

Q5er – The Official Newsletter of the Skyview Radio Society

December 1, 2016

Personalized Vanity Calls . . .

Jody - K3JZD

Lots of folks have found vanity calls that match their initials - like W3TLN, K3RMB, W3CDW.

Lots of folks have found vanity call signs that match their first names - like K1SAM is Sam, N2TOM is Tom, W5JOE is Joe, etc. But, there are not many of these available.

So, I'm now I'm seeing a new trend with CW operators - the name being sent is matching the call, even when it is a bit of a strange name. Like K4TEB who says his name is Teb and W4DOW who says his name is Dow - - hmmmmm.

Well, I looked and saw that KJ0DY is already taken. So I can't go after that vanity call. And while WJ0DY, NJ0DY, and AJ0DY do not show up in QRZ, they also do not show up in a search of available vanity calls. So forget about that idea (I'm old school, and I did not really want to have a zero call sign anyway).

Maybe I will just keep the call that I have and go with this new scheme of making my name match the call. Like "name here is Jzd".

That will work well on CW and on digital modes. But I guess whenever I'm on SSB or up at the club, "Jzd" will be a bit hard to pronounce.

Maybe I could pronounce it something like 'Jayzed'. Or maybe 'Jayzeed'. Or maybe I can just go with this :

"Hi, my name is J-Z-D, the ham formerly known as Jody".

Or, on second thought, I think I'll just fergetaboutit.

- ZOMBI HAM SATELLITE
- ELMER NIGHTS
- CITY WATER
- ACTIVE ANTENNAS
- STRAY RF
- KUL-LINKS
- CLOUD IS UNSAFE ?
- AND MORE

Hope you get everything that is on your wish list for Christmas

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

See you at the January Skyview Holiday Party

Say Hello To Your New Skyview Water Meter



It is installed, connected, and busy tirelessly recording all of the water that is being used to flush away your used beer, wine, and soda.

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The Skyview Radio Society Clubhouse is the “Every Tuesday Place” . . .

Something is going on at ‘the joint’ each and every Tuesday evening, from about 1900 hours to whenever.

See the general schedule of Tuesday events on the Skyview Web Page: <http://www.skyviewradio.net>

For the latest up-to-date plan, check the Yahoo Reflector: <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/K3MJW>
(You must be logged in to your personal Yahoo Account to get into the Skyview Yahoo Reflector)

Directions are on: <http://www.skyviewradio.net>

Guests are always welcome !!

From the Editor

Editorial - Clubhouse Changes

Going to have to update the picture on page 2. Planting those orange seeds that you see in the picture has paid off - towers have now grown out of those concrete bases. And wires have wormed their way from the clubhouse down to these new towers. There will soon be a need for some 'keep your hands off during contests' signs on those new towers.

There is now city water feeding the clubhouse rather than well water. Some have worried that this will be a big expense. I don't think so. While it was costly to put the new line in and get it connected to the city water line, I do not see having city water being a big monthly expense. I think it will be a lot like my summer place in Conneaut Lake where my monthly water bill is about \$25 for the basic "customer charges" and \$3 to \$4 for the water that I actually used.

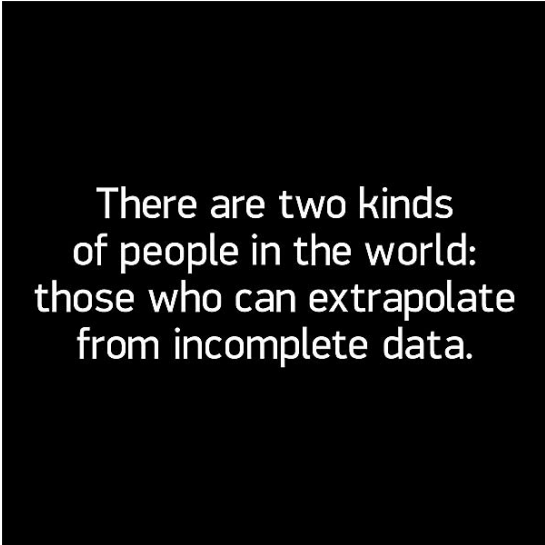
The old pavilion roof that was at the low end of the property is now history. While I thought that maybe the poles holding it up would support a new roof structure, it turned out that these poles were badly deteriorated below ground level and they gave way very quickly whenever the roof structure was being pulled by Dave - N3TIN's tractor. So it was well past serving its purpose, and as suspected, had become a liability.

Now that we are into the winter months, the new chairs with the plastic seats will be much more comfortable to sit on than the old cold metal chairs. And the new thermostat that was installed last winter is still doing a good job of maintaining the set-point temperature.

I would like to see a piece of RG-8x coax run from the radio room antenna block up into the ceiling and dropped down over in the corner of the meeting room where the TV is located. That would make doing live demonstrations of equipment and/or software that needs a radio and an antenna possible out in the meeting room. I have seen where it is quite difficult to do them in the radio room—only so many people can fit in the radio room and not all can actually see what is going on. If it were done out in the meeting room, if it was software on a laptop that needs a live radio being demonstrated, it would be simple to project the laptop's screen up onto the wall so that all could see. If it were live radios and/or live accessories being demonstrated, we could capture that with a laptop's camera and project that screen view up on the wall so that all could see.

Do you have any clubhouse improvement ideas?

Jody—K3JZD



There are two kinds
of people in the world:
those who can extrapolate
from incomplete data.

**HOW
TO AVOID
REACHING
FOR
YOUR
CELL
PHONE
WHenever
IT IS NOT
REALLY
YOURS
THAT IS
RINGING**

CW Ringtones

Joe Birsá - N3TTE

I got a new smart phone to replace the work flip phone when I retire and I decided to install CW ringtones on it.

I found the following website:

<http://www.morseresource.com/morse/makemorse.php>

You enter the text in the box and press [Create an MP 3 File etc]

Then you RIGHT CLICK on [Click Here for the MP3 file], select "Save Link As" and save it in a 'ringtones' folder on your computer.

Remember to give it a better name - "WC3O" for instance.

Then you upload the ringtones to your phone - however it works for your phone.

My new smartphone supports a direct USB connection, but for the work flip phone, I had to transfer the files to a Micro SD, plug in the MicroSD into the phone, and upload from there.

Finally you link the mp3 files to the 'victim' and you're set.

Note that this can require some ham-genuity, but we all have some of that, don't we.

Now my new smart phone calls CQ for phone calls.

I have KB3LZQ for Mary Ann's number and our home number.

MSG for messages

etc

Good fun !!

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2017 Digital Challenge Is Coming

We will be doing a Skyview 2017 Digital Challenge.

This time the Digital Challenge will be for four months, not five months, and it will wrap up before other Spring activities start to occur.

The modes will be:

Jan - JT65
Feb - RTTY
Mar - BPSK31
Apr - JT9

The 'CQ WW RTTY WPX Contest' will be on Feb 11 and Feb 12, and the 'North American QSO Party, RTTY' will be on Feb 25 and Feb 26. So, there should be ample opportunity to work this mode which is very active during contests.

I will not be supplying any new detailed "how to get ready for this mode" stuff this year - go into the K3MJW Yahoo reflector 'Files' section and read through what I supplied for the Skyview 2016 Digital Challenge.

The rules will remain the same, with one exception: This this year we will be adding a x2 multiplier for 40 meter digital contacts and a x3 multiplier for 80 meter digital contacts. I will be publishing the 2017 rules which will have this change.

Those of us who did the Skyview 2016 Digital Challenge had a really good time with this event and we learned a lot about the digital modes by participating. Consider participating this year.

Jody - K3JZD

The Skyview Spotlight

The Skyview Spotlight for this issue shines on:

No Volunteer for this issue

OK - Lets Talk About These Blank 'Skyview Spotlight' Pages

This was started by John (aka Tall Guy) - K3STL whenever he was editing this newsletter. It seemed like a good idea. If you look back at some older newsletters, you will see that it used an easy "interview format".

Once a member volunteered (or "was volunteered"), the member, in the comfort of his own home, and by himself, would provide written answers to a standard set of questions. The member could skip any questions that they wanted to skip, and also could insert any new "questions" that they wanted to answer. When they were finished, the answers were emailed to the editor, who then published the "interview" in the newsletter. So, it is really quite painless.

I am not in the habit of "volunteering" anyone - not my style. So, I have been sitting back waiting for volunteers.

Here, to help you think about being a volunteer, are my current standard interview questions:

- What was your first exposure to and your first impressions of Ham Radio?
- What triggered your decision to become a Ham? Did you have an Elmer? Who was it?
- Have any other family members who are Hams?
- When were you first licensed? How old were you whenever you were first licensed?
- Have you had any previous call signs?
- What was your first rig and antenna?
- What modes do you operate? Which is your favorite mode and why?
- Are you a member of any other Ham Radio clubs or Ham Radio organizations? What are they?
- Do you volunteer your Ham Radio Skills for Public Service Events?
- What Public Service Events have you volunteered for?
- What is your favorite Public Service Event? Why?
- What's it like to be a volunteer at these Public Service events?
- What do you find to be most challenging about Ham Radio?
- What is your most favorite memory about a Ham Radio experience?
- It appears that the interest in Ham radio is growing. Why do you think that is?
- What do you see changing about Ham radio in the next 5 years?
- What would another Ham Radio operator be surprised to know about you?
- What would a non-Ham Radio operator be surprised to know about you?
- What do you tell non-Ham Radio operators about this hobby?
- What would you tell someone who is thinking about becoming a Ham Radio operator?
- What kind of work do you do, and for who (or if retired, what kind of work did you do, and for who)?
- What other hobbies do you have?
- [add your "questions" here]

So, print this page, and when you are feeling like you want to share your story with the members, go ahead and "be interviewed". Then email it to me for publishing.

Once you share your story, you may find that there are others in the club who share something in your story, and you may thus find yourself forming a new bond with them.

Jody - K3JZD

Show Me Yours and I'll Show You Mine

The Featured Hamshack for this issue belongs to:

Richard - N2GBR



The Home Shack



The SOTA Shack

- WANTED -
GOOD WOMAN WHO CAN COOK, CLEAN AND
CLIMB A TOWER. MUST HAVE COMPLETE
HAM RADIO STATION. SEND PHOTO OF STATION.

Point My Antenna Where ??

Jody - K3JZD

Ever wonder why QRZ will tell you to point your Antenna to 329.6° (NNW) for JA1AAA in Japan?

In this era of computer assisted operating, we tend to just do it, and not think about it.

But, if I stop and think, I wonder why I'm blindly doing that because everyone knows that Japan really way out to the West of us.

The answer lies in a view of the world that is not used very often anymore - the 'Azimuthal Map'.

This is a Custom Azimuthal Map that is centered on my QTH in Levelgreen.

If you look at it, you will see that the closest path to Japan really is to the NNW, just like QRZ said it was.

And you can see why QRZ tells you to point your antenna to 45° (NE) for Europe instead of to the East.

And why you really want to use due North, not East or NE whenever you are looking for Asiatic Russia.

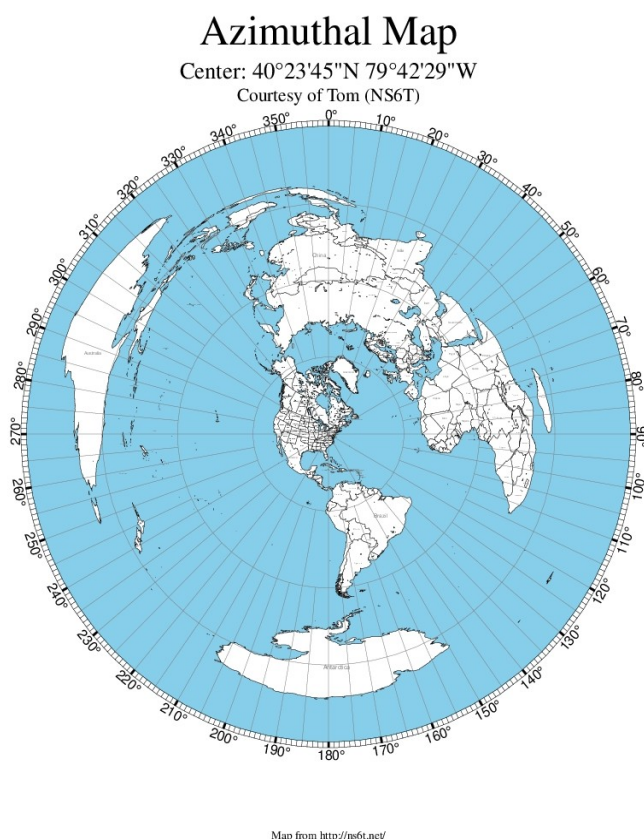
And why Australia, even though it is 'down under', is really to the WNW when whenever aiming an antenna.

You can obtain a free Custom Azimuthal Map that is centered on your QTH here:

<http://ns6t.net/azimuth/azimuth.html>

You can read about the theory behind this Azimuth Map Generator here:

http://ns6t.net/word/?page_id=10



----- Famous Hams -----



Joe Walsh - WB6ACU

Joe Walsh is an American singer-songwriter, composer, multi-instrumentalist and record producer. In a career spanning more than 40 years, Walsh has been a member of five successful rock bands: James Gang, Barnstorm, the Eagles, The Party Boys, and Ringo Starr & His All-Starr Band.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Walsh

On the way to 500 SOTA Activator points..

Richard - N2GBR

My Radio goals for this year were to reach 500 Activator points in Summits on the Air and complete a CW QSO... I'm happy to say that now in October I have almost reached one and completed the other..

I've been involved in SOTA since shortly after I received my Amateur license in 2014. Living in NJ was not the most ideal SOTA location there are a few 1pointers in the state and with the Appalachian Trail passing not far from my house, operating QRP on the trail pretty much always brings in some QSO's. I finished 2014 with 27 points... and 24 of those came around Christmas when I was visiting Monroeville, PA and managed to sneak away from the house to activate Mt Davis and Death Valley Mtn.

2015 with a move to PA full time, and new job, then a broken arm. I didn't start on SOTA until December completing a measly 22 points... but I was hooked! W3 was a largely untouched SOTA association.. the top activator had only 120 or so points and there were many unactivated peaks.

January 1st 2016 I was off over to NJ for a few days, on the way, I picked up Big Pine hill for 6+3 points... (SOTA Management Team (MT) gives us an extra 3points December through March 15th) and the new SOTA year was off to a fine start. From that point on I was planning through the week and then out operating almost every weekend during the bonus period. During the winter bonus period I completed some fifteen activations, and for some of them I was the first activator



I'm pleased to say that I also brought another SOTA activator into the "club". Chris Wilson (W3CDW) was keen to have a go. His baptism of fire came on a wet and dreary day 13th March... We went over to Mt Davis for an equipment shake-down and intro to SOTA activations.. that done, it was time for real SOTA hill... Savage Mtn.. W3/SV-007.



Previously activated only once and then during the summer... our winter activation was to become the stuff of *legend* (in our minds anyway). In the pouring rain we decided it had to be done... 8 points and 3 bonus.. the route up and over one peak to get to the bottom of Savage mountain was a beast... it was not even possible to reach the true summit as the vegetation was so thick.. we had to settle for as high as we could reach within the Activation Zone (the area within 82 vertical ft of the summit).. the peak was activated successfully I had 14

QSO's on 40m.. and Chris also activated it (you need 4 QSO's to activate a summit). We were soaked to the skin when we reached the car.. but happy with the day-out and satisfied with our accomplishment. Savage Mountain was to become the most difficult Activation I had done for a while.



Later in March, I decided to tackle on a single day, the two mountains you see when you're heading east to Altoona on RT22. Kettle Reservoir Mtn and Loop Mountain tower over Altoona. I decided to do Kettle reservoir first... after a short stiff climb from the parking spot an easy ramble along the ridge took me into the activation zone on a bright spring morning. Back

down at the car an hour or so later it was time to have a go at Loop mtn. Having previously tried this from the South and halted by "Posted" signs, it was my plan to do it from the north. Obviously no-one would try loop Mtn from the north.. From the road it was a straight climb on loose surface (no trail of course) for about 600-800ft vertical gain. No point putting Posted signs on that hill.. upon reaching the top, there's ~1.5miles of bushwhacking to attain the Activation zone/summit. Let's just say, I was happy to get it done and won't be going back...



You've probably read my Denver trip report. Memorable trip, including meeting Brad WA6MM, who will come back into this report later. Denver in the Spring also included snow and an accent of the famous Mt Herman, well known due to the exploits of Steve WG0AT and his four-legged pack totting compatriots..

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With Chris now fully on board we hatched a plan for an April assault on W4V Shenandoah Park. The weather was foul; we ran from Lightning on two occasions and ended the trip in wonderful sunshine.



May-June and July.. I picked off a few on the outer limits of the W3 area and finished off the W3/PT (Pittsburgh) peaks that are possible.



August was very memorable, I visited Denver for the 14'er Event and climbed with Brad again. We completed Mt Shavano, the hardest earned 10points of the year and the first time I had ever walked to 14,000ft.



As this is being written, September has now just ended and I'm on plan to hit my 2016 500 point goal. I just need 22 more points.. that's just a couple of days.

I'm hoping to reach 1000 activator points during 2017, but it's going to be tricky. The 1000 points level gets you to "Mountain Goat" status in the SOTA world. Currently there are only ~30 Mountain goats in the US. To make it difficult, I plan to only activate peaks once. This now means that each expedition is 2+hrs drive away (if I keep within W3 association). I may have to ditch that plan, the fallback being reactivating peaks using a different mode.... CW maybe

Ummm CW.

CW is very popular in SOTA, the combination of QRP power levels and the ability of CW to "get the signal out", make it the most popular mode for activations. I have struggled with learning CW, but finally just this week I have started to chase SOTA points using CW and made my first couple of SOTA QSO's. I'm a long way from confidently activating on CW.. but I have moved ahead significantly and I'm pleased with the progress

Richard // N2GBR

Zombie Satellite: Oscar 7 Still Alive, After 42 Years In Space

AMSAT News Service

Washington, DC, October 4th, 2016 — In a little more than a month, the venerable AMSAT-OSCAR 7 Amateur Radio satellite will mark 42 years in space. AMSAT says AO-7, the oldest ham radio satellite still in operation, is now switching between Mode A and Mode B on a daily basis, after coming up in Mode A on September 30th.

"That suggests that the satellite is now in constant sunlight and receiving enough power from the solar cells for the 24-hour timer to stay on throughout its entire orbit," AMSAT-NA Secretary Paul Stoetzer N8HM, said. "Expect daily mode switches between Mode A and Mode B to occur for the next three months or so. As AO-7's orbit precesses and the periods of constant sunlight become fewer and fewer, there will be less of an opportunity to use Mode A on a yearly basis, so enjoy it while it lasts!"

In Mode A, earthbound amateurs transmit on 2 meters and receive on 10 meters. Stoetzer said the type of 10 meter antenna isn't fussy. "Try whatever you can," he said. When continuously illuminated, AO-7's mode will alternate between Modes A and B (70 centimeters up/2 meters down) every 24 hours.

November 15, will mark 42 years since AO-7 was launched into space from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. AO-7 was the second so-called "Phase 2" Amateur Radio satellite that AMSAT-NA constructed and launched into low-Earth orbit. It remained in operation until a short circuit occurred in a battery in 1981. More than 20 years later, however, AO-7 unexpectedly returned to life, its 2 meter beacon showing up on 145.9775 MHz.

AMSAT describes the Mode A/B spacecraft as "semi-operational" and dependent upon its solar panels for a reliable power source; AO-7 works only as long as its solar panels are illuminated by sunlight. Satellite experts speculate that AO-7's resurrection occurred when the short circuit in the battery opened up for some reason, allowing the solar cells to power the spacecraft. When the satellite goes into eclipse, it powers down.

Since the satellite came back to life, terrestrial users have enjoyed numerous contacts via AO-7. Last February Dave Swanson, KG5CCI, of Arkansas achieved a distance milestone on AO-7 using Mode B to work Eduardo Erlemann, PY2RN (GG661w), in Brazil — 8030.895 kilometers — which Swanson said was "way beyond the theoretical range AO-7" and a feat that "the math said shouldn't be possible."

AO-7 has beacons on 29.502 MHz (used in conjunction with Mode A) and, nominally, on 145.972 MHz (used in conjunction with Mode B and Mode C — low power Mode B). The 435.100 MHz beacon has an intermittent problem, switching between 400 mW and 10 mW.

[de Wireless Association of South Hills WASHRag](#)

Elmer Night Under The Stars

Bob - WC3O gave a demonstration of using Cadwelded connections to securely fasten ground wires to ground rods.

With the days getting shorter, by the time that 1930 rolled around, it was a little dark for this outdoor demonstration. So, the pictures that I took with my phone did not really capture the demonstration real well.

The important takeaways from this Elmer Session were 1) Unlike bolted clamps, Cadweld connections are forever, and thus can be buried so that you do not have a tripping hazard; and 2) You really do want to use the special putty that is available in order to make a good seal at the bottom of the Cadweld enclosure.



We are always looking for people who would like to do a brief presentation on one of our Monthly Elmer Nights (which are on the 4th Tuesday of each month).

Ham or electronics related subjects are great, as the goal is to pass along some wisdom to the newer hams in the club. However, we have had a very broad selection of subjects in the past, so will consider any kind of a presentation related to any other experience or hobby that you may have that you would like to make to the group.



I guess it was only a matter of time

"Cloud repositories have become the hub of malicious web activities," warns one computer engineering professor. An anonymous reader quotes SC magazine: *A recent study detected more than 600 cloud repositories hosting malware and other malicious activities on major cloud platforms including Amazon, Google, Groupon and thousands of other sites. Researchers...scanned more than 140,000 sites on 20 major cloud hosting services and found that as many as 10 percent of the repositories hosted by them had been compromised, according to the "Lurking Malice in the Cloud: Understanding and Detecting Cloud Repository as a Malicious Service" report [PDF]...*

[According to the researchers] threat actors are taking advantage of the cloud because of how difficult it can be to scan the large amount of storage they provide... service providers which are bound by privacy commitments and ethical concerns tend to avoid inspecting their customer's repositories without proper consent and even when they are willing to inspect them it is difficult to spot malicious content.

de Slashdot 12NOV16 <https://slashdot.org/>

THIS SPACE AVAILABLE

Contact: K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET

Summits on the Air (SOTA) Chasers

Jody - K3JZD

If you have read Richard's Summits on The Air (SOTA) article in this issue, or his articles in previous issues, you probably have a sense of the level of effort that it takes to be a SOTA Activator. If you are out West, it looks like being a SOTA Activator could be a notch higher in difficulty, as these photos of David - K16YMZ activating a summit in Colorado suggest.



The reward for doing the climb is often a great view as well as the satisfaction of making contacts using the equipment, batteries, and portable antenna that you carried up to the summit.



But, this adventuresome life of being a SOTA Activator is not for everyone. But, those folks who are getting out there and doing it have created some sport for those of us at home.

To keep the SOTA Activators fulfilling their role, there have to be SOTA Chasers who contact them while they are out on their summits. While the SOTA Activators are out in the heat/cold, wind, rain/snow, and often will have to walk for miles (mostly up) in all kinds of terrain, the SOTA Chasers operate from their climate controlled shacks. The SOTA Chasers collect points and keep score



for their efforts, just like the SOTA Activators do. Each summit has some number of points assigned to it, based on height above average terrain - anywhere from 1 for the lowest to 10 for the highest.

Each SOTA Chaser who contacts a SOTA Activator who is out on a 8 Point Summit gets 8 Chaser Points for his effort. While a Summit Activator can be out there for hours to get his 8 points, a SOTA Chaser can get those same 8 Chaser Points in a matter of minutes. And then the SOTA Chaser can be off looking for the next SOTA Activator to collect 'x' more Chaser Points.

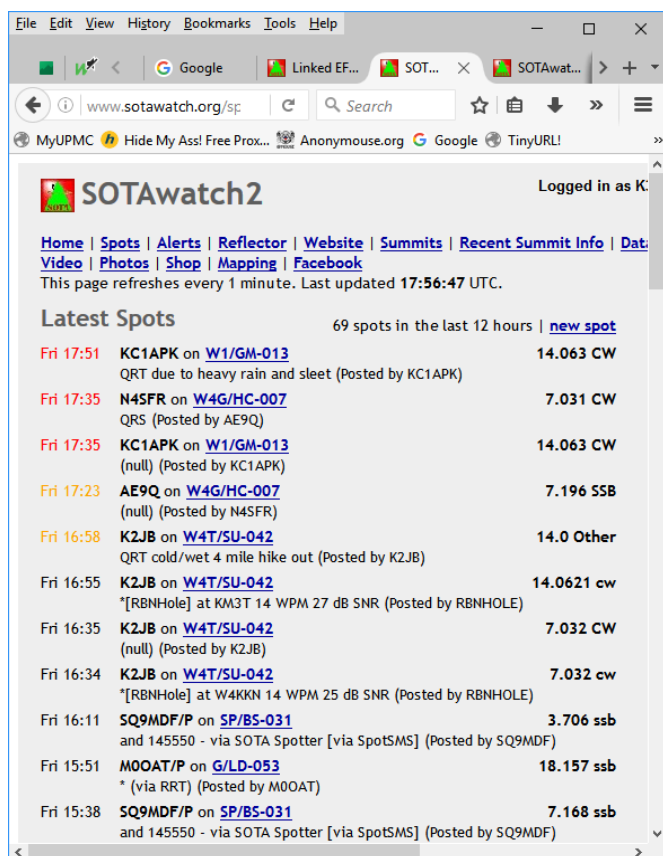
So, being a SOTA Chaser can give you something to do from home. Contacts are contest-like in that all you get from the SOTA Activator is a signal report, all you give back as a SOTA Chaser is a signal report and your state.

HF Contacts are made in SSB and CW. 2M FM Simplex is popular out West where line of site is pretty much down into the cities - there is not very much FM Simplex operation around here. In the event that there are multiple Activators on a summit in a single day (as often happens when Richard and Chris go out together), you can

contact each of these Activators, but you can only collect points for a particular summit once a day.

The Chasing is facilitated by watching the spots that are dynamically posted on SOTAwatch2, which is at:

<http://www.sotawatch.org/index.php>



There are also SOTAwatch Apps for both the Apple and Android cell phones which can be filtered to give you specific mode or activator location Alerts on your phone.

Thanks to the Internet, becoming a SOTA Chaser is a free and very easy thing to do. It is easy to sign up to be a SOTA Chaser, and it is very easy to record the various SOTA Activators that you have contacted on a web page. The SOTA Chaser score is accumulated automatically.

There is a 'Mountain Hunter Award' available for SOTA Chasers. And you can eventually earn the distinction of being a 'Shack Sloth'. Easy to sign up, and getting to the 'how-to' information that you need starts right here:

<http://www.sota.org.uk/>

SOTA Chasing is good fun; it will help entertain you as you while away the WPA Winter months.

I thought that you might also enjoy the comments that KI6YMZ had posted about this Summer SOTA Activation that these pictures I used here depict:

I have been sort-of shadowing Brad WA6MM on his last two activations trying to learn as much about HF as possible, and how he makes so many contacts! He has been very kind in showing me the ropes and even getting me set up with a multi-band end-fed antenna - many thanks!

Antenna in hand, I set out with Ben KDOPNS on Sunday to go up N. Arapaho Peak here in the CO Front Range. Brad was the first activator a couple years ago, and it seemed a pleasant fall hike.

What we weren't expecting was a fair bit of ice and frost on the 3rd class traverse which spiced things up a bit in the morning! Apologies for the late summit, most of our time was spent route finding around frozen bits and avoiding the 4th class rock as best we could.

We did make it just before noon and set up the station. The mast used was one of the shorted carbon poles from ebay with the top two sections removed. It was just okay - it struggled to keep shape with the weight of the antenna and bit of wind we had on the summit, but it was good enough for 20m.

Thanks to everyone who was patient with me as I figure out working HF! I made several contacts on 20m, one on 17m and a few on 2m with the HT. I was unsuccessful on 40m, but that might be due to the lateness in the day combined with the antenna being just barely above the rocks.

A few photos are attached, plus you can see our tracks on aprs.fi or the full track and numbers and some more photos on gaia.gps.

Thanks again for everyone's help, especially Brad WA6MM! I'm looking forward to working many more stations on HF as I figure out my rig and keep learning about SOTA beyond 2m.

73,

David Stillman — KI6YMZ

Say Hello to the Active Receive Antennas

We now have two small DX Engineering Model AVA-2 “Active Receive Antennas” hiding down in the woods on the low side of the driveway.

According to DXE: “DX Engineering’s unique Active Receive Antenna design makes it vastly superior to traditional active antennas in both strong signal handling and feedline decoupling. You get significantly better weak signal reception due to lower spurious signal interference and reduced noise.”

Sounds like a pretty heavy duty task for a 102 inch long whip that is down in a lower area. But, if you can’t trust DXE, who can you trust? (and don’t say MFJ).

All kidding aside, the specs are pretty impressive. Check them out at
<http://tinyurl.com/zstzsqz>



Welcome New Members !!

Welcome the following Skyview Radio Society Members who have joined us since the last newsletter:

K3VRU Jim Jackson Apollo

AC0KK John Young Pittsburgh 15238

If you are a reader who is interested in becoming a member, then go to: <http://www.skyviewradio.net/> for information.

If you are a reader who is not yet a ham, and you are interested in becoming a ham, , then go to: <http://www.skyviewradio.net/> for information.

Say Goodbye to the Old Pavilion



The old pavilion had been around for a while—it is reportedly the first structure that was built on the Skyview property. In recent years, it has just been one partial wall and a rotting roof. It’s only use was to provide some shade to a vendor at the annual Skyview Swap n Shop. Time took its toll on the structure, and it became a liability more than an asset. The concrete slab is still there. Maybe one day something will grow out of that slab.

RF in the Shack is Not Welcome

Jody - K3JZD

One really wants all of the RF coming out of a transmitter to go out to the antenna, and then from there radiate off to faraway lands. One does not want any of this RF in the Shack. However, I have probably always had some Stray RF in my shack while using my Mosley TA-33Jr Tri-Band Beam.

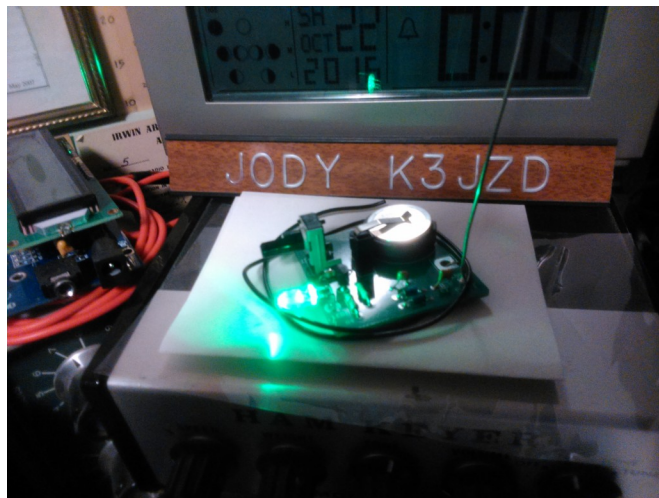
Now the TA-33Jr has been a great antenna – I have been using this particular antenna for 48 years – I'm on my second one now – the plastic in the loading coils eventually deteriorated on the first one. The driven element on this is directly fed with coax, just like a dipole, which makes for a very easy no-tune installation. But, the Achilles heel of this design over a continuous grounded driven element with a tunable gamma match seems to be some stray RF. So, in spite of my having my tower well grounded and my radios all well grounded, some stray RF makes its way into the shack.

Back in the old days (you know – back when I had to walk to school and back, and it was uphill both ways), I was using a Swan 350, and then a Kenwood TS-520s. There were not any computers in the radios or the shack – just radios with mechanical dials, and tubes and things. There was nothing there for stray RF to bother, except me. I would get little bite on the lip whenever I got too close to the metal microphone housing while I was operating on 20 meter SSB. Finally I added some toroids onto those microphone cables, and that reduced that bite down to an acceptable level.

But, today, with the shack computer and all of the newer high tech radios and gizmos that are busy communicating with each other that I now have in the shack, this stray RF has become annoying. My new rotator has a direction indicating meter. I see the needle on that meter wiggle whenever I transmit on 20 meters. The small SDR Dongle that I connected to my IC-756's IF board to get a Panadapter display on my computer gets unhappy and quits working whenever I transmit on 20 meters. So, it has been useless on 20 meters. My new Windows 10 software likes to inform me over and over that the USB port for my Asus External USB Sound

Card that I use with my Softrock RXTX SDR is being disconnected whenever I'm transmitting on 20 meters. And whenever I'm running more than 10 watts on 20 meter JT9 mode, my WSJT-X software keeps reporting communication errors with my transceiver and loses the frequency that the radio is set to.

It finally reached the point where it was time to look into it to see what I could do about it. Since my TA-33Jr antenna is setup for the phone portion of the bands, and I am now down at the CW end a lot with my digital mode and CW operation, my SWR is a little high. I wanted to get a bit of a feel for how widespread this Stray RF problem was. My old RF powered Field Strength Meter that was sitting in the shack was not indicating anything at all (but all of this other stuff sure was saying something to me). I purchased "Easy Field Strength Indicator" kit from QRPkits.com <http://www.qrpkits.com/ezseries.html#ezlpf> and set it in the shack.



This Field Strength measuring device did not provide any indication at all whenever I was transmitting on 15 or 10 meters with the TA-33Jr. But the indication LED on it lit up to full intensity, indicating a strong RF presence, whenever I transmitted on 20 meters with the TA-33Jr. And it was indicating at full intensity no matter where I was transmitting in the 20 meter band, and at all power levels over five watts. So, I concluded that reconfiguring the TA-33Jr an-

tenna for the CW portion of the band might help, but would probably not solve all of my problems.

I isolated it to the TA-33Jr by using other transmitters with it on 20 meters, and trying other antennas on 20 meters. No matter what transmitter I used with the TA-33Jr, the LED on the Field Strength Indicator went to full intensity. That did not happen when I loaded other non-resonant antennas on 20m. It was the TA-33Jr beam.

After doing some on-line research, I concluded that even though everything was [pretty] well grounded, what I was getting was stray RF that was coming down the outside of the coax shield as “Common Mode Current” (CMC). Everything that I found seemed to say that what I needed was to add a RF Choke into the antenna feedline.

<http://www.dj0ip.de/vertical-antennas/rf-cmc-choke/> (While I did use a Coiled Coax RF Choke that was recommended whenever I put up my Solarcon A-99 vertical last year for use on 10 meters, using Coiled Coax RF Chokes was not a common practice back whenever I put my beam up nor whenever I last changed the beam's coax feedline).

It looked like I had two choices: the high road or the low road. I could lower the beam and add a Coiled Coax RF Choke made out of some new coax right at the antenna. Or I could try something at ground level. I decided to try an on-the-ground solution first. I decided to try using the Ferrite Beads over Coax approach, commonly known as a W2DU Choke (aka W2DU 1:1 Balun). I purchased an #8231 "CQ 1:1 W2DU current type 3 foot jumper combination" from The Original Wireman <https://www.thewireman.com/baluns.html> While their advertising says this jumper was actually designed to be used between an amplifier and a transceiver to keep stray RF out of modern computer controlled transceivers, it seemed to me like it might also work out on the antenna feedline to keep stray RF out of the shack.

I cut the coax feeding the TA-33Jr around eye level while standing on the ground beside the tower, and I soldered coax connectors onto each of the cut ends. Then I inserted this W2DU Choke into the feedline. About the only change that I saw in the shack with this RF Choke added in was that I could now transmit up to 15 watts on 20 meters whenever using JT9 before my WSJT-X soft-



ware began reporting communication errors with the transceiver while I'm transmitting. All of the other issues were still present. So, I'm not thrilled that the W2DU Choke that I purchased did so little for me. Maybe it does better for its intended purpose.

I then added a Coiled Coax RF Choke in the feedline, ahead of this W2DU Choke. It was nine loops, six inches in diameter. Why nine loops? Nothing scientific – that just happened to be what I could make using a RG-8X jumper cable that I had laying around.

Now, adding this Coiled Coax Choke into the feedline did make a difference. I now did not see the LED on my Field Strength Indicator come on at all until I transmitted at over 25 watts on 20 meters. I was able to use my normal 20 watts on 20 meter JT9 again without any communication errors with my transceiver being reported. I was able to run 20 meter CW

at a full 100 watts without the IC-756 Panadapter SDR Dongle screwing up. While the LED indication on the Field Strength measuring device was still illuminated, it did not appear to always be at full intensity whenever I was transmitting at the 100 watt level. But the rotator controller direction indicating meter still wiggled.

This setup worked, as I was able to make a couple of 4500+ mile JT9 contacts into Europe on 20 meters. And while I did not make any 20 meter CW contacts, Reverse Beacon Network Stations in half a dozen European countries heard me calling CQ at a decent level. But, it was still not "right".

The following weekend, I bit the bullet and took the high road. I removed all of the ground level chokes that I had tried, and I put a Coiled Coax RF Choke right at the TA-33Jr beam feed point. I did not want to have any connectors up there, so I replaced the RG-8 from the beam to the ground with a length of new RG-8X coax with the Coiled Coax RF Choke. Exactly how to make that choke was a gamble, as there are a lot of opinions on the correct diameter and number of turns to use. And it is not easily changed. So I put my money on the manufacturer's recommendation, and I used a six inch diameter loop with five turns.



Since the piece of RG-8X that I used had some extra length, I wound another Coiled Coax RF Choke at ground level. If one is good, two might be better ??

Taking the high road was a much more time consuming effort and a more difficult process. But it yielded bet-

ter results. All of my 20 meter Stray RF symptoms that I had in the shack were gone. No more illuminated LED on my Field Strength Indicator. No sign of any disruption to my IC-756 Panadapter SDR Dongle. No more notifications that my Asus External USB Sound Card was being disconnected. No more issues when running WSJT-X. And, the

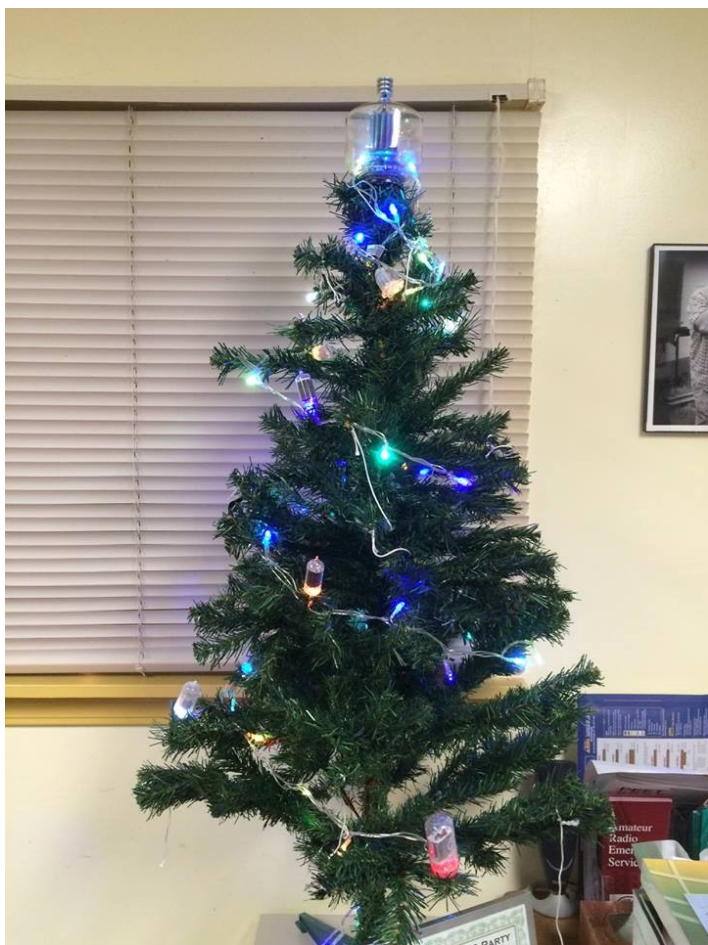
But the rotator controller direction indicating meter no longer wiggled. A 20 meter CW contact with a SOTA Activator on a Summit in Arizona went quite well. And several 20w 20m/15m JT-9 contacts to Europe, South America, and South Africa were made, getting good reports.

However, when I tested on the low end of the 15 meter CW band, I got a little bit of an illumination on the LED on my Field Strength Indicator. But, none of my other Stray RF symptoms were there. My SWR at the low end of the CW band is about 2.5 to 1. It is about 1.5 to 1 up in the phone band, which is what I assembled this beam for. But, now that I'm down at the CW end a lot now, I guess I will have to lengthen the elements to reconfigure it for the CW portion of the band the next time that I lower it.

I considered this to be a successful effort. I diagnosed what and where my problem was, and I made quite a bit of progress. The quicker and easier low road fix that I initially tried did not really get it done. I had to take the more difficult and more time consuming high road to get rid of all of the annoying Stray RF problems.

If you have strange things happening in your modern high-tech shack or elsewhere in your house whenever you are transmitting, then you could also be suffering from Stray RF. See a doctor if it lasts for over 24 hours. No, forget that; instead get an instrument and check for Stray RF. The inexpensive, yet sensitive, "Easy Field Strength Indicator" kit from QRPkits.com that I bought turned out to be a real good investment for me. A Field Strength Indicator is kind of like a canary in a coal mine.





Next Newsletter will be February 1, 2017

Wishing Everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Jody - K3JZD

Kul - Links

Jody - K3JZD

There is lots of stuff out on the Internet... Some of it can brighten your day. Some of it can educate you.

I can't really copy and past it all in here. But, I can point you at some of it

Here is an interesting device. Now if someone would invent one that can do trees

http://wc2fd.com/index.php?title=Emergency_Antenna_Platform_System

How about a 40m SSB Transceiver for \$45? You have add a case and a few external parts, but still

<http://www.hfsigs.com/>

I have to hand it to those SOTA folks who go up into the Rocky Mountains—they sure get a great view once they get to their summit. Here's a shot film clip . . .

<http://tinyurl.com/zydtkkm>

I'll consider any Kul - Links that you find.

Email then to me at k3jzd@arri.net

They might just end up in the next issue



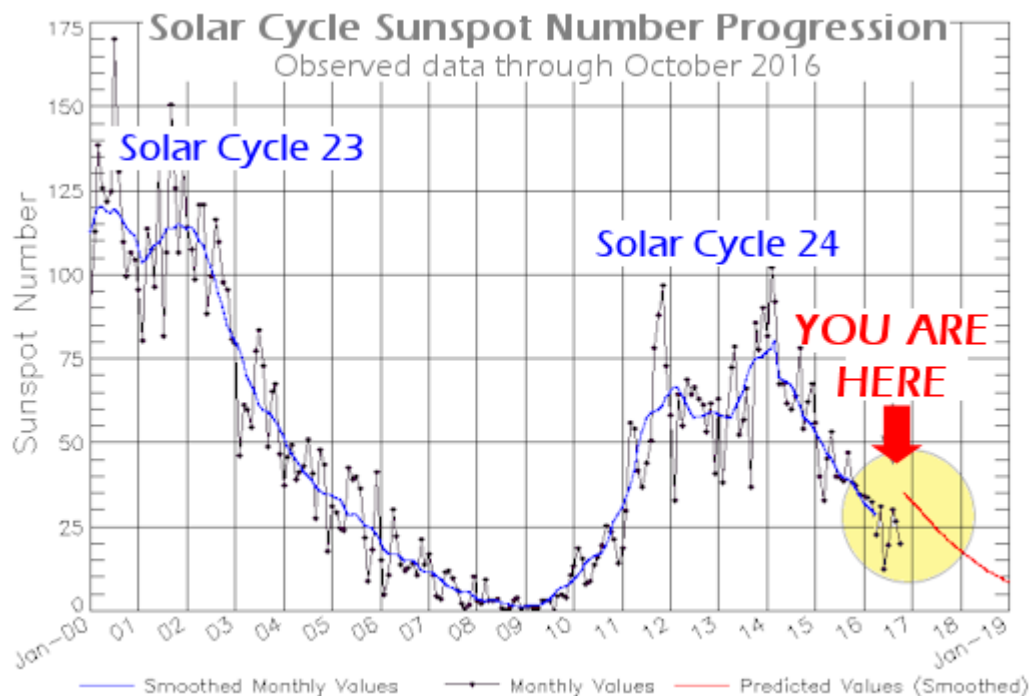
Breadboarding used to be done on Breadboards !!

**What did our
parents do to kill
boredom before the
internet?**

**I asked my 26
brothers and
sisters and they
didn't know either.**

SUNSPOT CYCLE AT LOWEST LEVEL IN 5 YEARS:

The sun has looked remarkably blank lately, with few dark cores interrupting the featureless solar disk. This is a sign that Solar Minimum is coming. Indeed, sunspot counts have just reached their lowest level since 2011. With respect to the sunspot cycle, you are here:



The solar cycle is like a pendulum, swinging back and forth between periods of high and low sunspot number every 11 years. These data from NOAA show that the pendulum is swinging toward low sunspot numbers even faster than expected. (The red line is the forecast; black dots are actual measurements.). Given the current progression, forecasters expect the cycle to bottom out with a deep Solar Minimum in 2019-2020.

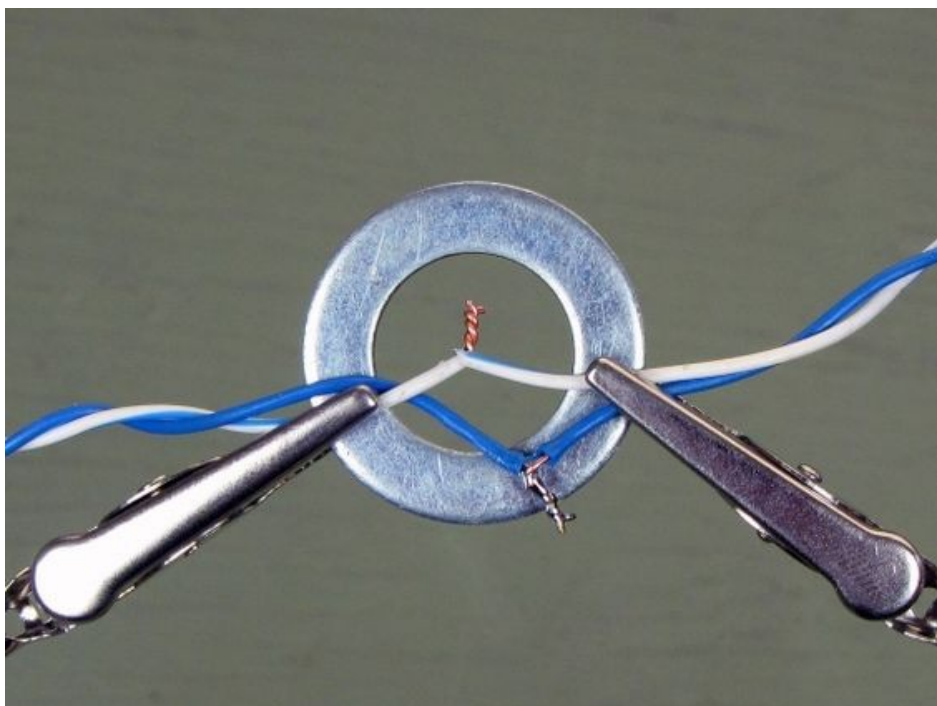
de <http://spaceweather.com/>

THIS SPACE AVAILABLE

Contact: K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET



de Richard — N2GBR



Using a Washer as a Soldering Aid - Unknown Source

Wrapup

As I look back over this issue, it is pretty clear that it could almost be called the Richard and Jody Blog.

That is certainly not the intent. This is your newsletter. This the place where you can share your interests and your experiences as well as read about the interests and experiences of others.

SOTA and portable operation are of interest to both Richard and I. And we each apparently enjoy writing and sharing our interests and experiences.

Richard is quite active and is a big contributor. Therefore you see a lot of his material in here. And I frequently have a number of things 'in the can' that I can publish whenever the inbox is empty. Therefore you may see a lot of my material in here.

It is as simple as that. As the editor, my task is to publish what is sent to me. I format whatever I receive for the newsletter, doing only a little editing wherever I feel it could help the reader understand better. Without your input to format and publish, you will just have to be content to read my ramblings.

So, now you know why it is how it is.

Jody - K3JZD



Q5er Editor & Publisher: Jody Nelis - K3JZD

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k3jzd@arri.net



That's Easy . . .

Come up to the Skyview Clubhouse on any
Tuesday and ask !!!

All General Information about the Skyview Radio Society is at <http://www.skyviewradio.net>

See Yahoo Reflector for All Current News & Activities : <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/K3MJW>
(You must be logged in with your free personal Yahoo Login ID to get into the Skyview Yahoo Reflector)
If you want to keep up with what is going on NOW, this is the place - have it forward msgs to your email



Is this how your dining room looks ??

Where are the pictures of your shack ??