



June 2016

Volume V, Issue II

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 2016:

President:

Dewey Chauvin – W3VYK

Vice President:

Jack Buzon – KA3HPM

Secretary:

Bob Bereit – K3RMB

Treasurer:

Pat Cancro – NK3P

Membership:

Bob Bereit – K3RMB

Radio Officer:

Bob Bastone – WC3O

Kitchen:

Bob Bastone – WC3O

Facilities:

Dave Dailey – N3TIN

Chairman:

John Hoffman – K3STL

Trustees:

Bob Siska – K3OFX

Dave Dailey – N3TIN

John Italiano – WA3KFS

Paul Rykaceski -WA3LCY

Frank Puskar – KB3YJQ

Bob Yusko – KB3OMB

Rich Ryba – WQ3Q

Bill Dillen – N3WMC

Jim Painter – KQ3S

Jody Nelis – K3JZD

A Letter from the Editor

Hi Everyone,

The third leg of horse racing's Triple Crown just ended, which means it's time for the Q5er Summer Edition! Congratulations to Creator for winning the Belmont Stakes!

This is going to be my final edition as editor of the Q5er. I believe there should be a "spirit" that goes with doing enjoyable things. With a lot of family health issues, and myself recently going through a lot of tests, biopsies, black and blue marks and etc..., and having a friend recently choosing to end his life prematurely, I just don't feel the "spirit" or creativity with the Q5er anymore. For whatever reason, I want to take some time and see some friends I haven't seen in a long time and perhaps see some sights that I always say "someday I will get there to see", and just take some time to stop and smell the roses. Life is always so busy and I didn't realize just how quickly time passes. To anyone who contributed to the Q5er during my tenure as editor. I want to say Thank You. You all have unique talents and experiences which made being the editor fun and interesting. It was great to learn something about each and every one of you.

So this is where the story gets great... I really did not want to see the Q5er fade away and asked if Jody K3JZD would become the next Q5er editor. I'm very happy to say that Jody agreed to become the next Q5er editor!

Those of you that know Jody know he is a tinkerer and very creative. Jody also has the "spirit" to bring new ideas to the Q5er and I hope you're looking forward to the next edition as I am to see what new things Jody is planning. I guess we'll have to stay tuned to what's in store for the September edition of the Q5er. ☺

The Skyview Spotlight shines on Joe Birsá N3TTE. Joe also shares with us an article he wrote to rfcafe.com!

Rich, N2GBR wrote a great article, including great pictures, about his trip to Denver. Rich also is featured in the Radio Shacks Au Natural section. However, I thought you weren't supposed to clean the shack prior to photo taking hihi!

Jody N3JZD has a few articles for this edition I am sure you will like.

Bob Wc3O has another article from the Radio Officer for all to enjoy.

I'm hoping you continue to send Q5er articles and you can write about just about anything. You don't have to write a long article. The Q5er is published quarterly and remember... **it's up to YOU to help make it happen and YOU are making it happen, So PLEASE support Jody and continue to write great Q5er articles!**

73 de John – K3STL



Upcoming Hamfests:

July 16, 2016

North Hills ARC Hamfest
Parkwood United
Presbyterian Church
289 Mount Royal Blvd.
Allison Park, PA 15101
Talk-in: 147.090 (+)
Contact: Eric Fowler
ericfowler@nharc.org
Website: www.nharc.org

July 17, 2016

Somerset County ARC
Location: Somerset County
Technology Center
281 Technology Dr.
Somerset PA 15501
Talk-in: 147.195 (+)
VE testing – Large vendors
Website: www.k3smt.org

September 3, 2016

Uniontown ARC Gabfest
Location: Uniontown ARC
Old Pittsburgh Great
Breakfast and Lunch served
Talk-in 147.045 (+) pl: 131.8
Contact: Tony Alviar
724-430-1277
Email: alviar@fcema.org
Website: www.w3pie.org

September 13, 2016

Butler County Amateur
Radio Association
Location: Unionville Fire Hall
Talk-in: 147.360 (+) pl: 131.8
Contact : Rick Melton
Email: N3VKM@arrl.net
Website:
<http://www.w3udx.org/>

The Skyview Spotlight

The Skyview Spotlight for this quarter shines on:

Joe Birsá N3TTE

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

N3TTE: I first learned about Ham Radio when I was in Catholic Grade School, about 1959 or 1960 from a story in our reading book. I must have thought it was neat because I still remember the story.

K3STL: How old were you when you first got licensed?

N3TTE: About 43, although I could have gotten my license when I was a teenager if I would have met a ham to elmer me

K3STL: How long have you been licensed? Any previous callsigns?

N3TTE: I got my Technician License in 1994, then I upgraded to Extra in 2005. The reason I waited was that I didn't have any place for a 'shack' in our house until then.

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

N3TTE: Mainly FM on 2 meters and 440, although I have HF sideband and digital capability. The problem is finding time with a horrible 1 hr, each way commute to and from work on the PA Turnpike. By the time evening comes, I usually just feel like crashing. When I retire next year, I'd like to get into CW (Hi Bob!!)

K3STL: What is your most favorite memory about a Ham Radio experience?

N3TTE: Teaching General and Extra classes. I really enjoy helping other hams upgrade.

K3STL: Are you a member of any other Ham Radio Clubs or any other organizations?

N3TTE: I 'belong' to the Gateway FM Association (WA3PBD). Andy's repeaters reach most of the area I'm in most of the time.



K3STL: What was your first rig/antenna?

N3TTE: An Icom IC-2GAT HT that I bought used at FHO shortly after I passed the Tech exam. I still use it because it's a good radio and it puts out 7 watts.



A Factoid from Jody – K3JZD:

The April Straight Key Century Club (SKCC) Weekend Sprintathon event had a “Years as a Ham” theme. That number was optionally added to the normal information exchange. (Another article in this issue talks about utilizing these SKCC events for gaining CW experience.)

I analyzed my log after operating this event. Of the 139 people that I worked, 114 provided me with this optional “Years as a Ham” number. It should come as no surprise that those of us who grew up with CW (not by choice), are still having fun using it. The average “Years as a Ham” for these 114 people was 41.5 years! Of these 144 folks, the Largest “Years as a Ham” number reported to me was 66. And the Smallest “Years as a Ham” number reported

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

N3TTE: My wife, Mary Ann – KB3LZQ.

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

N3TTE: My dad. He was always trying out different antennas and other things to get distant TV stations. (See the “Dog on Roof” story elsewhere.)

Tom Pusateri, W9NGB, got my interest going when I was in college.

Bob McKeever, ??????, kept my interest going and introduced me to hamfests

Bill Alliston, W3ICB, also kept my interest going and introduced me to Skyview

Jerry, K3FKI, a fantastic Elmer after I was licensed.

Bob, WC3O, and the rest of Skyview, a great bunch of people to associate with.

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

N3TTE: Ham Radio is a multifaceted hobby; there is a very wide variety of things you can do in it. You can build things, you can do contests, you can work toward different awards, like DXCC, you can go on Dxpeditons, you can meet interesting people. Ham Radio can be as challenging or relaxed as you want it to be for yourself. Plus, hams are very supportive people.

K3STL: What do you find to be most challenging about Ham Radio?

N3TTE: Just one big thing, finding the time to do all I want to do.

K3STL: What are your strongest beliefs about Ham Radio?

N3TTE: That it’s much more than just a hobby. In addition to the public service and emergency preparedness aspects of Ham Radio, it is also a fantastic gateway to a technical or scientific career for a young person.

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

N3TTE: Definitively an increase in the use of digital modes. And unfortunately more problems working HF due to interference from switching power supplies in LED lights, flat screen TV’s, etc.

K3STL: If you weren’t a Ham Radio Operator, what would you be doing with that time instead?

N3TTE: I’d probably have a huge model railroad in my garage.

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

N3TTE: Go for it, take the Technician test, buy a Chinese HT, and “jump in.”



to me was 2 (which happened to be Bob KC3DOF, who is a Pittsburgher). So, it is pretty clear that a transfusion of some "new blood" will soon be needed to keep the SKCC alive and well. Join in.

And, you folks who work CW, try sending this vanity call that I worked during this event: NV4U (I found this call sign to be somewhat of a CW tongue twister - I had to send it methodically).



The digital mode of operation for June will be JT9. JT9 is another of K1JT's weak signal communications flavors. It is generally seen as an improvement over JT65 in that it uses less bandwidth, while still achieving the same performance. While there are a few less people using JT9 than there are using JT65, I have found JT9 stations to be readily available. And, like with the JT65 mode, you will find a fair amount of DX stations using JT9 without really trying too hard.

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

N3TTE: Not much, outside of work and Ham Radio, I've lived a very boring life.

K3STL: Any Pet Peeves about Ham Radio that you wish to share?

N3TTE: Just those Ham Radio operators who take themselves far too seriously and end up being critical of others, especially other Hams.

K3STL: DO you have anything else to add about Ham Radio?

N3TTE: I've found that becoming a Ham is to join a fantastic, huge fraternity/sorority. When you meet another ham, you have an instant friend. One time when I was in Japan, I had a wonderful 15-minute conversation with the owner of a small Ham Radio shop in Akibahara even though I didn't know a lot of Japanese and he didn't know a lot of English.

The ever-persistent Hassan the Pirate from Baghdad, Iraq continues to plague the Amateur Radio bands. This guy has been pirating and bootlegging multiple calls for several years.

He has been heard bootlegging the calls YI1HR, YI1H, YI1HRP and YI1HI and pirating the calls

YI1BGD, YI1IRQ, YI1DZ and most recently TA7/YI1RZ.

Unfortunately in Iraq there does not seem to be any enforcement to take Hassan off the air, much less do anything about the situation. Therefore let's get the word out not to work or spot Hassan who operates on 20 Meters SSB, usually around 14178-14188.

In fact the best policy is to ignore him completely on the air.

— Bernie McClenny W3UR / The Daily DX

de Wireless Association of South Hills WASHRag

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.



TV DXing, and the Dog on the Roof

By: Joe Birsá N3TTE (Reprinted with permission by rfcafe.com)

Because I was born in 1951, I grew up without the benefit of 1,000 cable channels available whenever I wanted them. This was during the 1950's and 1960's when we lived in the city of Pittsburgh PA.

Instead we had to make due with four, that is four, VHF television stations that we could receive on a black and white TV. (Actually it wasn't strictly BLACK and WHITE; there were various shades of gray.) There was one TV station for each network, CBS, ABC, and NBC, plus one 'Educational' (PBS) station. Later on, we got two independent UHF stations.

This was also the era when the 'blackout rule' was largely in effect for sports broadcasts, and if you didn't go to the stadium for a home game, you made due with radio, AM radio that is.

Now there were two cities near Pittsburgh that had their own TV stations, Steubenville, and Altoona (or maybe Johnstown; I forget). And these TV stations would often carry Pittsburgh home games when the Pittsburgh TV stations couldn't because the game wasn't sold out.

Since my father wanted to see the games (usually football) on TV instead of listening to the radio, he went through some serious efforts to be able to receive them from Steubenville or Altoona. When I was growing up, he experimented with different and bigger TV antennas and antenna rotors on the roof of our house. One time, he even tried tuning and phasing the 300 ohm downlead from the antenna.

In addition, he also did 90% of the TV maintenance himself. Back in those days, you could take the back off of a TV, plug in a 'cheater cord' and try to repair the TV yourself. In fact, there were books telling you how to repair a TV, and my father had several. Whenever the picture got 'weak' or 'funny', out would come the books; off went the back, and out came the egg carton with extra TV tubes. (You kept the extra tubes in an egg carton, like the book told you to.)

My father then would start to tap and change tubes until the problem went away. A few times, he took down a mirror and propped it up on a chair in front of the TV so that he could see what the effect of an adjustment was he was making. During those olden days, you fixed simple things yourself. As I got older, I learned how TV's worked and repaired them myself. I still remember converging color sets using the mirror on the chair trick.



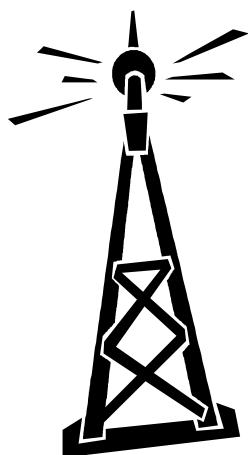
Anyhow, one day when I was in high school (~1967), we got another 'new', bigger antenna and went to put it up on our roof. Since we had a finished attic, we used a dormer window to go onto the roof. And while we were hoisting the antenna up the side of the house, our dog followed us out the dormer window and onto the roof.

Now the dog, Kingie, was a medium sized white terrier/dalmatian mix from an 'unauthorized' neighborhood tryst, and he was having a grand time seeing the neighborhood from a new and unique perspective. During all this time, my mother had gone to the store for a few groceries. (Which is why we decided it was the ideal time to install an antenna on the roof.) As she was walking home, Kingie saw her on the sidewalk from the peak of the roof of our three story house and started barking as loud as he could.

Needless to say, both my father and myself caught HECK. "Why did you let the dog go out on the roof, he could have fallen off." Nothing was mentioned about either of us falling however!!

Even though I didn't get my ham license until years later, I think those days were the start of my ham radio career. And also somewhere along the way, I also became an electrical engineer.

From the author: If you haven't seen rfcafe.com, it is a very eclectic mix of ham radio, antique radio, electronic, radio, radar technician, etc, etc, 'stuff'. I generally check it out once every day or two for new postings. The webmaster, Kirt, is a ham and enjoys getting emails, etc. You can also find this on rfcafe.com with some of Kirt's comments.



Skyview now has its own 440 repeater on the air!

Tune in to 444.525 MHz +5MHz

(pl 131.8)

Give us a call!



Three Days in Denver (April 2016)

By: Richard Jones N2GBR

I was lucky to be in Denver during April for a 3-day business meeting and subsequently received a 3-day Pass from my XYL. My plan was to use the extra days to complete at least five W0C / FR-xxx SOTA peaks. I packed a day-pack, my snow boots and few pieces of warm clothing. KX3 with a link-dipole, log-book and 2m HT for the activations.

After my meetings finished Friday I checked out from downtown Denver Hotel and rushed to the Airport where I picked up a rental car for the weekend. By lunchtime, I was heading South of Denver to my first target.. Mt Herman.

Mt Herman W0C / FR-063 (4pts)

Anyone that looks up "SOTA" on Youtube will recognize this one, probably recalling images of WGOAT and his famous four-legged, pack bearing friends.

Racing down I25 I was a bit worried when an obvious mountain in the correct direction was still covered with snow... not to worry, as I made it closer to Monument I soon figured out that I was looking at Pikes Peak and the objective for the afternoon was sitting in the sun without snow. As I made it onto Mt Herman Road I was presented with a great view of the East side of the Mountain

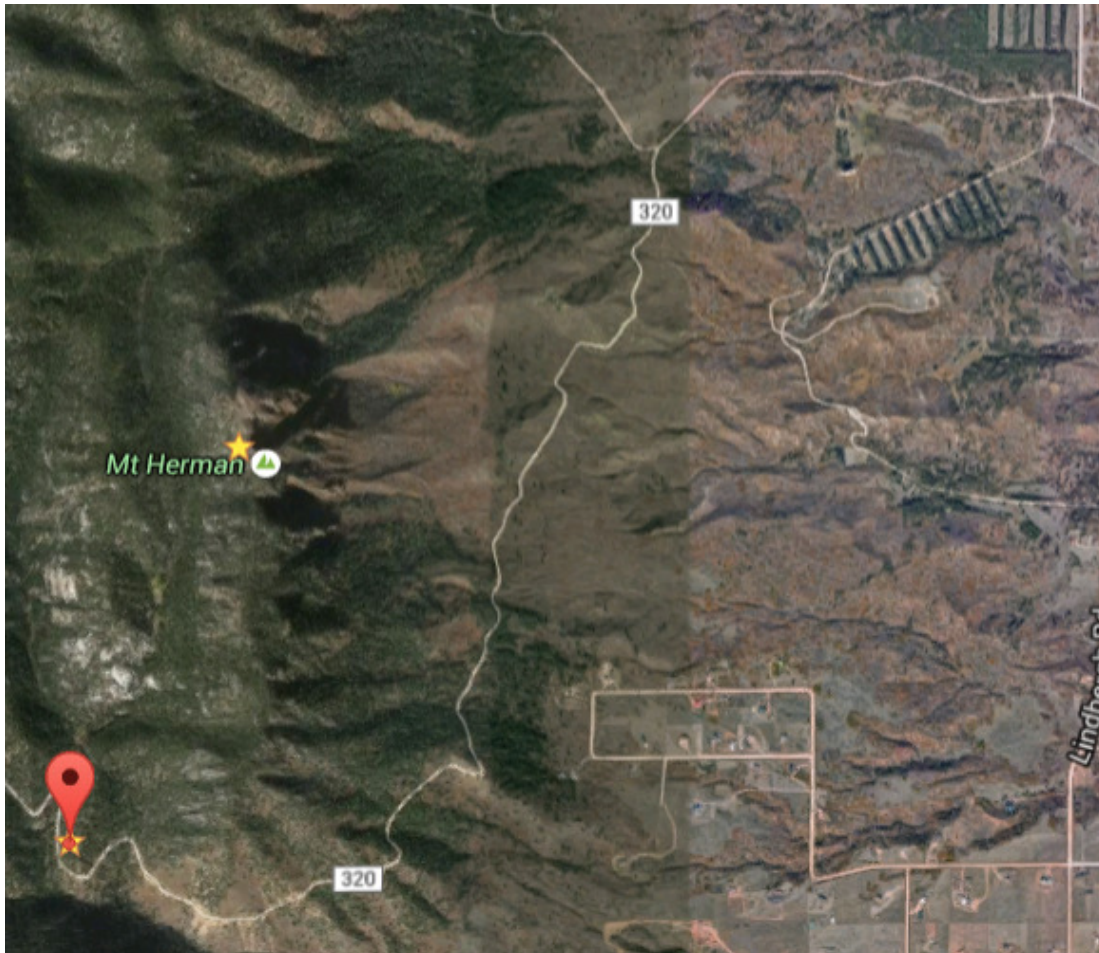




When the Tarmac road ends.. there was a fairly good solid dirt track for about 1.5miles up to the parking spot/trail head. A couple of "interesting" spots on the track needed careful navigation with the limited ground clearances... it only scraped a little... honest.. 😊. No barriers and single lane width in places, but fairly easy driving.



There is a large (eight cars worth) parking spot at the trail-head. The route to the top follows a well-trodden path up the west side of the hill.



I met a group of local Para-sail fliers at the trail head and wandered up to the top with them.. happy that I only had a day-pack... one of those fellas had a 40lb pack! The trail up is a very obvious, until the top section, where it sprawls out depending on your final summit destination, North, South, or somewhere in between. I went left (North). At the top there is a summit log (in an old ammo can) and a wind sock for the para-sail guys. They launch from a clearing / shoulder about 75ft below the summit ridge. I signed into the summit log and set-up for HF operation placing the link dipole into the available antenna supports aka Trees. At that point we had a nice fly-over by three F18's, out for a jaunt on a Friday afternoon ☺

SKYVIEW

Skyview Radio Society, K3MJW

K3MJW

2335 Turkey Ridge Road
New Kensington, PA 15068



I made a quick contact on 146.52 then moved to HF on 20m... fifteen plus contacts.. I moved to 40m made a single contact and then called it a day (radio wise)..





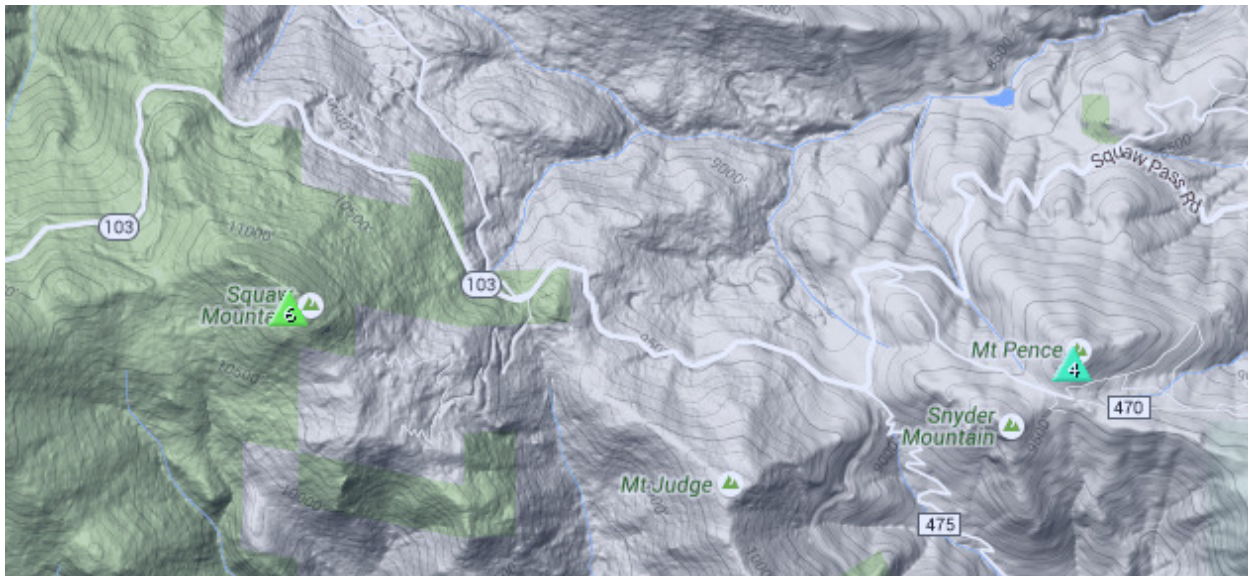
I gave the amateur radio / SOTA spiel to several passers-by and handed out a SOTA flyer to one guy that seemed very interested..

Mt Herman was a really nice, friendly introduction to W0C land.



I found a Hotel in Golden, CO as a base for the next couple of days. Golden is right beside I70 which is one of the main routes running West and the direction for the next couple of days activities. As can be seen on any topo map, the Front Range rises directly beside Golden and the West side of Denver.

Saturday this was my main day to do something special. The weather in the morning was clear and cool, but with the threat of high winds and possibility of a thunderstorm in the afternoon. Having received some suggested summits from Bob KX0R (the W0 Association manager) I set out to activate a relatively straightforward peak **Pence Mount (W0C / PR-118)** which rises to approx.. 10,000ft altitude. Pence is a short 20mins or so drive from Golden.



Following the SOTA access notes, I parked in the suggested spot and made my way up hill. My route to the top was fairly haphazard.. in places the snow was almost thigh deep! other places, no snow at all, so I picked my way through to the clearing at the top huffing and puffing like a good'un; altitude.. what fun!





There are several well placed trees in the meadow at the top so setting up the link-dipole was easy.. operating on 20m band first, I made eight contacts including some that usually chase me on the East coast. I switched over to 40m and made four more. I then moved on to 2m ... a few contacts there including K0JQZ... who was working on summiting somewhere... "but not quite there yet" I waited an hour and called him a few times... but never reestablished contact.. As I packed up... I heard WA6MM and completed a S2S on 146.52, we had a chat about the conditions at 11,000ft and weather expected during the afternoon, and he convinced me to have a go at Squaw Mtn next..



Squaw Mountain W0C / PR-082 (6pts)

Not far "up the road" is Squaw Mountain (and then further still Rogers Peak...) I parked at the obvious parking spot on Squaw Pass road. The path to the top is a Jeep quality trail.... it was still snowy up there and at an altitude I've not been at without an aircraft for about 20years... starting at ~10,600ft. I was really huffing and puffing now. The soft snow was a pain too, not being a lite-weight, I broke through the upper crust of snow on every step, ugggg. After about an hour and a half I reached the top (around 11,500ft). There are several buildings on the ridge.



To the North West (on the Ridge) is a house and used to be occupied year round.. to the south-East an observation building (I think it was the Forrest Service). I set-up in the the gully between the higher ridge lines. This was NOT and Ideal location, but I didn't have much option as I needed antenna supports. There was also a picnic table and some shelter from the wind. The prominent feature here being the very extensive VHF/UHF array.. the largest I have ever seen..





Being exposed on the ridge, and with the wind kicking up estimated 15mph (NOAA) with gusts to 30mph, It was nice to get some shelter..



I wandered over to the East-side and made a quick contact on 146.52FM and then jumped onto 20m for six more contacts.. not much action really (almost certainly due to my antenna set-up)... I was cold by then anyway so I packed up ready to leave.

On the way down, I caught-up couple of young lads (20's) wearing shorts and sneakers. Us Brits get everywhere, and one of the two fellas had "just" moved here from Nottingham (UK)... the world is a small place sometimes.. we had an entertaining discussion on the way back down to the cars.

Sunday..

Weather forecast was a bit iffy... according to NOAA. Cloudy with rain / thunderstorms forecast around mid-day. I drove out west to check out W0C / FR-054 Douglas Mountain that looked "interesting" on the map.

The parking spot was NOT Hertz economy car friendly.. you'd need a lot of ground clearance to get into the parking area alone, and then to seal the deal, it started snowing.. that was enough for me so I headed back towards Denver and Genesee mountain park..

Genesee Mtn W0C / FR-194 (2pts)

This is an easy one.. with a short walk from the parking lot below the summit took 5-10mins. Place was empty, as



expected..

SKYVIEW

Skyview Radio Society, K3MJW

K3MJW

2335 Turkey Ridge Road
New Kensington, PA 15068



I made quick contact on 146.52 and then moved to HF... nine contacts on 20m and then things went quiet.. I moved on to 17m and made a local contact with N0CU... after a five-nine Plus Plus signal report from him, we had a long chat and I kept turning down the power on the KX3. Eventually settling with a five-nine RST on 100mW that's a first.

It started raining so I packed up and wandered back to the car.

There was time left to get one more peak in before it would be time to head to the airport.

Green Mountain WOC / FR-107 (1pt)



There's a large parking area and some nice mixed use path around this prominent feature, plenty of mountain bikers, fell runners, and folks out for some exercise. The path is well maintained and there are choices to get to the top, so you can make a circular walk of it too, if you like.





The walk took me about 45mins from the parking lot. At the top I decided that there would be great difficulty putting out the HF antenna as there were absolutely no trees or bushes of any height. This would have to be a 2m only activation. I've never had any success with 2m activations, but in this location overlooking Denver.. should be easy right?

I was fortunate to catch up with WA6MM again, It seems that the 5/8 wave Telescopic antenna made by MFJ may have to be purchased! we had a good chat and I was able to make a few more contacts.. with only a quarter-wave whip.. I put seven QSO's in the log and then made plans for a face to face QSO with WA6MM. ~20mins later I was back in the parking lot.. Brad made my day by giving me the choice of two types of cold beers at the parking lot. We had a great chat about SOTA, and gear, and climbing, and stuff till it was time to go. This was the first time I've been able to activate a peak solely on FM (2M).



Wrap-up

Well I met my goals for the trip... 5 peaks, and some great memories. I really hope I can get back to WOC land again soon.. maybe the SOTA meet-up in August? Equipment all worked well and it was nice to have a lighter pack than normal... I did carry enough stuff though.... being in the hills on my own... I always had the ten essentials with me...



Equipment

Yaesu VX-8
 Elecraft KX3 with internal ATU
 Link dipole 20/40meters

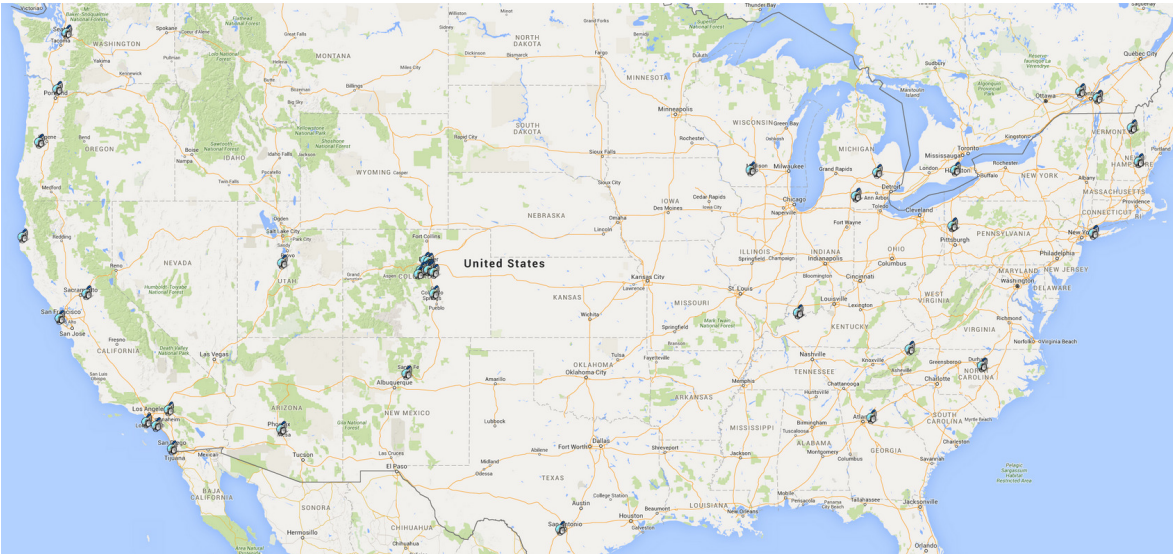
All this gear was in my Carry-on bag through the airports. No drama going through the TSA-pre line at either Pittsburgh or Denver.

SOTA results

Five Activations, 17points

Date	Summit	Call Used	QSOs	160	80	60	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	6	4	2	730cc	SSB	CW	FM	Points
08/Apr/2016	W0C/FR-063 (Mount Herman)	N2GBR	17				1	Y							1		Y		1	4	
09/Apr/2016	W0C/PR-082 (Squaw Mountain)	N2GBR	6					Y							1		Y		1	6	
09/Apr/2016	W0C/PR-118 (Pence Mount)	N2GBR	14				3	Y							3		Y		3	4	
10/Apr/2016	W0C/FR-107 (Green Mountain)	N2GBR	6												Y				Y	1	
10/Apr/2016	W0C/FR-194 (Genesee Mountain)	N2GBR	11					Y	1						1		Y		1	2	

Log to Map of contacts





5 Suggestions From an Elmer for New Hams

By: Mark Rossi W3RRK

As a club, Skyview does an excellent job of getting new people licensed and up and running. However, we do sometimes lack the time to be able to teach new hams about the hobby itself. What radio(s) to buy, how to program them, different types of antennas for mobile, base and portable. Operating procedures and how to conduct one's self on the air.

There is a lot to cover. So much so there isn't nearly enough time or space to cover everything in detail in one newsletter. So, here are a few basic things all hams should do or have done in the past!

Suggestions 1 & 2:

1. Join your local club
2. Join the ARRL

The reason is both are invaluable resources to new and experienced hams. Your local club is a wealth of knowledge with people having decades of experience that can pretty much answer any questions thrown at them. Plus there are a lot of new ideas and new people there to energize the hobby and maybe get you going in a direction you never expected. Remember, there is an old saying amongst us hams. Ask 5 people one question and get 12 different answers! None of them would be wrong either. It's just that there are many ways of achieving the desired outcome. I know Skyview has quite a diverse group of people doing different aspects of the hobby, so wherever your interests lie someone can help you. I'm sure other clubs aren't any different.

So don't be afraid to ask. We were all new at one time!

The ARRL is our national organization. They fight for our rights to use the radio spectrum and help keep it free of broadcast junk, jammers and other outside sources who would LOVE to have that space. The frequencies that we use and tend to take for granted are worth BILLIONS in the commercial market.



They also have great information beyond what any local club can provide, such as product testing of a variety of radios and ham related equipment with honest specs from their labs. And also, if needed, legal advice and help for RFI, interference and other ham-related issues. They are an organization worth joining! Plus they have a cool magazine every month - QST

Suggestions 3, 4 and 5:

3. Listen
4. Listen
5. Listen

Oh, did I mention to listen? Yes, listen. Way back when, in the days before anyone ever heard of .com, .org etc. we had to wait for our licenses to arrive by mail. This would often take 4-6 weeks, maybe longer. What to do in that time? I'll tell you what we did. We assembled our stations and we listened. We gained much wisdom from listening to experienced hams talking with each other, dx-ing, and running nets. Then when that golden day arrived with our shiny new call sign, we had confidence to get on the air like an old pro! Not really. But we were able to join in a conversation or net and not embarrass ourselves. Or worse yet, be disruptive. Am I suggesting you listen for 4-6 weeks? No. I am suggesting you listen for a week or two. Learn from others who have been around for a while. Emulate good radio practice.

One last thing, please be a lady or gentleman on the air. Every time we transmit we are representatives and ambassadors to our hobby. Never use foul or indecent language. A little consideration goes a long way. And you never know who is listening.

Happy Summer and good DX to all.

Mark

W3RRK

Ham Radio Shack Au Natural

This Edition's Shack Photo is from Richard N2GBR



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Use SKCC Events For Gaining CW Experience

By: Jody Nelis - K3JZD

Most people who are learning to use CW tend to shy away from organized CW events. The general concern is that they lack the necessary skill to participate. Well, with the big CW Contests, that is probably true. Those big contests will move along at a fast and furious pace, and are often using computer generated CW that is sent at a speed that cannot be copied by mere mortals.

However, organizations like the Straight Key Century Club (SKCC) cater to those who are new at using CW. The SKCC sponsors frequent operating events (Sprints) to encourage getting on the air and gaining that CW experience. These SKCC Sprint Events are 'fun events', not 'contests'. Yes, you can keep score and yes you can submit your score if you want to, but the submitted scores just get posted on the SKCC Web Site for 'bragging rights'. So, they are low pressure CW events, where people will slow down to match your speed rather than shun you for being inexperienced or slow.

There are several things that make these SKCC events good for inexperienced CW operators. First of all, they use a fixed format exchange. So, you know what to expect. Knowing what to expect next helps you a great deal whenever you are copying CW. I find that whenever I assume what is coming next, and then get something different, that generally throws me a curve and gets me flustered so that I then miss a bunch of stuff. The SKCC exchange consists of: [RST] [STATE] [NAME] [SKCC NUMBER]. The State will be just the two letter abbreviation. And, each will be repeated. So, you will actually receive: [RST] [RST] [STATE] [STATE] [NAME] [NAME] [SKCC NUMBER] [SKCC NUMBER] giving you two tries to copy each component. And, asking for a repeat on something is OK.

The second thing that helps a great deal is that you can use the free SKCC Logging program that utilizes the membership database. Whenever you type in a member's call sign, you will see the information for that member displayed. So, you can instantly confirm what you have copied. For example, here is what gets displayed in the 'Add Log Entry' form after I have typed in only: **AC2C**

His Name, State, and SKCC Number are displayed here for me. Most folks will have the name that they use on the air entered into the SKCC database. But some will not (ie: you may see 'David' here, and then they will send 'Dave' just to test you).

Add Log Entry - K3JZD - SKCC: 13330T
✕

Shortcuts

Now ☒ Use PC Time ☒ Read VFO ☐ Auto Clear

Date: 3/15/2016

Freq: 21.050500 MHz

QSY

MHz

Time: 15:34:11Z

Band: 15M

Call: AC2C Check QRZ

SKCC: 2748S Check

RST Tx: Run

RST Rx: ☒ Auto-Fill QSO Notes

City: Ellicott City

State: MD

Country: United States

Name: Ron

GridSquare:

DXCC Code: 291

TX Pwr:

RX Pwr:

Time End: Now

Comment:

Previous QSOs: ☐ Show Partial Matches ☒ Auto Log Log It

Dupe	Date	Time	Call	SKCC	Band
	2/24/2016	15:27:36Z	AC2C	2748S	40M

Clear All
Save Log
Close

All you really need to type in is the RST Sent and RST Received.

So, with the slow speed operation, casual attitude, the exchange data being repeated, and the support from the free SKCC Logger program, these SKCC events are ideal aids for improving your CW skills.

If you have not figured it out by now, you do need to use a Straight Key during these SKCC events. No Electronic Keyer with Paddles. For those of you who learned to send CW using an Electronic Keyer with Paddles, this may be a step back for you. The SKCC defines a 'Straight Key' as a non-electronic, manual mechanical device, which includes traditional straight keys as well as Sideswipers (cooties) and bugs. Using your Paddles jumpered together and connected directly to your transmitter (instead of to your keyer) as a type of 'Sideswiper' is also permitted and is often used as a way to get started without investing in a straight key right away. Transmitters with built-in keyers have to be re-configured for Straight Key use.

To participate in these SKCC events where SKCC Numbers are exchanged requires that you have a SKCC Number (duh). Not a big deal. You can request your free lifetime SKCC Membership and



Number from the SKCC website: <http://www.skccgroup.com/> Just choose "Request SKCC Number" from the menu on the main page. No real obligation, and does not result in any spam emails. However, you will get an emailed reminder for each SKCC event.

There is a monthly 'SKCC Weekend Sprint' that runs from 1200 UTC on a Saturday until 2359 UTC on Sunday. This lengthy event allows you to get in and operate whenever you have a little time available during the weekend. There is a monthly two-hour 'SKCC Sprint' that runs from 0000 UTC to 0200 UTC on a Wednesday (that's on a Tuesday evening for us). There is a SKCC Straight Key night that occurs on the first day of each month. And there are other annual events that will occur throughout the year.

If you want to submit your scores and see how you are doing with respect to the others who participate in an event, you should operate the whole event within one of the power-based entry classes available: QRPp (under 1 watt), QRP(1-5 watts), QRO (6-100 watts) or QRO+ (over 100 watts). However, if you are new to CW, I would recommend that you leave the QRP and QRPp operation for later on, and use some more power for now. It will make your life much easier whenever others can hear you better.

As you know, CW is no longer required. Those of us that had to learn CW in order to get licensed (way back when) couldn't wait until we got a class of license where we did not "have to use CW". But, now many of us old timers are "rediscovering" the satisfaction one gets from using CW. And many newcomers to the hobby are trying CW just see what they are missing. Participating in these available SKCC events can help you get up to speed in either case.

The SKCC offers many other 'recognitions' for your efforts, as well as CW learning aids, CW operating advice, and support. Spend some time exploring the SKCC web site. Get a SKCC number. Get a mechanical key hooked up. I'll be listening for you during the SKCC Sprints.

Jody - K3JZD



From the Radio Officer

Current projects:

We have two antenna projects in the works right now. The big project is building an 80 meter vertical phased array. This antenna will be able to be “electrically” aimed towards Europe or South America. The two verticals will be around 67 feet tall, 67 feet apart and built out of two Rohn BX towers with a long “Stinger” out of the top of each 24 foot tower to make up the total height of the elements. In theory this antenna will substantially increase our 80 meter signal into Europe. This project is primarily being built to help Skyview compete in contesting. I naturally know that not everyone is a contester and this project may or may not seem valuable.

Well, yes and no. It has been said that contesting is by far the fastest growing aspect of ham radio. It is. Contesting allows people to actually get on the air and gain GREAT experience in what radio is about. It takes people from TALKING about getting on the radio to truly getting on the radio. This experience is invaluable. Along with valuable experience, contesting builds comradery among members and creates club pride. For our little Podunk club we compete with the best of the best, especially considering that many of our ops are not hardened testers. We have done quite well and we have the plaques to prove it. One of the reasons we get beat in a given contest is simply because our low band (40 – 80 – 160) performance is not all that it could be. THAT is where I am hoping this 80 meter array will help our scores. Our 80 dipole simply cannot compete with other stations that have 80 meter 4-square systems. A two element array will at least give us a fighting chance in that area. The rest is up to our operators.

The project is based on components that we got for “almost free” from the bones of K3MD’s contest super station that Doc dismantled in central PA. Doc told us we could have anything that there was from his old station. We took him up on his generous offer, rented a big truck and grabbed up all that would fit in the truck. (This was years ago) The two BX towers we are using came from this grab (as are the stinger parts). They were a solution looking for a problem. It will be good to put them back into action again. Other components for this project we got at bargain prices. The only things we will be paying full price for will be the phasing unit needed, some of the base components and cement. The rest was all on the cheap.



How will it work? I have NO idea! I hope it works good. The folks involved have done a great deal of work, and it isn't done yet. This phased array stuff is just as new to me as it likely is to you. Through talking to people that DO know, this approach seems to be the best we can do. We would have trouble fitting a 4 square within the land constraints we have. That's how my original plan for a 4 square turned into a 2 element array. We just couldn't make it fit. It's about the best we could do. I hope it pays dividends.

That's the 80 meter phased array project

There is also a low band receive antenna project. Actually two of them! One uses two "active antennas" and a phasing unit to again, electrically rotate to where we want to listen, and even more importantly – null out noise. Noise is a HUGE issue on the lower bands and if you can't hear them – You can't work them.

The other receive antenna project is called a "flag antenna". It is a small loop of wire, a terminating resistor and a receive preamp.

How well will these antennas work? I have NO idea! I hope they work well! BTW the two receive antenna projects will be funded by donations.

So stay tuned and see if all the work pays off, both in contesting and in the betterment of our members, to become more active and knowledgeable in all aspects of ham radio. HUGE thanks to all that have put in the hard work. It makes ALL the difference.

vy73

Bob, WC3O

Radio Officer Skyview Radio Society



Reflections

Good Times!

By: John Hoffman K3STL

During my ham radio life, I have experienced a lot of things, learned a lot, and met some very interesting people. Some say great things about me, some say good things about me, some say bad things about me, some say very bad things about me, and some just make up very weird things about me. Whichever category I fit in your opinion is all good with me. The hobby itself is interesting and there never seems to be a lack of learning something new. That got me to thinking about what, in my opinion, is the best thing about ham radio... The Good Times!

I remember not knowing a single letter or word in morse code (not even CQ) and Bill Bell W3RSR/SK would be at the club crankin out the Q's and he would look at me and say "Who is it?". I had no clue and just about every time it was a Russian, or Rooskie, on the other end. Bill would tell me to "Hit em!", but I would just sit there like a deer in the headlights, while watching Bill put another Q in the log.

I remember before Skyview had all the radios at the club, people would bring up their own radios and, as a new ham, always enjoyed watching Rich K3RWN talk to people around the world. At the time, I was a Technician and did not have HF privileges. We would walk over to the Yaesu map of the World and Rich would show me the country he just worked. I always got a kick out of it when Rich would make fun of me for being frugal (cheap). Nowadays, I just enjoy the occasion we get to chat. I also got to meet Mike K3FH through Rich and made a great friend.

There was a time during the Dayton contest dinner, I first met Tim K3LR. Generally, I am not a star-struck person. However, I kept repeating myself when talking to Tim and seemed nervous. Tim didn't care... He just likes everyone in the hobby and likes to have fun. I still feel silly for being nervous back then.

Some of my favorite times are with Bob KB3OMB. There's something about that guy which brings the kid out of me. There were more laughs during the PA QSO Party and Field Day made with Bob than anyone else I operated radio with. Sometimes I think we should start our own Ham Radio Show hihi

I also remember George N3WJK always teasing me as a new ham. He had a lot of one liners too that were quite funny. It would be great to run into him again.

Well, I'm almost out of paper and will stop here. I'm going to take some time for myself in life and live a little. As I look out the window and see my HF antennas taken down, and look at the boxes of HF equipment that someday may be set-up again (I still have VHF in the truck), and think about the day I will start making new Good Times with Ham Radio. So stop and think to yourself... what are your "Good Times"? 73 de K3STL... Clear