



December 2014

Volume III, Issue V

Q5er – The Official Newsletter of the Skyview Radio Society

Looking to Join
Skyview Radio Society?

Go to
www.skyviewradio.net to
learn more about becoming
a member and also to see all
the club's activities

The Skyview Radio Society
weekly net is on Thursday
nights at 9:00 PM local time
146.640 Repeater PL 131.8

Skyview Officers for 2014:

President:

Bob Yusko - KB3OMB

Vice President:

John Hoffman- K3STL

Secretary:

Bob Bereit – K3RMB

Treasurer:

Greg Dober – N3VMF

Membership:

Bob Bereit – K3RMB

Radio Officer:

Bob Bastone – WC3O

Kitchen:

Bob Bastone – WC3O

Facilities:

Dave Dailey – N3TIN

Chairman:

Tony Joint – KB3HGJ

Trustees:

Bob Siska – K3OFX

Pat Cancro – NK3P

Dave Dailey – N3TIN

John Italiano – WA3KFS

Paul Rykaceski -WA3LCY

Frank Puskar – KB3YJQ

Joe McElhaney – KR3P

Tom Varela – KB3MDL

Tom Kerr – AB3GY

Mark Rossi – W3RRK

A Letter from the Editor

Hi Everyone,

It's time for the winter edition of the Q5er! Brrrrrr!

This edition of the Q5er has a variety of topics:

The Skyview Spotlight shines on the Chairman of the PA QSO party Michael Coslo N3LI

K3RMB's interesting article in his 4th series and about 2 meter receiver options

We have a new "Caption This" photo. Don't forget to e-mail me captions for it.

There's a new Skyview Classics section I'm sure you'll enjoy

W3TLN writes another great a story for the "Reflections" section.

There are also a few new additions to the newsletter that everyone should enjoy.

I'm hoping to receive many articles from the membership and you can write about just about anything. You don't have to write a long article.

Let's have fun with the newsletter, it will be published quarterly and remember... **it's up to YOU to help make it happen.**

2014 has been a great year at Skyview. I will be the club President for 2015 with the motto "Let's Have Fun". So let's continue to keep things at Skyview going in a positive direction and have a fun 2015!

73 de John
K3STL @arrl.net

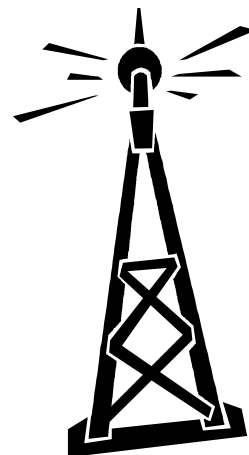
ANNOUNCEMENT:

Skyview now has its own 440 repeater on the air!

Tune in to 444.525 MHz +5kHz

(PL 131.8)

Give us a call!





Did you know?

Since 2010, You can print a personalized certificate for your callsign in any of the CQ WW contests.

Here's how to do it:

1. For **SSB** and **CW**, go to www.cqww.com
 2. Select the "Results" Tab
 3. Enter your callsign in the search box and select "Go"
 4. Click the "Cert" link, which is to the right of your scores.
 5. Select the size of paper you wish to print.
 6. Preview your certificate and then print it.
-
1. For **RTTY**, go to www.cqwwrtty.com.
 2. Select the "Results" Tab.
 3. Select the "Scores Database" link
 4. Enter your callsign in the search box and then select "Submit"
 5. Click the "Cert" link to the right of your scores.
 6. Select the "Create CQ WW Certificate" link
 7. Preview your certificate and then print it.

The Skyview Spotlight

The Skyview Spotlight for this quarter shines on the Chairman of the PA QSO Party:

Michael Coslo, N3LI

K3STL: Tell me what got you first involved with Ham Radio and what was your impression of it?

N3LI: I have been involved in electronics from an early age, but my career took me down the computer path. Wanting to branch out, and looking for a new avocation after my family was grown, I looked at amateur radio as a way to have some fun, and learn more about RF.

K3STL: How old were you when you got licensed?

N3LI: 46 years old. As I was gaining more free time, I felt it was time to get involved in RF.

K3STL: What modes do you operate? What is your favorite and why?

N3LI: I do some contesting on SSB, and am preparing to do some RTTY contesting. My favorite mode is PSK31, probably because of my computer background, and because it is more convenient for a person that is hard of hearing.

K3STL: What was your first rig/antenna?

N3LI: My First VHF was a Yaesu FT-50, which I still have, and works FB. My first HF radio was an Icom IC-745. Now my first antenna that actually worked was a doublet hung between trees in my yard, tuned with an MFJ tuner. My very first HF antenna was a random wire with a really poor ground, that only succeeded in giving me an RF burn on my finger. That antenna went away quickly.

K3STL: Are you a member of any Radio Clubs? What are they? What do you like about them?

N3LI: I'm a member of NARC, and their Vice President at this time, as well as the Mountaintop station manager, and Chairman of the Pennsylvania QSO Party, which is sponsored by NARC.





Upcoming Hamfests:

February 22nd 2015

WASHfest 2015
The South Hills Hamfest:
Castle Shannon VFD
Memorial Hall
3600 Library Road
(State Road 88)
Castle Shannon, PA
Talk-in: 146.955(-) 131.8 PL
Contact – Carol Demko
KB3GMN at
washarc@yahoo.com
Web site:
<http://www.n3sh.org/>

April 12th 2015

Two Rivers ARC Hamfest:
The Spectrum
6001 Smithfield Street
McKeesport, PA
Talk-in: 146.730-
Mobile Check In: 146.520
Contact:
wi3r@comcast.net

June 7th 2015

Breezeshooters Hamfest
and Computer Show:
*An ARRL
Sanctioned Hamfest*
Butler Farm Show Grounds
625 Evans City Road
Butler, PA 16001
Website:
www.breezeshooters.net -
Breakfast and lunch served
- Contact person:
Bob Benna N3LWP
412-366-0488

K3STL: Who are you biggest influences? What did they do to influence you?

N3LI: When I was a new General, and was trying to assemble my first station, I was having a terrible time with an antenna installation. The problem was that I was listening to experts and their advice. So my lot was too small, and I needed this and that, while others were telling me that this and that didn't work. I was rapidly approaching a firm believe that there was nothing I could put up that would work. Fortunately, Woody Brem, K3YV took me aside, and gave me some simple, yet perfect, advice. Soon I had a doublet, a manual tuner, and fed it with ladder line. I worked the world with it.

K3STL: Is there anyone else in your family that is a ham?

N3LI: No, I'm the only one.

K3STL: It appears the interest in Ham Radio is growing. Why do you think that is?

N3LI: Multiple reasons. What gets a lot of press these days is emergency communications. Certainly many new hams have come into the ranks with a public service outlook. What is not as highly publicized is that we are in a new golden age of Ham Radio.

So many options of HF radios that have incredible performance, from the classic form factors to Software Defined radios, and many new transmission modes. We should not forget contesting either, it is also increasing in popularity; the bands are filled every weekend with contests and QSO Parties.

K3STL: What would you tell someone who is thinking about becoming a Ham Radio operator?

N3LI: That Amateur Radio is an incredibly diverse avocation, and almost certainly something to keep a person well occupied, whether a person is an experimenter, a homebrewer, boatanchoring, or enjoys talking or having a good time using Morse Code on the air. Enough different activities and special interests to fill a lifetime.

K3STL: What do you wish those who do not operate Ham Radio knew about it?

N3LI: There are some silly stereotypes about Hams, when in fact we are every bit as diverse as the general population. We just play with Radios.

K3STL: What do you see changing about Ham Radio in the next 5 years?

N3LI: I see more Software defined Radios coming along, and also some of the features of high end radios of today filtering down to more moderately priced rigs.

I also see some of the maker movement becoming involved in Amateur Radio, and vice versa. I already have some plans for re-doing my homebrew bug catcher antenna using 3-D printing. Just don't tell my wife yet!

On the subject of homebrewing, I've bit the bullet and started building projects using surface mount components. I've built a Software Defined transceiver, and am enjoying it now. While the idea of soldering and building devices under a binocular microscope at first seemed odd, it became second nature after a few hours.



As the World Shrinks

By: Jody Nelis K3JZD

Having been involved with electronics, ham radio, and computers 'for a while'; I have seen a lot of evolution. In particular, there has been a tremendous decrease in both size and price of most everything electronic over the years.



The device on the right is a 5 1/4 inch 30MB Computer Hard Drive (that's 30MB, not 30GB). In 1988, I bought that 30MBs of data storage from a paper catalog for \$300 (which is the equivalent of \$600 in 2014 dollars). But, it held over eighty 360KB Floppy Disks worth of data, so it was great!

The device on the left is a 64GB USB Flash Drive. That Flash Drive can be bought online and locally today for \$30. (Flash Drives like this one have made my 1.6GB Back-up Tape Drive a relic also – but that is another story.) So we have 2133 times the data storage capacity for 1/20th of the price. And note that there is a little difference in size. (But, I'm not real sure that I need to carry 64GB of data around in my pocket – and it seems like it would be much easier to misplace a Flash Drive than this hard drive).

K3STL: If you weren't a Ham Radio operator, what would you see yourself doing instead?

N3LI: I'm also into Amateur Astronomy, and have built a number of telescopes from grinding and polishing the mirror, to designing and building the telescope mounting system. I enjoy making them pretty, and have won some awards for my designs.

K3STL: What would a Ham Radio operator be surprised to know about you?

N3LI: **I'm a biker**, an Ice hockey player, into 4 wheeling off-road, and my education is in art. Probably not the usual background for a Ham, but as I say, we are more diverse than many people know.

K3STL: What was the spark that started the PA QSO Party?

N3LI: A fair part of the QSO Party inception was based on the needs of county hunters. Certainly there was a "worked all New England Counties award. In 1957, the Harrisburg Radio Amateur club, under W3IMN Harold German, thought that a Pennsylvania version might be fun. At some point, the Nittany Amateur Radio club took over administration of the party. Some of the party history is obscure, and as always, I ask for information about the early years if there is anyone who has anything of historical interest.

K3STL: What are some of the challenges you face when organizing the PA QSO Party?

N3LI: One of the biggest challenges is getting help. Not everyone is up to the hard deadlines and commitments a QSO Party entails.

K3STL: Did you expect the PA QSO Party to become as popular as it is today?

N3LI: I'm amazed at the passion and interest shown by my party people. In looking back at the history, I can see that we are a lot different than many contests. We've added classes and modes over the years to keep interest in the party high, and the operators have responded. We get a lot of mobile operators to work in our party and do as much to encourage them as we can, because they really make it possible for the others to get those 67 county sweeps.

K3STL: What is your most favorite memory from the PA QSO Party?

N3LI: I remember operating mobile one year, it was late at night, and I was operating mobile from either Elk or Cameron County in the Quehanna Wiled area along route 2004. It was a warm evening for October, and I had set up a lawn chair so I could operate outside the car at my stop. Looking up, I could see a lot of stars, and thought to myself, it doesn't get much better than this – a warm fall evening, stars, the woods, and playing radio".

K3STL: Who held the position before you?

N3LI: Chuck McMullen, K3CM. Before that, was John Walters W3JAW, and Woody Brem did one year in 2000. Before then was Doug Maddox W3HDH, who is without a doubt, the most popular administrator of the PA QSO Party

K3STL: What do you see the PA QSO Party being in 5 and 10 years from now?

I am hoping to get more automation in the party, as well as to assemble a core of folks with more task delegation, one of my major shortcomings. It's a surprising amount of work.

SKYVIEW

Skyview Radio Society, K3MJW

K3MJW
2335 Turkey Ridge Road
New Kensington, PA 15068



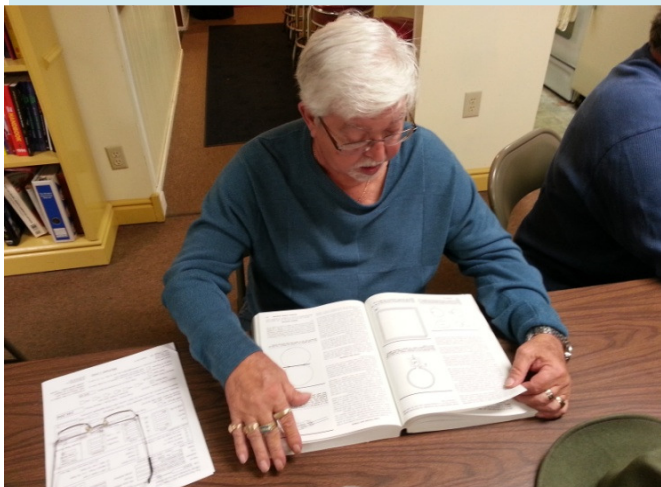
A Random Tuesday Evening at Skyview



Some of the Skyview members talkin Ham Radio



A view from the other side of the room



Capt. Jack KA3HPM is getting some new antenna ideas



Gary AE8Q and **Dave N3TIN** are exchanging ideas with each other



Joe AJ3O, **Bob WC3O**, and **Pat NK3P** show Reed KA3FMR the shack



Dan pictured with Reed KA3FMR – A 92 year old Ham!

The following article about Amateur Radio Direction Finding (ARDF) is **Part 4 of a 5 part series by Bob Bereit – K3RMB**

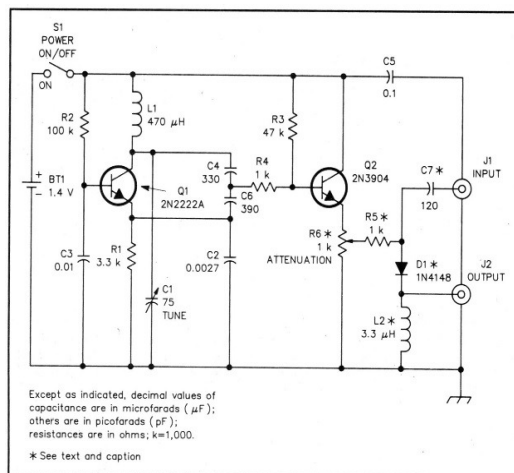
2m Receiver Options For ARDF

The hand-held tape-measure yagi antenna, described in our previous article, is designed to be used in conjunction with any type 2m receiver for Amateur Radio Direction Finding. For a 'walking' fox hunt, with Scouts, you will want an easy to carry portable unit. You can use an HT, a small multi-band receiver, or even some scanners.

The Micro-Fox T-Hunt transmitters, described in our second article, put out a signal of 10-15mW. Using this signal source, the tape-measure yagi, and a typical HT receiver the signal strength is too strong to use the S-meter on the radio for determining the direction of the strongest signal. My initial testing of the antenna, with an IC-92AD (and also an ID-51A) gave a full scale S-meter reading, no matter where the antenna was pointed, at a distance of over 1,000 feet from the transmitter. Depending on terrain, at that distance, it is impossible to determine where the hidden 'fox' is located. And you are not close enough to visually see the control point.



To reduce the received signal strength, a variable attenuator can be used. Numerous circuit diagrams are available for construction of such a device. The circuit shown in this article is taken from the *1995 ARRL Handbook*. Arrow Antennas (<http://www.arrowantennas.com/>) sells an Offset Attenuator for a modest \$59.00 which many fox hunting groups have used.



Most receiving attenuators can be damaged if the radio to which they are connected is placed into transmit mode. When using an HT with an attenuator for fox hunting you must therefore lock out the transmit function or be extremely careful not to hit the xmit button!

Since my intended audience for fox hunting are boy scouts, the chances are pretty slim that a scout won't be tempted to push the xmit key while on his hunt. Since most HT's do not have a provision to lock out transmissions, another approach is called for.



Following the lead of the K2BSA Fox Hunt team, at the 2013 National Scout Jamboree, I have chosen to use a Icom IC-R6 portable communications receiver for ARDF activities. This 7.1 oz unit covers 0.100-821.995 Mhz, 851.000-866.995 Mhz and 896.000-1309.995 Mhz. The 2m fox hunt frequency we're using (146.565 Mhz) falls within the receiving range of this unit, but so do several harmonics of that frequency. Consequently, we've programed 6 of the harmonics into memory channels on the IC-R6. Attenuation is then achieved by tuning to one of the harmonics instead of the primary frequency. The attached chart lists the harmonics programmed, along with the channel names assigned.

By using the IC-R6 receiver, we eliminate the need for an additional signal attenuator (and potential damage). In the field, a scout aims the tape-measure antenna toward the transmitter. If the signal is too strong to accurately determine the direction to the fox, then it's merely a matter of changing to another programmed channel, a harmonic or the primary frequency. In actual hunts, with transmitters spread more than a mile apart, I have not yet seen the need to go much above the third harmonic to get a usable S-meter reading.

Description	Mhz	Channel
Primary Frequency	146.565	PRI
1st Harmonic	293.13	HRM-1
2nd Harmonic	439.695	HRM-2
3rd Harmonic	586.26	HRM-3
4th Harmonic	732.825	HRM-4
5th Harmonic	879.39	Blocked
6th Harmonic	1025.955	HRM-6
7th Harmonic	1172.52	HRM-7

- Bob Bereit, K3RMB

Stop up and see us at Skyview Radio Society!

2335 Turkey Ridge Road
New Kensington, PA 15068

Business meetings on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm.

Weather Group meetings on the second Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm.

Social meeting on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm.

Elmer Night on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm.

Skyview Radio Society is on Facebook!

Give us a "like"





Happenings

Monday nights at 8:30 PM (local time), WC3O conducts code practice sessions. Anyone at any proficiency can participate in code practice.



Think you'd like to give Morse Code a shot? Tune in to the Skyview repeater 146.640 pl 131.8 and/or listen for WC3O on 28.102 MHz.

Fireside Net

**Friday nights at 9:00 PM
(Local Time) on 28.464MHz**



WAN Repeater System

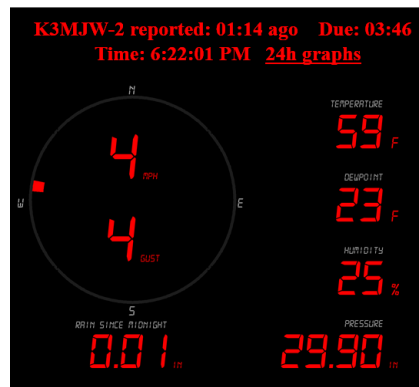
Have you heard about the Wide Area Network Repeater System with coverage from the New York State line down into Maryland (and even farther via Echolink)?

Learn more about the WAN Repeater System at:

<http://www.wanrepeater.net/>

Skyview Radio Society has its own weather station!

Click the "Skyview Weather Group" tab on Skyview's webpage and see for yourself!





WHAT IS DX?

By: Jack Buxom – KA3HPM

“DX” is radio jargon for “distant reception.” If you receive a signal from an unusually long distance, it is DX.

WHERE did the term “DX” come from?

Telegraphers over a century ago invented many abbreviations for common words or phrases. If one didn't have to tap out all the Morse characters in a word or phrase, messages could be transmitted faster. Amateur radio operators (hams) to this day frequently use such abbreviations. Many ham abbreviations are: QRM (interference), QSL (verification of reception), QTH (location), and QRP (reduced power).

DX in General

DX means different things to different people, depending upon the frequency spectrum you're using. HF DX of UHF DX, etc. has a whole different range of possibilities, based on the physics of radio waves on those frequencies. There is a aura of mystery about HF DX because you never know what the ionosphere will serve up at any instant. Each band has its own characteristics and they open and close somewhat predictably, but there are frequent surprises.

To many hams, DX is where it's at. In earlier years, many of them used to graduate from the ranks of SWLs, and the opportunity to be able to chase DX came to be one of the major attractions of amateur radio to them. So, what is DX and why is it such a popular aspect of amateur radio?

“DX is!” sums it up for the real DXer. However, for the purpose of general discussion, DX is working long distances. Long distances are what you really want them to be. If you are in the USA and are new to the HF bands, you may regard contacting European hams as DX. But, if you are a experienced DXer, you may consider working European stations on 80 or 160 meters, rather than on one of the higher bands like 20 meters.

Working DX-making two way contact with distant stations – appeals to nearly every ham sooner or later. It starts innocently enough: You answer the CQ of a foreign station and you marvel that your signal has traveled so far. Suddenly you realize that the whole world is at your finger tips. You may continue to work domestic hams with equanimity, taking your DX casually when it comes along, Or, you may find seeking out only foreign stations, particularly from countries you haven't worked yet.

There is DX and there is rare DX. What's rare? Rare countries do not have active amateur radio populations, just chickens, goats and birds and crawly things on the ground. The countries may be quite near or very far, but activity is the defining factor, not the distance. Of course, distant DX operators may be harder to work, but if they are active, sooner or later the target-oriented DXer will get through, usually on SSB cause CW gets lost in the nether regions of the ionosphere. The barren lighthouse rock of Market Reef (OJ0) sitting astride the Finnish-Swedish may be easy to work, “IF” any active radio amateurs live there!!

GOOD DX TO YOU !!



Caption This!

Caption the following picture. All submissions will be posted in the next newsletter.

Send captions to K3STL@arrl.net with the subject line "Captions"





Volunteer Examiner Sessions

Skyview Radio Society conducts VE sessions for those who wish to obtain or upgrade an Amateur Radio license.

NOTE: The Tech test has just been changed as of July 1, 2014. The old study guides may no longer be accurate prep materials.

Mark Your Calendars!



Next Skyview
VE Session is
at 8:15 AM
on Saturday
December 20, 2014



Contact Volunteer
Examination Coordinator
Bob Worek ag3u@arrrl.net
for exam test dates and
information, or go to the
"VE Session" tab at
www.skyviewradio.net.

Walk-ins allowed. To be fair
to our Volunteer Examiners,
if we do not know of any
candidates, we may cancel
the session, especially during
inclement weather
conditions.

Congratulations to the following
Amateur Radio Operators who
passed their exam to obtain
and/or upgraded their Amateur
Radio License in 2014 at
Skyview Radio Society:

AB3UG - David
KC3CEA - Shawn
KC3CEB - Scott
KC3CSH - James
KC3CSI - Joe
KC3DDL - Gilchrist
KCEDDK - Lia
KC3DTO - Ben

Looking for practice exams? Here's
an example of just a few of the
many websites out there:

AA9PW:
<http://aa9pw.com/radio/>

eHam:
[http://www.eham.net/exams/?eham
sid=lcncdebhjm80uv3lldbhb48kt7](http://www.eham.net/exams/?eham_sid=lcncdebhjm80uv3lldbhb48kt7)

HamExam.org:
<http://hamexam.org/>





Meet New Member: Jody Nelis - K3JZD

I was originally licensed in 1958 as KN3SCC while I was living in Fort Smith Arkansas. I became K3JZD upon moving back to Pittsburgh in 1959. Although that is a call sign with a very limited number of cute phonetics, I have maintained that identity. Jody is a childhood nickname that I didn't care for when I became of school age and abandoned it. But, I found it to be pretty unique name whenever I decided to start to use it on the air (although on CW, I get RU XYL? a lot). Today, only hams and a couple of remaining relatives know me as Jody.



K3JZD - in North Augusta, SC - September 2014 (nearing the end of a 10 day ride)

I'm recently retired and still learning the ropes. A good portion of my working career was doing steel mill design engineering work at several Pittsburgh companies. I started out as a draftsman doing electrical installation drawings and migrated into doing computerized process control whenever that became popular. But eventually that work got scarce around here. I found a new niche in system testing. I tested railroad and transit system computerized traffic control systems

for 13 years. That included the upgrade of Pittsburgh's T system in 2003. I tested prototypes of new computerized medical devices at Philips-Respironics during my last five working years.

Most of my HF equipment is pretty dated. I use a Kenwood TS-520s from the 1980's and a Swan 350 from the 1960's. I use a TA-33Jr tri-band beam and a 40m dipole. Neither have much height, but they get the job done. I have a Kenwood TS-120 that I have used as a mobile rig and a Ten-Tec Scout 555 that I have yet to put to work. I have used mostly SSB for the last x years, but I will be working on restoring my CW skills during the upcoming 'indoor season'. I have an assortment of 2M and 440 stuff. I have built quite a few kits and have homebrewed some stuff as well. I am just getting started in learning to work with a small QRP Software Defined Radio.

Another interest is home computers - I have been messing with home computers since 1977. I have a bunch of them all networked together. I build them and I do programming. I am pretty much a do-it-yourselfer as far as maintaining my vehicles, house, and appliances, farming out only the big jobs. I spend a fair amount of time actively managing my investments - the copy of Charles Schwab's *How to Be Your Own Stockbroker* that I picked up in 1986 convinced me to make my own decisions (most days I

don't regret that). I had a street bike way back when and then had a dirt bike almost that far back. Both faded away as other interests took precedence. For the last five years I have resurrected that riding interest with a Harley that I have been putting 10k miles a year on.

I have been involved the Greater Pittsburgh VHF Society (146.61 repeater), the Irwin Area Amateur Radio Association (pretty much dormant now). I have also been involved with the Two Rivers Amateur Radio Club. I am looking forward to participating in many of Skyview's activities.

Perhaps you would like other Hams to know your "story" – Send your story to K3STL@arrl.net

Build Your Own 2m HT?

Would Be Pretty Tough To Do Today

By: Jody Nelis - K3JZD

I'm not a big buyer of HF radios, but I have bought a lot of 2m FM radios. Maybe it is because they are so much more affordable. Maybe it is because the mobile radios take a beating living in my car year round and the handhelds (HTs) get banged around a lot. Once in a while, it is just to keep up with the times.

My most recent purchase was for a second VHF/UHF Baofeng HT, and that purchase was made for a whole different reason. I bought that radio just to get my Amazon order up over \$35 to get the Amazon free shipping. Can you believe that? I was going to have to pay \$9 in shipping for the \$18 item that I really wanted. Then I saw this Baofeng dual band HT listed there for \$30. Adding that radio to my order, I ended up spending \$48 instead of \$27. So, I got that radio and its accessories for only \$21.

Getting that dual band HT with all of its bells and whistles for that price got me thinking about my first 2m FM HT, which was one that I had built. It was a Heathkit HW-2021. I dug out that dusty old 2021 and sat it beside the new Baofeng HT. I reflected back on how difficult it had been to hand solder all the discrete components on that 2021 circuit board, and tried to imagine anyone hand assembling something the size of the Baofeng. While it might be possible, I simply could not envision anyone ever attempting it. Even if the Baofeng had 90% fewer components, they would be so very tiny.

Just for kicks, I dug out the Icom IC-2AT that had replaced the 2021. It allowed me to dial in any single 2m frequency with thumbwheels instead of having to buy more crystals. That was a big improvement and it kept me going for quite a long time. But it eventually got replaced by a fairly modern Yaesu FT-270 that I got to use in the car that I had bought which had absolutely no practical place whatsoever to install my mobile 2m radio. This FT-270 added memory channels and scanning. Found out that scanning memory channels was a neat feature, because now I could scan all of the quiet 2m repeaters and hear lots of different IDs as I drove along.

I put them all in a line and took a group photo



(Photo Credit: Jody Nelis K3JZD)

Now I see why they called the HW-2021 a brick.

Skyview Elmers in Action



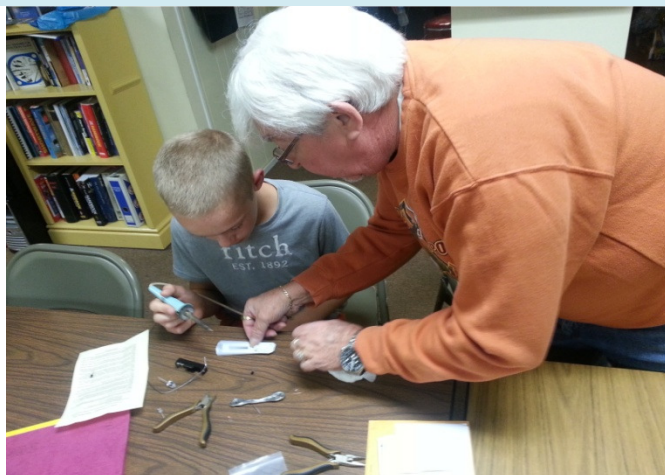
Bob WC3O explaining the contest computer to **Dewey W3VYK**



Dave AA3EE giving Jenny her first soldering/j-pole lesson



Frank KB3YJQ giving **James KC3CSH** some soldering tips



Jack KA3HPM giving **Joe KC3CSI** some soldering tips



Steve KB3EYY giving Morse code QSOing tips to **Rich WQ3Q**



Mike KC3CBQ (middle) smiling after making his first Switzerland contact with help from **John WA3KFS** (left) and **Jack KA3HPM** (right)



The sign said Estate Sale

By: Bob Bastone – WC3O



We had just finished up a successful VE session up the joint one Saturday. I had a dresser in the back of my truck that I needed to deliver to my father-in-law so after the VE session I headed off to make my delivery. As I headed down Rt 286 I saw it. That sign said Estate Sale. I continued to drive past it. After a sort time I wondered what I might be missing at this estate sale. Hmmm.....

I turned around and headed back to said sign. After finding the house I parked out front. The house looked like it had lacked maintenance for quite some time and the stairs leading to the front door were badly dilapidated so the folks running the sale were guiding people in through the garage.

She only said "The whole house". I said ok. The first thing I did was looked down at the table in the garage. There it was. An Altoids tin. Hmmm, this Altoids tin had a BNC connector sticking out of one side. Son-of-a-bitch this was a Ham's house! Of all the gin joints. Looking inside the tin I found a RockMite mostly built, missing the two chips and it was never wired up to the connectors. Hmmm. I next wondered into the basement. There in the one corner was a grouping of a short wave radio, an audio generator, and a VTVM (Vacuum Tube Volt Meter). A stack of QSTs over here, a stack of CQs over there. An old Ohmite resistor calculator slide rule. A piece of wood with a coil of wire and a tuning capacitor attached. A headband magnifier glass. Among the books was an amateur radio license manual circa 1962. (Original price of \$1.00) A Radio Shack field strength meter. Lots of other odds and ends. All the remains of a life in ham radio.

As I poked around upstairs I found lots of books about World War II, Korea, and books of adventure. My friend was obviously a vet. Looking around it was apparent that he had traveled the world. A grandfather clock ticked away in the corner. I looked out the back door for signs of antennae. No dice. There were however logs from very recently cut trees. I'll bet you dollars to doughnuts there was wire in them trees! No signs of tower bases in the ground.

In the one bedroom I found an old harmonica. I bought it.

Q. Do you play the harmonica, Bob?

A. No. What's your point?

As I wondered back down to the garage I wished I had known who this ham was. I could likely research it but to what end? He was one of us. The cycle continues.

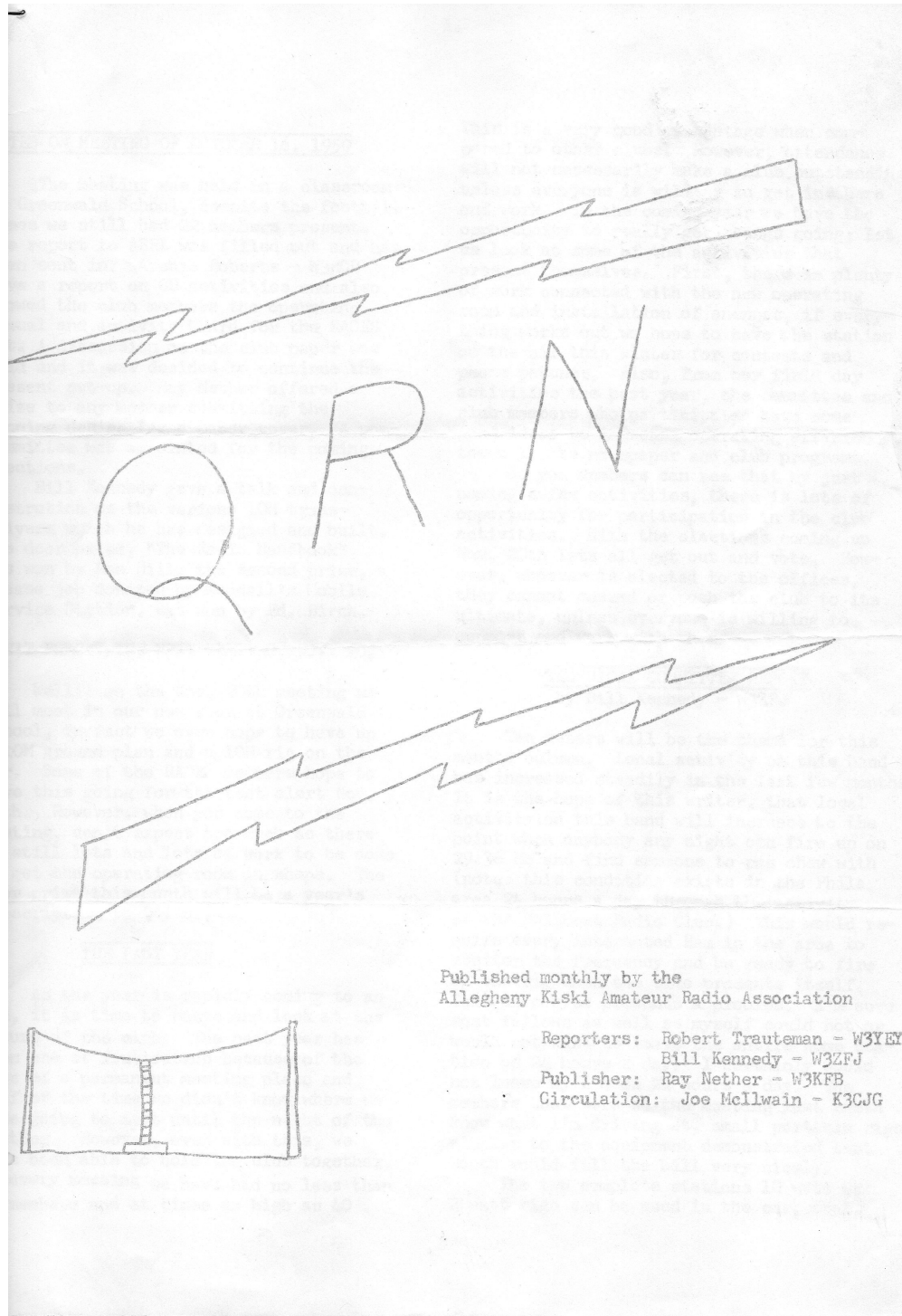
There was a roof mount TV antenna sitting in the front yard for sale. As I waited to pay for my new-found harmonica I got to listen to a guy tell another guy that the TV antenna wouldn't work because the new TV signal is digital and that was an old style antenna. That antenna couldn't "decode" the new TV signal. It can be so much fun just to sit back and listen. It's the little things.

Thank you mystery old timer for the adventure. It was my pleasure So next time you see an estate sale sign be sure to stop. You never know what gin joint you might walk into. AND you may just come home with a new harmonica! – 73 de WC3O



Skyview Classics

(From the Basement)



Published monthly by the
Allegheny Kiski Amateur Radio Association

Reporters: Robert Trauteman - W3YBY
Bill Kennedy - W3ZFJ
Publisher: Ray Nether - W3KFB
Circulation: Joe McIlwain - K3CJG

"Skyview Classics (from the basement)" features a past edition of a Skyview Newsletter.

This edition's feature is the "Skyview QRN" as written in 1959



NOTES ON MEETING OF OCTOBER 16, 1959

The meeting was held in a classroom at Greenwald School, despite the football games we still had 22 members present. The report to ARRL was filled out and has been sent in. Archie Roberts - W3HCU gave a report on CD activities and also showed the club members the operating manual and activity board for the RACES Net. A discussion on the club paper was held and it was decided to continue the present set-up. Ray Nether offered a prize to any member submitting the winning design for a paper cover. A non-committee was appointed for the coming elections.

Bill Kennedy gave a talk and demonstration on the various LOM transceivers which he has designed and built. The door prize, "The Radio Handbook" was won by Ron Hill; the second prize, a grease job donated by Woodall's Mobile Service Station, was won by Ed. Birch.

DON'T FORGET THE NEXT MEETING, NOV. 20.

Well!! on the Nov. 20th meeting we will meet in our new room at Greenwald School, in fact we even hope to have up a LOM ground plan and a LOM rig on the air. Some of the RACES members hope to have this going for the test alert Nov. 18th. However, when you come to the meeting, don't expect too much as there is still lots and lots of work to be done to get the operating room in shape. The door prize this month will be a year's subscription to QST or CQ.

THE PAST YEAR

As the year is rapidly coming to an end, it is time to pause and look at the future of the club. The past year has been one of frustration because of the loss of a permanent meeting place and half of the time we didn't know where we were going to meet until the night of the meeting. However, even with this, we have been able to hold the club together, at every meeting we have had no less than 20 members and at times as high as 40.

This is a very good percentage when compared to other clubs. However, attendance will not necessarily make a club outstanding unless everyone is willing to get in there and work. In the coming year we have the opportunity to really get things going; let us look at some of the activities that present themselves. First, there is plenty of work connected with the new operating room and installation of antennas, if everything works out we hope to have the station on the air this winter for contests and phone patches. Also, from our field day activities the past year, the committee and club members who participated have some good ideas to increase operating efficiency, there is the newspaper and club programs.

So you members can see that by just naming a few activities, there is lots of opportunity for participation in the club activities. With the elections coming up Nov. 20th lets all get out and vote. However, whoever is elected to the offices, they cannot succeed or push the club to its ultimate, unless everyone is willing to support and work with them.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT by Bill Kennedy - W3ZPJ

Ten meters will be the theme for this months column. Local activity on this band has increased steadily in the last few months. It is the hope of this writer, that local activity on this band will increase to the point when anybody any night can fire up on 29.36 Mc and find someone to rag chew with (note: this condition exists in the Phila. area 24 hours a day through the activity of the Philmont Radio Club.) This would require every interested Ham in the area to monitor the frequency and be ready to fire up the rig when the time presents itself. This of course presents a problem. I'm sure most fellows as well as myself could not or would not want to leave the entire home station on 24 hours a day. I certainly would not leave my A-4 on 24 hours a day. The members that were at the meeting last month know what I'm driving at, small portable rig; similar to the equipment demonstrated last Month would fill the bill very nicely.

The two complete stations 10 watt or 2 watt rigs can be used in the car, boat,



2.

Technical Committee Report (cont'd)

airplane, at home or any place you happen to be. Both rigs proved their worth during operation pumpkin at Oakmont. The ten watt rig was used as a base station and the two watt rig was plugged into W3OTJ cigarette lighter and hooked to his B.C. ant., W3OTJ was mobile in minutes. The receiver portion in the two units are identical. Flea power is more than adequate for mobile to mobile around town. W3RSR and W3LPQ are both running 1 W with surplus equipment and the results are amazing.

Any one interested in information or building one of these rigs see me or call me during the day at Ch. 2-1500 Ex. 703 or at home Pa. 7-4656. I will have these units at the meeting this month for those who would like to see them. One big problem with the superegen receivers is the annoying hiss, however, a squelch circuit is now under development. To date W3HCW, W3GDS, W3YEX are building the 10 W rigs and K3DFR and W3RSR are building the 2 W rigs.

MARS

A MARS training net is in operation for Pa. MARS stations every Tues., Thurs., Sat. and Sun. at 8:00 p.m. est (0100Z) on 4020 Kc. Net control station Tuesday A3KFB, Thurs. A3GIY, Sat. A3YLF and Sunday A3YEX.

These nets are for the purpose of training beginners and old timers alike and will eventually qualify operators to act as Net Control Stations or Alternates.

The only activity that can be reported at this time is A3RSR - Bill Bell has been having some trouble with his BG-669 connected with loading, but once this is cleared up Bill should be back in the swing.

Lyman Will - A3WSW has been reporting river stage and weather data on Sunday mornings for quite awhile now.

Ray Nether - A3KFB has been NCS on 4020 Kc every Tuesday since Feb. 1959. Reports nets run from 5 to 20 numbers per check in.

Any RACES men wanting to listen to nets run with snap and polish, listen on 4020.

How about some of you other MARS men reporting on your activities.

RACES NEWS

K3DFR, K3HQJ, W3HCW, W3GDS, W3RSR, W3WSW, W3YEX, W3ZPJ had a nice visit and discussion of CD problems at the Greensburg N.C. center with Walt Downens. During the discussion of Net frequencies for Westmoreland County we now have been assigned the frequency of 29.56 Mc. however, we will not move to this frequency until crystals are available.

Don't forget the net 29.36 Tuesday's at 2000.

OPERATION PUMPKIN

by Vern Lloyd-K3DFR

Operation Pumpkin came off this year as a huge success and a wonderful time was had by all participants. The Oakmont Police were well satisfied and pleased with the way the communications were handled. W3ZPJ got a twelve foot bamboo pole from W3HCW and made up a ground -plane antenna and with the assistance of W3GDS, K3HQJ, and K3DFR installed it on the roof of the Oakmont Police Station. They then ran some coverage checks to make sure there were no "dead spots" within Oakmont which might give trouble during Operation Pumpkin. No "dead spots" were encountered and even spots that the police said gave the fire department radio trouble did not reduce the signal strength by an appreciable amount. A ten watt homebrew transmitter and receiver constructed by W3ZPJ was used as the base station for Operation Pumpkin. It was set up right in the police headquarters and was operated by K3DFR. In previous years, a mobile unit sat outside the building and operated as the base station. The police liked the station inside because of the ease of coordinating between the amateur net, police net, and telephone. W3GDS, W3HCW, K3HQJ, W3HCW, W3LPQ, W3OTJ, W3RSR, W3WSW, W3YEX, and W3ZPJ participated in the operation as mobile units. An auxiliary policeman was on duty in each car along with the amateur operator. Each unit was assigned a specific "beat" to patrol. The traffic handled on the net included most everything from three youngsters being lost to and including a frightening experience for the caretaker of the graveyard. On the humorous side, when W3HCW was being talked into the station for



3.

Operation Pumpkin (cont'd)

the start of the operation, the telephone rang and someone was complaining that an amateur by the call of "W3HQW" was interfering with his television. Poor Woodie hadn't even arrived at the station yet and already someone was complaining about TVI. It is reported the F.C.C. is going to change Woodie's call from W3HQW to K3TVI. After the operation, the police furnished coffee and doughnuts at the station.

Everyone, police and amateur, had a wonderful evening.

-----QRM-----QRM-----QRM-----

PHONE-PATCHES

by Cliff Signer - W9SWD

The use of a phone-patch on a telephone line is frowned upon by the Bell System for several reasons and one of these is the additional load at the test board if left connected to the telephone line and when your line is tested (they all are) indications of additional load will be detected and followed up by a trouble shooter.

The men employed to trouble shoot have a job to do and although not 'snoopers' in the actual sense, very often will call unexpectedly, and upon investigation will request that you disconnect your phone-patch and if you do not comply it is not only possible but very probable that you will be denied telephone service as long as the patch is connected. This inconvenience includes the being without any phone service as well as the 'usual' hook up charge.

One known case in recent months occurred in Illinois and the hams phone-patch was confiscated by the telephone company via the trouble shooter.

So phone-patch users, my advice to you is in order to avoid an embarrassing situation make sure that you have a line disconnecting switch or plug and use it.

(From AMA-CHEWER)

-----QRM-----QRM-----QRM-----

New Officers of the Western Pennsylvania Mobileers:

President.....	W3PUX
Vice President.....	W3PDR
Secretary.....	W3ZUW
Treasurer.....	W3DAW
Directors.....	W3HOB
	W3AEU
	W3RSB
	W3SHT
Net Control.....	K3BVW
	W3SHT

W3TOC on The Sick List.

Have you missed Bill--W3TOC around the band. Bill has been on the sick list for the past month. Here is Bill's own account of what happened.

On September 28th as I was getting ready to go to the VFW, a terrific pain in back of my right ear caused me to fall and strike the bath tub. Becky, on hearing the noise came and opened the door and tried to get me up, as I could not help myself. She called the Police Department and they sent Officers to help. They got me into bed. Becky called the Doctor and as he could not come right away, He asked her what had happened. She told him and he said to put an ice bag on the back of my head. When he got here, he said it was not a stroke, just a muscular spasm of a blood vessel inside of my head which caused temporary paralysis of my legs and arms. That's all straightened up now. Hope to be up and around again soon. Thanks to all the good friends for all the wonderful cards and letters. They really do help.

Let this be a warning not to lock your bathroom door. In case it would happen to you someone could come to your help.

I also want to thank Vi for the nice article she wrote in September's Oscillator about Brownie.

(From the Oscillator)



Reflections

My First Elmer

By: Tom Nagy – W3TLN

I grew up in Lower Burrell back in the 1950's. For those younger, the 50's were the start of the baby boomer generation. Every block had enough kids, without girls, to make up two "stick" ball teams. Bike riding, snow sledding, marbles, stilts, baseball cards, kites and playing army or cowboys and Indians were all the rage. Boy scouts and church youth functions were my social life. TV was in its infancy. 17" black and white, with doors, was state of the art. All three channels were "off air". The stations went to a test pattern after the 11PM news. For me, those were the "good old days".

Now to the subject of this article...

I had a paper route back in the late 50's. I was 12 or 14 years old. I delivered the New Kensington newspaper, the Daily Dispatch. The paper sold for 5 cents. No Sunday edition, so I collected 30 cents a week from each of my customers.

One of my paper customers had a long wire "aerial" strung from his sun porch to a shed about 80 feet away. I could look in his sun porch windows and see his radio gear. When I collected from him I must have mentioned his sun porch radio shack. One day, when I was collecting for the newspaper, he invited me to come over that evening. He would show me his station. Oh boy, was I excited!

His name was Ken Pfeiffer. I still remember his call, W3AEN. "Able Easy Nancy" were his phonetics. Ken had a state of the art station for the late 50's. His gear consisted of a Heathkit DX-100 AM/CW transmitter and a Hallicrafters SX-99 receiver. No SSB or digital modes then, just CW and AM. No transceivers, either. Ken would put me on the air and I would rag chew with other amateurs. No contesting then, mostly rag chewing. You had to "log" all your transmissions with all the pertinent data, on paper. Can you imagine that today!



Ken sparked my interest enough for me to send for an Allied Radio catalog. I purchased an Ocean Hopper 3 tube regenerative receiver in kit form. I paid about \$10, all saved from my paper route and mowing lawns. My Dad helped me build the kit. He put up a long wire for my "aerial".

I spent many long hours in the basement listening to that little receiver with a single headphone. I was a "shortwave listener". Oh, how I remember listening to all the ham chatter, Voice of America and far off Radio Moscow! Even the time standard from Fort Collins, Colorado was fascinating! Bought a huge call book and had QSL cards printed. I was SWL-W3. I'd send out cards and check the mail anxiously every day for a return card. Saved the foreign stamps also. I still have the cards I received and some of my SWL-W3 cards here somewhere.

Coincidentally, a youngster with the future call of WQ3Q, lived 2 houses from my elmer. WQ3Q was just a duckling then, but I remember him.

Somehow I heard about a local amateur radio club, the Allegheny-Kiski Amateur Radio Society. They had a station in the basement of Greenwald School in the Valley Heights area of New Kensington. I attended a meeting and joined the club. Some of the members I remember were Ray Woodall. Ray was the Civil Defense director for Arnold. CD was very big back in the '50's at the peak of the "cold war". Others I remember were Joe McElwain, Dale Henry, Bob Troutman, a Hunter and Archie Roberts. I remember a schism in the club. Some members broke away to form another club and some stayed with the old club. I only went to a few meetings.

Another of my paper route customers was a blind fellow name Joe Iozzi. He was blinded in a tank in Italy during WWII. Joe and I would talk. I told him about my little kit built Allied Ocean Hopper receiver. I must have sparked his interest in ham radio as he became licensed some years later as WA3GBD. Joe was a great guy and he paid a tremendous price for our country! I see his name on Skyview's Silent Key plaque. I sincerely thank Skyview for honoring him.

My radio interest waned before I turned 16. I got my driver's license, discovered girls, cars and rock and roll were my major interests. Then college, marriage, children and



work, but I always had amateur radio in the back of my mind. Every five or ten years I would pick up a ham magazine and scan the latest gear. I even joined the ARRL twice during that time period. I also bought a couple Novice license manuals, a code oscillator and the ARRL antenna book.

After I retired in 2001 we started to go south for a few winter months. I picked up the FL newspaper one day and saw a two Saturday Technician class was being offered by a local ham club. I enrolled and passed my Tech exam. The next year I passed my General exam at the same club. Took all of 53 years but I finally made it!

With the advent of the internet and search engines I decided to look up my old 1950's elmer Ken Pfeiffer, W3AEN. I discovered he moved to Indiana, PA and passed away in the mid to late 90's. I sure would have liked to have looked him up and thanked him for elmering a 13 year old kid!

Fast forward to today and all my Skyview elmers are younger than me!



Tom Nagy W3TLN (pictured) involved in Ham Radio today...

Because of his first Elmer: Ken Pfeiffer W3AEN