socket pins to terminal strips, to printed circuit boards. Now we are faced with something that has been creeping into the world of kit-building—surface-mount parts. With the trend in the electronics industry away from conventional through-hole parts, we hams are faced with building with these new tiny components.

There are many kits on the market today that have a handful, or even just one or two, of these parts. Some kits have the surface-mount parts already mounted, as in the MFJ Cub-series of CW transceivers. The MFJ Cub-series has all the surface-mount parts already mounted, and the builder completes the kit by installing all of the through-hole components. The Elecraft KX-1 CW transceiver kit as well as the Hendricks PFR-3 CW transceiver are also examples of kits with a few of these parts already mounted on the board. The very popular Rock-Mite by Small Wonder Labs has a single surface-mount 8-pin IC that is not pre-mounted, but is very easy to solder in place by any of a number of methods. More kits are coming that will make use of these inexpensive but tiny components, so I decided to cover the best ways to deal with them.

*7133 Yosemite Drive, Lincoln, NE 68507
e-mail: <k0neb@cq-amateur-radio.com>



Arnie Grubbs, KA0NCR, using a solder-paste syringe on a PC board. Solder paste and a low-airflow heating tool from a craft store can make mounting surface-mount parts easier.

It is time again to remember to use a very brightly lit magnifier when working with surface-mount parts to be sure to identify and orient the part correctly. Working on a cookie sheet will save you a lot of grief if a part should come loose while handling it. Often there are tiny numbers or other marks printed on them, so it is always a good idea to mount them with the numbers facing up to be able to check your work later. By far, the simplest way to solder a surface-mount part such as a capacitor or resistor is to put a tiny dab of solder on one of the two pads. Then use tweezers to bring the part to that pad and heat it with your soldering iron. Be sure to use the smallest tip possible for best results as well as the thinnest solder available to prevent placing too much solder on the connection or causing solder bridges.

Now with one side soldered, you can easily solder the other side and return to the first connection if needed. The 8-pin IC in the Rock-Mite can be soldered by holding it in place with tweezers and soldering one pin, being careful to hold the IC in alignment with all of the eight pads. Then once that pin is soldered and it looks straight, solder the rest of the pins. You will see that the board has a solder resist on it that helps prevent solder bridges, but do not use excessive solder. Most kits will call for the surface-mount parts to be placed before any other components are installed. That is to allow you the easiest access to the pads where they are mounted. It also allows for more than one method of installing the parts.

The Heat Tool Approach

My favorite way to solder surface-mount parts is to use solder paste and a low-airflow embossing heat tool. Don't use a hair dryer or painter's heat gun as the airflow is way too strong and will blow the parts right off your board! The low-airflow embossing heat tool is available for about \$20 or less at many craft stores that specialize in scrapbooking items, such as Hobby Lobby or Michael's. Watch for sales or discount coupons to make these tools even more affordable. This method is very similar to how surface-mount components are soldered in mass production, but on a much smaller scale.

The solder paste used looks like a gray paste and is actually a mixture of solder and flux. It is often dispensed in a modified medical syringe. Simply take the syringe and place a dab on each of the pads for each component you are mounting. I most often make a line of paste about the length of the pad without going over it. Then, using tweezers, place the parts onto the pads. The solder paste will hold the parts loosely in place, but do not tilt or jostle the board very much, as the parts may come loose. Turn on the heat tool and hold it a few inches above the board so as not to blow an excessive amount of air on the board. That may result in parts coming off their pads. Moving the heat around will



Completed Norcal surface-mount dummy-load kit on a warming plate. The warming plate can pre-soften solder paste before heating with a heat tool.

gradually melt the solder paste and release the mixture of solder and flux. When that happens, the gray paste will suddenly turn silvery and the parts may move slightly as the surface tension almost magically aligns the parts on their pads as the solder flows.

Once all of the paste on all of the pads has liquefied, you may remove the heat and allow the board to cool, once again being careful not to move the board. Once cooled, it is a good idea to view your connections through a magnifying glass and see if they all are smooth and appear to make good contact between the part and the board with no bridges. If there are a large number of surface-mount parts, try doing them in sections, but remember that adjacent parts may be reheated as well during the melting process.

A technique to try that makes this process go a little faster is to use an inexpensive warming plate to preheat the board before placing the paste on the pads and using the heat tool to melt it. You can buy potpourri warmers or coffee-cup warmers at many discount stores for about \$5 to \$10. These often have a soft rubber pad onto which you place the cup. Preheating the board allows the paste to stick a little better to the pads before parts placement and speeds up the process of melting the solder paste with the heat tool. It is not advised to use this if there are surface-mount parts on both sides of the board, as you run the risk of losing parts mounted on the bottom. These plates also are helpful only if the board is small enough to fit in the round rubber-surface pad. Do not use metal heating plates, as they might damage the underside of the board or overheat it.

Baking Your Board

An alternative method is to carefully

place the board with the pasted components in place on a metal tray with metal screws with nuts or standoffs to keep the board off the surface of the tray. Place the tray with the board in a conventional oven or a small toaster oven that has been preheated to about 350 degrees. Use a good, oven thermometer to be sure you are at the proper temperature. You can watch the process through the window to see when the solder has melted. Be very careful to allow the board to cool before moving it. The great thing about this method is that it is extremely low-cost. It also allows you to desolder and resolder surface-mount components.

Solder paste is available pre-loaded in a 0.5-cc syringe from Cash Olson,

KD5SSJ, for \$5.00 plus \$1.95 for shipping/handling in the USA. His website is: <<http://kd5ssj.com>> and he offers a discount in quantity, so buying as a group saves you even more. It may not look like a lot of solder paste, but it will last for many connections.

As with conventional soldering methods, a great way to practice surface-mount techniques is by using surplus circuit boards. Old computer boards and cards are a goldmine of surface-mount parts for practice desoldering and resoldering. Keep in mind that many types of surface-mount parts you see on computer boards may not show up in kits, such as large, flat-pack ICs or exceptionally small resistors/capacitors/diodes. However, practicing with them will make soldering the more common larger surface-mount parts a lot easier. Try using the heat tool to remove a part from the board and using the paste to solder it. After a while, you will discover the right distance to hold the tool from your board and how long it takes for it to melt the solder or paste. Keep in mind that boards made with the newer lead-free solder will take longer to heat than those made with traditional lead-based solder.

I have just "scratched the surface" of surface-mount soldering. There are many more things that are helpful that will be discussed in future columns.

73, Joe, KØNEB

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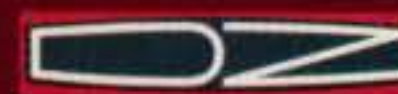
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Kits for Kids

As a young ham, I always get the question "What do you think would get young people interested in radio?" Well, quite frankly, there is no one answer to that, but many. All people are different. They all have different interests. We can tell this even by looking at just the adult ham operators. This is why radio has factions such as ragchewing, contesting, DXing, and people who are interested in building.

Let's take the people who are interested in the technical aspect of radio, for example. These people also differ from each other in their likes and dislikes. They could be very artistically inclined people who enjoy putting things together with their hands. They could be people who love to tackle a challenge, they could be puzzle lovers, they could be scientists, or even people who want to get some relaxation time. Either way, in order to get *kids* interested in radio, you have to focus on their interests. If they love to talk, the answer is ragchewing; if they enjoy the fast-paced communication, then contesting. However, I would like to focus on the lovers of art, challenge, puzzles, science, or a nice relaxing hobby. I would like to focus on the art of building.

To see if kit-building is a good activity for kids, I decided to be the guinea pig. I decided to build a kit of my own and write step-by-step my challenges and tips. My dad had bought me a QRP

amplifier kit recently, to go with my radio, a Yaesu FT-817, for a little power boost. He also had a kit he was building, so we worked side-by-side, each on our own project. Here is my kit-building experience, and everything I learned along the way!

Ramsey 20-Meter 20-Watt QRP Linear Amplifier Kit

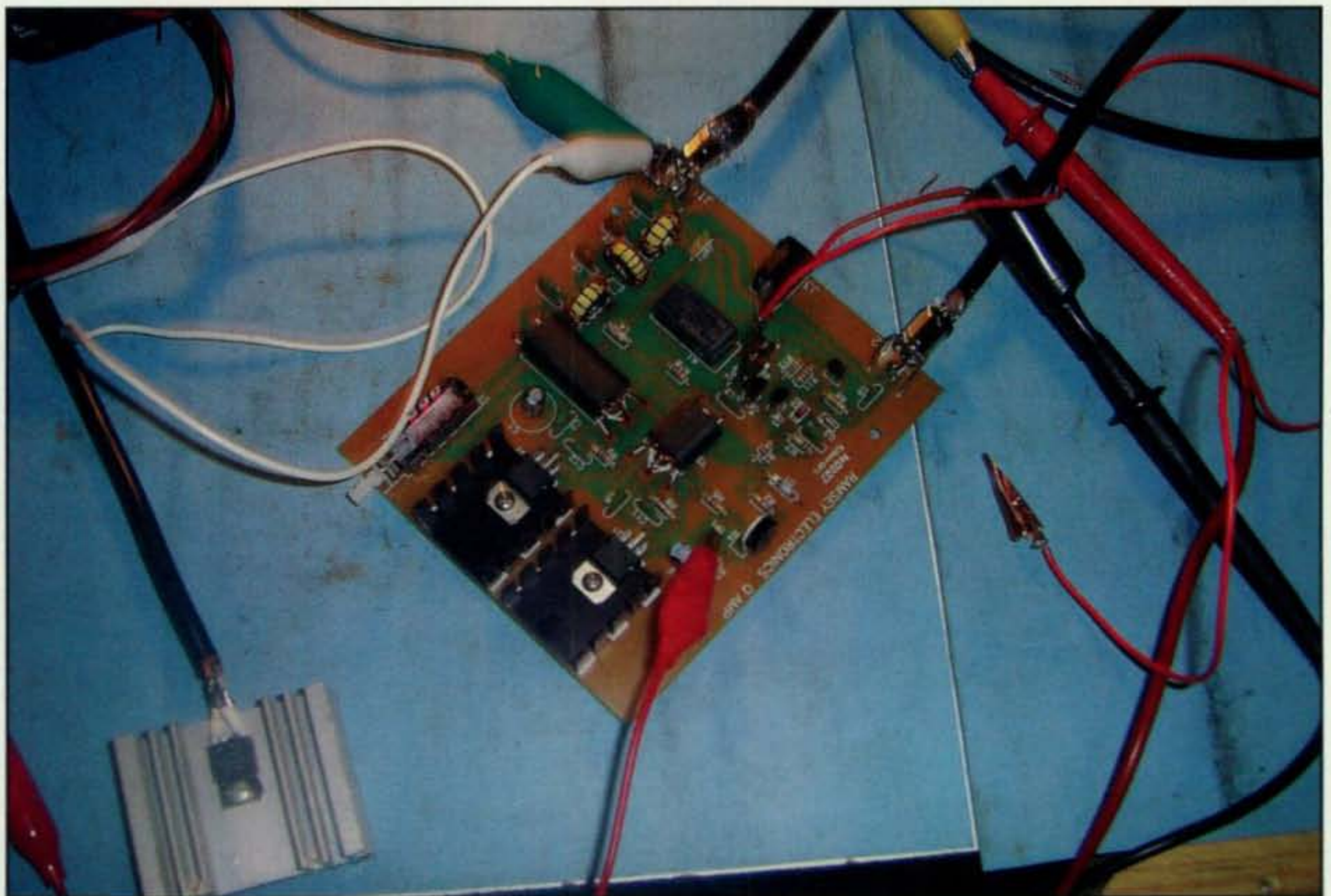
1. Sit down with the manual and read through it. It may not be the most exciting thing to read out there, but going through the steps in your mind before you begin will help you know what you're doing and will get you off to a better start. In fact, I learned this trick in my chemistry class, where before every lab we are required to do a write-up showing that we understand the instructions of the lab. This is so that we do not make mistakes, because especially in chemistry class, if you make a mistake, it could cost you your experiment.

2. Now it's time to take inventory. Go through every single part and make sure it is accounted for. I took a piece of foam, and as I went through my parts I stuck them in the foam so they wouldn't fall off the desk.

3. It's time to start building your kit! With your work space clear and clean, your parts accounted for and organized, you know exactly where to start, because you already reviewed the instructions.

I first had to install the PC-mounted pushbutton switch, PC-mounted RCA phono jacks, PC-mounted DC power jack, a relay, and a poten-

**c/o CQ magazine*



My finished kit, and it's hooked up to be tested!

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- 1 Year Warranty
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- JTMB1 - Mobile Mounting Bracket
- JTPC3 - Power Cord
- JTPRG1 - PC Serial Programming Cable
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tiometer. These installations went smoothly and were straightforward.

4. The next step was where I came to a problem. I had gained momentum and was going through the motions, when I apparently installed a capacitor *and* a transistor in the wrong spots. I did not notice this until many steps later when I went to install a part and found there was already one in its place! So this is where my first tip comes in handy: Check everything twice—even three times. You may not know it, but you could be reading a line below where you are supposed to be. And trust me, it is a pain to use the solder wick to uninstall, then reinstall, your parts. In fact, when I made a mistake with the transistor, I uninstalled it, put it in the correct place, and then took the other transistor that was supposed to be in its place and installed it backwards! Therefore, despite mistakes, go slowly. It's worth it.

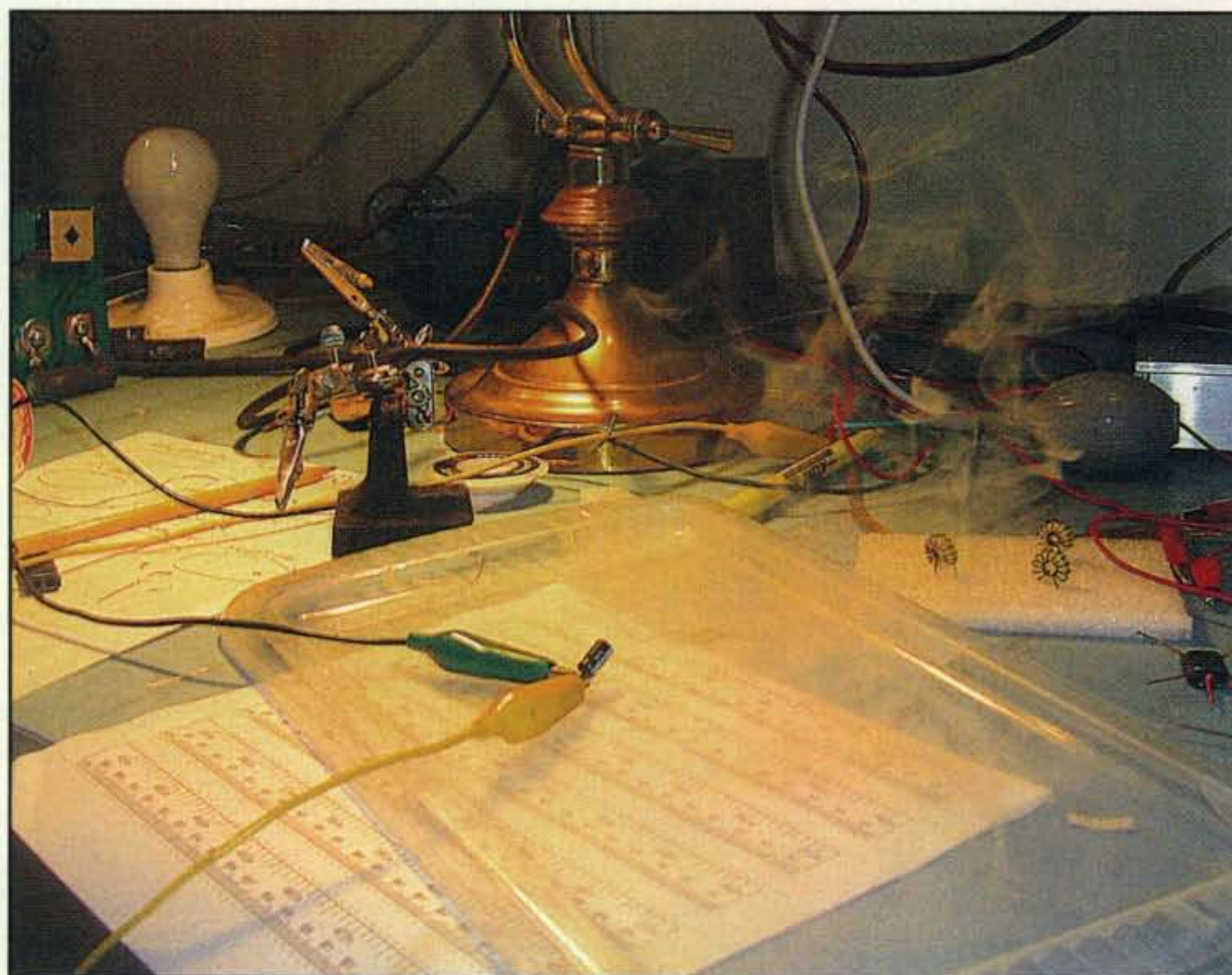
5. Next I put in various resistors, and then diodes, which had to be installed with the band on the correct side in order for the circuit to work. After that, capacitors and more diodes. Next I had to put in a piece of lead wire as a jumper. I recommend you save the scrap lead wire from when you cut the ends off your resistors so that you can use them for the jumpers in this project.

6. Then came more capacitors, including an electrolytic capacitor, which is polarized and must be installed with the polarities facing the correct directions. If you fail to do this, your

experiment literally will blow up—not like an atomic-size explosion, but...

We did a test of this scenario to show you exactly what it would look like!

Now imagine a large electrolytic



Our smoking capacitor experiment, and my dad's project visible in the left corner.

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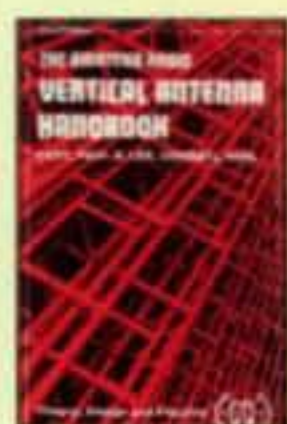


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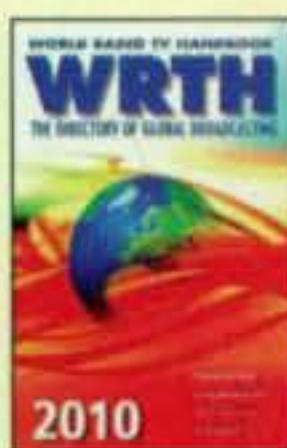
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capacitor (about 100 times the size of the small one in the kit) being installed wrong. That would not be good.

7. Next I installed a whole bunch of resistors, which, in my opinion, are the easiest to install. A tip: If you are having trouble keeping your resistors from falling through the board, just bend the wires a bit on the other side and they won't fall out while you solder. One of the resistors required me to cut $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch off the wire and bend it into a hook, which is quite difficult if using your hands. I used a wire stripper to grip the wire and bend it into a perfect hook shape for testing later. (*Needle-nose pliers work pretty well, too.—ed.*)

8. After that was mostly capacitors that had to be put in, including another electrolytic capacitor (remember the polarity!).

9. Next I started to get to the more complicated stuff. The MOSFET power transistors were to be installed. The three prongs had to be bent at different lengths, which is best done with a tool, not with hands. Then it was put on a heatsink and screwed onto the board and soldered. I liked this part because it was not as monotonous as installing resistors and capacitors which involve the same basic concept to put in.

10. The next part I found the hardest and most frustrating. I had to wrap 8 inches of enameled wire around a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch toroid RF coil *exactly* 14 times—not 15 or 13, but 14. This is difficult because it's thin wire and bends in all directions so it doesn't always cooperate when you want it to. As if this wasn't a hard enough task to complete, I also had to heat the wire so that the enamel would melt off or else the solder wouldn't hold onto the wire. This particular wire supplied in the kit gave us quite a lot of difficulty, so we decided to use our own wire instead, and that was much easier. Although this was a tough step, I loved the challenge of completing it.

11. The last step was the ferrite transformers. The interesting piece about this step was how they had a different approach to the center tap. In the kit, you wound the wire through the transformers, and since a center tap was needed, they had me twist the wire from the center into one wire. Usually you would scrape the center wire and just solder another wire to it. This twist was much less time-consuming.

12. Your kit is finished! Now just give it a good looking over to look for the following:

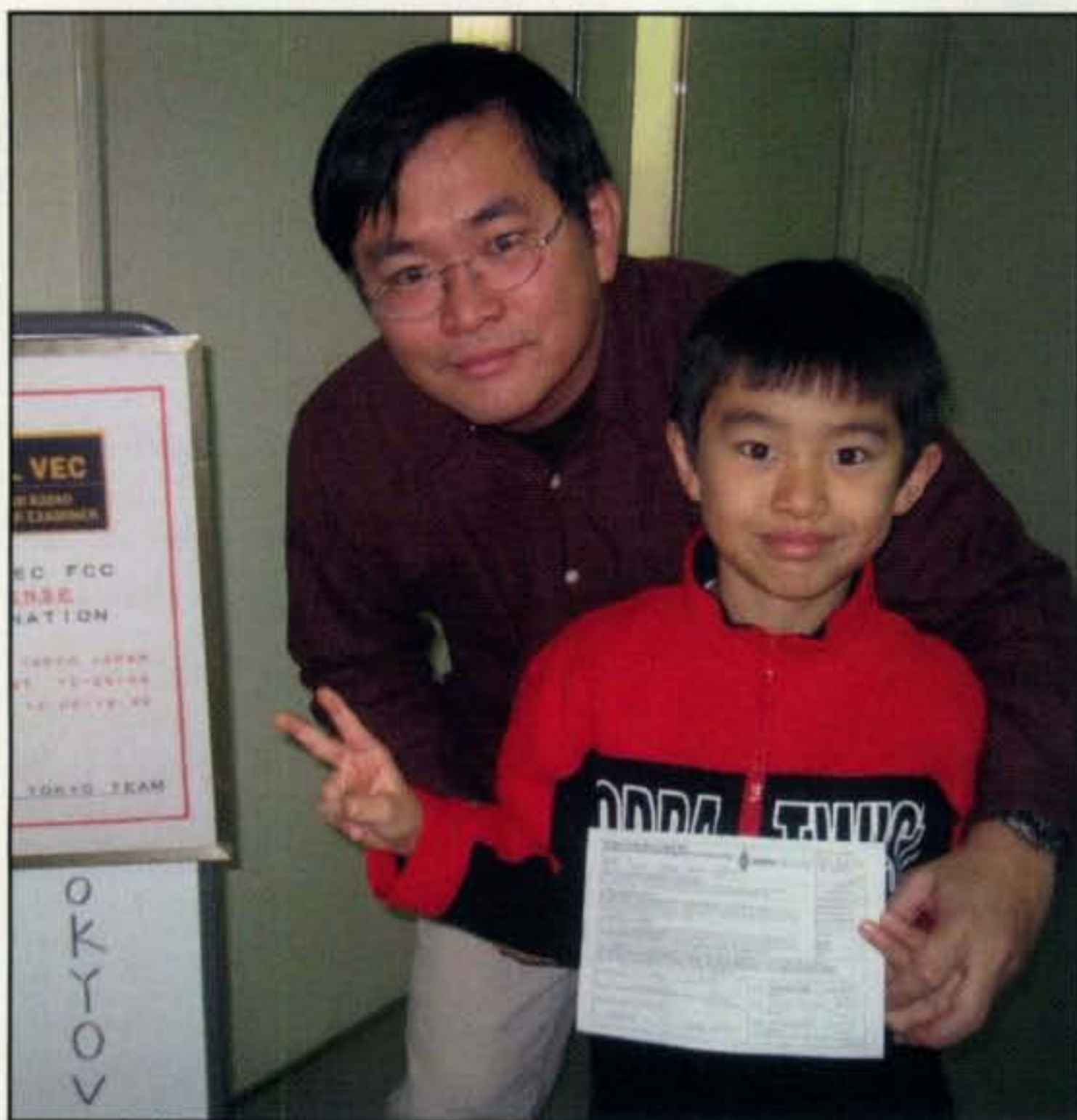
- No bridged over solder joints
- No misplaced components
- No incorrectly installed transistors or diodes
- No incorrectly installed capacitors!!

Now, with my project finished, it was time for the moment of truth. Time for the test that would prove whether my efforts had been fruitful.

First we used an ammeter to adjust the bias. We hooked up a QRP transmitter to our amp then to a dummy load, and when we looked at the wattmeter, sure enough, we saw about 20 watts. Our project was successful!

Yes, Yes, and Yes!

My review of the benefit of kits for kids is simply—yes, yes, and yes! I had such a great time doing this kit. Especially as the type of person who is independent and enjoys problem solving on my own, I really liked the challenge of doing this. It's great for younger kids to have a sense of independence while doing this kit, but always have their Elmer right there for them to watch for any mistakes. I also liked how I got to spend more quality time with my dad in his ham radio room, which with both of our busy lives going at full throttle can be hard to come by. I am sure this is the situation for many other



Nine-year-old Yoshiki Nakada, KH0UA, seen here with his father, Kuny, W1FPU/7L1FPU, just upgraded to Extra Class. (Photo courtesy Kuny Nakada)

Lastly, kit-building is great for kids simply because it's an activity that beats out many of the other activities that kids are so obsessed with these days. With much of today's technology being more on the pointless side, it is sometimes hard for kids to break away from the computer screen or from X-Box® to do something mind-stimulating. It is like pulling teeth to get some kids to even pick up a book for pleasure. However, many of the kids who enjoy video games enjoy them because they are a challenge or a puzzle. Well, so are these kits, except if you have not been introduced to electronics or do not know any of the parts, it is especially challenging. This hobby has led countless kids to careers in engineering or communications just because activities like this pique their interest at a young age. Then their hobby evolves into a college major they enjoy studying and a career for which they have a passion.

Sound Bytes

Congratulations to Yoshiki Nakada, KH0UA, for passing his FCC Amateur Extra Exam at only 9 years old! This is quite an achievement, especially because English is not his first language.

Know a young ham who recently achieved something worth congratulating? Send your sound byte to me at <KB1OGL@cq-amateur-radio.com>.

73, Brittany, KB1OGL

parents and kids, too! We both were doing our own projects, but side by side, and if I had a question he could help me out.

Kits are extremely beneficial for less experienced hams who are struggling to learn about electronics. Instead of answering questions out of a Q&A book, it is much more effective to have a hands-on visual project. This way, the mechanics of the project can be explained on a build-as-you-go basis, seeing which parts work in which ways. Math can also be incorporated into this lesson. For example, when setting the bias control we set the transistors to pull about 1/2 amp and the voltage to 12 volts. Using the power equation, we can figure out how much power the amplifier takes when not being keyed. $P = I \times E$ is the equation with $I =$ current (1/2 amp), $E =$ voltage (12 volts), and $P =$ power in watts. Therefore, $P = 1/2 \times 12$, $P = 6$ watts. This is a concrete example that gives substance to the power formula.

Another benefit of building kits is that a lot of times you can buy a kit cheaply and build it into something that would normally cost a lot of money to buy already made. This QRP amp is not something you could normally buy. Therefore it is definitely a must-have to build. CW keyers can also be cheaper if you build them.

Because these kits are cheaper than buying the already-made product, or the product isn't sold as anything but a kit, they can make great gifts. They are mind stimulating, and perfect for a family who is or would like to be involved in ham radio as a family hobby. It is a timeless gift that Elmers have always given kids, and those kids usually have kept the QRP amps, keyers, or like my dad, a Heathkit HW-8 transceiver, for years afterwards.

As an artistic person myself—very interested in music, literature, and other forms of art—I thought this project was actually very artsy. It definitely takes craftsmanship, a keen eye, and some patience to complete these projects. A steady hand is also a plus, which unfortunately I do not have.

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New Column, New Topics, Same Mission

After doing the "Beginner's Corner" for several years, the editors and I decided to try something different to add new life to my column. Although my column has changed, the mission statement is still the same. "The Ham Notebook" is a source of useful and practical information for the ham radio operator—sort of like a "what every ham should know" knowledge bank that includes book learning as well as hands-on, common-sense practices garnered through experience.

Records + Notes + Doodles = Inspiration

The new name is inspired by something I have been doing since my start in amateur radio in 1976—keeping a record of all radio activities in my shack and shop (see photo A). At first glance, it may look like an ordinary notebook. However, inside it is a journal of all of my ham radio activities, including notes on how to properly tune my first transmitter (an Eico 723, a crystal-controlled, 60-watt transmitter from the 1960s with three vacuum tubes inside) and what wrench sizes are needed to tighten down the U-bolts and other fasteners on my antennas.

I should mention that the FCC removed the logging requirements many years ago. Even so, many hams continue to keep a log of activities, and I agree this is a good practice to follow, for several reasons. For example, keeping a record of your contacts may become important if a neighbor blames you for causing interference to his home theater system, and you can show evidence that your station was not on the air at the time.

Second, a station log is an easy way to record your two-way contacts for the various operating awards such as the DX Century Club (DXCC), Worked All States (WAS), and the CQ DX and DX Field Awards.

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Third, a logbook is a great place to record general information on your radio activities. Think of the logbook as a journal, where you record important facts and notes that may come in handy later. For example, if you work on your antenna system by moving the direction a few degrees to the north, make a note of this in the logbook. You should include any notes on the antenna system before the changes as well. After a few months, compare signal reports of the contacts before and after the antenna work to see if there have been any improvements. Of course, propagation might be a factor, but over time some pattern of change or improvement may be noticed. On the other hand, if the signal reports are consistently lower or worse than before the antenna work, that is an indication of something, too.

Other things you may want to make note of include special ham visitors, new rig purchases and installations, serial numbers of your equipment, adjustments or switch settings on an antenna tuner, and so on. Lately, my log reflects my main radio interest these days: Microwave- and millimeter-wave station equipment building and contesting. The notebook includes much practical information on microwave equipment construction and component notes.

Of course, in the 21st century the notebook does not necessarily have to be on paper. It certainly can be an electronic, paperless document. Electronic documents have the additional advantage of being "searchable" using key words.

And Now for Something Completely Different

One item that is documented in my notebook is a portable power supply I take to various operating events. The "Orange Box" has made small appearances in previous articles, but has never been fully described. I have received several requests for more information on the portable power source, so this is a good time to show this project in more detail.

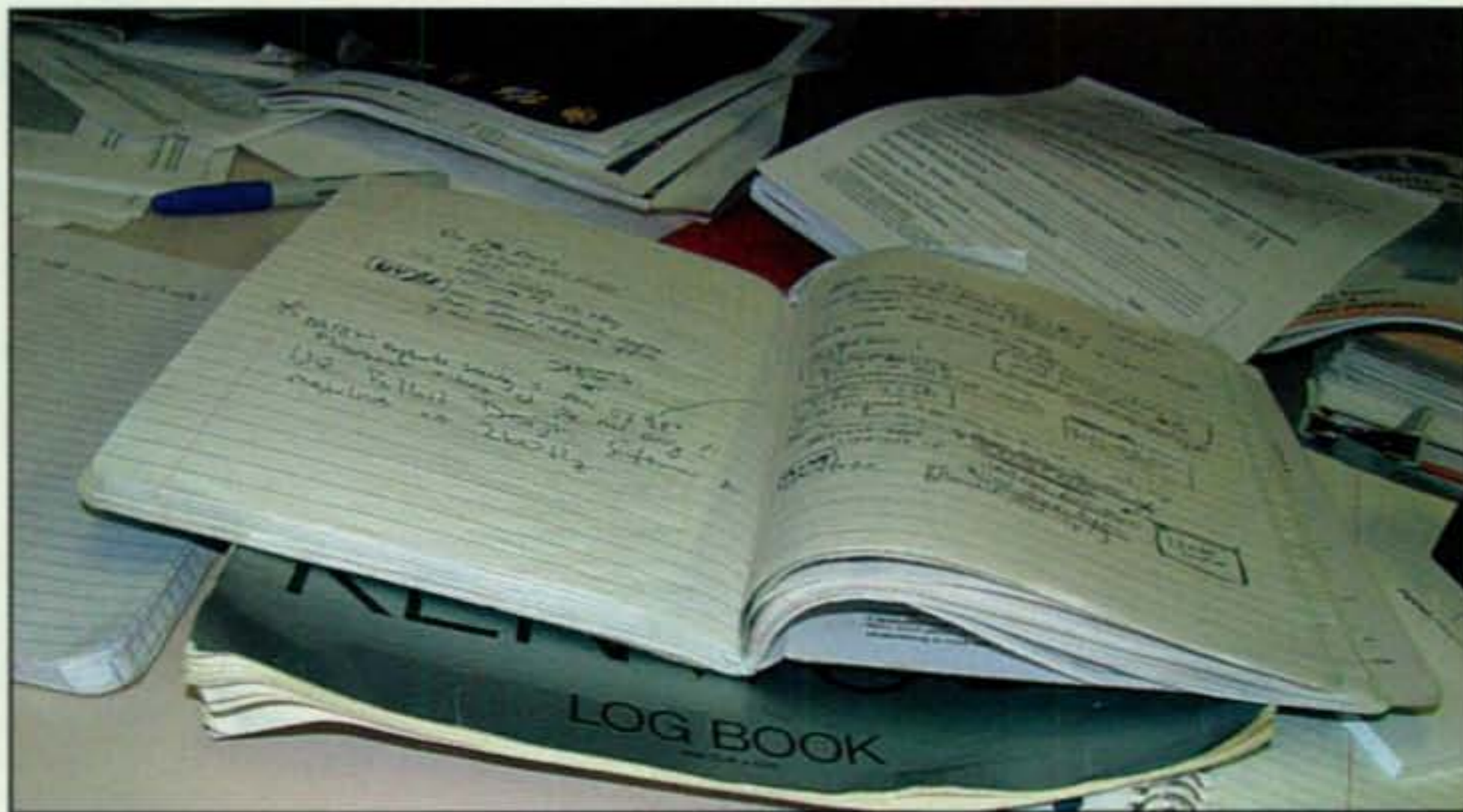


Photo A—A ham's log can and should contain much more than a record of radio contacts. The notebook is a handy, single location to keep important information about your station.

Refer to photo B. The portable power supply is really a weatherproof box with a big gel-cell inside. One version is an off-the-shelf item from an automotive supply store. It is intended to be an emergency jump-start battery for your vehicle. Every ham with a mobile rig installed in a vehicle should have one of these, just in case you forget to turn off the radio and the starting battery fails to crank the engine. Although these booster batteries can be used as-is, some adapters are needed in order to enhance safety and convenience when using them as a power source for your radio gear.

Photo C, shows you one of these modifications—an adapter to connect the big clips to smaller wires that are more convenient to connect to your rig or rigs. The picture does the best job of describing how this cable is made. A scrap piece of wood and a pair of 1/4-inch screws and nuts create terminals for the big clips to grab onto. Then a pair of wires goes to the radio gear. All of my 12-volt units use power cables terminated in Anderson PowerPoles®. This includes non-ham radio items such as rechargeable flashlights, radar detectors, GPS units, and digital camera chargers.



Photo D— My dedicated portable power box is a sportsman's dry box that I have modified for ham use, including a light for nighttime operating.



Photo B— An automotive emergency starter battery can be used as a portable power source, but some minor modifications will increase safety and convenience.

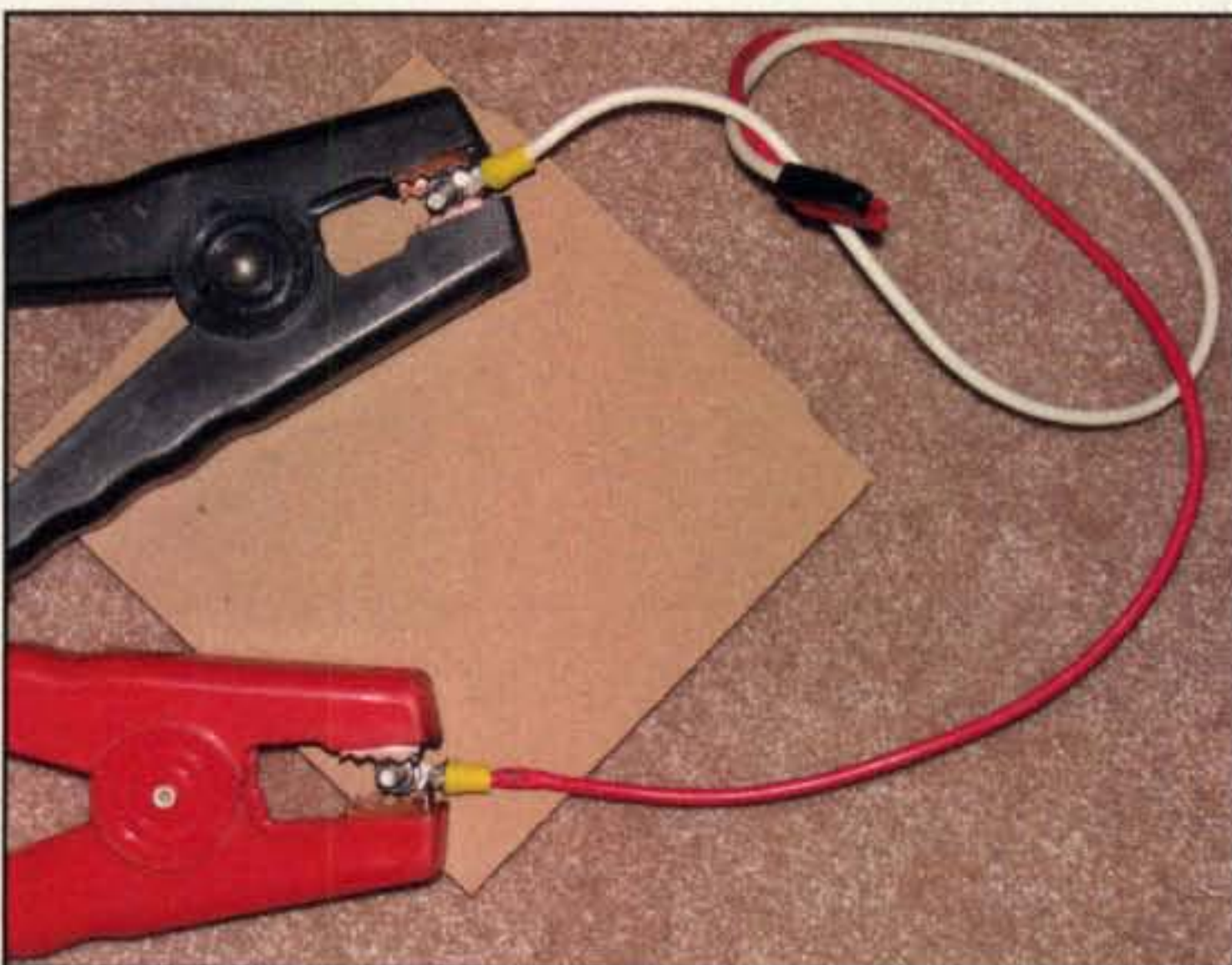


Photo C— The booster battery should have some modifications to increase safety and convenience. (See the text for more details.)



Photo E— The homemade power box includes enhancements such as meters to monitor battery condition and multiple DC outlets. The wire handles help protect the meters from damage.

Remember to include a fuse somewhere in the positive line for safety, since a big battery like this can deliver quite a spark if the plus and minus leads get shorted. If something goes wrong with the radio, there is enough juice to cause a fire, since the battery will be able to force a lot of current through the interconnecting wires. (Some folks will fuse the negative line as well, as an added precaution.—ed.)

The Orange Box portable power unit (see photo D) is essentially the same. The plastic sportman's dry box is available from fishing tackle or marine stores. Other sturdy containers or boxes with handles can also be used, or made, but make sure the box is sturdy enough to accommodate the battery, since lead-acid gel-cells are very heavy.

I added meters, a small West Mountain Radio RigRunner™ DC power strip, and a cigarette lighter socket to the front panel, as shown in photo E. The small automotive map light with its flexible lamp comes in handy when operating in the dark, although it is switched off as much as possible to conserve battery power.

In addition, there is a battery charger inside the box. The charger is a surplus unit intended to be the power supply for a burglar or fire alarm. I removed the circuit board from its plastic case so it fits into the dry box. The price is in the \$5.00 range.

Being a surplus item, I hesitate to reveal the source, since many times such surplus items run out, never to be seen again. However, I checked with the store, and they have plenty of these units. The source is JK Electronics, 6395 Westminster Boulevard, Westminster, CA 92683 (714-890-4001).

If you are not able to find this exact "12V alarm power supply/battery charger" you can use any other charger that is compatible with the battery you purchased. Ask the sales staff where you bought the battery. Also check the advertisers in *CQ* for other possibilities.

Regarding the battery, I recommend that you purchase the biggest, beefiest battery you can afford and can fit into



Photo F— Big gel-cells are strapped inside the box. A piece of nylon webbing wrapped around and under the batteries helps to make battery removal easier. A battery charger is included inside the power box.

the case you use. In my experience, a 20-Ah or 30-Ah gel-cell would be strong enough to power a mobile transceiver in low power (5 watts or 1 watt) for several weeks—depending, of course, on how much you transmit. To extend battery life even more, I would use a 1-watt/5-watt handie-talkie radio rather than a mobile rig. As with all emergency or backup supplies, one must conserve as much as possible and transmit only when necessary.

In photo F I have multiple 12-volt gel-cells connected in parallel. However, I recommend that you get a single, large 12-volt gel-cell, since it will simplify wiring and may last longer than connecting multiple batteries in parallel.

I got the batteries free from our building telecommunications man, who performed some preventative maintenance work on a bank of uninterruptible power supplies in the telephone switch room. These were considered hazardous waste, but after I explained what

I wanted them for he gladly gave them to me. Although the batteries were several years old, they were able to supply emergency power for my 2-meter mobile radio for several hours. Recently, these batteries became depleted, and I will be replacing them with one large 12-volt gel-cell. When shopping for the battery, take the case with you and "try on" several batteries to make sure of a comfortable fit inside your box.

That's it for this column. If you have any ideas you'd like to share with other *CQ* readers, or if you want to see something covered in this column, send me an e-mail message and let me know.

By the way, I plugged "what every man should know" into the Barnes and Noble search engine. The B and N search reports 139 books related to this topic, so I hope my ham radio version of this concept catches on.

73, Wayne, KH6WZ

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Low-Cost HF'n: Tips for Success

Our previous "How It Works" column introduced the concept of seeking out and lightly refurbishing an older and basic-style transmitter and receiver for getting started in HF band activities at low cost. That description contained an extensive amount of always-beneficial information, and it also overflowed available column space before we could bring in full details on interconnecting and operating the setup. This time we continue from that point with a number of time-proven notes and tips on rig connections, antenna and T/R switching, semi- versus full-break-in operation, frequency-warping crystals, and more. Let's start with some notes on hookups.

Hookups and Options

When you start setting up a separate transmitter and receiver for HF, you realize there are two AC power cables to connect and no T/R switch or antenna changeover relay like included in modern transceivers. What to do? Several options are possible. You might implement the separate receive and transmit antennas arrangement as we quickly discussed in our January column and reiterated/clarified in fig. 1. A random-length wire preferably $1/4$ or $1/2$ wavelength long for your favorite band works well for receiving. However, a dipole, vertical, or other 50-ohm antenna cut for your favorite band and tweaked for lowest SWR should be used for transmitting.

Position the antennas away from each other and (hopefully) at right angles to minimize receiver pickup of your transmitted RF energy. The back-to-back 1N34 or equivalent glass/germanium diodes connected between the receiver's rear-panel antenna and ground screws do not degrade reception; they just prevent signals greater than .3 volts from overloading the receiver. Are they actually necessary? I cannot physically visit each reader to evaluate all the fine details of your particular installation, so I say it is better to have them and not need them than vice versa. Using this arrangement, you may also find it necessary to quickly reduce the receiver's RF gain control to minimize loud bleeps when transmitting. You could use the receiver's "receive/standby" switch, but that would eliminate a convenient means of monitoring your transmitted CW—although an alternate idea will be discussed later.

The next step is to use a large knife switch for antenna changeovers (fig. 2). Too "fumblesome"? No, it brings out the "real operator" in you! With a little practice, you can become fast and accurate at T/R switching ye olde knife switch and cranking down receiver RF gain. I know . . . like many old pros, I used that "two-handed T/R switching" when starting out in amateur radio and actually found it fun. I even left the knife/antenna switch "straight up" (disconnected from both transmitter and receiver) for safety and lightning protection when away from the rig.

Moving up one more step, you can substitute a relay with double contacts for the knife switch and acquire voltage to operate the relay from the trans-

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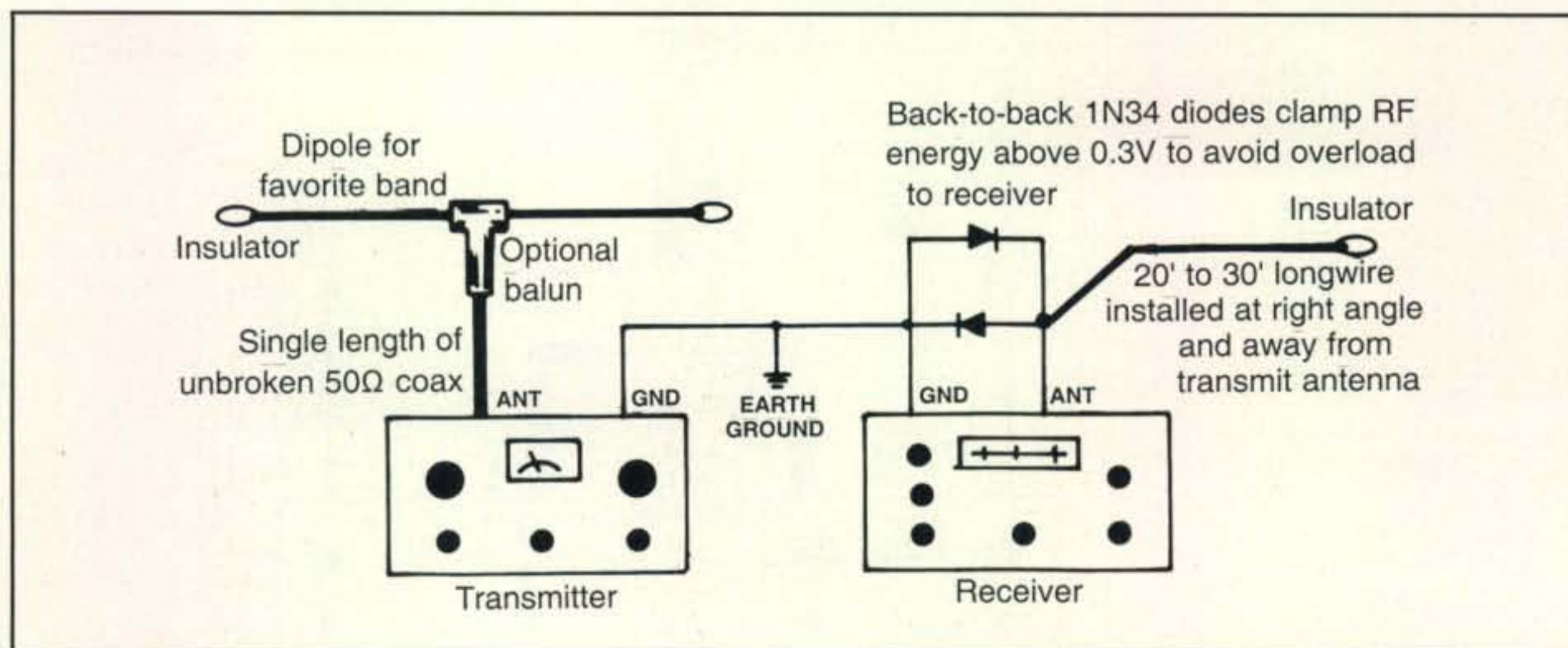


Fig. 1—The super-simple way to combine a vintage receiver and transmitter in an HF setup: The transmitter connects to dipole via a length of good-quality 50-ohm cable, while a random wire connects to the receiver. "Back-to-back" 1N34 or similar "glass"/germanium diodes clamp the transmitter RF at .3 volts to protect the receiver. You manually turn down the receiver's RF gain when transmitting. Most "low end" transmitters are keyed in both oscillator and amplifier stages and need not be T/R-switched.

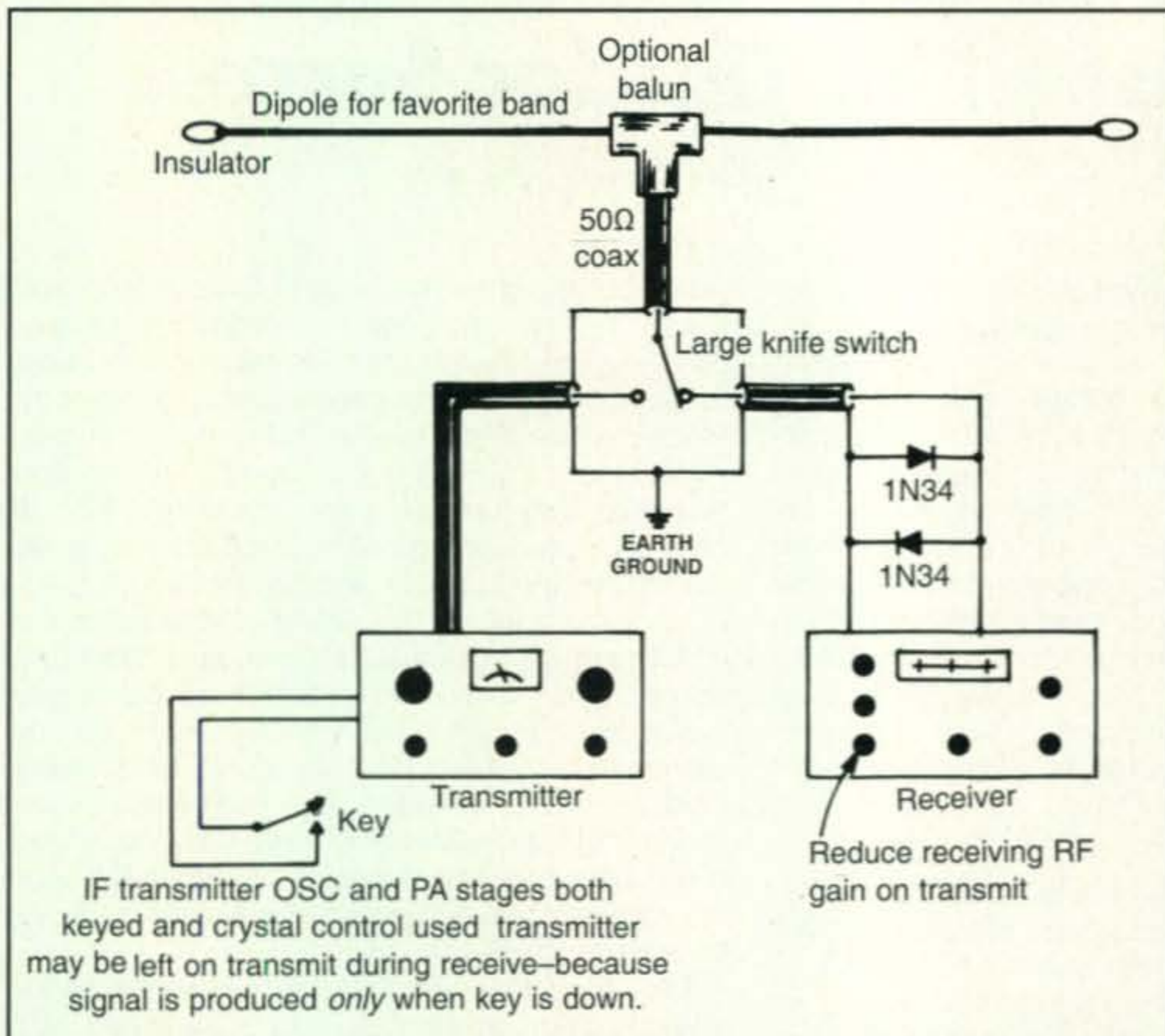


Fig. 2— A more proficient setup utilizes the same antenna for transmitting and receiving, with a simple open-air knife switch used for antenna changeovers. Simultaneously, you turn down the receiver's RF gain with your free hand—two-handed T/R switching.

mitter's "send/standby" or receiver's "receive/ standby" switch. This will require some technical savvy, but it produces a cool-going setup. One of the old Dow Key coaxial relays with fully enclosed mechanism, extra receiver

standby/muting contacts, and three SO-239 sockets (for antenna, transmitter, and receiver) is ideal here. Finding one today is a major challenge, however, so you will probably substitute a large Potter and Brumfield relay (or flea-

market-obtained equivalent).

Wire one set of contacts for antenna switching, one set for receiver muting, and enclose the relay in a metal box with all its screws intact. Check your transmitter's circuit diagram carefully, looking for extra switch contacts. Then consider rectifying 6 or 12 volts from the transmitter's filament supply to operate the relay (be sure it, too, has a 6- or 12-volt DC coil!). Depending on your technical expertise, other relays and activating schemes may be utilized.

Like to add a neat finishing touch? Use the relay's "second set" of contacts to switch between the receiver's internal RF gain control (on receive) and an external and equal ohmic value RF gain control (on transmit). (See fig. 3.) Then adjust the external control to a reduced/non-overload level for easy monitoring of your transmitted signal.

One other note warrants mention while planning station "frills" and relay voltages. Many simple low-power transmitters from past times relied mainly on frequency-controlling crystals and lacked mating VFOs. In such cases, you can add a 10- or 15- μ Hy inductor and 150- or 250-pFd variable capacitor in series with the crystal to produce a variable frequency crystal oscillator, or VXO, with a tuning range of 5 to 15 or 20 kHz (fig. 4). It is akin to a limited-range VFO, but more stable.

Additionally, most simple low-power transmitters do not draw plate current or produce an output signal until their connected key is closed. In that case, you may leave the transmitter set

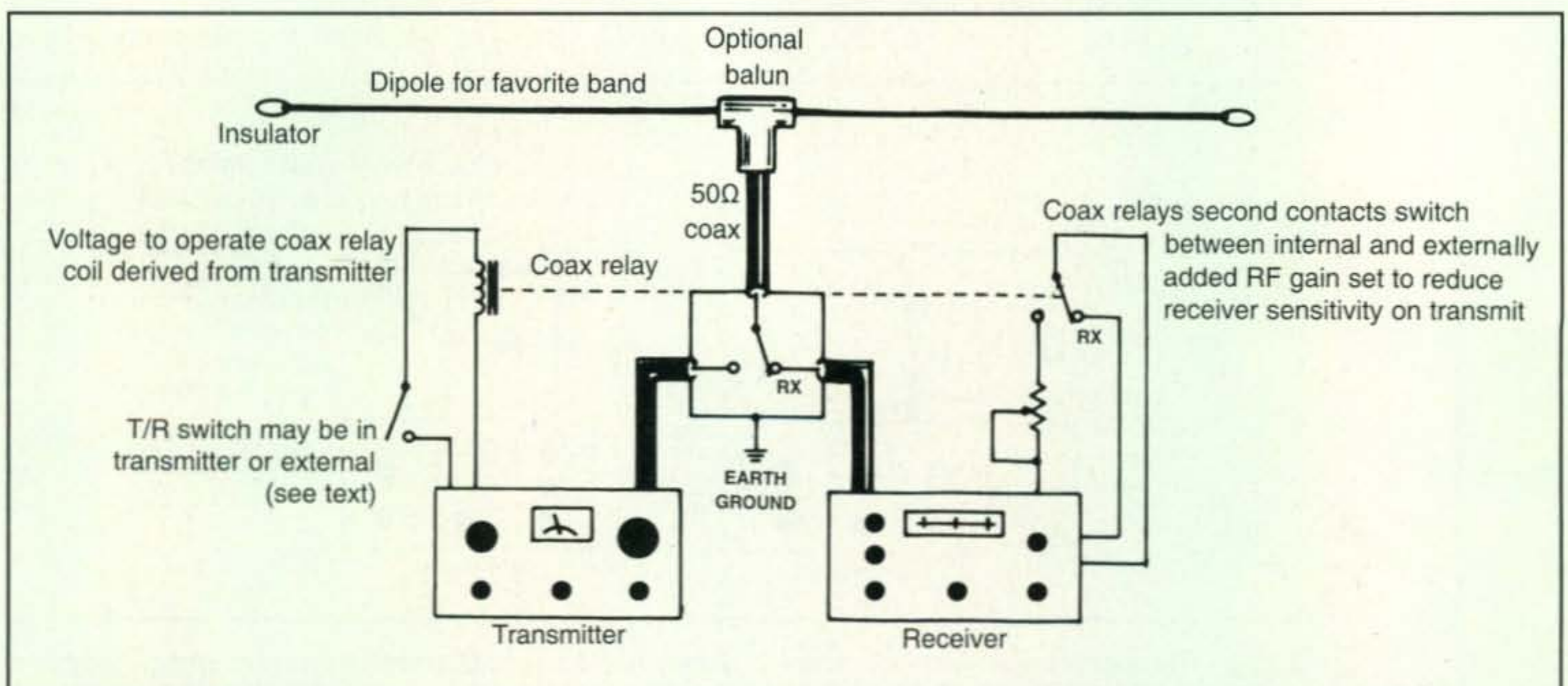
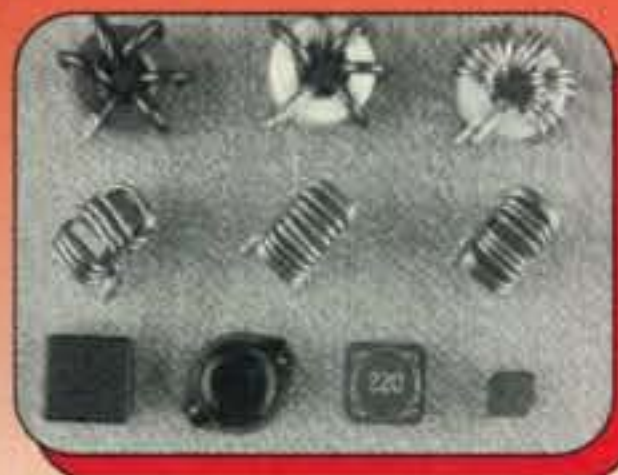


Fig. 3— A "big time" T/R switching arrangement utilizing a (homebrewed or commercial) coaxial relay with its coil activated from voltage acquired and switched by your transmitter. As discussed in the text, a second pair of relay contacts can switch between the internal and an (added) external RF gain control for conveniently monitoring your transmitted signal.

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to "send" when operating and activate the T/R relay by another voltage source. You might also consider replacing the receiver's "receive/standby" switch with a Double Pole equivalent and using the extra set of contacts to operate the T/R relay.

Now do not become perplexed over the previously discussed options. Just pick the one you like and understand and implement it. Remember the name of the game is enjoyment and having fun.

Antennas and Keys

A good antenna is your key to successful HF'n, and several types are easy to home-assemble. A dipole

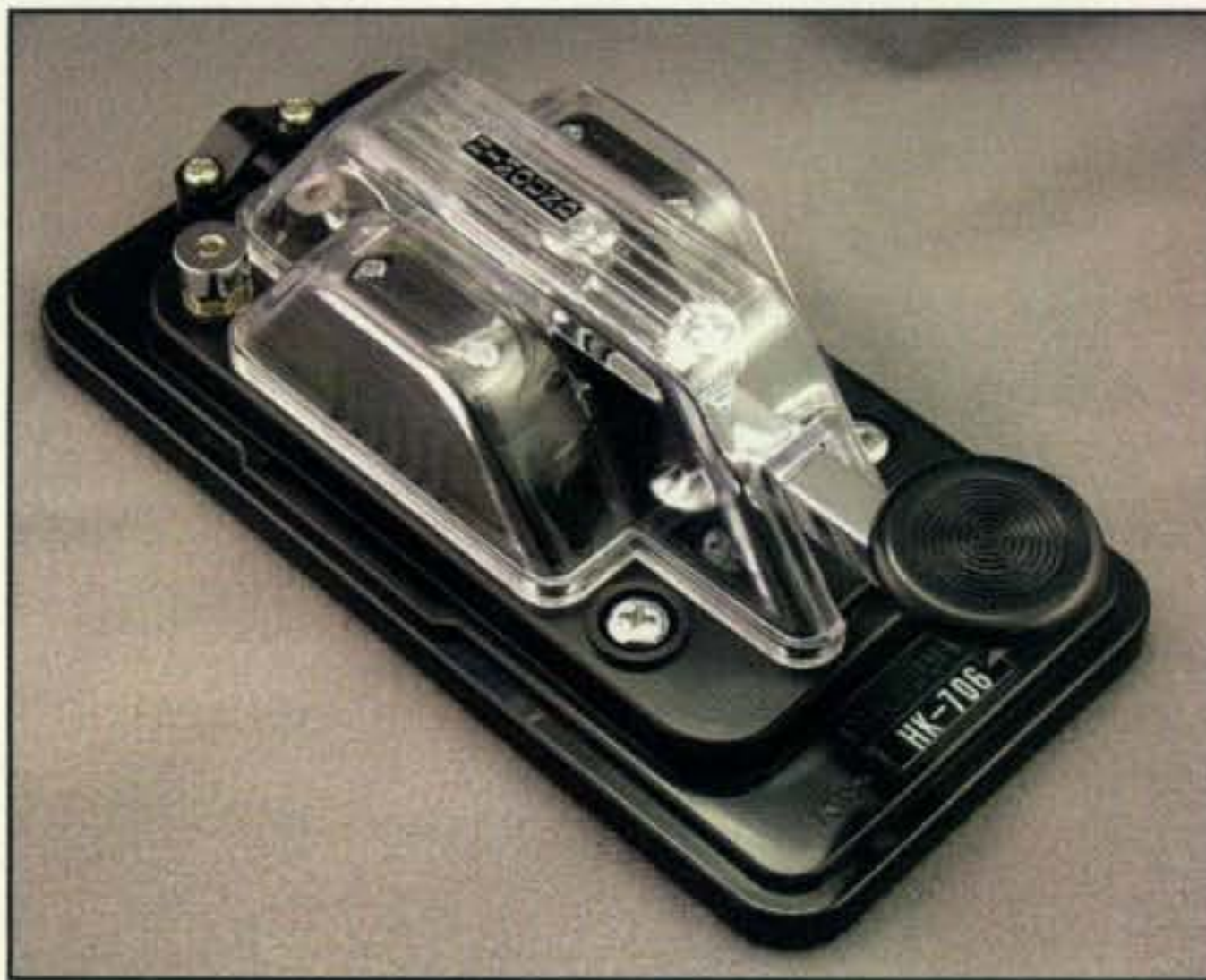


Photo A— Concerned about getting zapped by high voltage when operating CW with a tube rig? Use a plastic-cased key such as this Hi-Mound HK-706 available from <www.morseX.com>. It's a gem.

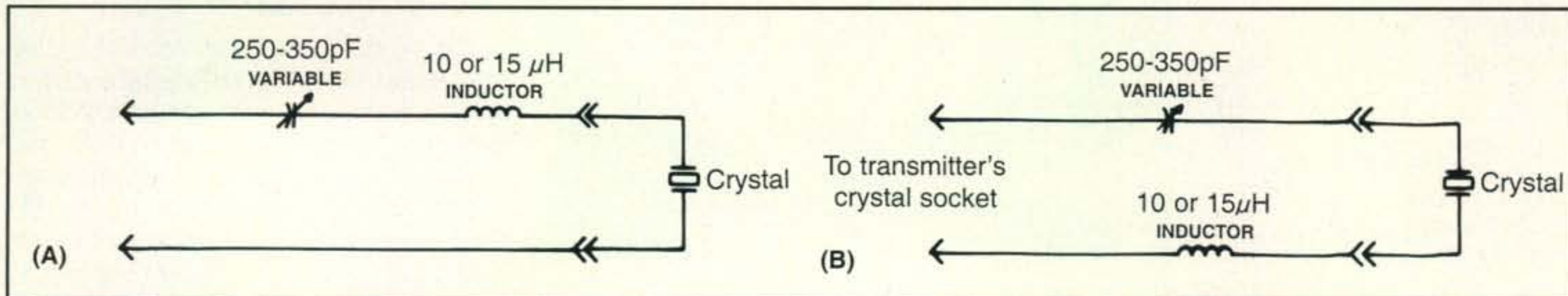


Fig. 4— Outline of a simple VXO circuit capable of shifting the frequency of your transmitter's quartz crystal between 5 and 20 kHz (depending on band and value of inductor). Suitable inductors may be home-wound on toroid forms (T-50-2 with 20 or 30 turns works well), or ready-to-use molded inductors may be purchased from Mouser Electronics (1-800-346-6873).



Photo B—As shown by this neat Eico 720 transmitter (right) and Hallicrafters SX-25 receiver (left) setup put together by Bill Albrant, K6CU, old-time gear has a special warmth and beauty unequalled by modern gear. Look at those soft amber dials, those analog meters, those classy knobs!

installed in an open area 30 to 60 feet above ground so it has plenty of clear room to radiate and receive signals is a popular choice. Be sure to use or “feed” it with a single and unbroken/unspliced length of high-grade 50-ohm coax,

include a balun, and seal feedpoint connections with silicone or Coax Seal® (and no, electrical tape is not an adequate sealer). Tweak overall length to yield an SWR close to 1:1 and enjoy.

A better wire antenna with a tad of sig-

nal gain is a full-wave delta loop, and it usually can be installed in the same space required for a dipole. You can also make it a real romper by installing it in what most folks might call an upside-down configuration so most of its wire is highest in the air for maximum radiation/reception and its feed point is closest to ground for minimizing coax-cable length.

If supports (such as trees) are not available for installing wire antennas up high, consider using a homebrewed vertical installed at ground level. Some folks say verticals do not “work out” as well as dipoles or delta loops, but that is usually because they mount them in a closed/confined area where signal radiation is blocked and/or they fail to include a ground radial system. Install at least four quarter-wave-long radials, with the vertical positioned for a good horizon-to-horizon view, and maintain a positive “can do” attitude. Confidence is paramount! Another tip: Aluminum tubing (or less-expensive electrical conduit) is not mandatory for making a vertical. Anything that will support a thick wire or unrolled strip of half-inch-wide copper works equally well, and that radiator can also be hidden in a fiberglass pipe or pole adorned with a flag and plastic ball or eagle.

With respect to keys, I should remind you that tube gear places high voltage on its key’s contacts. You must exercise care—just like we did in the good old days—to avoid getting shocked. If you can’t be careful, use a plastic-cased key or bug. Hi-Mound’s HK-706 hand key (photo A), available from <www.MorseX.com>, is a nice choice. Alternately, browsing hamfest flea markets might reward you with a plastic-cased E.F. Johnson, Skilman or Hi-Mound bug like Bill Albrant, K6CU, uses with his golden oldie setup shown in photo B. Also note that hamfest flea markets can be a great source of old-time rigs (photo C); you just have to look for them!

Operating Tips and Techniques

Using a delightful old receiver and transmitter setup is a mite different from using a modern transceiver. The receiver’s AGC system is less active, for example, so you avoid overload from strong signals by cranking up the AF Gain to around three-quarters of maximum and using the RF gain (sensitivity) to control overall volume. This is the “reverse” of transceiver operation. Once acclimated to the technique, you might also “tweak” RF and AF levels for



Photo C—A quick tour of the 2009 Huntsville (Alabama) hamfest flea market uncovered these smooth-working Conar transmitter-receiver twins complete with original manuals and at a most affordable price to boot. The good deals are out there, friends. Just look carefully to find them.

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your particular rig, antenna, and usual times of operation.

Assuming you add VFO or VXO control to your transmitter, setting it to the precise same frequency as received stations' (called) "zero beating" can prove tricky, especially if your transmit signal overloads your receiver. A "spot" switch is ideal here, but if it is not included in your transmitter, reducing your receiver's RF gain usually helps. You "zero beat" a station by tuning your receiver from a high-pitch/treble CW tone on one sideband down to the lowest pitch/bass tone you can hear, and then double-check that setting by tuning through the other sideband in a similar manner. Then leave your receiver set at zero (midway between the two sidebands lowest pitch tones) and set your transmit frequency to that same zero-beat tone point for transmitting. Once zeroed, you can retune the receiver (but not the transmitter!) for a comfortable-to-copy tone from the other station.

You may also find it helpful to ask an old-pro amateur to double-check your zero-beating accuracy with an on-the-air QSO. With some practice, you may also become proficient in matching sideband tones rather than zero beating stations. Just be sure you tune in the proper side-

band or the "other station" may not hear your (2 or 3 kHz) off-frequency signal. You can quickly check that, incidentally, by placing a borrowed "big time" transceiver by your receiver and tuning in the same station on both rigs.

Unlike instant-on solid-state gear, tube gear appreciates a few minutes warm-up time before transmitting. Remember that fact, and it will reward you with long tube life. Checking your antenna's SWR each time you get on the air is also encouraged, as it alerts you to an unrealized antenna or transmitter problem and/or gives you a positive "can work them" mindset when the power is up and the SWR is down.

If you are new to HF'n, 80 meters is usually considered a nighttime band because it is typically "open" during the hours of darkness (similar to the AM broadcast band on 550 kHz to 1650 kHz). Forty meters is a night plus some-of-the-day band, with a "slump" in signal propagation between 10 AM and 2 or 3 PM your local time, and 30 meters is a day and nighttime band with a mild slump between 12 noon and 2 PM and 2 AM and 5 AM. The higher you go in bands, the more they are open during daytime hours, and the lower you go in bands, the more they

are open during nighttime hours—plain and simple.

In closing, I remind you that some folks battle high power-line noise, and sometimes that noise is intermittent. It drowns out your signal and drops off the minute after you call so another station "gets through" with no problem. Some operators also use narrow CW filters (even when calling CQ! Gad!) and do not hear you unless your signal falls right into their passband (like Luke Skywalker dropping a bomb into a small opening on the Death Star ship in *Star Wars*). Don't fret: Just learn as you go and move on. Developing good operating skills can give you a 10- to 20-dB advantage over other less-proficient operators—and that's a fact!

Conclusion

Goodness gracious, we totally overflowed available column space and must bow out quickly. Here's hoping our mini series inspires you to give HF'n a good old college try, and if you need more guidance, tell us (specifically) and we will address those needs in future columns. Good luck on HF and here's hoping we meet one night soon on 30 meters.

73, Dave, K4TWJ

Radios, Improvements, and More

New and improved amateur radios and other gear are in the spotlight this month as far as "What's New" is concerned with the introduction of Yaesu's new FTM-350R mobile rig, Yaesu's APRS-improved VX-8DR, a new USB-controlled RF switch from RFMD, some definite improvements to the popular Weather Defender computer application from Swift Weather, some new items from MFJ, PSK31 help from Nifty! and a new version of the HamLog software application for the iPhone.

Yaesu's Newest: the FTM-350R

Leave it to Yaesu to produce one of the most technologically advanced VHF/UHF ham rigs to come down the pike in awhile—the new Yaesu FTM-350R (photo A) with GPS, APRS, and Bluetooth® capabilities.

Advertised by Yaesu as a 50-watt, dual-band, 2-meter and 70-cm radio that at press time is waiting for FCC approval, this one is actually a tri-bander with its 1-watt output capability on the 222-MHz ham band. In many areas of the country that means this rig can go a long way in helping its monitoring owners keep up with what the nearby hams are talking about on the crowd's favorite local FM repeater, since it covers the most popular bands for ham repeaters.

However, the GPS, APRS, and Bluetooth features are the big draw for this rig. You'll need the optional FGPS-1 or FGPS-2 receiver and antenna,

but with the combo, the screen of the FTM-350R can supply you with all of the information available from a traditional GPS unit, and it's compatible with various APRS functions, including traditional APRS receive capabilities and what Yaesu describes as SmartBeaconing from HamHUD Nichetronix.

In addition, the FTM-350R comes with dual speakers to listen to FM commercial stereo broadcasts, wide-band receive, a high-speed band scope to check local FM activity, a 1200/9600-bps packet port, more than 1000 memory channels, a built-in front-panel microphone and an MH-48A6JA hand microphone, a detachable control head, and support for the optional FPR-1, a portable monitor unit that enables you to let others within 1000 feet of your FTM-350R receive your transmissions.

Yes, it's quite a package, and I have no doubt you'll discover many other impressive features once you get your hands on your own FTM-350R. With this radio it's pretty obvious that Yaesu is continuing its role as a leader in amateur radio technology.

Yaesu VX-8DR, Adding Enhanced APRS

Are you already enjoying your technologically advanced Yaesu VX-8R (photo B) portable radio? Well, now you have an option to upgrade to an even more advanced unit that Yaesu has christened the VX-8DR, which comes with enhanced APRS capabilities. Yes, upgrading your present

*1870 Alder Branch Lane, Germantown, TN 38139
e-mail: <wv5j@cq-amateur-radio.com>



Photo A— Yaesu's newest ham rig is the FTM-350R, which features three-band operation on the 2-meter, 222-MHz, and 70-cm bands along with GPS, APRS, and Bluetooth® capabilities. The new mobile/base transmits up to 50 watts on 2 meters and 440 MHz and can also receive commercial broadcasts and play FM stereo broadcasts through twin speakers located in the back of its removable control head.



Photo B— Yaesu is now marketing its new and improved VX-8R under the new model name VX-8DR. The new model has been equipped with enhanced APRS capabilities and has a slightly higher price. Present VX-8R owners have the option to upgrade their radios with the enhanced APRS capabilities for a few dollars if they choose, but they must send the HT to Yaesu to have the work done.

VX-8R is an option that will cost you a few dollars, but if you haven't made the purchase yet, you now have the choice of either buying the VX-8R or the VX-8DR with new expanded APRS capabilities that Yaesu says can meet the needs of even the most active APRS user. The VX-8DR has the same appearance as the VX-8R and uses the very same accessories, but it costs a little more.

Why consider getting the VX-8R now that the VX-8DR is here? For all the great reasons you were first attracted to the VX-8R, including a full 5 watts of FM transmit power on 50/144/430 MHz, plus 1.5 watts on 222 MHz and AM capability on 6 meters; Bluetooth hands-free operation with the optional BU-1 and BH-1 or BH-2; APRS 1200/9600-bps data communication (B band only); submersible capabilities (can go 3 feet under for a minimum of 30 minutes); 7.4V 1100-mAh lithium ion battery (included); its compact size 2.36" x 3.74" x 0.92"; simultaneous independent two-signal dual receive function (both V + V or U + U); weather receiving with Weather Alert; built-in barometric sensor; the ability to monitor amateur radio frequencies while receiving AM/FM broadcasting; a dot matrix LCD display that provides up to 16 character memory tags; a high-resolution Spectrum Analyzer with ± 50 channels indication; DCS and CTCSS ENC/DEC tone features and wave monitoring of received/modulated signal; and a laundry list of additional options such as a 1800-mAh LI battery, GPS unit and antenna, and a 3x AA battery-cell case.

But if that's not enough for you as an APRS enthusiast, opt for the VX-8DR and get all that plus advanced APRS functions such as Smart Beacons™, a standout feature that automatically adjusts the beacon timing to your traveling speed and location to plot a smoother trace to match your position and movement on a map. Other Yaesu improvements to the VX-8DR include an increase in the number of stations listed from 40 to 50; a larger APRS message memory growing from 20 to 30 while also adding a selectable message-received LED flashing rate; a DIGI-PATH route indication function (the APRS® packet data includes Digipeater routing information); and a change to the heads-up compass display on the GPS screen that positions your traveling direction always toward the top of the display.

So now is the time to do some digging—or just call it personal research if you like—and find out all about the

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Photo C— Swift Weather has improved its Weather Defender software, giving it increased warning times to a user-designated location, additional maps, and greater alert capabilities, while also enhancing its programmable alert dissemination features to include sending notices about threatening lightning storms, tornadoes, hail, high winds, heavy precipitation, and more via e-mail or to a handheld device.

Yaesu VX-8R and VX-8DR, then determine which one of these feature-packed HTs you want and fills your needs. By the time you read this, the VX-8DR should be available through most ham radio dealers.

Swift Weather Releases Improved Weather Defender 1.1

Swift Weather tells us that its new easy-to-use weather software, Weather Defender 1.1 (photo C), allows users to track winter weather threats in real-time so they can better prepare for blizzards, snowstorms, and extreme temperatures. Weather Defender 1.1 also provides immediate customized severe winter weather alerts for users' specified geographic areas through an on-screen computer monitor display, an audible alarm, e-mail message, or by SMS text to any mobile handheld device.

Weather Defender 1.1 should be an attractive product for both consumers and businesses alike, since it allows users to monitor weather changes in a timely, accurate manner and send weather updates to their e-mail or handheld device.

Other features of Weather Defender 1.1 include the ability to track blizzard and winter storm watches, warnings, and advisories as they are issued in real-time; view live weather radar with

precise rain, sleet, and snow color-coding; see up-to-the-minute snow depth reports and road conditions; study extreme temperature maps; and issue automated alerts based on any weather threat to the nearest 1/10 mile that can be sent directly to a user's preferred e-mail or mobile handheld device.

Weather Defender 1.1 is compatible with Windows® 2000/XP/Vista/7 operating systems. The Residential Edition is \$29.95 per month plus activation, while the Commercial Edition is \$49.95 per month plus activation. For more information and a free seven-day trial version of Weather Defender 1.1, visit <weatherdefender.com>.

TES6000-30 USB-Controlled RF Switch

Telemakus, LLC tells us it is now marketing the TES6000-30 (photo D), a laboratory-quality RF SPDT switch that provides 30 dB isolation, less than 2 dB insertion loss, and is described as the smallest USB microwave switch available today.

The switch is fully terminated at all ports with a return loss better than 20 dB at 4 GHz. The RF connectors are SMA, with the common port male and ports 1 and 2 female, allowing for easy interconnection. Put simply, by plugging this unit into a USB port on your



Photo D— Want to control your RF outputs via your computer or laptop? This USB-controlled RF switch model TES6000-30 from Telemakus, LLC is just the thing to make it happen. Plug it into a USB port or extender cable attached it to your computer, connect your SMA-equipped cables from antennas and transmitters, and you are ready to go. The TES6000-30 may also be used as a basic building block for complex switch matrices.

computer, you can control RF connections through a Windows®-based user interface. The device comes with a half-GB of flash memory containing all the installation files, data sheet, and test results. It can also be used with common ATE software. Multiple switches can be used, allowing complex switch matrices to be built.

Potential applications for this compact switch include RF routing for various test or communication configurations, switching between two RF sources or loads, pulse modulation for amplifier testing, redundancy switching, and filter banks.

For more information visit <rfmw.com/Telemakus>, or contact RFMW, Ltd. at telephone 1 (877) 367-7369, e-mail <sales@rfmw.com>, or by mail at RFMW Ltd., 90 Great Oaks Blvd. #107, San Jose, CA, 95119.

MFJ New Products

Triple-Band 2m/220/440 FlexiDuck™. MFJ is doing it again—answering the needs of amateurs everywhere, this time by providing compatible antennas that work with today's multi-band HTs such as the Kenwood F6 and the Yaesu VX-8R and VX-8DR.

MFJ is now making available its triple-band MFJ-1718S 2M/220/440 HT FlexiDuck™ antenna which measures in at 17 inches tall, comes with an SMA connector, and gives the user a 1/4-wave antenna on 2 meters and 222 MHz, and a 5/8-wave on 440 MHz.

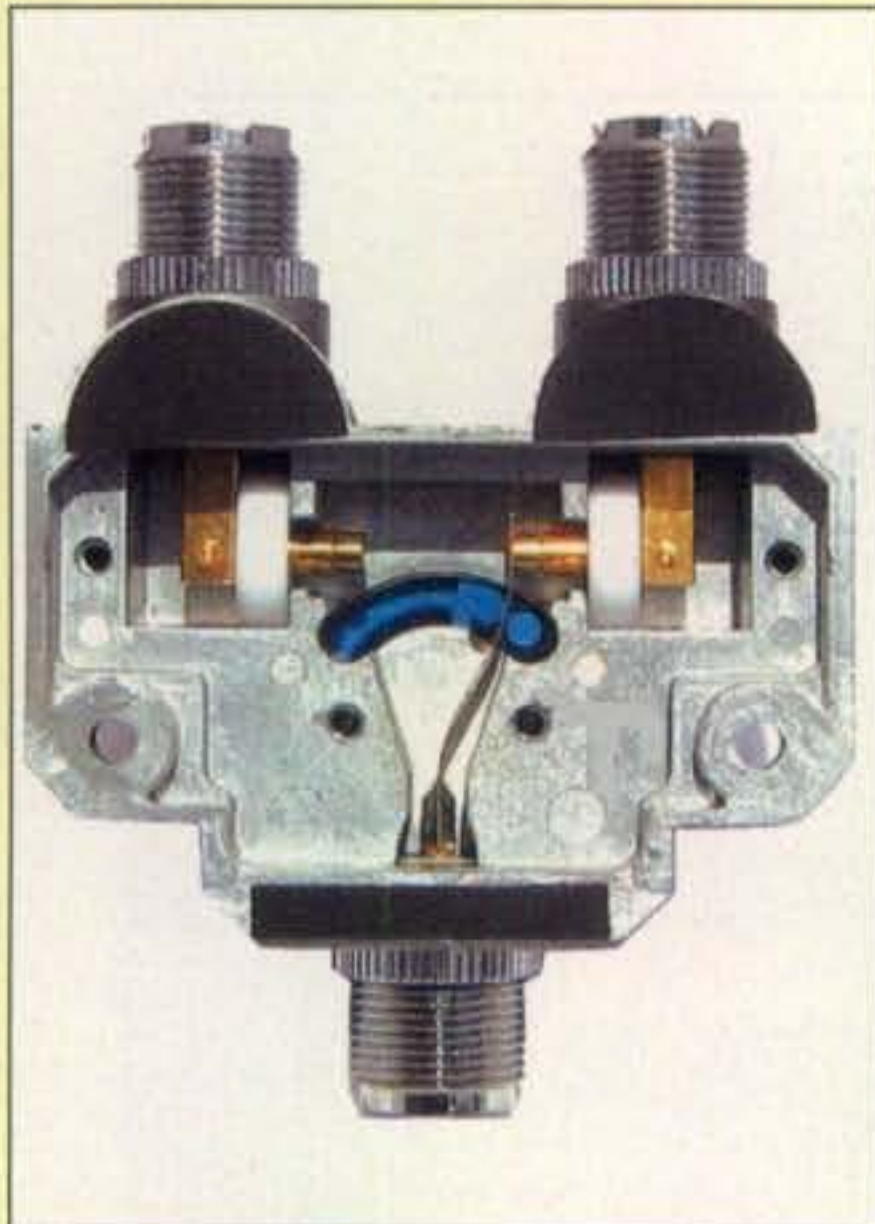
MFJ also claims that the MFJ-1718S is precision-tuned at the factory for lowest SWR, features High-Q and low-loss construction, and handles up to 10 watts of output power. The MFJ-1718S is priced at \$29.95.

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Photos E & F— Recently, MFJ announced a number of new products, including a tri-band rubber-duck antenna for 2m, 222, and 440; an NMO truck-lip mount; 1- and 3-GHz antenna switches (left), and dummy loads (top). Get more information about each item or place an order by visiting the mfjenterprises.com website.

Mini NMO Trunk-Lip Mount. MFJ is also making available its new Mini NMO Trunk Lip Mount, the MFJ-346M, priced at \$24.95. Made with stainless steel, it comes with 17 feet of coaxial cable terminated with a PL-259 connector and includes a rubber cushion that protects your vehicle surface from scratches.

Antenna Switches, Dummy Loads. MFJ is also now marketing its new wideband 1- and 3-GHz two-position antenna switches (photo E) and 1- and 3-GHz dry dummy loads (photo F), both

available with SO-239- and N-male connectors.

The antenna switches feature gold-plated flange and connector contacts and are priced at \$49.95 each with the SO-239 connectors (MFJ-2702) and \$59.95 for N connectors (MFJ-2702N).

The dummy loads are rated to handle up to 200 watts for 5 seconds and 35 watts continuous for frequencies from DC up to 1 or 3 GHz depending on the model selected. Both versions are available with your choice of SO-239 (MFJ-262B) or N connector (MFJ-262BN) option and are priced at \$59.95 each.

MFJ's products are covered under its famous No Matter What™ one-year, limited warranty that promises that MFJ will repair or replace (at its option) your MFJ products no matter what the reason for one complete year.

To order any of these MFJ items, get a free catalog, or to locate your nearest MFJ dealer, call 1-800-647-1800; send a fax to 1-662-323-6551; write to MFJ at 300 Industrial Park Road, Starkville, MS 39759; or visit mfjenterprises.com.

HAMLOG App for the iPhone

Are you ready for a ham radio application for your iPhone that can make your logging chores a little more fun? It's called HamLog (photo G), and it logs contacts; exports via e-mail as CSV (comma separated values), ADIF (Amateur Data Interchange Format), or eQSL.cc formats; conducts automatic name/QTH resolution based on U.S. callsign; handles grid square calculation using the phone's built-in GPS; gives you azimuth calculations; and performs callsign lookup via QRZ.com or a dedicated database imported directly from the FCC (U.S. only). Logging fields include time



Photo G— Is it worth 99 cents to get some help with your logging duties? Nick Garner, N3WG, hopes so now that he has developed and gained Apple approval for HamLog, an app for the iPhone that is designed to help radio amateurs handle their logging of contacts.

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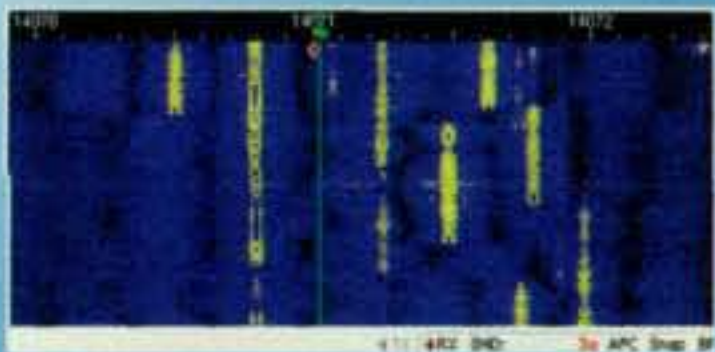
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Nifty E-Z Guide to PSK31 Operation



PSK31 Digital Operating Modes
PC to Transceiver Interfacing
Practical Issues of Operation
Digital Software Operation
Sound Card Configuration
Homebrew and Commercial Interfaces

Bernie Lafreniere, N6FN

Photo H— Nifty! Radio Accessories can bring you up to speed on how to get up and running on PSK31 with its newest book, a 70-page compilation of facts about one of the modes of amateur digital communications. Priced at \$12.95, the book goes light on theory, emphasizes how to get things connected, and shows you the best way to start making PSK31 QSOs.

on, time off, frequency, mode, RST, SRST, name, QTH, grid, power, and a space for user notations. HamLog also provides you with an IARU prefixes list, the U.S. band plan, the latest DX spots from DX Summit, WWV propagation reports, and a Q signal list.

Additional screenshots of the software can be seen at n3wg.com/hamlog. HamLog (current version is 2.4) costs 99 cents and is downloadable from the iTunes App Store.

HamLog author Nick Garner, N3WG, also tells me he has a free iPhone app coming, somewhat of a HamLog Lite, that is awaiting Apple approval. It is called iRover and can be of assistance to VHF/UHF contesters. For more information, visit n3wg.com/iRover.

Nifty E-Z Guide to PSK31

Nifty! Ham Accessories, well known for its series of amateur radio quick-reference guides, has now released a book designed to quickly get amateur radio operators up and running with PSK31 mode operation (photo H). Light on theory, the book concentrates on getting things connected and making PSK31 QSOs. The book explains the details of transceiver-to-PC sound-card interfacing, software configuration, and opera-

tion. The pros and cons of building a homebrew interface or purchasing several types of commercial interfaces are also explored. Nifty! says its detailed instructions and screen shots take the mystery out of operating PSK31 software and interpreting the quality of received signals.

Priced at \$12.95, this 70-page book can be ordered from the company's web page: niftyaccessories.com. For further information about this book, you may visit the company website, call 1-760-781-5522, or write to Nifty! Ham Accessories, 1601 Donalor Drive, Escondido, CA 92027.

That's it for this month. We'll be back next time with more new products of interest to the amateur radio operator.

73, John, WV5J

Note: Listings in "What's New" are not product reviews and do not constitute a product endorsement by CQ or the column editor. Information in this column is primarily provided by manufacturers/vendors and has not necessarily been independently verified. The purpose of this column is to inform readers about new products in the marketplace. We encourage you to do additional research on products of interest to you.

Apollo 11: The Australian Story

This past June amateur radio operators around the world operated Earth-Moon-Earth (EME) in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the successful Moon landing of Astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin (Buzz) Aldrin, who were onboard the Lunar Module (LM) of Apollo 11. Under the project Echoes of Apollo (EOA), which was organized by Pat Barthelow, AA6EG, several major dishes were in operation. Among them was the Mt. Pleasant dish located in Tasmania, Australia.

Along with the operation of the Mt. Pleasant dish came a spotlight on Australia and the tremendous contribution citizens of that country made in the successful transmission of the live pictures from the Moon on July 21, 1969.

The Winter 2010 issue of *CQ VHF* magazine contains Barthelow's article summarizing the EOA success of last June. Along with mentioning the Mt. Pleasant record-setting 3-mW QSO that took place during the EOA project date, he also discusses the two other dishes of importance to the success of the Apollo 11 operation 40 years ago. These dishes are Parkes and Honeysuckle Creek. For more information on their success, he includes this URL: http://www.publish.csiro.au/?act=view_file&file_id=AS01038.pdf, which is a pdf of John Sarkissian's paper "On Eagle's Wings: The Parkes Observatory's Support of the Apollo 11 Mission."

While Sarkissian's paper is quite lengthy (25 pages), the story he tells about the Parkes dish and the other Australian giant dishes used in the live Moon broadcast is absolutely fascinating. Ten years ago the movie *The Dish* was released. It takes a humorous and creative license approach to the story of the Parkes dish. As is so often the case, when creative license is taken some of the more intriguing facts in the real story are lost in the artistic rendition. For example, in watching the movie the viewer is led to believe that the Parkes dish was the only dish involved in the television transmissions from the Moon. In actuality, when the TV camera on the LM was switched on (by activating its circuit breaker), three dishes received the signals simultaneously. They were Goldstone, Honeysuckle Creek, and Parkes. NASA began the broadcast by choosing the Goldstone received TV signals first. A fourth Australian dish, the Tidbinbilla, also received the signal but it was not used in the broadcasts. More about its role is covered later in this piece.

It is popularly understood that for the first few minutes of the broadcast NASA alternated the signals between those received by Goldstone and Honeysuckle Creek. After 8 minutes and 51 seconds, the Parkes signal was used and they stayed with it for the remainder of the 2¹/₂-hour transmis-

VHF Plus Calendar

| | |
|----------|--|
| March 7 | Last quarter Moon. Very poor EME conditions. |
| March 12 | Moon apogee. |
| March 14 | Moderate EME conditions. |
| March 15 | New Moon. |
| March 21 | Moderate EME conditions. |
| March 23 | First quarter Moon. |
| March 28 | Moon perigee. Excellent EME conditions. |
| March 30 | Full Moon. |

—EME conditions courtesy W5LUU

sion. In truth, there is some doubt about this understanding. The conclusion of this piece addresses this confusion.

As I read Sarkissian's article, I was inspired by what I read. Furthermore, I felt that this story needed to be shared with us amateur radio operators. Therefore, in order to give the Australian story an amateur radio venue, I created the following, a very limited and somewhat focused digest of Sarkissian's paper:

It was in 1968 when NASA asked for the Parkes dish to be used in the Apollo 11 mission. It was the superior gain of the 64-meter dish that originally caught the attention of NASA in 1966, when it had to cut back on its project to build three 64-meter dishes, one in Goldstone, California, and the other two in Australia and Spain. Suddenly, the already existing Parkes dish became very attractive—especially for the Apollo 11 mission.

The agreement between NASA and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) of Australia consisted of a two-sentence contract that essentially stated that the Radiophysics Division of CSIRO would agree to support the Apollo 11 mission for \$3,500 per day plus \$15,000 to cover the additional work on the dish.

NASA supplied the S-band front-end receiving equipment, tape recorders, and translating equipment for converting the incoming signals into a TV signal. The observatory provided everything else. Personnel at the dish included both NASA and CSIRO employees.

The original plan was for Parkes to be a backup to Goldstone and the 26-meter dish at Tidbinbilla near Canberra, Australia. Additionally, the 26-meter Honeysuckle Creek dish, also near Canberra would track the command module *Columbia*. One problem was that the original timeframe for the first extra vehicular activity (EVA), or Moonwalk, was to take place immediately upon landing. However, Moonrise at Parkes would not take place for more than six hours after lunar landing. Additionally, because of the dish's 30-degree horizon (meaning that the dish could not be lowered beyond 30 degrees), Moonrise for the dish would

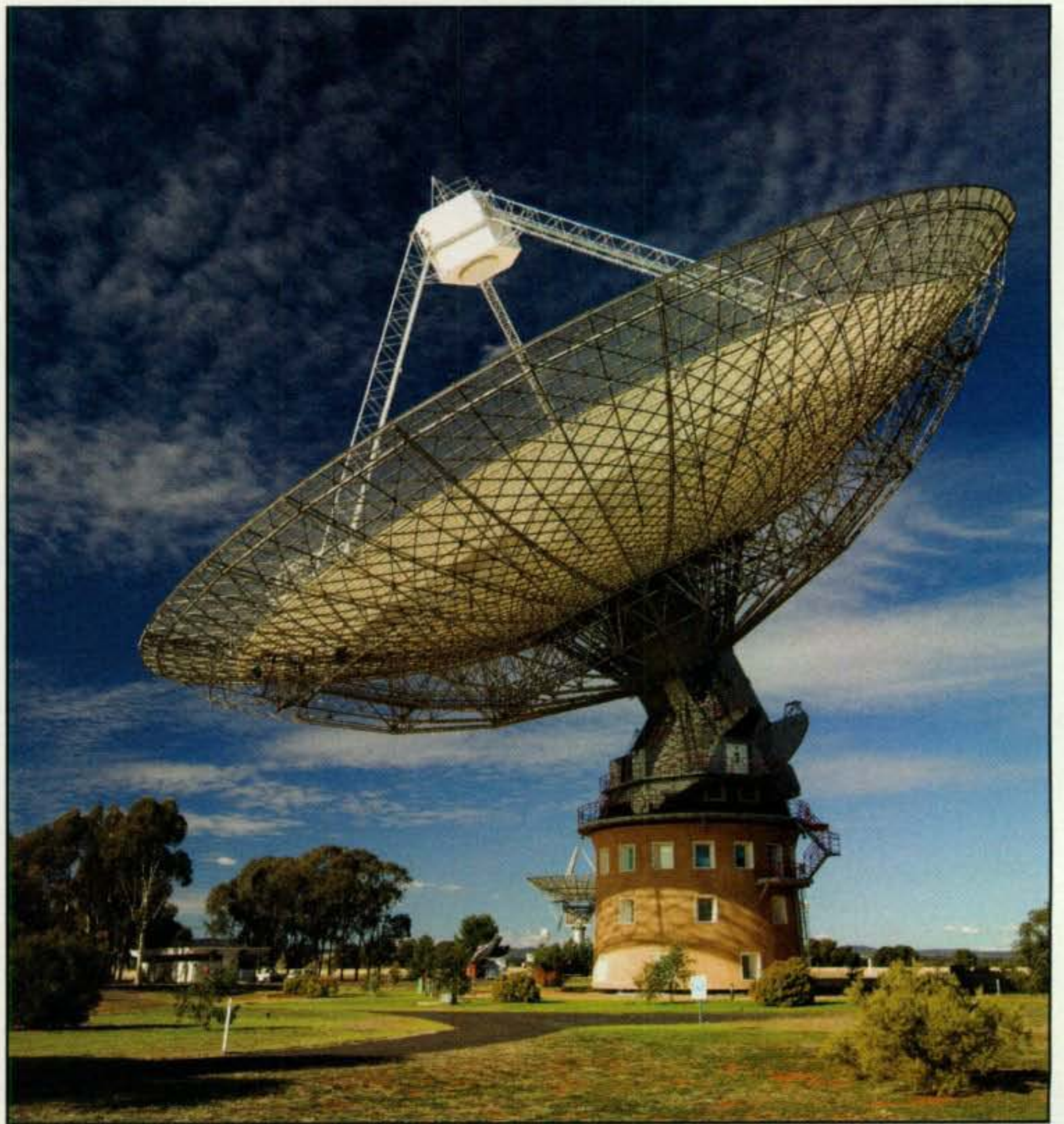
be another 30–40 minutes after the Moon had risen. This lack of availability of Parkes meant that the plan for an immediate EVA upon landing was scrubbed for a later time of ten hours after landing. Ironically, the problem with this new time was that the Moon would have already set at Goldstone.

In the end, Armstrong would exercise his option to go ahead with the EVA as soon as they had landed and were secured. Unfortunately (or fortunately, as it turned out), it took the astronauts several hours to suit up and depressurize the LM's cabin. By the time Armstrong was ready to alight, it was just about time for Parkes to acquire the signal with its offset feed.

Another unfortunate event almost scuttled Parkes availability. Just before the acquisition of the signal, a huge squall hit Parkes. Winds in excess of 70 mph subjected the dish to forces ten times more than it was designed to take. As fortune would have it, at about the same time that Aldrin was to push in the circuit-breaker button and thus activate the television camera, the winds died down. Additionally, the Moon rose sufficiently for the Apollo 11 signal to be picked up when Aldrin activated the camera. As the 1980s television series *The A-Team* character Col. John "Hannibal" Smith (played by George Peppard) would often say, "I love it when a plan comes together."

Even though there was a calm in the squall at the moment of the acquisition of the television signal, the weather never did fully cooperate. The winds pushed the dish outside its safety limits for the duration of the 2¹/₂-hour EVA. Furthermore, regarding that plan coming together, before it finally came together there was one more change in the order of the giant Australian dishes. Unfortunately for the personnel at the Tidbinbilla dish, a fire in the transmitter on July 18 made it inoperable. Heroically, the engineers made the necessary repairs in 12 hours. Even so, insofar as NASA was concerned the damage was done. Tidbinbilla's role was given to Honeysuckle Creek. Tidbinbilla would become the tracking dish for *Columbia*. Yet insofar as the television broadcast was concerned, that relegated role would not take it entirely out of the picture. I will have more on this tidbit later in this piece. For now, however, we continue to focus on Parkes's role.

NASA had the signals from all three of the dishes—Goldstone, Honeysuckle Creek, and Parkes. Initially, NASA rotated around the three signals. However, after the main receiver on the Parkes



*CSIRO's Parkes Dish was the focal point of the 2000 movie *The Dish*, which was about its involvement in the reception of Apollo 11's transmissions. (Photo credit: David McClenaghan, CSIRO)*

dish acquired the signal it turned out to be of such superior quality that NASA switched to that signal and stayed with it for the remainder of the EVA.

Tidbinbilla would not be the only site to experience a disaster. One important element of Australia's communications network was the Overseas Telecommunications Commission (OTC), which was located in Paddington. At OTC the television and telemetry signals were separated and routed to their respective termination points. The television pictures were slow scan television (SSTV) with a scan rate of ten frames per second (non-interlaced) at 320 lines per frame. These pictures were hardly ready for prime-time TV. They would have to be converted to both NTSC (the North American format of 30 frames per second, 60 interlaced fields per second) at 525 lines per frame and the Australian CCIR standard of 25 frames per second (50 interlaced fields per second) at 625 lines per frame.

For the North American conversion

the pictures were displayed on a 10-inch black-and-white monitor with a Vidicom TK22 camera pointed at the screen. The camera was gated so that it did not take a picture until the 10-inch monitor had completed displaying the full SSTV frame. This output was then recorded and played back five times. During the playback the monitor screen was blacked out and the next SSTV frame would begin displaying.

Because the monitor had enough persistence, it retained the picture. Also, because RCA had built special circuits in the monitor, any loss of brightness between the top and bottom of the picture was alleviated. It was by way of this setup the NTSC signal was produced, with only one of the six fields being live.

In actuality not even the single live field was live because NASA, fearing that something might go tragically wrong, introduced a 6-second delay. This delay, coupled with the 300-ms delay caused by the relay from Australia to Houston via satellite, meant that what the world

saw was 6.3 seconds behind live. Australia, on the other hand, picked off its part of the television signal, electronically converted to the CCIR standards, and broadcast it live. Thus, Australian audiences saw the picture about 6.3 seconds ahead of everyone else.

Even so, all of this conversion almost didn't take place. A few weeks before the launch the scan-converter exploded when it was switched on following a test. The difference in wire color coding is what almost ruined everything. In the U.S. black is the hot wire for electrical circuits. White is neutral and green is ground. However, in Australia black is neutral. In addition, while all of the other equipment in the room was single phase, the scan-converter was wired for three-phase power.

It appears that an Australian technician saw the black wire connected to the hot terminal, assumed that it was incorrectly hooked up, and changed it. When the scan-converter was turned on the next day it exploded, with the camera taking the biggest hit. It took weeks of work, ordering special parts, replacing over 100 transistors, and adapting components to complete the repairs while the astronauts were on their way to the Moon. Fortunately, the repairs were made in time before the EVA took place.

I mentioned above that because of the problems at Tidbinbilla, it was relegated to tracking *Columbia*, the command module. The controllers discovered that the beamwidth of the 26-meter dish was so wide that it could also pick up the LM signal. Using a little creativity, the controllers were able to extract the television signals from the LM signal and display them on television sets at the station. Thus, the only truly "live" pictures of the EVA were seen by the Tidbinbilla controllers. It seems that the ancient saying of the last shall be first had a ring of authenticity at the Tidbinbilla dish.

Even though there was much work done in order to make the television broadcast happen, it almost didn't get off the ground. It was at a meeting at NASA's Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston that took place about five months before launch when a number of NASA managers and others who were interested in televising the lunar walk met to discuss the pros and cons of making it happen.

One of the biggest cons was the camera. It weighed more than seven pounds, was big and bulky. The LM's weight limitations had already caused design changes to accommodate all of the gear that would be stowed in it. For

some, adding the additional weight of the camera was an unnecessary luxury that the LM could do without.

During this meeting Ed Fendell, the man responsible for scheduling the television broadcasts during the flight to the Moon, made an impassioned plea for not having television broadcasts from the Moon. To his surprise, when he concluded his remarks the audience loudly objected to his conclusions.

Some of the senior NASA executives then spoke equally impassioned on behalf of having television broadcasts from the Moon. In particular, they were concerned with how NASA owed the people of the world this possibility of witnessing the historical event of man walking on the Moon. In the end, the group gathered voted unanimously to have television broadcasts from the Moon.

While the opening account of this

piece indicates that it was popularly understood that the Parkes signal was used almost throughout the lunar television broadcast, in truth, the knowledge of which signal of the three dishes NASA used has been lost. Even so, what was important to John Bolton, Parkes's director at the time of the project, was that the entire group on all sides of the project "collectively succeeded." In a letter he wrote to Mike Dinn, the Deputy Director of Operations at Honeysuckle Creek in July 1969, just before his death, Bolton commented: "Unfortunately, this [collective success] is something that historians never seem to understand; for them A has to have beaten B."

In fact, it was the work of thousands of people around the globe that made it possible for one-fifth of those of us who were alive on July 21, 1969 to watch one

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| | |
|--------------|---------------|
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| AN779L (20W) | AR313 (300W) |
| AN762 (140W) | EB27A (300W) |
| EB63 (140W) | EB104 (600W) |
| AR305 (300W) | AR347 (1000W) |



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Balloon Sat Project

The following by Michael Weigand, KB3PDB, is reprinted from the Fall 2009 issue of "Checking In," the newsletter of the USMA Amateur Radio Club:

Partnering with the Astronomy Club and the Electronics Experimenters' Club, the Ham Club is developing its first Balloon Sat payloads, scheduled for launch in the mid-spring semester of 2010. The Balloon Sat project is an opportunity for cadets in the three clubs to develop their own satellites, which will rise to an altitude to exceed 100,000 feet on a tether below a large helium- or hydrogen-filled weather balloon. At that height the sky is literally black.

Each satellite team consists of cadets across the three clubs and cadet classes in order to share ideas and experience. CDT Tom Dean, KB1JJJ, is developing a radio package based around APRS that will allow the ground crew to monitor the balloon's progress and locate its position once the balloon bursts at apogee and begins its descent back to Earth under a large parachute. He is also developing an amateur television payload that will beam live video from the balloon to the ground station throughout the entire journey.

CDT Michael Weigand, KB3PDB, the Ham Club A/CIC, leads up a different team and plans to conduct experiments with the IEEE 802.15.4 standard radio devices commonly known as Zigbee radios. [Ed note: Zigbee radios are low-cost, low-power digital radios that are based on the IEEE 802.15.4-2003 standard for wireless personal area networks (WPANs). For more information on them see the Zigbee Alliance website: <<http://www.zigbee.org>>.]

He is utilizing a custom-made microcontroller solution to log and transmit GPS, air pressure, and ambient-light readings to the ground station through the Zigbee transceiver using high-gain antennas. The three clubs hope to launch their balloon with attached payloads sometime in mid-spring semester out west in Colorado or in the Northeast. Stay tuned for pictures and details of the launch!

Current Contests

European Worldwide EME Contest 2010: Sponsored by DUBUS and REF, the EU WW EME contest is intended to encourage worldwide activity on moon-bounce. Information for this contest is available at the following website: <<http://www.marsport.org.uk/dubus/EMECContest2010.pdf>>.

Echoes of Apollo 2010: In his Winter 2010 *CQ VHF* magazine article Pat Barthelow also announces this year's Echoes of Apollo event. Taking place

over the weekend of April 16–18, it will be in honor of Apollo 8. Again, it will be an EME event with participation encouraged by the big dishes. This year's event will include Arecibo, which is expected to be on the air on its favorite band, 70 cms.

Calls for Papers

Calls for papers are issued in advance of forthcoming conferences either for presenters to be speakers, or for papers to be published in the conferences' *Proceedings*, or both. For more information, questions about format, media, hardcopy, e-mail, etc., please contact the person listed with the announcement. The following organizations and/or conference organizers have announced calls for papers for their forthcoming conferences:

Southeastern VHF Society Conference: Technical papers are solicited for the 14th annual Southeastern VHF Society Conference to be held in Morehead, Kentucky on April 23–24. Papers and presentations are solicited on both the technical and operational aspects of VHF, UHF, and Microwave weak-signal amateur radio. The deadline for the submission of papers and presentations is February 5. All submissions should be in Microsoft Word (.doc) or alternatively Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) files. All text, drawings, photos, etc. should be black and white only (no color). Submissions for presentation at the conference should be in PowerPoint (.ppt) format, and delivered on either a USB memory stick or CDROM or posted for download on a website.

Please indicate when you submit your paper or presentation if you plan to attend the conference and present there or if you are submitting just for publication. Papers and presentations will be published in the conference *Proceedings*. Send all questions, comments and submissions to the program chair, Robin Midgett, K4IDC, via <K4IDC@comcast.net>. For further information about the conference go to: <<http://www.svhfs.org>>.

Central States VHF Society Conference: Technical papers are solicited for the 44th annual Central States VHF Society Conference to be held in St. Louis, Missouri on July 22–24. Papers, presentations, and posters on all aspects of weak-signal VHF and above amateur radio are requested. You do not need to attend the conference, nor present your paper, to have it published in the *Proceedings*. Posters will be displayed during the two

days of the conference. Please contact the folks below if you have any questions about the suitability of a topic. Strong editorial preference will be given to those papers that are written and formatted specifically for publication, rather than as visual presentation aids. Submissions may be made via the following: electronic formats (preferred)—via e-mail; uploaded to a website for subsequent downloading; on media (3.5" floppy, CD, USB stick/thumb drive). Deadline for submissions: May 1. For more information, please contact CSVHFS President Ron Ocho, KO0Z, at ko0z@arrl.net.

Meteor Showers

The γ -Normids shower is expected to peak on March 14. For more information on this meteor shower's predictions please see Tomas Hood, NW7US's Propagation column, as well as visit the International Meteor Organization's website: <<http://www.imo.net>>.

And Finally . . .

The saying that truth is stranger than fiction is certainly applicable to the first televised broadcast of man's walk on the Moon. The movie *The Dish* took some creative license with the facts. For example, in the movie the Parkes dish director is seen playing cricket on the dish's surface. It did not happen. Also in the movie, the whole area surrounding the dish suddenly loses power. It did not happen. Additionally, in the movie Australia's prime minister visits Parkes. It did not happen. Finally, the relationship between the Australians and the NASA personnel seems curious and at times strained. Again, it did not happen.

What happened was what inspires us amateurs. When problems arose, ingenuity solved them. Some of the problems seemed strange. However, they were not insurmountable. The best of these traits is what we amateur radio operators are also capable of displaying. Therefore, I challenge us to be inspired and to stand on the shoulders of the giants of our past so that we can see into the future and thus be able to also solve our sets of unique and challenging problems.

If you have solved your own unique and challenging project, I invite you to tell your story here in this column or in *CQ VHF* magazine. You can contact me with your story via my e-mail address: <n6cl@sbcglobal.net>. I am looking forward to reading your story.

Until next month... 73 de Joe, N6CL

Castles, Flora & Fauna, and Islands

BY TED MELINOSKY, K1BV

awards

USA-CA Special Honor Roll

Howard Terry Harrison, AA1VA
USA-CA All Counties #1192
November 25, 2009

Richard McKinney, WB4VFN
USA-CA All Counties #1193
November 27, 2009

Jim Lineberger, K4DI
USA-CA All Counties #1194
December 7, 2009

USA-CA Honor Roll

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 500 | | K4DI.....1505 |
| AA1CA.....3489 | | |
| WB4VFN.....3490 | 2000 | |
| KB7QLH.....3491 | AA1CA.....1389 | |
| K4DI.....3492 | WB4VFN.....1390 | |
| S51ZZ.....3493 | K4DI.....1391 | |
| KG4JSZ.....3494 | | |
| 1000 | | 2500 |
| AA1CA.....1789 | AA1CA.....1307 | |
| WB4VFN.....1790 | WB4VFN.....1308 | |
| K4DI.....1791 | K4DI.....1309 | |
| 1500 | | 3000 |
| AA1CA.....1503 | AA1CA.....1218 | |
| WB4VFN.....1504 | WB4VFN.....1219 | |
| | K4DI.....1220 | |

The total number of counties for credit for the United States of America Counties Award is 3077. The basic award fee for subscribers is \$6.00. For nonsubscribers it is \$12.00. To qualify for the special subscriber rate, please send a recent CQ mailing label with your application. Initial application may be submitted in the USA-CA Record Book, which may be obtained from CQ Magazine, 25 Newbridge Road, Hicksville, NY 11801 USA for \$2.50, or by a PC-printed computer listing which is in alphabetical order by state and county within the state. To be eligible for the USA-CA Award, applicants must comply with the rules of the program as set forth in the revised USA-CA Rules and Program dated June 1, 2000. A complete copy of the rules may be obtained by sending an SASE to Ted Melinosky, K1BV, 12 Wells Woods Road, Columbia, CT 06237 USA. DX stations must include extra postage for airmail reply.

loaded from the RNARS website, or by sending a suitable SAE to the Awards Manager. QSL cards are not required. Send to RNARS HQ, HMS Collingwood, Portsmouth, UK. Internet: <http://www.rnars.org.uk/50TH_ANNIVERSARY.htm>; e-mail: M. Puttick, G3LIK, Chairman RNARS at <mick_g3lik@ntlworld.com>.

The group offers an interesting series of awards which can be found on its internet site: <<http://www.rnars.ork.uk>>.

Castles

Operating on the premises of or within specified distances from castles is a popular summertime activity in Europe. Literally thousands of castles, old forts, and grand homes have been cataloged by numerous sponsors for their particular award. The rules usually require a minimum number of contacts to earn the basic level of award. If the rules are well-designed, the number of contacts is modest for those of us living on another continent. The award described below meets that rule perfectly, calling for only three such "entities." Swabia is a region located in the southernmost part of Germany, rather than a political entity, so well-defined borders do not exist. The sponsor has provided a list of valid castles for the award.

Germany's Schwäbisches Burgen Diplom. This award is sponsored by the DARC e.V., Ortsverband Illertissen, T15 for contacts after January 1, 2009 with stations operating no farther than 500 meters from castles or fortresses in Schwaben. SWL OK. Each castle or fortress must give you a Schwäbische Burgen-Number (SWB), and this number must be shown on the operator's QSL card. Each SWB number counts only once.

We begin this month's column with a short-term award celebrating the 50th anniversary of The Royal Navy Amateur Radio Society. We then move on to the popular award themes of castles, flora and fauna, and islands.

Royal Navy ARS 50th Anniversary Award

The Royal Navy Amateur Radio Society (RNARS) was formed in June 1960. This year, therefore, is the 50th anniversary of the society and a number of events are being planned throughout the year to celebrate this occasion. The RNARS has been authorized to use the special callsign GB50RNARS. This or any other special event callsign may be used by only by members of the society from their own stations for a period not exceeding 28 days in order for contacts to be available to the maximum number of amateur radio operators throughout the UK and beyond.

To earn this award, work 50 RNARS members between January 1 and December 31, 2010. Mixed modes are acceptable. A station can only be counted once no matter on how many bands/modes you have worked/heard it. Each station worked/heard counts one point, but special stations run by the RNARS during the qualifying period count for two points. Applications for this award must be on the official RNARS awards form, which can be down-



To earn The Royal Navy Amateur Radio Society 50th Anniversary Award work 50 RNARS members between January 1 and December 31, 2010.

*12 Wells Woods Rd., Columbia, CT 06237
e-mail: <k1bv@cq-amateur-radio.com>



Germany's Schwäbisches Burgen Diplom. is sponsored by the DARC e.V., Ortsverband Illertissen, T15 for contacts after January 1, 2009 with stations operating no farther than 500 meters from castles or fortresses in Schwäben.

DL stations need 7 different SWB numbers from 5 different areas.

EU stations need 5 different SWB numbers from 3 different areas.

DX stations need 3 different SWB numbers from 2 different areas

All bands and modes except Echo-Link allowed. Send a GCR list and fee for DL 5 Euros, EU 7.50 Euros, or DX US\$12 to Manfred Siebenhaller, DB6SQ, Römerhalde 31, D-89287 Bellenberg, Germany. Internet: <www.mydarc.de/db6sq/swb.htm>. The list of SWB numbers can be found at: <http://www.mydarc.de/db6sq/swbliste_konplett.htm>.

Flora and Fauna

This is a rapidly growing series of awards given for contacting stations that operate within the borders of nature parks or nature reserves. The idea was conceived by a group of Russian amateurs who continue to provide artistic assistance to other sponsors and maintain continent-wide lists of parks and reserves that are valid for the awards.



Italian Flora Fauna Award is sponsored by the ARI Mondovi (Cuneo) to publicize the national parks, reserves, oases, and natural or protected areas of Italy.

Their website is <http://wff44.com> and contains pages in Russian and English. It is the authoritative website for this segment of the hobby. It shows that at the end of 2009 there were some 20 countries that sponsor "WFF" awards.

Italian Flora Fauna Award (IFFA). The IFFA is sponsored by the ARI Mondovi (Cuneo) for all amateurs and SWLs to publicize the national parks, reserves, oases, and natural or protected areas as recognized by the Italian Government of the environment and Guardianship of Italy. The award is available for contacting 10 different IFFA locations on HF or 5 references on VHF (50 MHz or higher). All modes may be used. Contacts must be made on or after August 1, 2009.

The application form is provided on the website noted below. A list of valid Flora/Fauna references is also shown on the website. The award is free if you agree to receive it via e-mail in a PDF format and print it yourself. If you choose the free award, apply via e-mail to the address shown below. If you wish a traditional printed copy, the cost is 10 Euros or \$US13 and the application should be sent to: Massimo Balsamo, IK1GPG (or Betty Sciolla, IK1QFM), ARI Mondovi, Casella Postale 4, I-12084 Mondovi (Cuneo), Italy.

QSLs are not needed as the sponsor will verify using the IØSSH-Log-IFFA-database. Endorsements are available for each additional 25 IFF QSOs. Fee is SAE and 2 Euros. An Honor Roll Plaque is available at the 100 different IFFA references level. The fee for this plaque is 25 Euros or \$US35. A Top Honor Plaque is available for QSOing 200 different references. Fee for this level is the same. Internet: <http://www.dcia.it/IFFA/>; e-mail: <iffainfo@alice.it>.

Islands

One of the original specialty "location"-based awards is the famous Islands On The Air Award (IOTA); see <www.rsgbiota.org>. Supplementing this are literally dozens of awards from individual countries for contacting their own islands. During the summer, many of the German Islands valid for the following award will be activated.

German Islands Award. The Oranienburg branch (DOK Y 02) of the DARC issues this award to licensed radio amateurs and SWLs for contacting stations active on German islands, both in the sea and in bays near the coast on or after January 1, 1994. Work a specific number of islands and earn points per the list below. Use the official list of



The German Islands Award joins the many awards that promote contacting islands of the world.

islands. Each callsign on an island may be used once. The number of islands and minimum point score required for the basic award are:

DL stations—at least 6 islands, and a minimum of 8 points (callsigns)

EU stations—at least 4 islands, and a minimum of 6 points

DX stations—at least 2 islands, and minimum of 4 points

Islands/points that are required for higher classes:

| Sticker | 3rd class | 2nd class | 1st class |
|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| DL | 12/16 | 18/24 | 24/32 |
| EU | 8/12 | 12 / 18 | 16/24 |
| DX | 4/8 | 6/12 | 8/16 |

At least one island must be in the North Sea and one in the Baltic Sea for the basic award. For higher classes you may not exceed a ratio of one to three (three to one) of the number of the islands in either of both seas. The name of the island must be clearly identifiable on each QSL card. All bands and modes OK. The application for the award must be accompanied by the certified GCR list of QSL cards and the fee (for DL stations 5 Euros, for all others 7.50 Euros or \$US7.50) must be sent to the award manager: Dietmar Piepenhagen, DL2YY, An der Nordbahn 23, D-16556 Borgsdorf, Germany. The application for higher classes of the award also must be accompanied with the complete GCR list. The fee for one sticker (including postage) is: for DL stations 1.50 Euros, for all others 2 Euros or \$US2. IRCs and checks are not accepted. The German Islands list is available at <http://www.islandchaser.de/>.

We'd like to hear from any groups or individuals who sponsor awards. Please contact me at the e-mail address shown on the first page of this column.

73, Ted, K1BV

5 Band WAZ and N5PHT

BY CARL SMITH, *N4AA

dx

Well, now, 2009 sure gave the eastern USA a cool goodbye! Sub-freezing temperatures and heavy snow kept a lot of folks at home for Christmas and extended through New Year's. Even in mid January as I write this it is very cold well into the sunshine state of Florida. It's hard to comprehend freezing temperatures at Disney World in Orlando! I sure hope they are able to save the citrus crops.

If you couldn't get out to see friends and relatives over the holidays, you probably spent time on the air ... if you had power, that is. I lost mine for three full days. Propagation on the low bands was far more favorable than the weather, so your on-the-air time would have been well spent.

N5PHT and 5 Band WAZ

A good story came along concerning the low bands, and I'd like to share it with you. You might get some ideas of your own. Here is what Gary, N5PHT, in Texas had to say following his completion of the requirements for CQ's 5 Band Worked All Zones Award.

In pursuit of the 5B WAZ! A few details of the N5PHT quest for 5B WAZ:

My first WAZ award was for 20 Meter SSB, awarded in 1993. I've been active on and off since then, but my active DX chasing started about 10 years ago. I got it down to needing only four zones (all on 80 meters), but I had no success working them after many tries. I finally decided the simplest antenna I could put together with a little bit of gain on 80 meters would be a $1/4$ -wave sloper hanging off my 80 foot tower.

I thought about the direction of the last four zones needed. Well, it turned out they all are fairly close together from north Texas. I realized that my "hit list" spread was only from about 355 degrees (zone 18) to about 20 degrees (zone 21), with zones 22 and 17 tucked in between. I reasoned that a simple wire $1/4$ -wave sloper would be a good bet aimed at about 5 degrees and it would easily cover the target zones. Simple it was, too, just a $1/4$ wavelength of wire sloping at about a 45-degree angle from the tower, with the lower end about ten feet above ground (to prevent accidental contact). I fed the top end with coax, bonding the outer shield to the tower leg. The rig isn't anything out of this world either. I had an ICOM 746, but had upgraded to a 746PRO a few years ago. It feeds an Ameritron ALS-600 with about 500 watts output.

On November 27, 2009, Nodir, EY8MM, gave me zone 17 (with a USA QSL Manager). Zone 18 was provided by Alex, UA9YAB, on December 16, 2009. Then only five days later came zone 22 via Nelson, 4S7NE. I had to use registered mail, but what is ten bucks postage for #199!

And the best was left for last. I had been e-mailing and trying some skeds with a few stations for my last zone (21), including with Hamad, 9K2HN, with no luck. Hamad has a 2-element Optibeam on 80 meters so that gave me some hope. We tried . . . and zip. Then during the last few hours of 2009 I received a call on my cell phone with "Good morning from Kuwait City," and it was none other than Hamad. He said, "Hope you are near your radio." I said something like, "I will be in a few seconds." Well, we were almost perfect greyline in both locations and traded a nice 559 each way and #200 was in the bag!

Thus, 5B WAZ started with my initial award of 180 zones (certificate #1514) issued on September 6, 2006 and ended a little over three years later, completing those last 20 zones.

73 de Gary, N5PHT

(A photo of Gary's tower and the bottom end of that quarter-wave sloper is shown this month. It's nothing exotic or outlandishly expensive, but it worked!—ed.)

I enjoy telling these stories about DXers who have made a significant effort to accomplishing their goals. You don't have to spend a fortune on



Here's that sloper for 80 that Gary, N5PHT, used to finally wrap up his 5 Band WAZ. (Photo courtesy of Gary, N5PHT)

*P.O. Box DX, Leicester, NC 28748-0249
e-mail: <n4aa@cq-amateur-radio.com>

The WPX Program

CW

3239W6IYS

MIXED

2084K8ZEE 2086N5PHT
2085LU1WI

CW: 400 EA1DR. 600 IT9ELD. 1000 HA2ESM.

SSB: 450 EA1DR.

Mixed: 850 NN5PHT. 1200 DH5MM. 1500 EA1DR. 2500 KC9ARR.

Digital: 750 EA1DR.

30 Meters: HA2ESM

Africa: HA2ESM

Oceania: HA2ESM

North America: HA2ESM

Award of Excellence: S55SL

Award of Excellence Holders: N4MM, W4CRW, K5UR, K2VV, VE3XN, DL1MDD, DJ7CX, DL3RK, WB4SIJ, DL7AA, ON4QX, 9A2AA, OK3EA, OK1MP, N4NO, ZL3GO, W4BQY, I0JX, WA1JMP, K0JN, W4VQ, KF2O, WB8CNL, W1JR, F9RM, W5UR, CT1FL, WA4QMQ, W8ILC, VE7DP, K9BG, W1CU, G4BUE, N3ED, LU3YL/W4, NN4Q, KA3A, VE7WJ, VE7IG, N2AC, W9NUF, N4NX, SM0DJZ, DK5AD, WD9IC, W3ARK, LA7JO, VK4SS, I8YRK, SM0AJU, N5TV, W6OUL, WB8ZRL, WA8YTM, SM6DHU, N4KE, I2UIY, I4EAT, VK9NS, DE0DXM, DK4SY, UR2QD, AB9O, FM5WD, I2DMK, SM6CST, VE1NG, I1JQJ, PY2DBU, H18LC, KA5W, K3UA, HA8UB, HA8XX, K7LJ, SM3EVR, K2SHZ, UP1BZZ, EA7OH, K2POA, N6JV, W2HG, ONL-4003, W5AWT, N3XX, HB9CSA, F6BVB, YU7SF, DF1SD, K7CU, I1POR, K9LJN, YB0TK, K9QFR, 9A2NA, W4UW, NX0I, WB4RUA, I6DQE, I1EEW, I8RFD, I3CRW, VE3MS, NE4F, KC8PG, F1HWB, ZP5JCY, KA5RNH, IV3PVD, CT1YH, ZS6EZ, KC7EM, YU1AB, IK2ILH, DE0DAQ, I1WXY, LU1DOW, N1IR, IK4GME, VE9RJ, WX3N, HB9AUT, KC6X, N6IBF, W5ODD, I0RIZ, I2MQP, F6HJM, HB9DDZ, W0ULU, K9XR, JA0SU, I5ZJK, I2EOW, IK2MRZ, KS4S, KA1CLV, WZ1R, CT4UW, K0IFL, WT3W, IN3NJB, S50A, IK1GPG, AA6WJ, W3AP, OE1EMN, W9IL, I7PXV, S53EO,

DF7GK, S57J, EA5BM, DL1EY, DJ1YH, KU0A, VE2UW, 9A9R, UA0FZ, DJ3JSW, OE6CLE, HB9BIN, N1KC, SM5DAC, RW9SG, WA3GNW, S51U, W4MS, I2EAY, RA0FU, CT4NH, EA7TV, W9IAL, LY3BA, K1NU, W1TE, UA3AP, EA5AT, OK1DWC, KX1A, IZ5BAM, K4LQ, K0KG, DL6ATM, VE9FX, DL2CHN, W2OO, AI6Z, RU3DX, WB9IHH, CT1EEN, G4PWA, OK1FED, EU1TT, S53MJ, DL2KQ, RA1AOB, KT2C, UA9CGL, AE5B, K0DEQ, DK0PM, SV1EOS, UA0FAI, N4GG, UA4RZ, 7K3QPL, EW1CQ, UA4LY, RZ3DX, UA3AIO, UA4RC, N8BJO, UA3BS, UA9FGR, UT3UY, WA5VGI, UT9FJ, UT4EK, K9UQN, UR5FEO, LY2MM, N3RC, OH3MKH, RA3CQ, UT3IZ.

160 Meter Endorsements: N4MM, W4CRW, K5UR, VE3XN, DL3RK, OK1MP, N4NO, W4BQY, W4VQ, KF2O, W8CNL, W1JR, W5UR, W8ILC, K9BG, W1CU, G4BUE, LU3YL/W4, NN4Q, VE7WJ, VE7IG, W9NUF, N4NX, SM0DJZ, DK5AD, W3ARK, LA7JO, SM0AJU, N5TV, W6OUL, N4KE, I2UIY, I4EAT, VK9NS, DE0DXM, UR2QD, AB9O, FM5WD, SM6CST, I1JQJ, PY2DBU, H18LC, KA5W, K3UA, K7LJ, SM3EVR, UP1BZZ, K2POF, IT9TOH, N6JV, ONL-4003, W5AWT, NN3XX, F6BVB, YU7SF, DF1SD, K7CU, I1POR, K9LJN, YB0TK, K9QFR, W4UW, NX0I, WB4RUA, I1EEW, ZP5JCY, KA5RNH, IV3PVD, CT1YH, ZS6EZ, YU1AB, IK4GME, WX3N, W5ODD, I0RIZ, I2MQP, F6HJM, HB9DDZ, K9XR, JA0SU, I5ZJK, I2EOW, KS4S, KA1CLV, K0IFL, WT3W, IN3NJB, S50A, IK1GPG, AA6WJ, W3AP, S53EO, S57J, DL1EY, DJ1YH, KU0A, VR2UW, UA0FZ, DJ3JSW, OE6CLD, HB9BIN, N1KC, SM5DAC, S51U, RA0FU, CT4NH, EA7TV, LY3BA, K1NU, W1TE, UA3AP, OK1DWC, KX1A, IZ5BAM, DL6ATM, W2OO, RU3DX, WB9IHH, G4PWA, OK1FED, EU1TT, S53MJ, DL2KQ, RA1AOB, UA9CGL, SM6DHU, K0DEQ, DK0PM, SV1EOS, N4GG, UA4RZ, 7K3QPL, EW1CQ, UA4LY, RZ3DX, UA3AIO, UA4RC, N8BJO, UA3BS, UA9FGR, UT3UY, WA5VGI, UR5FEO, N3RC, UT3IZ.

Complete rules and application forms may be obtained by sending a business-size, self-addressed, stamped envelope (foreign stations send extra postage for airmail) to "CQ WPX Awards," P.O. Box 355, New Carlisle, OH 45344 USA. Note: WPX will now accept prefixes/calls which have been confirmed by eQSL.cc. Other electronic QSL confirmation means are not accepted.

*Please Note: The price of the 160, 30, 17, 12, 6, and Digital bars for the Award of Excellence are \$6.50 each.

The WAZ Program

6 Meters

91K6QXY (31 zones)

40 Meter CW

275N6KZ

20 Meter RTTY

63N5ZM

160 Meters

329RA1AOB (40 zones)

All Band WAZ

Diamond Jubilee

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 005WD5DBV | 011N3SL |
| 006WT8C | 012SM3NRY |
| 007VE3XN | 013WB6RSE |
| 008W9RPM | 014N4ZM |
| 009WA5VGI | 015K7MTR |
| 0104X4JU | |

Mixed

| | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 8639EA1AHP | 8643LU5OM |
| 8640NA5Z | 8644JR9CPT |
| 8641VA1CHP | 8645K8ZEE |
| 8642K5OAZ | |

SSB

5124IV3NDI 5125K6FW

CW

583K5OAZ

Rules and applications for the WAZ program may be obtained by sending a large SAE with two units of postage or an address label and \$1.00 to: WAZ Award Manager, Floyd Gerald, N5FG, 17 Green Hollow Rd., Wiggins, MS 39577. The processing fee for all CQ awards is \$6.00 for subscribers (please include your most recent CQ mailing label or a copy) and \$12.00 for nonsubscribers. Please make all checks payable to Floyd Gerald. Applicants sending QSL cards to a CQ checkpoint or the Award Manager must include return postage. N5FG may also be reached via e-mail: <n5fg@cq-amateur-radio.com>.

The CQ DX Field Award Program

Mixed

103HA1ZH

SSB

64WB6TFD 66N4GOA
65VK2RO

Digital

16G0DEZ

Mixed Endorsements

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 220N8PR/220 | 150HA1ZH/152 |
| 200VE3ZZ/207 | 100G0DEZ/100 |
| 200JN3SAC/206 | 3.5/7 MHzG0DEZ |
| 200N4MM/202 | SSTVHA1ZH |

SSB Endorsements

175N4MM/186 100VK2RO/123

The basic award fee for subscribers to CQ is \$6. For non-subscribers, it is \$12. In order to qualify for the reduced subscriber rate, please enclose your latest CQ mailing label with your application. Endorsement stickers are \$1.00 each plus SASE. Updates not involving the issuance of a sticker are free. All updates and correspondence must include an SASE. Rules and application forms for the CQ DX Awards may be found on the <www.cq-amateur-radio.com> website, or may be obtained by sending a business-size, self-addressed, stamped envelope to CQ DX Awards Manager, Billy Williams, N4UF, Box 9673, Jacksonville, FL 32208 U.S.A. Please make all checks payable to the award manager.



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equipment or antennas; just set a goal and be determined to achieve it. Like Gary, it probably won't be accomplished in a short time. It will take dedication, and perhaps the loss of some sleep for those low bands, but it can be done.

The Solar Flux

I just have to mention the solar flux. Here it is mid January and the flux number has risen to the low 90s. I can't remember that last time I saw the flux at 90. It's been a *long* time. Therefore, the upcoming contests should be interesting. Could we see some propagation on 10 meters? That would be signifi-

5 Band WAZ

As of January 1, 2010, 796 stations have attained the 200 zone level and 1664 stations have attained the 150 zone level.

New recipients of 5 Band WAZ with all 200 zones confirmed:
None

The top contenders for 5 Band WAZ (zones needed, 80 or 40 meters):

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| S51U, 199 (27) | K9OW, 199 (34 on 10) |
| N4WW, 199 (26) | N5AW, 199 (17) |
| W4LI, 199 (26) | JH7CFX, 199 (2) |
| K7UR, 199 (34) | IN3ZNR, 199 (1) |
| IK8BQE, 199 (31) | G3VKW, 199 (31) |
| JA2IVK, 199 (34 on 40m) | EA5BCX, 198 (27, 39) |
| IK1AOD, 199 (1) | G3KDB, 198 (1, 12) |
| GM3YOR, 199 (31) | JA1DM, 198 (2, 40) |
| VO1FB, 199 (19) | 9A5I, 198 (1, 16) |
| KZ4V, 199 (26) | K4CN, 198 (23, 26) |
| W6DN, 199 (17) | G3KMQ, 198 (1, 27) |
| W3NO, 199 (26) | N2QT, 198 (23, 24) |
| RU3FM, 199 (1) | OK1DWC, 198 (6, 31) |
| N3UN, 199 (18) | W4UM, 198 (18, 23) |
| W1JZ, 199 (24) | US7MM, 198 (2, 6) |
| W1FZ, 199 (26) | K2TK, 198 (23, 24) |
| SM7BIP, 199 (31) | K3JGJ, 198 (24, 26) |
| N4NX, 199 (26) | W4DC, 198 (24, 26) |
| N4MM, 199 (26) | F5NBU, 198 (19, 31) |
| EA7GF, 199 (1) | OE2LCM, 198 (1, 31) |
| N6HR/7, 199 (37) | WK3N, 198 (23, 24) |
| JA5IU, 199 (2) | W9XY, 198 (22, 26) |
| RU3DX, 199 (6) | KZ2I, 198 (24, 26) |
| N4XR, 199 (27) | W7VJ, 198 (34, 37) |
| HA5AGS, 199 (1) | K9MIE, 198 (18, 21) |
| VE3XN, 199 (26) | W9RN, 198 (26, 19 on 40) |
| YU7GMN, 199 (10) | W5CWQ, 198 (17, 18) |
| K7LJ, 199 (37) | I5KKW, 198 (31&23 on 20) |
| RA6AX, 199 (6 on 10m) | IV3MUC, 198 (1&31 on 40) |
| RX4HZ, 199 (13) | UA4LY, 198 (6&2 on 10) |
| K0GM, 199 (17) | JA7XBG, 198 (2 on 80&10) |
| S5BQ, 199 (31) | |
| KQ0B, 199 (2 on 10) | |

The following have qualified for the basic 5 Band WAZ Award:

IW0HOU (168 zones)

5 Band WAZ updates:

W7/DL1UF (195 zones)

*Please note: Cost of the 5 Band WAZ Plaque is \$100 shipped within the U.S.; \$120 all foreign (sent airmail).

Rules and applications for the WAZ program may be obtained by sending a large SAE with two units of postage or an address label and \$1.00 to: WAZ Award Manager, Floyd Gerald, N5FG, 17 Green Hollow Rd., Wiggins, MS 39577. The processing fee for the 5BWAZ award is \$10.00 for subscribers (please include your most recent CQ mailing label or a copy) and \$15.00 for nonsubscribers. An endorsement fee of \$2.00 for subscribers and \$5.00 for nonsubscribers is charged for each additional 10 zones confirmed. Please make all checks payable to Floyd Gerald. Applicants sending QSL cards to a CQ checkpoint or the Award Manager must include return postage. N5FG may also be reached via e-mail: <n5fg@cq-amateur-radio.com>.

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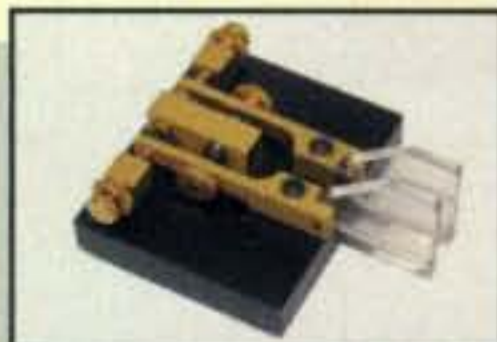
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Lee, HL1IWD, likes to visit and operate in contests from Saipan. Here (left to right) we find Lee, KH0/AH2Y; Jun, WH0V; Len, KH0AC; and Harry, KH0/WX8C. (Photo courtesy of Lee, HL1IWD)



David Bower, K4PZT (in the Hawaiian shirt on the left in the front row), visiting in Hawaii happened to be on hand for the Koolau ARC holiday picnic. The club has more than 60 members and meets monthly at the Ho'omaluhia Botanical Gardens. Sorry I didn't get a "roster" of all these folks. The club URL is <<http://www.karc.net>>. (Photo courtesy of David, K4PZT)

cant, and we need to be listening ... maybe talking would be better ... to see if there is anyone else doing the same.

Contests seem to be the place to look for DX in late February and on through March. There are a few operations scheduled, but most of those are related to contesting.

Postal Rates and QSLing

An increase in Canadian postal rates, increased post office box rental rates in Italy, and talk of another rate increase from the U.S. Postal Service ... it just continues to cost more to use the postal services, no matter where you are. Two years ago, my PO box rental went from under \$100 to \$180 per year. Yes, I do have a large box because we need a large box, but the rate increasing nearly 50% over two years was

almost enough for me to drop mine. I have not done so, because it is convenient and we live in an area where a box on the roadside is required, and that service has proven to be unreliable for several reasons. "So what," you say. I'm getting there—QSLing, and I talked about it last month. With the latest rate increases I thought I'd touch on it again. If you are not using the ARRL's LoTW, or eQSL, you really need to take a long, hard look at getting there. If you are collecting paper, it probably isn't for you, but if you want confirmations you need to be using LoTW.

From a Reader

Recently, I had an interesting telephone conversation. A reader commented that he had about given up on DXing, with all

THE WPX HONOR ROLL

The WPX Honor Roll is based on the current confirmed prefixes which are submitted by separate application in strict conformance with the CQ Master Prefix list. Scores are based on the current prefix total, regardless of an operator's all-time count. Honor Roll must be updated annually by addition to, or confirmation of, present total. If no up-date, files will be made inactive.

MIXED

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|
| 6139.....9A2AA | 4150.....I2PJA | 3684.....IK2ILH | 2998.....K9UQN | 2440.....K5UR | 1930.....W2FKF | 1593.....S55SL | 964.....K8ZEE | 636.....ZS2DL |
| 5758.....K2VV | 4146.....N6JV | 3616.....W9OP | 2965.....OZ1ACB | 2397.....VE6BF | 1905.....W7CB | 1512.....WD9DZV | 815.....KL7FAP | |
| 5426.....W1CU | 4082.....I2MQP | 3609.....YU7BCD | 2905.....N8BJQ | 2378.....W3LL | 1891.....VE9FX | 1446.....DF3JO | 726.....K5IC | |
| 5031.....W2FXA | 3980.....N9AF | 3522.....ON4CAS | 2873.....W2ME | 2358.....I2EAY | 1820.....KX1A | 1359.....N3RC | 723.....K0DAN | |
| 4669.....EA2IA | 3937.....S53EO | 3325.....SM6DHU | 2845.....JN3SAC | 2353.....W2OO | 1741.....AB5C | 1337.....K6UXO | 682.....AI8P | |
| 4618.....N4NO | 3930.....K0DEQ | 3227.....K9BG | 2752.....K1BV | 2116.....AE5B | 1705.....W2EZ | 1322.....AA4FU | 680.....IW0HOU | |
| 4592.....9A2NA | 3821.....KF2O | 3150.....W9IL | 2704.....K2XF | 2192.....N2SS | 1662.....SV1DPI | 1269.....K5WAF | 662.....JA7OXR | |
| 4430.....YU1AB | 3814.....WA5VGI | 3091.....9A4W | 2499.....KC9ARR | 2001.....AB1J | 1643.....N1KC | 1016.....RA1AOB | 650.....N3YZ | |
| 4232.....VE3XN | 3735.....WB2YQH | 3007.....W2WC | 2475.....W6OUL | 1951.....K0KG | 1634.....AG4W | 976.....KM6HB | 644.....KW0H | |

SSB

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 5065.....I0ZV | 3505.....N4NO | 2711.....LU8ESU | 2300.....SM6DHU | 2072.....K5UR | 1795.....KQ8D | 1464.....VE7SMP | 1083.....KX1A | 637.....K5WAF |
| 4505.....VE1YX | 3323.....OE2EGL | 2709.....KF7RU | 2297.....W9IL | 2071.....N6FX | 1751.....N8BJQ | 1463.....I2EAY | 1042.....IZ0BNR | 600.....WA2BEV |
| 4377.....K2VV | 3213.....CT1AHU | 2642.....YU7BCD | 2209.....IK2QPR | 1986.....DL8AAV | 1729.....W6OUL | 1410.....S55SL | 1031.....IK8OZP | |
| 4371.....F6DZU | 3133.....KF2O | 2595.....EA1JG | 2201.....NQ3A | 1945.....KI7AO | 1714.....IK2DZN | 1404.....AG4W | 978.....EA7HY | |
| 4184.....OZ5EV | 3108.....I4CSP | 2550.....WA5VGI | 2142.....W3LL | 1935.....SV1EOS | 1678.....K9UQN | 1386.....IK4HPU | 951.....KU4BP | |
| 4116.....I2PJA | 2914.....K0DEQ | 2471.....I3ZSX | 2140.....SV3AQR | 1927.....AE5B | 1643.....JN3SAC | 1385.....AE9DX | 924.....VE6BF | |
| 3843.....I2MQP | 2860.....I8KCI | 2451.....EA3GHZ | 2094.....I8LEL | 1915.....W2OO | 1623.....VE9FX | 1377.....EA3NP | 875.....K7SAM | |
| 3669.....9A2NA | 2857.....4X6DK | 2431.....G4UOL | 2093.....W2WC | 1879.....K3IXD | 1611.....W2ME | 1258.....N1KC | 741.....WD9DZV | |
| 3616.....EA2IA | 2817.....IN3QCI | 2326.....CX6BZ | 2076.....K2XF | 1891.....W2FKF | 1480.....AB5C | 1145.....EA3EQT | 717.....K0DAN | |

CW

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 5353.....K9QVB | 3607.....EA2IA | 2723.....EA7AZA | 2502.....JA9CWJ | 2308.....N6FX | 1927.....W6OUL | 1403.....AG4W | 1053.....K5WAF | 749.....AE5B |
| 5254.....WA2HZR | 3295.....WA5VGI | 2632.....W2ME | 2483.....JN3SAC | 2305.....N8BJQ | 1848.....I2EAY | 1334.....RU0LL | 1030.....AA5JG | 695.....S55SL |
| 5107.....K2VV | 3223.....9A2NA | 2623.....SM6DHU | 2419.....IK3GER | 2223.....VE6BF | 1804.....EA7AAW | 1327.....WA2VQV | 987.....WD9DZV | 608.....IK2SGV |
| 4146.....N6JV | 3241.....K0DEQ | 2618.....K9UQN | 2415.....W2WC | 2101.....I2MQP | 1665.....AC5K | 1317.....K6UXO | 915.....N1KC | 600.....IT9ELD |
| 4128.....N4NO | 2838.....I7PXV | 2727.....YU7BCD | 2373.....W9IL | 2089.....K2XF | 1643.....W2OO | 1223.....KX1A | 824.....VE9FX | |
| 3827.....VE7DP | 2837.....KF2O | 2707.....W8IQ | 2324.....OZ5UR | 1979.....K5UR | 1445.....EA2CIN | 1220.....AA4FU | 821.....HB9DAX | |
| 3760.....LZ1XL | 2727.....YU7BCD | 2647.....KA7T | 2323.....I0NNY | 1966.....W9HR | 1407.....WO3Z | 1109.....VE1YX | 753.....F5PBL | |

DIGITAL

| | | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1284.....W3LL | 1010.....N8BJQ | 1009.....GU0SUP | 721.....K0DEQ | 692.....WD9DZV | 653.....AG4W |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|

Creative Services Software presents the PK-232

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1985

For the last 25 years, over 100,000 PK-232 have been sold and tens of thousands are still in use. The re-release of the DOS and Windows 3.1 software, which now all have Y2K fixes, is to show how far development has come since those early days of the PC and the PK-232. These older programs will not be sold separately, but only in this anniversary collection.

Creative Services Software announced today that hams can pre-order the PK-232 25th Anniversary Collectable CD. This collection of software is limited to 10,000 copies. It includes:

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of the intentional interference and general discourteous operation by so many. However, after taking a look at the whole subject, he has taken the attitude "I don't care if I get a card; I don't plan to apply for any awards. If I don't like what a DX station is doing, I just turn the knob. It doesn't matter anymore if I have worked 'his' country or not. I just like the competition of the pile-up and making the contact. I worked a station recent-

ly and he had my call wrong. I don't even care. I worked him, I put him in my log, and to me that's all that counts."

Hmmm. Sometimes I feel like doing that myself.

Perhaps I'll have more DX to talk about next time, but for now all I can offer is to enjoy the chase and remember to Have Fun doing it!

73, Carl, N4AA

CQ DX Field Award Honor Roll

The CQ DX Field Award Honor Roll recognizes those DXers who have submitted proof of confirmation with 175 or more grid fields. Honor Roll listing is automatic upon approval of an application for 175 or more grid fields. To remain on the CQ DX Field Award Honor Roll, annual updates are required. Updates must be accompanied by an SASE if confirmation is desired. The fee for endorsement stickers is \$1.00 each plus SASE. Please make all checks payable to the Award Manager, Billy F. Williams. Mail all updates to P.O. Box 9673, Jacksonville, FL 32208.

Mixed

| | | |
|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| K2TQC.....265 | F6HMJ.....206 | K8OOK.....189 |
| HA0DU.....240 | JN3SAC.....206 | BA4DW.....188 |
| W1CU.....228 | KF8UN.....205 | 9A5CY.....187 |
| VE7IG.....227 | W6OAT.....205 | RW4NH.....187 |
| HA1RW.....220 | OK1AOV.....205 | K2SHZ.....182 |
| N8PR.....220 | N4MM.....202 | K1NU.....180 |
| VE3XN.....217 | W4UM.....198 | W5ODD.....177 |
| K0DEQ.....216 | N4NX.....192 | N0FW.....176 |
| VE3ZZ.....207 | ON4CAS.....191 | |
| HA5WA.....206 | HA9PP.....190 | |

SSB

| | | |
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| W1CU.....209 | VE7SMP.....190 | N0FW.....176 |
| W4ABW.....202 | N4MM.....186 | DL3DXX.....175 |
| K0DEQ.....192 | W4UM.....182 | JN3SAC.....175 |

CW

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| DL2DXA.....209 | OK1AOV.....196 | N4NX.....177 |
| K0DEQ.....207 | W4UM.....191 | |

QSL Information

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| D2EB via IZ3ETU | ET3JD via WU01 |
| DR09ANT via DL5MHQ | EU1EU via OK8EU |
| DV9XO via DU9AXJ | EX9FF via EX8AB |
| EA6/AA5UK via AA5UK | EY7/DJ8QP via DJ8QP |
| EA6/LX1DH via LX1DH | EY8/DJ8QP via DJ8QP |
| EA8/OH6CS via OH6CS | EY8/K4ZW via K4ZW |
| EF8M via UA3DX | FG/F4EUG via F4EUG |
| EG5WSP via EA5RKB | FO/G3BJ via G3BJ |
| EG6CIB via EA6JN | FS/W6IZT via N7XG |
| EG7SDC via EA1AUM | FT5WO via F4DYW |
| EH1DAA via EA1WS | GA0NBM via GM0NBM |
| EH1PAZ via EA1RCM | GA2MP via N3SL |
| EH5VE via EA7URD | |
| EH7VE via EA7URD | |
| EK6LP via DL8KAC | |
| EO16IKF via US6IKN | |
| EO16IKN via US6IKN | |
| EO16IT via UX3IT | |
| EO16IZ via UX5IZ | |

(The table of QSL Managers is courtesy of John Shelton, K1XN, editor of "The Go List," 106 Dogwood Dr., Paris, TN 38242; phone 731-641-4354; e-mail: <golist@golist.net>; <<http://golist.net/>>.)

CQ Contest, CQ Contest, CQ Contest

March's Contest Tip

Passing needed multipliers from one band to another is both an art form and an aggressive sport. The fundamental secret to success, however, is to ask another station in a way that makes it sound like you really mean it. For example, instead of saying "Can you go to 40 meters?" frame the question to be "Thanks. Let's now QSY to 7145, OK?" Being more specific and convincing is an important element to the successful pass. Also, don't be limited by the fear of rejection. Not everyone can or will move for you. You can be guaranteed, however, that the other station won't QSY if you don't ask, and especially if you take a lax approach. Give it a try!

It's 2359Z and the anticipation of yet another exciting XYZ contest has reached its peak. You may not have the biggest station in the world, but you've at least completed as much preparation as possible. For once, you've actually tested your computer software ahead of time. Even your voice-recording hardware is working and pre-programmed! The coffee is brewing along with a steaming crock pot full of beef stew. This is contesting as we know it.

Suddenly the clock turns over to 0000Z; the contest has begun. As a smaller station, you choose a strategy that begins by searching and pouncing up and down the bands. This is probably the approach taken by most participants in a major contest, and it can be quite effective. Careful tuning combined with judicious use of a second radio can really maximize your start in any contest—especially as a smaller station.

What I have been characterizing so far is missing one key element. In many contests, one can start at 14150.2 and move up to the other end of the band and find station after station calling CQ, especially when the band is wide open. Some of them are DX stations in South America or the Caribbean working guys at incredible rates. Others are North American operators endlessly calling CQ with only an occasional answer. And this phenomenon is not limited to only DX contests. The ARRL Sweepstakes, for example, can often demonstrate similar characteristics.

Unless I've missed something, there are no contest rules that disallow discretionary CQing. If you want to park your VFO on 28995 kHz for the entire 48 hours of a DX contest, calling CQ the entire time, that's your prerogative. Lately, however, there seems to be more debate about excessive CQing in contests, so let's unpack the topic a little more.

Who are the predominant CQers these days? Well, it used to be an exclusive club that included mostly the large multi-multi and multi-single stations from around the world. However, in recent years it seems that something has changed dramatically. More and more operators have become increasingly aggressive with their use of the CQing operating tool. Why is that? Well, for starters there

*2 Mitchell Pond Road, Windham, NH 03087
e-mail: <KT1AR@contesting.com>

Calendar of Events

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| All year | CQ DX Marathon |
| Feb. 26–28 | CQ 160M SSB Contest |
| Feb. 27–28 | REF SSB Contest |
| Feb. 27–28 | UBA CW DX Contest |
| Feb. 27–28 | North American RTTY QSO Party |
| Mar. 2 | AGCW YL-CW QSO Party |
| Mar. 6–7 | ARRL SSB Contest |
| Mar. 13 | AGCW QRP Contest |
| Mar. 13–14 | EA PSK31 Contest |
| Mar. 14 | North American RTTY Sprint |
| Mar. 14–15 | Wisconsin QSO Party |
| Mar. 20–21 | BARTG HF RTTY Contest |
| Mar. 20–21 | Russian DX Contest |
| Mar. 27–28 | CQ WW WPX SSB Contest |
| Apr. 3–4 | SP DX Contest |
| Apr. 3–4 | Missouri QSO Party |
| May 29–30 | CQ WW WPX CW Contest |

are simply more stations to work. From a U.S. perspective (especially the East Coast), the number of European participants in a DX contest such as the CQ WW is at an all-time high. I'd be a rich man if I had 25 cents for every time I've commented about the "bottomless pit" of G, DL, I, EA, and other countries that call me during a European opening. Thus, from this perspective aggressively calling CQ is usually a sensible operating strategy.

Secondly, while the top tier of stations has maintained its leadership in antenna hardware, the second tier has been hard at work, too. It used to be that only the very elite had use of stacked high-band beams and other large antennas. Now, while it's hardly a majority, it's no longer that uncommon to run into station after station—especially in the U.S.—using antenna hardware that's larger than a tribander on a rooftop. The point is that while station "X" may still be 15 dB weaker than W3LPL or K3LR, it is still transmitting a dominant signal that can take good advantage of a CQing operating strategy.

The third contributor to this proliferation of CQers in contests is the use of the second radio by single operators. In the "old days," you had to make some tough decisions about band choices as a single operator with only one radio. For example, "Should I call CQ on 20 meters with the intent of establishing a good clear frequency at the beginning of an opening to Europe/Japan?" Or, "Should I stay on the low bands for another 20 minutes and pick up some of those juicy 5W, VK6, FK8, CE, UAØ multipliers on 40 and 80 meters?" With the use of a second radio, as I've described in the past, you can have the best of both worlds. After all, as a single operator you don't have the limitation of the 10-minute rule or band-change restrictions that multi-single operations have to contend with. You can CQ to your heart's content on 20 meters working stations at 20–30 QSOs per hour, for example, while mounting a determined multiplier search on the second radio. The result is maximized score and the creation of yet another tier of CQers on the band.

Lastly (and I'm sure there are even more examples), competitors outside of North America have

jumped on the CQing bandwagon as well. For at least the past 25 years, the bands have always been filled with the louder overseas stations running Ws at a feverish clip. In recent years, they have been joined by a new second level of stations that have found CQing to be an effective operating strategy by virtue of: (1) improved station hardware, (2) increased contesting experience, and (3) rising participation by North Americans. This is especially noticeable with the JAs and some European areas.

So what is the point of all of this rhetoric? I think a fair question to consider is: Is there too much CQing in today's world of contesting and is there anything we should do about it? While thinking about this topic, my first reaction was to put much of the blame on the level of sunspot activity. It's only natural that this topic becomes an issue of contention when everyone is forced into a 300+ kHz band on the only useful daytime band — 20 meters. However, if you think about it, we have been dealing with this issue even during the last sunspot cycle peak. I can still vividly recall operating on 10 meters above 28850 kHz — not because I wanted to be there, but because the band was so crowded that it was simply the first usable spot I could find. Also, the issue of CQing is not simply limited to SSB. A little introspective thought can yield similar comparisons on CW, too.

Well, just to set your mind at ease (if it even needs to be), I'm hardly suggesting that we need to change contest rules to put a governor on the use of CQing in contests. What I am asking this month is for contesters to continue to keep this topic at the forefront of their minds and think about it in a little more depth as we operate. Remember, excessive CQing has implications beyond the contest community. A non-contester listening to a station calling CQ ineffectively can build a pretty strong case for spectrum misuse if you look at it from his/her perspective. As contesters, we need to continually be sensitive to that point.

Let me list some scenarios that may fit into the excessive CQing category:

- Situating yourself on the lower end of a band two to three hours before the band opens to Europe/USA/Japan in an attempt to establish a clear running frequency. A questionable moral violation (if not outright breaking of the rules) is to do this with a different callsign so as to not use valuable on-time during non-48 hour events.

- Allowing yourself to go beyond what is reasonable and sensible and contin-

ue to call CQ, even when rates fall to five to 10 QSOs/hour.

- Being overly inflexible and continuing to call CQ when the frequency you are using is clearly not yours (e.g., is being used by nets, ragchewers, other modes, etc.). Another variation on this is the typical "frequency battles" where two stations may choose to "duke-it-out" for upwards of 15 to 30 minutes, both calling endless CQs and neither operator working anyone.

- Transmitting with an endless CQ loop while you leave the station temporarily, e.g., "potty break") in order to hold a run frequency.

I'm sure you can think of a myriad of other examples along these lines. Let's face it: CQing as an operating strategy has been with us for decades and will be an element of contesting for a very long time into the future. I'm personally opposed to putting artificial limits on the practice through rule changes. One

interesting idea I've recently heard is to determine, by looking at the reported frequencies in a log, whether someone is CQing vs. searching. By giving increased point credit to the "searched QSOs," you may encourage less CQing and more searching on the bands. This is probably not a practical alternative, but it is an intriguing concept. And, of course, there is the challenge of accommodating the "non-computerized" entry. There is plenty of opportunity to develop other ideas. What do you think?

Final Comments

I hope you've been surviving the winter season and are making plans for fun antenna projects in the spring and summer (at least those of you in the north). This year will be the year we start our outside activities in April and not October, right? Well, we can dream.

See you in the next contest!

73, John, K1AR



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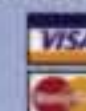
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There Really Is A Sunspot Cycle 24!

A Quick Look at Current Solar Cycle Conditions

(Data rounded to nearest whole number)

Sunspots

Observed Monthly, December 2009: 11
Twelve-month smoothed, June 2009: 3

10.7 cm Flux

Observed Monthly, December 2009: 77
Twelve-month smoothed, June 2009: 70

Ap Index

Observed Monthly, December 2009: 1
Twelve-month smoothed, June 2009: 4

One Year Ago: A Quick Look at Cycle 23 Conditions

(Data rounded to nearest whole number)

Sunspots

Observed Monthly, December 2008: 1
Twelve-month smoothed, June 2008: 3

10.7 cm Flux

Observed Monthly, December 2008: 69
Twelve-month smoothed, June 2008: 69

Ap Index

Observed Monthly, December 2008: 2
Twelve-month smoothed, June 2008: 7

Sunspot activity over the last few years has been nearly nonexistent. Certainly, the solar cycle minimum between sunspot Cycle 23 and the new Cycle 24 is one of the longest since the early 1900s. A great deal of speculation developed about the prolonged absence of solar activity. In 2008, there were 266 spotless days (73% of the year), and 2009 looked to follow suit. However, the last decade closed out with a welcomed sign that our nearest star was no longer inactive.

From November 2009 until press time (early January 2010), sunspot activity ruled the solar disc. December was a very active month, with only ten days without official sunspots. This resulted in 2009 seeing a total of 260 spotless days (71% of the year). That does not seem encouraging, unless you look at the monthly activity from November onward (fig. 1).

While the latter part of November was void of official sunspot regions, by December 9th, ending 16 days of zero spots, the Sun began to show signs of activity. Sunspot region 1034 (as numbered by The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), small but belonging to the new Cycle 24, emerged near the eastern limb of the Sun. This small region resulted in an initial sunspot count on December 9 of 13. By December 12, it appeared to be fading, yet on December 13 it increased in spots with a count of 14.

*P.O. Box 9, Stevensville, Montana 59870-0009
e-mail: <nw7us@arrl.net>

LAST-MINUTE FORECAST

Day-to-Day Conditions Expected for March 2010

| Propagation Index..... | Expected Signal Quality | | | |
|--|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| | (4) | (3) | (2) | (1) |
| Above Normal: 1-6, 10-17, 19-25, 27-31 | A | A | B | C |
| High Normal: 8, 18, 26 | A | B | C | C-D |
| Low Normal: 7, 9 | B | C-B | C-D | D-E |
| Below Normal: N/A | C | C-D | D-E | E |
| Disturbed: N/A | C-D | D | E | E |

Where expected signal quality is:

- A—Excellent opening, exceptionally strong, steady signals greater than S9.
- B—Good opening, moderately strong signals varying between S6 and S9, with little fading or noise.
- C—Fair opening, signals between moderately strong and weak, varying between S3 and S6, with some fading and noise.
- D—Poor opening, with weak signals varying between S1 and S3, with considerable fading and noise.
- E—No opening expected.

HOW TO USE THIS FORECAST

1. Find the *propagation index* associated with the particular path opening from the Propagation Charts appearing in *The New Shortwave Propagation Handbook* by George Jacobs, W3ASK; Theodore J. Cohen, N4XX; and Robert B. Rose, K6GKU.

2. With the *propagation index*, use the above table to find the expected signal quality associated with the path opening for any given day of the month. For example, an opening shown in the Propagation Charts with a *propagation index* of 2 will be good (B) on March 1st through the 6th, poor (C) to fair (C) on the 7th, fair (C) on the 8th, etc.

3. As an alternative, the Last-Minute Forecast may be used as a general guide to space weather and geomagnetic conditions through the month. When conditions are Above Normal, for example, the geomagnetic field should be quiet and space weather should be mild. On the other hand, days marked as Disturbed will be riddled with geomagnetic storms. Propagation of radio signals in the HF spectrum will be affected by these conditions. In general, when conditions are High Normal to Above Normal, signals will be more reliable on a given path, when the path is ionospherically supported.

Then, on December 14, another new sunspot region numbered 1035 emerged, kicking the sunspot count up to 28. By December 15, its size was seven times wider than Earth (fig. 2)! Over the next several days through December 18, this new Cycle 24 sunspot group rapidly increased in size. On December 16, the complex magnetic structures within this sunspot region triggered a coronal mass ejection (CME) toward Earth. This massively huge cloud of solar plasma (billions of tons!) arrived about three days later, but did not cause any geomagnetic disturbance. This is one of the downsides of an increase in solar activity: When active sunspot regions breed CMEs, the possible result is geomagnetic storms that counter any positive effect that the increased solar activity may have on radio signal propagation.

CMEs are the fuel for auroral activity, and that is welcomed activity to the VHF weak-signal DX hound. When active sunspot regions breed CMEs, the possible result is geomagnetic storms that counter any positive effect that the increased solar activity may have on radio signal propagation on the frequencies below 6 meters. At the same time, the CME unleashes a plasma cloud that rides the solar wind, and then, if the unleashed ejection is directed into the orbital path of Earth, causes aurora. Auroral activity occurs at the E-region of the

ionosphere, and "clouds" of highly-ionized clouds form that in turn may reflect radio signals in VHF and sometimes even UHF spectrum.

Another downside to increased sunspot activity is the direct impact of solar flares. On December 16, region 1035 produced three C-class flares. (For a scale showing the size of C-class flares, refer to <http://www.swpc.noaa.gov/NOAAscales/>). During the rest of the period until press time, a number of new

C-class flares were produced. These flares result in degradation on the high-frequency propagation of radio waves, starting at the lower frequencies if the flare is weak. The stronger the flare, the higher the frequencies affected.

By December 19, the Sun kicked into high gear with the total sunspot count climbing to 43. This pushed the 10.7-cm flux up to 87 on December 17, becoming the highest flux reading of 2009!

Speaking of size, the size of active

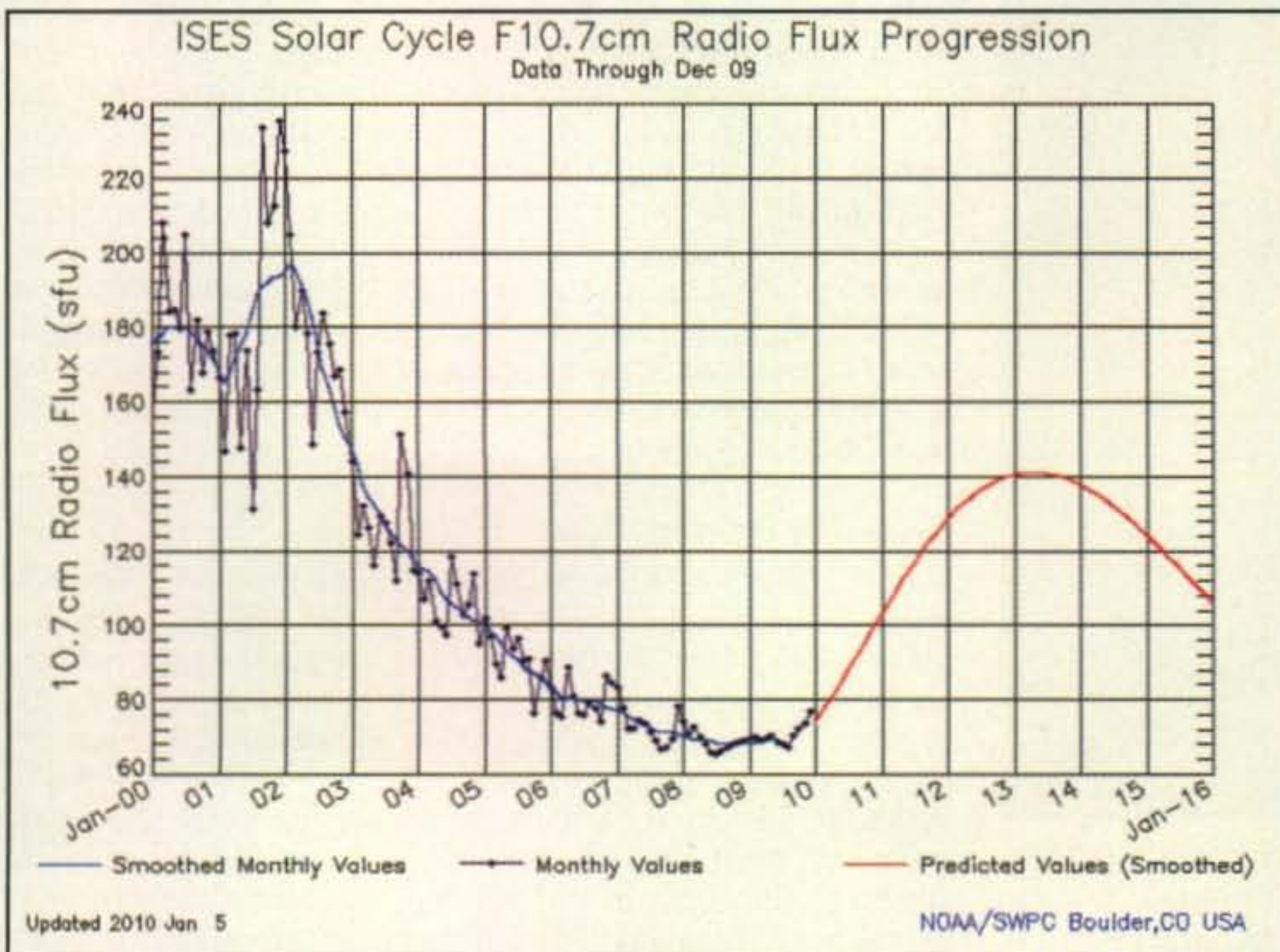
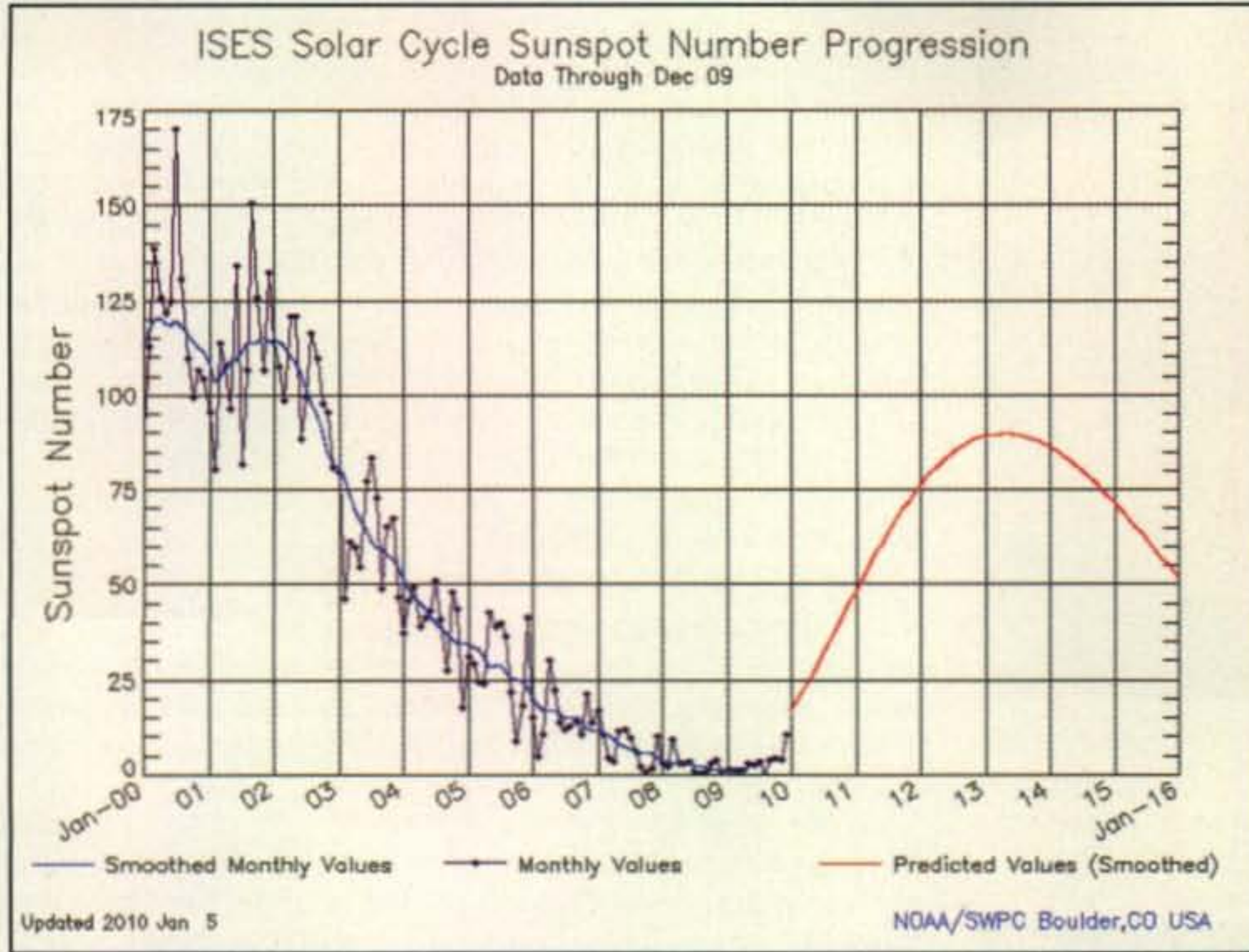


Fig. 1— Sunspot Cycle 24 progression charts showing the definite rise in both the monthly observed sunspot counts in the last months of 2009, as well as the rise in the 10.7-cm flux monthly figures. (Source: Space Weather Prediction Center [SWPC] / The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA])

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sunspot regions is given as units, each unit being one millionth of the Sun's visible hemisphere (this unit does not have a specific name). The active region 1034 that emerged on December 9 measured ten of these units, or 10 millionths of the visible solar disc. By December 11, it grew to 20 millionths. With the new sunspot region, 1035, emerging on



Fig. 2— The Michelson Doppler Imager (MDI) intensitygram (IGR) of the active sunspot region 1035 on December 15, 2009. The size of this active region is seven times that of Earth. (Source: Solar and Heliospheric Observatory [SOHO])

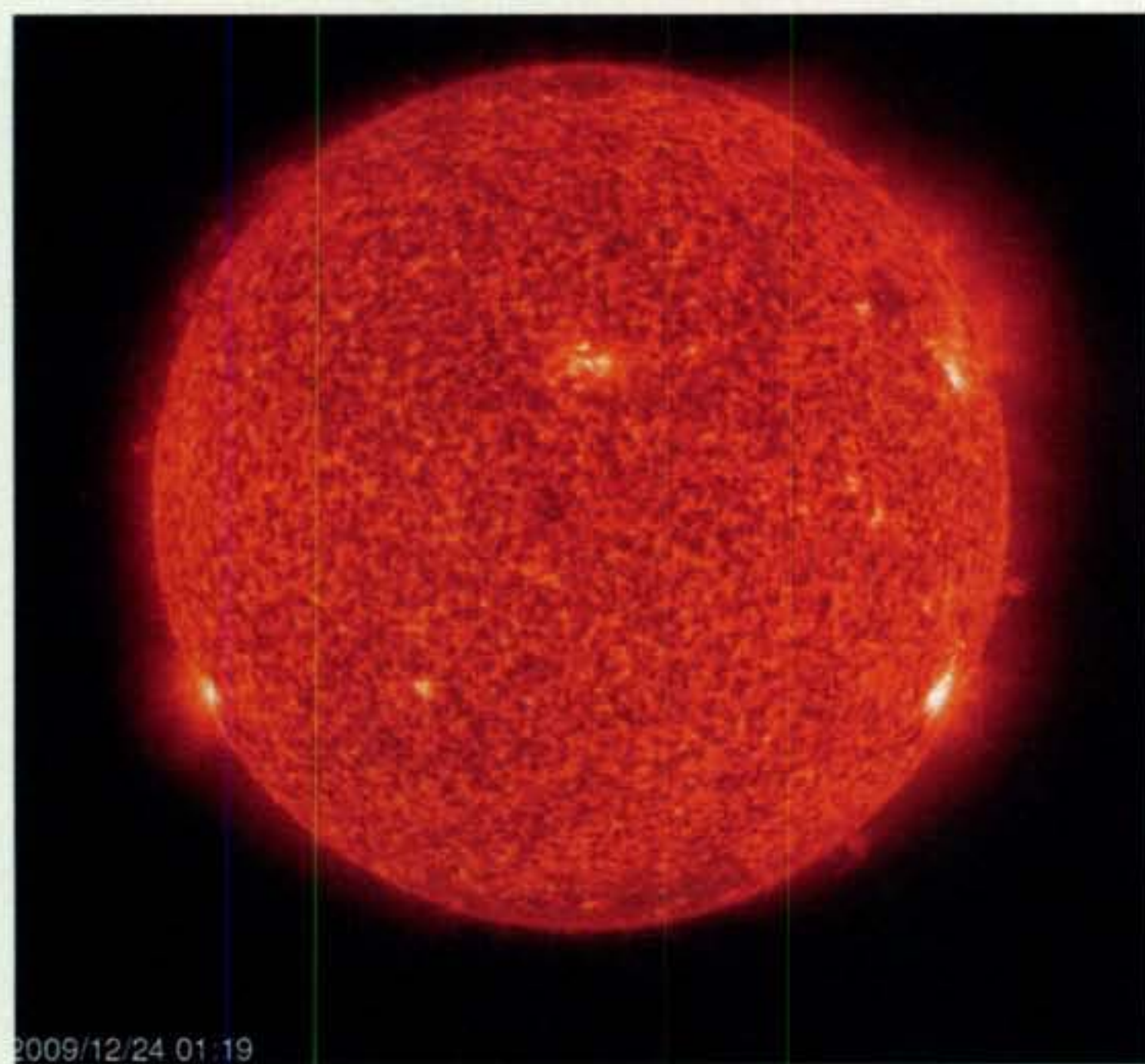


Fig. 3— The Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO) Extreme ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (EIT) image (EIT 304) on Christmas 2009 at eleven times ionized iron at a temperature of approximately 1.5-million degrees Kelvin, showing activity in many areas of the visible solar disc. This much activity has not been seen since the last sunspot cycle, a number of years ago. (Source: SOHO)

December 14, the total area of all active regions only totaled 30 millionths. However, 1035 quickly grew in size. By December 20, the total area of all sunspot regions equaled a huge 330 millionths of the visible solar hemisphere, the largest sunspot region of 2009 and the second largest so far in the new Cycle 24 (the largest came in January 2010).

Between Christmas and New Year's Eve, three additional sunspot regions emerged—1036, 1037, and 1038 (fig. 3). Region 1037 quickly ended, but the others continued to help keep things exciting. Additionally, active region 1039 emerged on December 26, 2009 and continued to rotate across the solar disc until it rotated around out of view on January 6, 2010. On January 7, region 1036 rotated back into view, re-numbered 1040. As this region quickly grew, it became larger than ten times the size of Earth, peaking at 380 millionths of the visible Sun hemispheres, the largest yet in the new cycle. This region was peppered with spots (fig. 4). As a result, the 10.7-cm flux peaked at 93 on January 12, and the sunspot count peaked at 41 on January 13 (figs. 5 and 6). At press time, the rest of January has not yet played out, but perhaps now we can start to accept the idea that the new cycle is well under way. With that comes overall improvement on higher frequencies in the high-frequency shortwave spectrum. Soon, with this up-tick in sunspot activity, the *F*-region of the ionosphere will begin to offer VHF propagation, as well.

Why Aren't HF Conditions Showing Significant Improvement?

With this increased activity, hopes are high that drastic improvements will occur in ionospheric radio signal propagation. However, many are observing the conditions on the HF amateur radio bands are not that different from conditions of a year ago.

In truth, we really haven't seen enough solar energy to raise the maximum usable frequency (MUF) higher than that of the last few years. Data from ionosonde sounders indicate that these MUFs are not yet changing enough to cause noticeable improvements. You can view these readings at http://www.swpc.noaa.gov/ftplib/lists/iono_month and http://www.swpc.noaa.gov/ftplib/lists/iono_day (the day data shows the variations during the course of one 24-hour period, while the month data shows the same hourly variations, but for the entire month in question). Any variations that we see during such low solar activity are due to other influences on the ionosphere, and not from solar energy from sunspot regions. Only when sunspot activity rises significantly, and for extended periods of time, will we see lasting and noticeable improvements in radio propagation in the high-frequency spectrum.

Gray-line Propagation

March is one of the optimal DX months. As the Spring Equinox approaches, the gray-line begins to run straight north and south. With the return of sunlight to the polar north, north to south openings on the higher shortwave frequencies (20 through 10 meters) are improving. However, since we are still at the bottom of the solar cycle, openings on east/west paths on higher frequencies continue to be short and weak, if they occur at all. The good news is that this year we are seeing an increase in the 10.7-cm flux levels, which could strengthen these openings, affording an opportunity to catch some longer-range DX.

During the daylight hours, the energy from the Sun ionizes our upper atmosphere, causing distinct layers of ionized gas to form. These layers form what we call "ionosphere." The

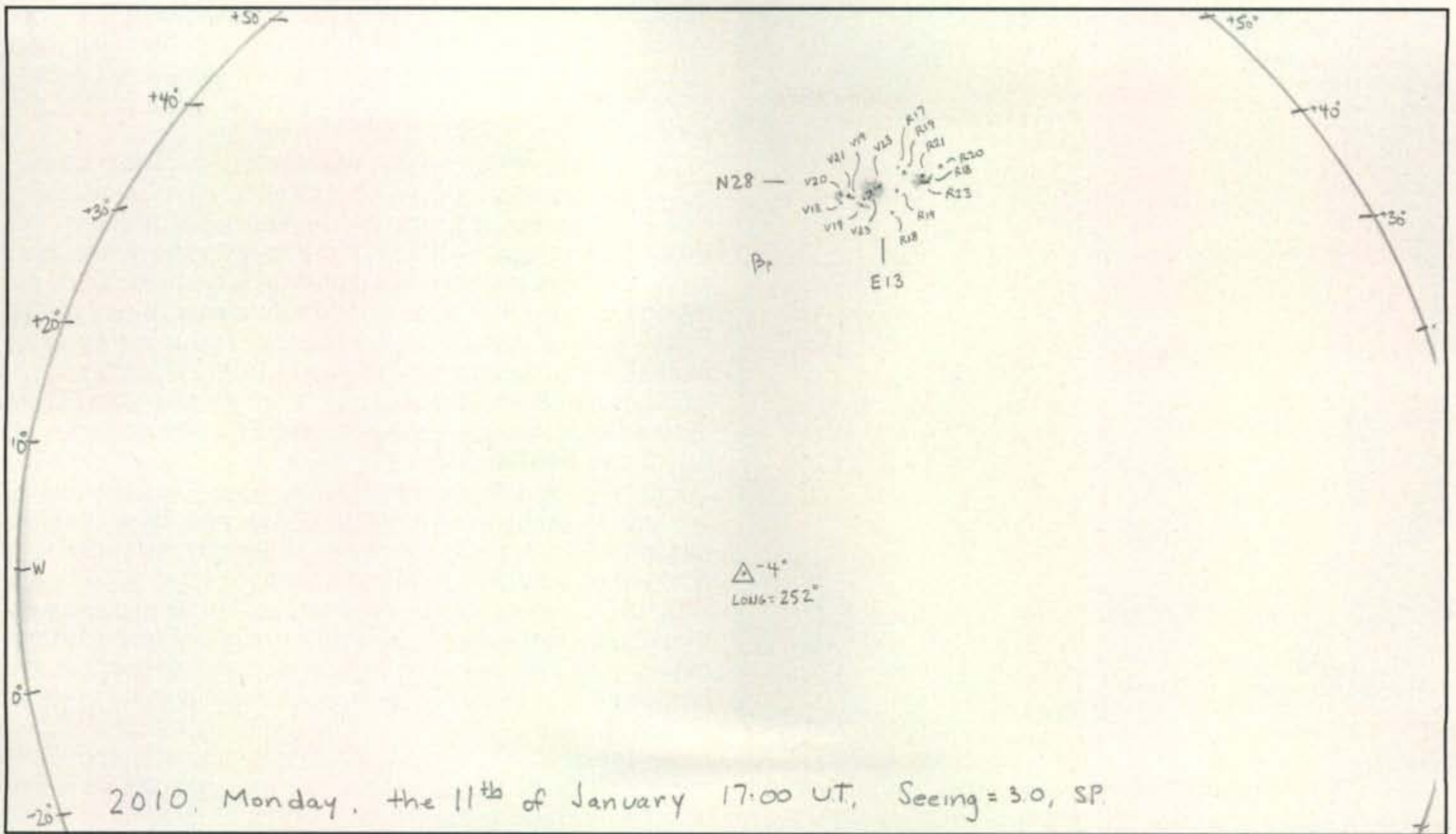


Fig. 4— The hand drawing at a solar observatory of the sunspots observed on January 11, 2010. Notice the numerous spots counted. This is not typical yet in the new Cycle 24, and is a hopeful sign that the new cycle is coming awake. (Source: The Division of Astronomy & Astrophysics, University of California, Los Angeles [UCLA])

layer closest to the Earth is called the “D-layer” or “D-region.” This layer of ionized gases generally absorbs some of the energy of an HF (high frequency; those frequencies below 30 MHz) radio wave, and hence the D-layer is often called the “absorption layer.”

As a radio signal travels through the D-layer, it gets attenuated. How much a radio wave is attenuated depends on how energized the D-layer has become, the frequency of the radio wave, and the angle at which the radio wave enters the D-layer.

When the end of daylight occurs at our radio shacks, and sunset ends the direct exposure of the ionosphere above us to sunlight, solar radiation no longer strikes the ionosphere and ionization stops. Without this solar radiation, the layers of ionization decrease in density by a process called “recombination.” This causes the MUF to become lower as well, which is why by total darkness the highest HF bands close down. Those frequencies do not get refracted, but continue on out into space.

The D-layer is the first layer where ionization stops. Since it is closest to the ground, sunlight no longer reaches it, while higher levels of the atmosphere remain in sunlight. Think about how you can see a passing satellite by the sunlight reflected on its surface, while you are standing in darkness; it’s dark on the ground, but the satellite is still being illuminated. As the D-layer goes into recombination, the electron density goes down and the absorption does down.

During the twilight hours the D-layer rapidly loses its ionization and does not absorb radio signals passing through it, while the E- and F-layers are still being ionized by sunlight. This makes for about 45 to 60 minutes of stronger signal propagation on a wide range of HF frequencies. As the ionization decreases, lower and lower frequencies start to punch

through the D-layer with almost no signal attenuation. Yet the MUF is still high, allowing long-distance skip propagation. Then, when the Sun is blocked from illuminating the E- and F-layers, the MUF can drop dramatically and very quickly (within minutes). This twilight zone, where the Sun is exactly 12 degrees below the horizon, is called the “gray-line,” or

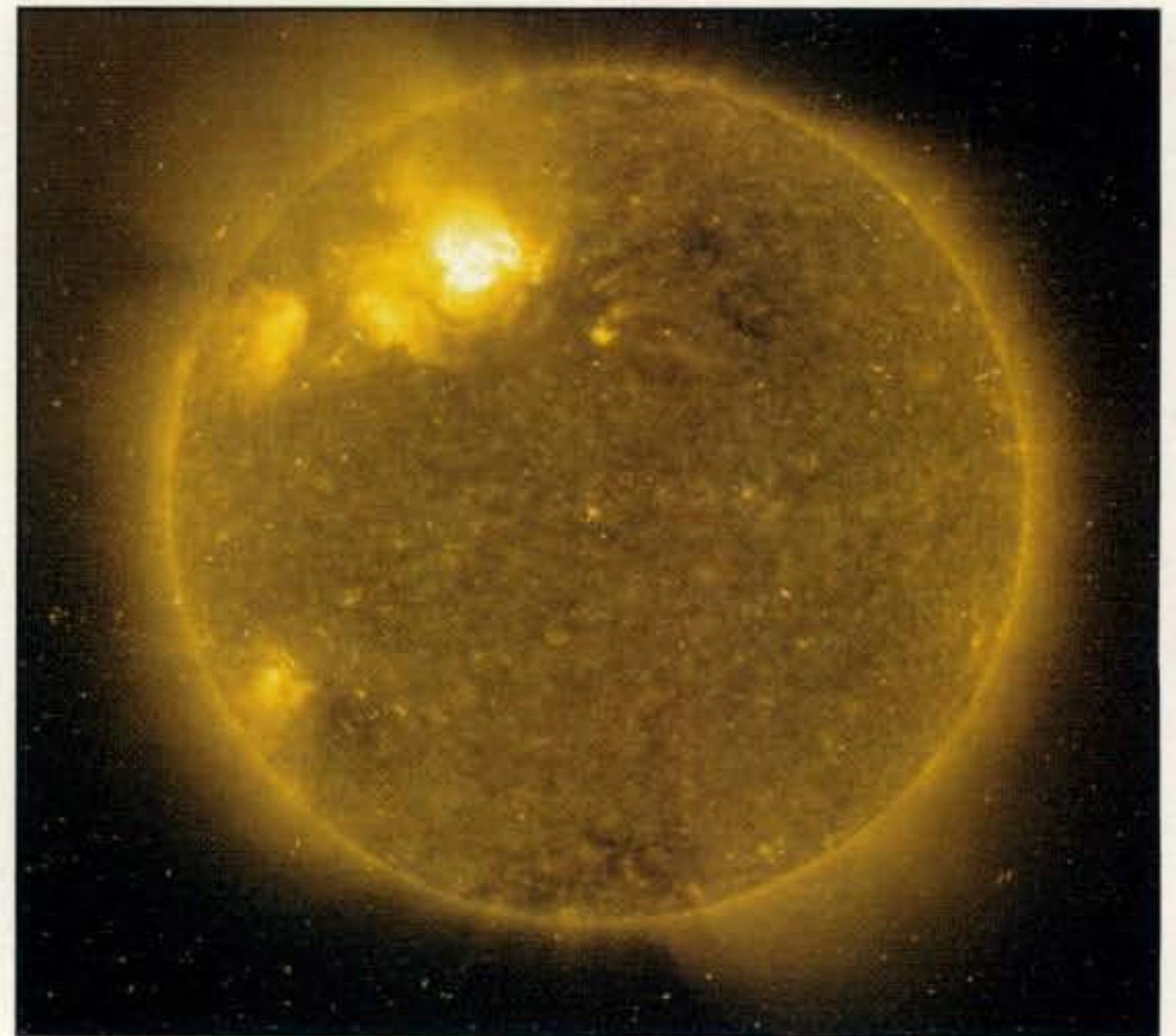


Fig. 5— The EIT image of the active sunspot region on January 11, 2010. This active region 1040 pushed the 10.7-cm flux to 93, the highest yet (as of press time) of the new sunspot Cycle 24. (Source: SOHO)



Fig. 6— The Michelson Doppler Imager (MDI) intensitygram (IGR) of the active sunspot region 1035 on January 15, 2010. The size of this active region is over ten times that of Earth (the largest sunspot region yet in Cycle 24 as of press time), and is responsible for a number of C-class X-ray flares, and for pushing the 10.7-cm flux to above 90. (Source: SOHO)

in astronomical terms, the “terminator.” The same principles apply at sunrise; the upper ionosphere begins to become ionized, while the *D*-layer is still dark and low in density, offering free passage of very low HF signals, even MW signals.

Signals that are aimed along a path that stays within the gray-line often experience significant improvements in propagation. This is what we refer to as “gray-line propagation,” and is a very exciting way to hear exotic DX signals. These signals may be coming in from the long path as well as the short path, but always along this gray line.

There is an excellent article regarding gray-line propagation at Steve Nichols, G0KYA’s internet web page, <<http://www.qsl.net/g0kya/radcom.html>>. Steve, a member of the Radio Society of Great Britain’s Propagation Studies Committee, believes that propagation around sunrise and sunset is not fully understood. His article outlines the mechanisms behind gray-line and other twilight propagation modes, and also explains a research project designed to better understand these modes.

As we are right at the start solar Cycle 24, gray-line propagation will bring exciting DX. Tune around the lower amateur radio HF bands about an hour before sunrise, and again right before sunset, and look for these long-distance signals. Of course, gray-line DX will occur on most of the HF spectrum, but is quite noticeable on these lower shortwave bands, since DX signals on these bands are rare.

March Propagation

At this time, the ionosphere is not being energized enough to support much propagation on the highest HF bands. This is because the solar energy is not yet at a consistently high enough level to ionize the *F*-layers sufficiently for refracting

these higher frequencies. With the reduced energy level of the ionosphere, even 20-meter propagation suffers with short openings and limited distances. Overall, signals are generally weaker over many radio circuits during this part of the solar cycle.

Ten meters will be spotty, with the most reliable propagation along north/south paths, and mostly over shorter distances. I’ve been following the revealing reports from the PropNET propagation research group <<http://www.propnet.org/>>. It conducts daily propagation tests on 10 meters. The reports confirm that even during the lowest phase of the solar cycle, 10 meters does have life. You won’t know it, though, if you are not on the band trying. When the 10.7-cm flux rose above 90 in January, there were reports of CW Morse Code two-way (non-sporadic-*E*) contacts successfully made on 10 meters.

Fifteen meters will be somewhat more usable than 10. We will find 15 opening up to more areas, and for somewhat longer periods, into the evenings. Those daytime paths that do open up (certainly much less often than during the peak solar cycle years) will not degrade much until midsummer. You will see these openings mostly from regions close to the equator, as the current solar activity is not supporting the propagation of these higher frequencies via the *F*-layer of the ionosphere.

Seventeen and 20 meters will remain in good shape. Both short- and long-path circuits are reliable and solid. All nighttime paths are wide open during March. Primetime evening hours in the United States are sunrise hours across Russia, Africa, and both the Near and Far East. Expect a lot of short- and long-path DX into these areas of the world. The daytime band of choice will be 20 meters, as has been proven in contests during past solar cycle minimums.

Between sunset and midnight, expect DX openings on all bands between 20 and 160 meters, with occasional openings on 15 and 17 when conditions are High or Above Normal. Conditions on 30, 40, 60, 80, and 160 meters should favor openings to the east and south. These bands should peak for openings to Europe and Africa near midnight.

From midnight to sunrise, expect optimum DX conditions on 30, 40, 60, 80, and occasionally 160 meters. Conditions should favor openings toward the west and south. Some rather good 20-meter openings should also be possible toward the south and west during this time.

The seasonal drop of daytime maximum usable frequencies continues and the geomagnetic activity as reported by the planetary *A*-index (*A_p*) is on its seasonal rise. Take advantage of the current excellent conditions and work the world before the summer conditions create greater challenges.

VHF Conditions

The possibilities for ionospheric openings on the VHF bands usually improve during March and the spring months as more auroras occur close to the equinoctial period. There is a slight but fair chance for an increase in widespread auroral activity during March, but definitely by April, since we will continue to experience coronal-hole activity and possibly solar flares during this new solar cycle. These auroras could be accompanied by auroral-scatter-type openings on 6 and 2 meters. Check the Last-Minute Forecast at the beginning of this column for those days in March expected to be Below Normal or Disturbed. These are days on which auroral activity is most likely to occur.

Conditions should be optimal during March for trans-equatorial scatter propagation between the southern tier states

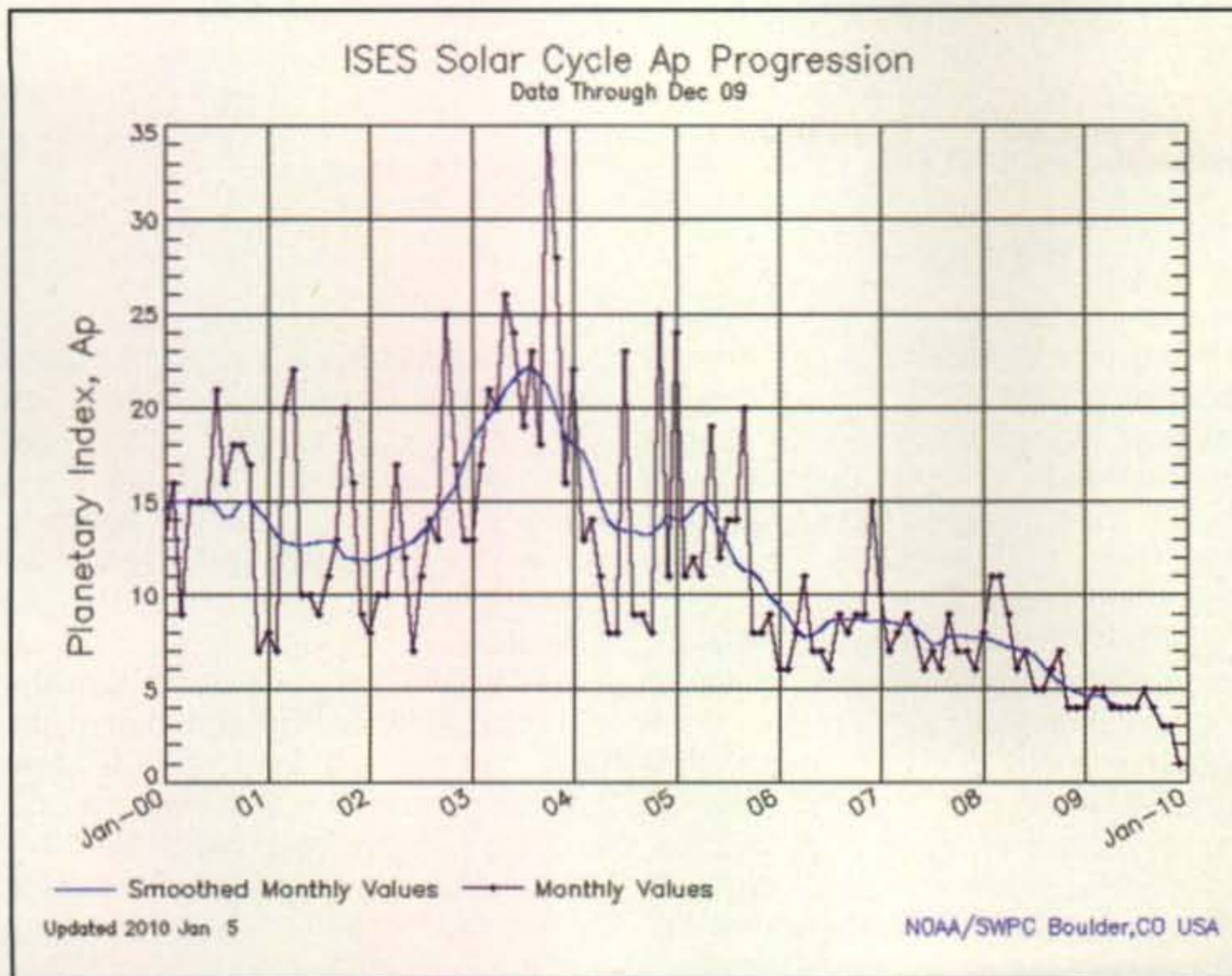


Fig. 7— This graph of the monthly and smoothed planetary A-index (A_p) reveals that we've reached the most geomagnetically quiet period yet recorded in the sunspot cycle minimum between Cycle 23 and 24. This is a record low, at least within the last few solar cycles observed. (Source: SWPC/NOAA)

and countries deep in South America. The best time for TE openings should be between 8 and 11 PM local time. Don't forget to check out *CQ VHF* magazine for more details on VHF propagation and conditions.

Current Solar Cycle Progress

The Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory at Penticton, BC, Canada, reports a 10.7-cm observed monthly mean solar flux of 76.8 for December 2009, up from November's 73.6, continuing a slow but steady monthly rise. The 12-month smoothed 10.7-cm flux centered on June 2009 is 70.2, also indicating a steady rise. The predicted smoothed 10.7-cm solar flux for March 2010 is about 80, give or take about 7 points.

The Royal Observatory of Belgium reports that the mean monthly observed sunspot number for December 2009 is 10.6, a very sharp rise over the previous three months of 4.2, 4.6, and 4.2. The lowest daily sunspot value during December 2009 was zero, occurring on December 1–9 and December 25. That's only ten days without sunspots! The highest daily sunspot count for December was 30 on December 20. The 12-month running smoothed sunspot number centered on June 2009 is 2.7. A smoothed sunspot count of 20

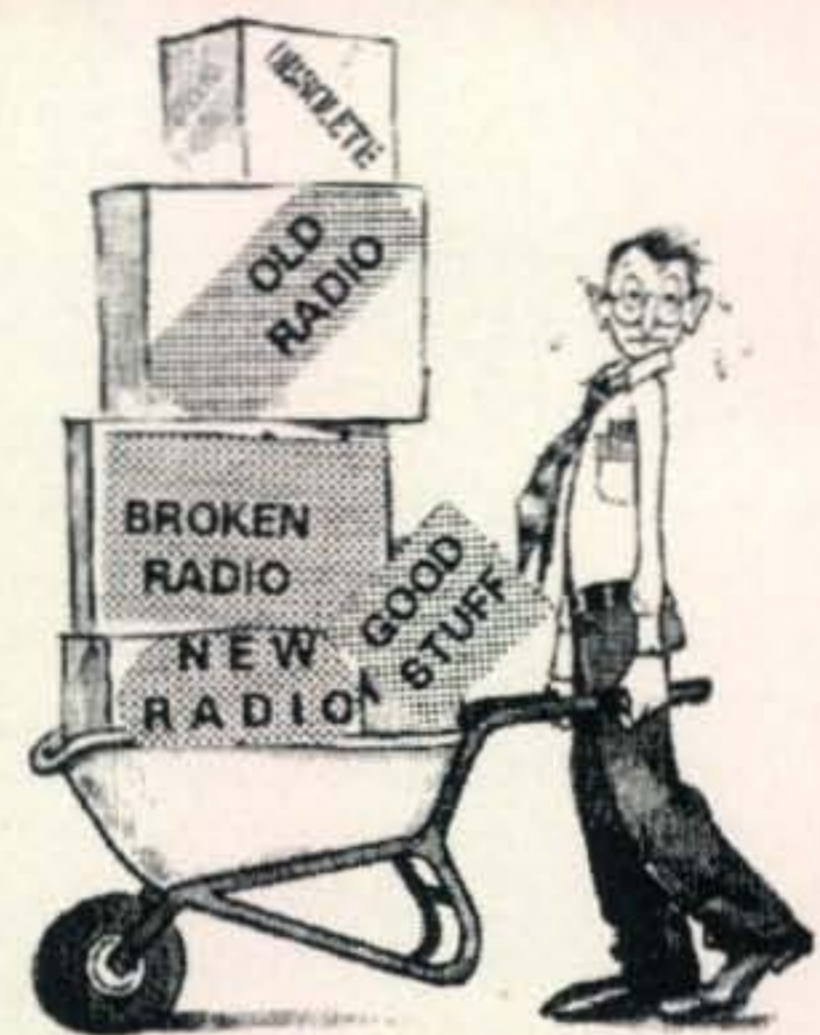
is expected for March 2010, give or take about 8 points.

The observed monthly mean planetary A-index (A_p) for December 2009 is one (1)! That's the lowest of the solar cycle minimum between Cycles 23 and 24 (fig. 7). The 12-month smoothed A_p index centered on June 2009 is 4.0. Expect the overall geomagnetic activity to be unsettled to stormy during March. At the time of this writing, the forecast holds that March will be a reasonably quiet month, but with occasional geomagnetic storminess due to recurring coronal holes, flares, and possible coronal mass ejections (if flaring occurs from possible sunspot activity). Refer to the Last Minute Forecast for the outlook on which days this might occur.

I welcome your thoughts, questions, and experiences regarding this fascinating science of propagation. You may e-mail me, write me a letter, or catch me on the HF amateur bands. Please come and participate in my online propagation discussion forum at <http://hfradio.org/forums/>. If you are on Facebook, check out <http://tinyurl.com/fb-spacewx> and <http://tinyurl.com/fb-nw7us>. See you on the air!

73, Tomas, NW7US

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Timeline of Ham Radio History 1945-2010

To help celebrate CQ's 65th anniversary, we've put together a timeline of significant events in ham radio history from 1945 to the present. Each month this year, we'll present five or six years' worth, and then put the whole list on our website when we're done. (Since this is a timeline and not a textbook, we had to be selective. We apologize in advance if we leave out something of importance to you.)

This month, we'll cover the years 1957-1961:

1957-1961: Dawn of the Space Age & Record Sunspot Numbers

1957: Sputnik launched by USSR, ushering in the Space Age; hams

among first to receive transmissions from the satellite. Solar Cycle 19 reaches peak, highest on record, resulting in unparalleled DXing opportunities; Collins introduces its first transceiver, the KWM-1; Slow-Scan Television (SSTV) invented.

1958: Continued peak of Cycle 19; integrated circuit invented; 11-meter ham band reallocated to newly-created Citizen's Band.

1959: RCA promotes nuvitors to hams in effort to hold off onslaught of transistors; Don Stoner, W6TNS, famously poses the question in his CQ "Semiconductors" column, "Does anyone have a spare rocket for orbiting purposes?" leading directly to birth of Project OSCAR and the launch of the first amateur satellite two years later.

1960: First amateur radio EME (Earth-Moon-Earth) contact, between

W6HB and W1BU; 73 magazine begins publication; General Conference on Weights and Measures adopts the Hertz (Hz) as the standard unit of frequency (1 Hz = 1 cycle per second), turning kilocycles (kc) and megacycles (Mc) into kilohertz (kHz) and megahertz (MHz).

1961: OSCAR-1 (Orbiting Satellite Carrying Amateur Radio) launched, the first non-governmental satellite ever placed in orbit. It was a transmit-only satellite, sending primitive telemetry—"HI" in Morse code on 2 meters—with speed varying with the satellite's temperature.

Next month, we'll look at 1962 through 1967, an era marked by the first appearance of Japanese gear on the U.S. ham market and the debate over "incentive licensing."



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