

## Q5er – The Official Newsletter of the Skyview Radio Society

### Skyview 2017 Digital Challenge

This issue went to press before the logs from the January JT65 Mode activity came in.

Out of the chute, the bands were pretty choppy. A log of QSB and noise. Some solar storms probably contributed to that. The QSB is probably affecting the JT Modes more so than it affects other communication modes because when you are doing weak signal work, you are often on the very edge of getting through to begin with. During QSB conditions, even whenever you are working strong stations, the path may not hold up for the whole six minutes. Or, it may be fading in and out causing ‘broken QSOs’.

But, in spite of that, there have been times where 40 meters and 80 meters have supported JT65 DX contacts. I worked an Australian station on 40 meters one morning. Australia is about as far away from WPA as you can get (unfortunately, he rejected my eQSL saying that I was not in his log - so it was a ‘broken QSO’). While I did not find much JT65 activity on 10m or 15m, 20m has been pretty good at times.

So, I’m expecting to see some pretty large scores from the January activity, especially with the 40m and 80m bonus multipliers. Results will be posted on the K3MJW Yahoo Reflector <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/K3MJW/info>

February’s RTTY Mode should go pretty well. February was picked for doing the RTTY Mode due to there being some RTTY Contests in February. The RTTY Mode is most active during Contests. Check <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/> for the contest schedule. I find that RTTY contesting works best when using N1MM+ with MMTTY.

Jody - K3JZD

### Information Sharing

I have been fortunate in that I have been receiving **The WASHRag** newsletter for several years. This Wireless Association of South Hills monthly newsletter is produced by Ron Notatius - W3WN. Each month Ron includes a lot of general ham radio related news from all over as well as the WASH club news.

As I assemble this newsletter, which is pale in comparison, I realize that many of our members may not receive **The WASHRag**. Thus, I take advantage of the liberal right to copy terms and reprint some content there. This month, I have used a great deal of the content from the January 2017 issue of the **The WASHRag**. I simply copied the two pages containing the in-depth article that Ron wrote regarding the Ham Radio Deluxe software controversy (you may have to zoom in a little to read it). Some text from other content that was simpler, was copied and credited.

Jody—K3JZD

February 1, 2017

- IS DON ON CRACK?
- ELMER NIGHT
- NEW WPA MANAGER
- THE WOODPECKER
- HAM RADIO DELUXE
- DEATH OF THE ELMER
- SUNSPOTS
- AND MORE . . . . .

**Wintertime is usually a good time to be operating. Lots of contests, big and small. Lots of different things to try.**

**The best way to enjoy our hobby is to stay active. Keep the air full of RF Energy.**

#### Inside this issue:

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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**

Still need to update my picture on page 2 - I need to get up there in the daylight to do that. I have usually stopped by whenever I was out riding around on my Harley and I was in the neighborhood. Have not been doing very much riding lately.

In addition to using what was submitted, I added some historical stuff into this issue. Tom - W3TIN sent me a picture of his SWL Report Card, which triggered my thinking about my foreign broadcast SWLing days. And— poof — out came an article. Sometimes that is all it takes, something triggers a memory and I go and bang away on the keyboard.

So, am I a natural writer? Not really. If you read my stuff, you already know that. During my days when I was commuting to Pitt, I had to submit a number of articles for an English class. I was not a great student. I did everything in a 'Just in Time' mode. I wrote my articles out of my head and onto a typewriter while sitting in my car just before I had to go into the class and turn it in. I only had time for one shot at each of them. Naturally I got dinged every time for organization!!

Doing an article with a word processor makes for a better article because you can massage it until it makes sense. I always ramble on a bit too much whenever I'm doing the initial writing. I have to go back through and cut out a lot of 'noise' that is outside of the primary sub-

ject matter. I once sold an article to 73 Magazine, as long as I resubmitted it at 50% of it's size. So, while my articles tend to be a little long, they could be worse :-)

After listening to some periodic sweeping interference on 40 meters, I recalled the days of the Russian Woodpecker. A little research turned up some facts and pictures. I'm glad that is history.

Hope that those who chose to participate in the 2017 Skyview Digital Challenge are enjoying it. I enjoy using the digital modes - it is something different. But I would not want to do nothing but digital modes.

I have an IC-756Pro III with a variable width filter, a RF Gain control, and Digital Signaling Processing (DSP). So how come there is not some combination of these settings that will allow me to actually copy a weak CW or SSB signal that I can definitely hear down in the noise, but cannot quite copy well enough to be able to hear my call sign coming back from them? Is it time to spring for a IC-7300 or what? IC-7300 owners: how about some feedback on how that thing works under very weak signal conditions. Maybe I need my antennas to be up at 200 feet (yeah—dream on boy) . . . .

Jody—K3JZD

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You add the caption to this one





**SOMETIMES THE  
SOLUTION IS  
EASIER THAN  
YOU THINK**

## Is Don on crack?

You learn something new every day  
We have a 140 watt Weller soldering gun at the clubhouse. It sure comes in handy for soldering the larger things. We picked this gun up at a hamfest a number of years ago. After some time there was nothing left of the soldering tip. I was working at the club with Don, WA3HGW one fine day.

Don noticed the soldering tip in very poor condition and he said "I should make you up some tips for this iron". Make us up some tips? What's he talking about making these tips? Don said he just bends up some common 14 AWG solid copper wire in the shape of a tip and they work great.



Is Don on crack? Is he nuts? Make a tip out of common solid copper wire? Well, Don did make some tips and installed one in our gun. It works GREAT! I think it works better than the original! Well I'll be damned.

You really do learn something new every day.



And no, Don is not on crack.

Cooky -  
WC3O

## Winter SOTA

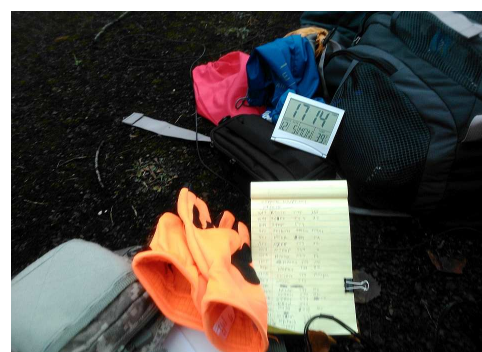
So, Richard - N2GBR has told me that SOTA Activations do not have to stop when the summer ends. So, on a balmy day in December, I gave it a try.



When the headphones do not fit over the hat, you stretch the hat.



I could key with gloves on . . . . .



. . but could not write with a glove on.

39 was the warmest it got that day.  
Another day in January, the high temp was 22 - what am I doing out here?

Jody—K3JZD



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**The Skyview Spotlight**

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**The Skyview Spotlight for this issue shines on:**

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***No Volunteer for this issue :-)***

## ARRL Changing of the Guard

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### Thanks For A Great Two Years & Welcome W3BC!

**West Middlesex, PA, December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016 — Thanks to all the Western PA ARRL members that made my tenure as WPA Section Manager a pleasure to serve these past two years.**

**Starting January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017, Joe Shupienis W3BC is the ARRL Western PA Section Manager.**

**Joe has done a tremendous job as Affiliated Club Coordinator these past two years, so I am certain he will continue his commitment to help WPA grow.**

**Very 73 & Happy New Year! — Tim Duffy K3LR**

de WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH HILLS WASHRag



**ARRL, the national association for Amateur Radio**

The purposes for which our corporation is formed are the following: the promotion of interest in Amateur Radio communication and experimentation; the establishment of Amateur Radio networks to provide electronic communications in the event of disasters or other emergencies; the furtherance of the public welfare; the advancement of the radio art; the fostering and promotion of noncommercial intercommunication by electronic means throughout the world; the fostering of education in the field of electronic communication; the promotion and conduct of research and development to further the development of electronic communication; the dissemination of technical, educational and scientific information relating to electronic communication; and the printing and publishing of documents, books, magazines, newspapers and pamphlets necessary or incidental to any of the above purposes.

### Happy New Year, Western Pennsylvania!

Falls Creek, PA, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 -- Here's hoping this holiday season has been a time of joy for you, your friends and families too. The start of a new year is a traditional time to look back at the past and look forward to the future. To start off with a look back, I want to thank our outgoing Section Manager Tim Duffy K3LR for his excellent leadership of the Western Pennsylvania section.

During the time he was WPA Section Manager, Tim established a clear sense of direction and built solid momentum for moving forward. It was a privilege to work with him as Affiliated Club Coordinator, and I learned a lot about our many fine clubs, their members and their leaders. For me, it was a terrific opportunity to serve our favorite hobby, and help other amateurs to increase their enjoyment and better serve the public.

These past few weeks, Tim and I have been working together to enable a smooth transition of leadership, and I appreciate being given this opportunity to serve at a higher level. I look forward to helping our section increase and continue its many worthwhile activities and successes.

I speak for all the Western Pennsylvania Section Staff, when I say we are here to help you. We're your first point of contact for assistance with ARRL programs and activities, and can answer your questions— from emergency communications to contesting, awards, VE exams, licensing classes, technology, and much more! Our WPA Staff is at your service!

Over the next few weeks, announcements will be made, requesting applications for vacant staff positions. Applications will be reviewed and applicants will be interviewed to find the best qualified, enthusiastic volunteers who are ready, willing and able to serve you.

My door is always open. I invite every radio amateur in the Western Pennsylvania Section to contact me directly any time with your questions, problems and concerns. The members of the WPA leadership team have plenty of expertise, and we will do our best to help you.

I'm Joe Shupienis W3BC, and I am your Section Manager... How may I help YOU?

Visit our new WPA Website: <http://wpa-arrl.org>

Join our Facebook Group: <http://fb.com/Groups/WPAARRL>

de WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH HILLS WASHRag

**Show Me Yours and I'll Show You Mine**

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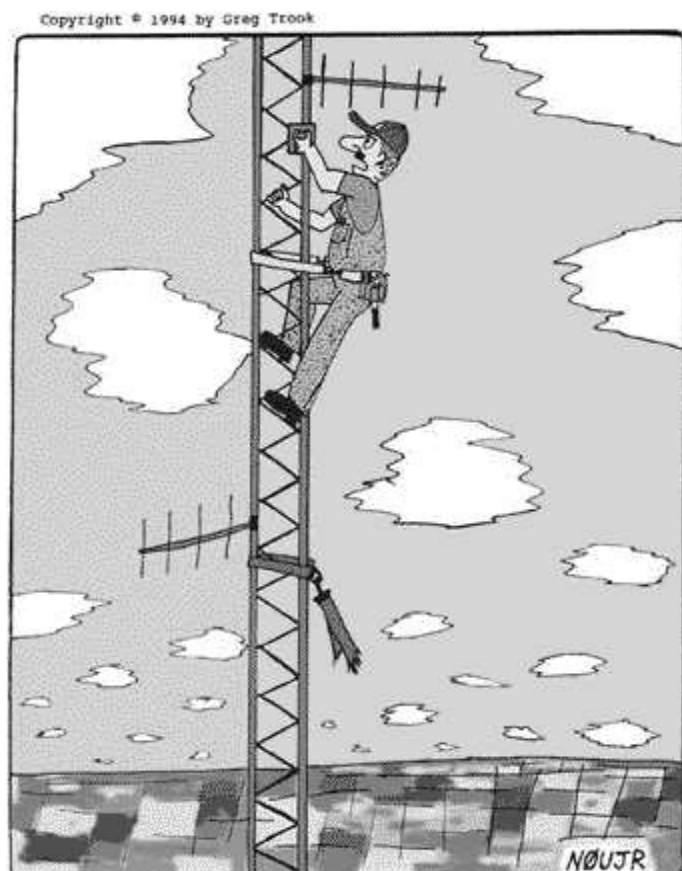
The Featured Hamshack for this issue belongs to:  
**Cooky - WC30**





## THIS SPACE AVAILABLE

Contact: K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET



"So Art ...why did your ex-wife give you a new climbing belt for Christmas?"

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

**Barry Goldwater [SK]**  
1909 – 1998



Five-term United States Senator from Arizona

Avid amateur radio operator from the early 1920s onwards.

Maintained an early 'super station' used for MARS operation.

<http://tinyurl.com/h94y76r>

## Short Wave Listening

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I've been searching for these for quite a few years. Sandy found them today when she was digging out Christmas decorations. I have 49 remaining. 57 years ago I was 14.— Tom, W3TLN

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Tom's SWL Report Card brings back memories of my Short Wave Listening days.

My grandparents had a big console radio much like this one in the corner their living room. That was their entertainment center for most of their lives. It would receive the local AM Radio Stations during the day. During the evening hours, I could tune in AM Radio Stations from other states if I tuned around very carefully.

It also had a Shortwave Band. There, in addition to static and many other very weird noises, I could tune in AM Broadcast Stations that were originating from other countries. I spent many hours listening to these foreign shortwave broadcasts. They played a lot of really different music. And, if they were broadcasting in English, I would also listen to their spin on the news and some of their serial stories.

Most all of these shortwave stations were interested in knowing where they were being heard and they would ask for reception reports. If you sent them a reception report stating the frequency, date, time, and what you were listening to, they would reply with a SWL Confirmation. I did not have a SWL number nor nice per-printed SWL Report Cards like Tom used. I just sent my reports



on regular post office postcards with hand written information. The confirmations that I got back from the foreign broadcast stations varied. Sometimes it just a letter or a picture postcard. But often it was often a fat envelope which contained a schedule of their upcoming broadcasts, pictures of their station and antennas, information about their country, and other neat stuff.

I accumulated quite a collection of SWL Confirmations. During that time, I was also collecting stamps, and the various stamps that were on the incoming SWL Confirmations were just as valuable to me. This was all occurring back in the Cold War days. Many of the SWL Confirmations that were in envelopes that were coming from the communist countries were being opened and examined at the East McKeesport Post Office. I recall that they would have a sticker on them explaining that they had been opened for routine postal inspection.



**knight-kit "Space-Scanner" 2-Band Radio Kit**  
**Model Y-259**  
**\$18.95**

You'll really be proud of this remarkable performer. It's an all-new 2-band receiver you can build yourself as easy as pie. Has true bandswitching—selects thrilling short wave on 6 to 18 mc (foreign countries, amateurs, aircraft, police, marine); and full AM regular broadcast. Very sensitive circuit; beam-power output; 4" PM speaker; latest miniature tubes. All parts and tubes supplied, including cabinet. Even a beginner will get wonderful results. AC-DC. Wt., 7 lbs.

**Model Y-259. "Space-Scanner" Receiver Kit**  
complete with cabinet, only... **\$18.95**

Whenever my family moved to Fort Smith, Arkansas, I obtained a Knight-Kit Shortwave Receiver so that I could continue to listen and send out my SWL reports. That radio got good reception with just a simple wire antenna hanging out of a window. We were in an apartment on the second floor of a private home. The older couple who owned the house lived on the first floor and had converted their second floor into three efficiency apartments. There was an active army instal-



lation just outside of town, and a soldier and his wife lived in one of the other apartments. There was only one mailbox for that address, so whoever got to it first sorted the mail. Both the home owner and the soldier asked me a few times about this mail that I was getting from communist countries. With the active military installation there, I think that they were more sensitive to the cold war stuff.

Whenever I got my ham license, and got permission to put up a 40 meter dipole, I think that they then got even more suspicious because now I had a transmitter and was broadcasting in Morse Code as well as listening. And now I was getting these strange ham radio QSLs cards with 'coded phrases' as well as this foreign SWL stuff in the mail. While I explained several times that they were unrelated, I do not think I ever convinced that it was just hobby stuff.



A Radio Moscow Shortwave Reception Confirmation Card from 1969

(Today "Radio Moscow" is a rock band)



I had sent Radio Moscow a SWL Report. That resulted in them sending me a fat envelope full of stuff along with the SWL Confirmation. And then I automatically got a broadcast schedule from Radio Moscow every couple of months. I think that all of this stuff coming from Radio Moscow did it. It was not the FCC, but some representative of some other federal government agency actually paid me a visit to talk to me and see my setup. I'm thinking it was to appease the nervous home owner, or maybe the soldier in the next apartment. I do not think that whoever it was went away thinking that I was a communist spy who was reporting on activities at the military installation. But, who knows – maybe they were keeping me on their radar screen.

Shortwave listening is still happening, but it is not any where near as popular as it used to be. Once in a while I will still use my general coverage receiver to tune tune around and see what I can find. And I have a small inexpensive SDR Dongle that covers all of the HF frequencies that I will use once in a while to do some broadcast shortwave listening. The shortwave bands are no longer crowded with adjacent broadcast stations. And there does not seem to be any jamming going on by countries who do not want stations to be heard by their citizens. Even though it can be easily blocked, most seem to be using Internet Radio now. But, you can still find some shortwave broadcast stations to listen to (including some still in our 40 meter band). There is a SWL column in CQ Magazine, and there are web sites like <http://shortwave.hfradio.org/> that will tell you where and when to listen.

Recently, I had thought about buying a Shortwave Radio for my nephew's young son to see if he might take an interest in communications and maybe even one day in ham radio. But, then I realized that there is not really enough foreign broadcast 'bait' out there to hook him. And the ham bands that I used to listen to before I was licensed are 99% SSB and 1% AM now. So, I forgot about that idea.

Anyone else have any SWL stories?

Jody - K3JZD

(By the way, I used that Knight-Kit Space Spanner receiver for the first two years that I had my ham license.)

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## THIS SPACE AVAILABLE

Contact: K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET

## December Elmer Night — Small Contests

Mike - K3FH

While I missed this presentation, John (aka Tall Guy) - K3STL took some photos and sent them to me. And, just to show that Mike walks it like he talks it, here is some evidence. (I happened onto this event by accident whenever I was testing one of my portable antennas out in the back yard and looking for signal reports. Whenever I went back inside, I continued using my QRP SDR ).

Jody - K3JZD



Most likely Mike mentioned that the **WA7BNM Contest Calendar** (<http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/>) is what you want to watch to find these state QSO parties and other small events. There, you will see that there is usually something going on somewhere. And, I'll bet Mike said: "always submit your log". Jody - K3JZD





## The Infamous Russian Woodpecker

Jody - K3JZD



### Abandoned Duga-3 'Woodpecker' Radio Antenna Near Chernobyl In Russia.

#### What A Monstrosity!

Back in the 1970s, amateur radio enthusiasts around the world began hearing a sharp, repetitive tapping pulsing noise at the 10Hz frequency, which disrupted shortwave radio communications. It was dubbed the "woodpecker" signal.

This was the cause of it: a Russian over-the-horizon anti-ballistic missile system called Duga-3, which could give early warning of missile launches. There were two of these systems.

The systems operated from July 1976 to December 1989. It is felt that military satellites took over the job of doing early detection, and this system was shut down. The hams did not miss this %^!\*#!\*%# Woodpecker a bit.





It was what you could call a rather large array of antennas

Dick - K3BEI took an interest in the Woodpecker about the same time as I did.

See the Wikipedia.org article that he references for more detail and pictures

There is an interesting article about the famed “Russian Woodpecker “ on Wikipedia. It was an over the horizon radar system that plagued the amateur bands in the late 70’s to the late 80’s.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duga\\_radar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duga_radar)

There is an audio clip that gives you a nostalgic listen if you were around back then. Or if not you can see what the old timers had to put up with back then.

de 'NARC Radio Newsette' (NITTANY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB ) Dick Thompson K3BIE Editor

## The 80 Meter Phased Array Story

Cooky — WC3O

This is a story of a number of circumstances coming together. In this story there may be an occasional flashback to the circumstances that made this whole thing work.

As you may know, we do some contesting at the clubhouse. Actually we do pretty well considering our equipment and antennas are not really comparable with many serious contest stations. Add to that, many of our operators are not what you could call serious contest ops. Many are doing contesting for the first time. (And getting better as time goes on!) Despite these limitations we consistently place in the top 10 USA, sometimes top 5, sometimes even #1 USA! Not bad.

Any good contester looks at the score breakdown of the stations that had beaten them in the past. Doing so we could see that we were on par on most upper bands with much larger stations/antennas. Where we lack is mainly on 40 meters and especially 80 meters. We are competing with 80 meter 4-square antennas and 80 meter beams, to our marginal 80 meter dipole. No matter how you stack it, we will lose. What we need is a better 80 meter antenna!

Flashback: One August a couple years ago before our Swap N Shop I knew that big-time contester Tim Duffy, K3LR was going to be at our hamfest. Prior to the fest I asked Tim, if Skyview was your contest station and you wanted to improve your 80 meter score, what would you do? Tim replied he would build an 80 meter 4-square array, hands down.

Flashback: A number of years ago we (Skyview) received a number of small towers (Rohn BX) that was one part of an 80 meter 4-square that Doc, K3MD built at his contest station in central PA. When Doc gave up his contest station he donated much of his antenna stock to Skyview. While we didn't have all 4 towers, we already had most of what we needed to build our own 4-square!

It seemed like a great idea at first. We went with tape measures to the lower yard and mapped out where this array could fit. It was all looking great until we realized that we forgot one MAJOR aspect. The radial field! These

vertical antennas only work with a good ground system around each tower. For an 80 meter vertical the radials would need to extend out @ 67 feet in all directions away from each tower. Taking into account the size of the radial field of each tower we simply did not have the room for a 4-square array. It just wasn't going to happen.

Enter the 2 element vertical phased array: While we couldn't swing 4 antennas, we could fit two.

Background: When contesting you find that BY FAR, most of your DX contacts come from Europe. If you want a big 80 meter score you REALLY need to cover Europe well. With two vertical elements orientated correctly you get most of the gain of a 4-square in your intended direction (EU). Actually with this system you have three directions available. You build the 2 antenna system to aim to EU. Through the magic of phasing the two antennas, you can beam to Europe - and the opposite direction. You also have a third option, broadside. The opposite direction from EU will land you more or less into VK, ZL, KH6 and more. Again, you have gain comparable to a 4-square in those two directions. Really, the only directions we will be lacking will be JA and SA. Even broadside you will have a little more gain than a single vertical. Not too bad! Add to that, DX Engineering makes a ready-made system to do just what we want — The DVA-80-P.

So what is this 80 meter 2 element phased array? It is built out of two towers approximately 67 feet tall and 67 feet apart. They are ¼ vertical radiators. Like the 4-square antenna, there are radials on the ground reaching around 67 feet out in all directions from each tower. How many radials? The more the better! We are planning on around 60 radials per tower. That's a lot of wire! There is a control box near the center point between the two towers. The box handles the antenna phasing that will allow us to beam to EU and VK, or broadside. The main feedline goes into this box. From the box there are two "phasing lines" made of 75 ohm coax cut (you guessed it) around 67 feet long! These two lines are what actually feed the two towers. This technique is nothing new. AM broadcasters use this type of antennas system all the time. It just works, and works well.



While we had most of the tower hardware we needed, there was MUCH hard work to be done. First off there were a number of large trees in close proximity to the

one tower. These trees needed to be cut down and cut up so that they could never fall on the tower and destroy it.



The towers had some rust on them. All the sections needed cleaned and painted. If you have ever painted tower sections, you know this is no fun. Since these tower sections are the ACTUAL radiating elements, we need to make sure there are good electrical connections between the tower sections. To ensure good contact all legs of all sections are welded together. The actual towers are only 24 feet tall. We need to reach 67 feet! Out of the top of each tower are 2 inch masts that taper down to ½ tubing. These “stingers” make up the rest of the 67 total feet we need. This makes the two towers fairly light and easy to tilt and tune.

To plant these two towers we need cement bases in the ground. They need to be 3 by 3 by 3 feet. Many thanks to Todd, K3TAJ for use of his backhoe to dig the two holes. Actually, there are MANY members

that helped with this excavating project. With the two holes dug it was time to make the forms and jigs to hold the bases in place while the cement is poured. Everything came out great.







The next adventure was to install the main feedline from the shack down to where the phasing box will be mounted. For a feedline we went with  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch Heliacx. To protect the feedline we put the Heliacx cable (and phasing box control cable) inside heavy plastic tubing. To bury all the feedlines we rented a trencher. Some of the trenches were dug by hand.



One of the biggest challenges of this project was that the radial field and one of the phasing lines needs to cross the driveway! This means that there will be many radial wires that will be buried under the gravel driveway. To help protect all these wires we sandwiched the radials between two large pieces of landscaping fabric. Again, we put the phasing lines inside plastic tubing for protection.

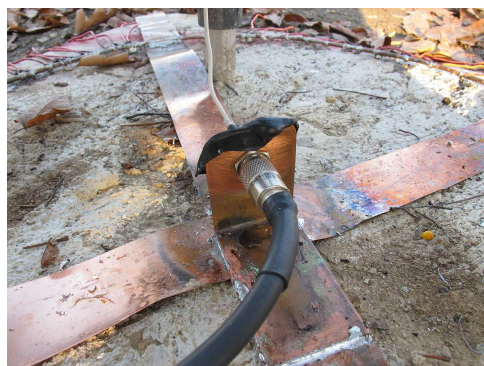


Now it's time to lay the rest of the radials! This is no small task. If we stick with 60 radials at @67 feet each, that's over 4000 feet of wire! Luckily during the last Breeze Shooters hamfest we happened across a vender in the flea market with many spools of wire at a good price. We bought up all he had.

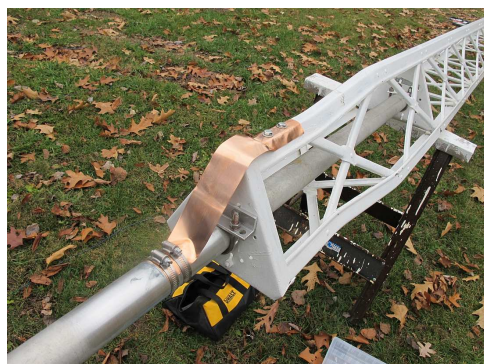




While we still need more wire to finish this project, we have a decent amount of radials down. We will continue to add more wire in the spring. This will reduce the “Ground resistance” which will further improve the performance of this array.



With the bases in, the basic towers assembled and welded, the feedlines and phasing lines run, the phasing box installed, many of the radial down, it was time to build the stingers! Along with the towers that Doc donated to the club, there were yagi



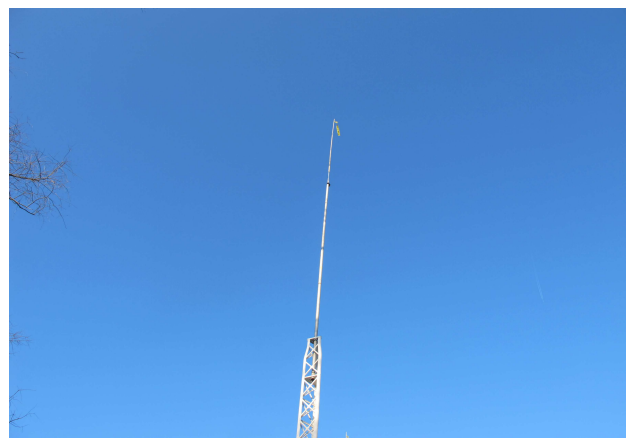
beam parts. The 2 inch mast sections were once the booms for mono-band yagis. The smaller tubing was once the elements of those yagis. It took some figuring, but we were able to make the tapers that got us to the final length needed to obtain resonance.



Using an antenna analyzer we tuned each tower so that there was near zero reactance in each tower at our target frequency. It all went pretty much as the instructions said it would! The only thing is the resistance is slightly high, but will come down to spec when we add the final radials.

Other than all this, it was an easy job! The SWR looks good and they seem to be performing well. We will really find out come contest season. Europe: Look out! Here comes K3MJW.... If all goes as planned Captain Jack will have even MORE QSL cards to fill out!

Again, there were MANY members that contributed big-time to the project. Not everyone shows up in a photograph. As Radio Officer I can't begin to thank them enough. You know who you are.



And that is the 80 meter phased array story.





## The Death of the Elmer & the Rise of the Expert

Robert Powell VK4FFAB courtesy of [eHam.net](http://eHam.net)

Of late I have found that my zeal for sharing what I have been getting up to in radio has been at an all time low. Its not that I am not excited about what I am doing, I am having a wonderful time doing radio, it's that there seems to be little point sharing on social media or forums. I am not alone in this either, with may people that I speak with similarly disillusioned and are dropping out entirely.

And why are we dropping out? Simply, there are too many Experts and not enough Elmers. What's the difference you may ask? Well, the point of the Elmer is to encourage you to continue, to go further and to keep trying. While the expert is all about stroking his own ego so we all know who has the biggest.

The prime example of this attitude is Homebrew. Someone will post a rather cool project they put their heart and soul into building and after 1000 views the post might garner 4 or 5 comments and typically the comments are not very relevant to the project.

But, if someone asks "What Resistor Should I Use" you will have Mom, Dad, The Kids, Aunties, Uncles, Second Cousins and a few Twice Removed's banging on for 10 pages whether to use 1/4w 1/8w 5% 10% etc, stroking each others egos along with plenty of, "back in my day when I worked for the military industrial complex..."

Every expert under the sun and anyone with an opinion crawls out from under their proverbial rocks to show just how expert they are, and tell us how expert they used to be. And this is attitude is typical of just about every topic group there is, people who share their achievements and accomplishments, their posts will gain no traction while the controversial and utterly stupid posts will go viral.

Have we really come so far in radio that the best we have to offer is argument about trivialities? If not, how about more comments like "Thanks for sharing." "Keep at it." "Atta boy." And perhaps then, people will start sharing again because there are more Elmer's and fewer experts.



de WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH HILLS WASHRag



**THIS SPACE AVAILABLE**

Contact: K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET

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## Welcome New Members !!

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

KC3IIO Ed Meising Verona

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.

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## When Money is No object

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Found somewhere out on the Internet—Probably on Google Photos which rarely has credits



## Will A Poor Support Experience 'Gone Viral' Sink Ham Radio Deluxe?

Ron Notarius W3WN

A posting to several Amateur Radio online forums, about an extremely poor customer support experience with the company that now owns the Ham Radio Deluxe software package, has exploded across the Internet, leading many to question whether or not the company will be able to survive the subsequent fallout.

Ham Radio Deluxe is a software package that provides rig control, logging functions, and many other features to supported Amateur Radio transceivers that have a computer interface. It was originally developed, starting in 2003, by Peter Halpin PH1PH/PE1MHO (SK) and Simon Brown HB9DRV/GD4ELI, and it was initially intended to be a simple control program for the then-new ICOM IC-703. Over time, more features and more radios were added to HRD's feature set.

Development of HRD under the "freeware" model by HB9DRV continued for many years. For a variety of reasons, the application and its development were sold to a new company, HRD Software LLC, in November 2011. The owners of HRD Software LLC were Rick Ruhl W4PC, Randy Gawtry K0CBH, and Mike Carpenter WA9PIE.

"Free" versions of HRD, through Version 5.24, remain available on the web at various sites. Support for these versions by HRD LLC are unknown, but there is still a lot of peer-support available. The commercial version of HRD, starting with HRD 6.0 released in February 2012, is currently on Release 6.3.

The start of the existing kerfuffle began when Jim Gierczyk N2SUB, a user of HRD version 6.1, was having various issues. He contacted HRD support but was told that he was "on his own." He then purchased version 6.3, only to learn afterwards that the new version no longer supports Windows XP. N2SUB then purchased a new Windows 10 computer, and successfully installed the new HRD software on it.

A new problem arose when N2SUB installed Microsoft Office 365 on his new computer, which "broke" the HRD logbook and other functions. (This turns out to be a known incompatibility issue due to older .NET drivers used in HRD). He again requested assistance from HRD Support, and found the assistance lacking. As a result, on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, N2SUB wrote a [less than complimentary review of HRD](#) on the eHam review page.

In December 2016, N2SUB again contacted HRD Support over an issue. He was told by Support that he would first have to upgrade to the latest build of Version 6.22 before they could provide assistance. He did so, only to find that when he started HRD, the application would immediately terminate. He reported this in the Support ticket, and was given this immediate response:

**"I'm sorry, but your support has expired and we are unable to provide any further support. We would also like to request that you NOT RENEW your support nor use our software due to the review you placed on eHam back in September. Remember that? <http://www.eham.net/reviews/review/143372> Good luck, and 73 HRD Tech Support"**

He immediately called the HRD Support Line, and was informed that he had been "blacklisted" and that the new version would prevent HRD from running on his machine. He then was contacted two days later, and told that HRD was willing to unblock his copy of the software... if he would remove the negative review he had posted on eHam.

The help desk ticket of the incident can be found at <https://archive.org/details/HRDSoftwareINC> and <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B6A...ZtaVBzKQ/view>

Subsequently, on December 14<sup>th</sup>, N2SUB started new threads on forums on eHam.net, QRZ.COM and other places detailing what had happened to him.

As one might expect, reaction to these posts were swift; a virtual firestorm soon erupted. Most of the initial responses were either in disbelief that a commercial company would actually do something like this to a paying customer, or declaring that the poster would not or would never again do business with HRD. But many other contributors to the threads indicated that they too had had similar poor experiences with HRD Support or HRD LLC in general. Many other stories of "blacklisting" in response to reviews also came to light. (One example is this topic posted by K9IUQ in 2015, <http://www.eham.net/ehamforum/smf/index.php/topic.106480.0.html>. N0IU also reported similar experiences, which can be found in the same thread.)

Initial reaction from HRD came from co-owner W4PC. He claimed that N2SUB's support expired on November 30<sup>th</sup>, which is why he received no assistance, and that he could revert to the previous version without issue. This did not explain, though, why N2SUB was instructed to download a version that would not work – or why he was not told at the time (as he claims) that his support had expired. It also did not explain the email response requesting that N2SUB NOT renew his support, or the demand that the negative review must be removed prior to any further support.

On December 16<sup>th</sup>, it [came to light on Reddit](#) that the "blacklisting" based on negative reviews [has been ongoing for a long time](#). A screenshot of eHam reviews showed almost every negative review coupled with that call shown as "blacklisted".

Several commenters have pointed out that the ability to disable the software for "any" reason was spelled out in the HRD license agreement. This is usually done for reasons involving illegal or malicious use, or for pirated copies. To have it done because of a negative review is (in Amateur Radio circles, at least) virtually unheard of prior to this.

On Page 4 of the PDF of the support ticket (see links above), "Rick" (who is alleged to be W4PC, one of the owners) admits that N2SUB was put on "a blacklist in our code", cited section 7 of the Terms of Service (license agreement), and also threatened to see N2SUB in court if the negative review was not deleted. (At no point did "Rick" indicate what was allegedly "blatantly false" about the September 2<sup>nd</sup> review, just that he wanted it completely removed)

As the issue attracted more and more attention, at one point the owner of QRZ.COM, Fred Lloyd AA7BQ personally removed the forum discussion thread about the HRD issue, and then posted an explanation as to why he did so. Many forum members responded angrily about this, alleging that HRD had requested that AA7BQ do this to try and silence the issue. Within a short time, the original thread was restored, and as of deadline is still open for comments.

At some point in time, the Twitter feed for HRD was deleted as well.

Finally, on December 17<sup>th</sup>, WA9PIE issued apologies on both the eHam and QRZ threads, stating that the situation was "regrettable" and that he was going to make amends with N2SUB. He also stated that it was "not the policy or practice of HRD Software, LLC" to retaliate against negative reviews. This was followed by [an apology from W4PC](#), withdrawing his threat of a lawsuit, and blaming his "mistake and error of judgement" on low blood sugar, due to his diabetes medication(s).

Reaction to both apologies were harsh, especially since it had come to light that this was not an isolated incident, but had been part of an ongoing pattern of support issues. WA9PIE made multiple additional posts to both forums to try and again apologize, and to answer some questions. Many others remain unanswered.

WA9PIE has also said that he would be discussing with his partners the future role(s) that W4PC would have with the company in the future, in light of these incidents.

On December 19<sup>th</sup>, [a story about the incident](#) "broke" on the UK website "The Register@ – Biting The Hand That Feeds IT". Several details of the story do not appear to be strictly correct, this still sparked comments from outside the relatively small world of the Amateur Radio forums. A [follow-up story](#) posted there on December 21<sup>st</sup> also revealed more details about the blacklist itself.

The black list itself actually works very simply. The newer versions of HRD have a "phone home" mode (via telnet) on startup; the software contacts a license server owned by HRD and checks to see if the call sign of the user is in a database of users. If the database lists that call with a status code of "Blacklisted", the HRD application immediately terminates.

Continued on page 12



## Poor HRD Support Experience

continued from Page 11

It also came to light that a negative review might not be the only reason that a call was Blacklisted.

- Karel Cornelis ON7TA reported that he discovered he was Blacklisted because someone at HRD believed he was a member of a Yahoo group critical of the company, and he was only removed from it by W4PC after he had demonstrated to their satisfaction that he was not.
- Guy Simmons G4DWW / 4X1LT asked HRD, while still within the 30 day trial license period, if he could be given a discount on the license cost, as he has been recovering from multiple medical issues the last few years. He was offered a 15% discount. "A day or so later my trial license did not work." According to the support ticket, [posted on his web site](#), he was accused by Support of being "not exactly truthful" about his medical condition, and was told that this "upsets all of us." Support accused him of providing misleading or false information, and explicitly requested that he "didn't bother" to purchase the software license. Guy states that only after he contacted the owners regarding this ticket was his 15% discount re-instated.

WA9PIE has stated since this came to light that all "Blacklisted" calls have been removed from their license server. (It is not known if other status codes, such as "Inactive" or "Deleted", were affected by this action, nor is it known if the company would ever reinstate this status code in the future). He has also apologized, again, saying that while he is an owner and investor in HRD LLC Inc. (and is listed as their President), he did not have a hand in the day-to-day operations of the company, and was unaware of many of the actions that have now come to light.

A [new issue was raised](#) on December 25<sup>th</sup> by an anonymous ham calling himself "CHRISDX". He has alleged that while using the trial copy of the software, he discovered that his call had been changed to "TH1EF". HRD Support allegedly told him that he [must have used a trial copy in the past](#), but did not admit to changing his call.

Where do things stand today? As of deadline:

- More hams have come forward with stories of support issues that did not resolve well.
- Other hams have indicated that they will not purchase HRD or not renew their license or support contract, because of the issues that have come to light. Current users of HRD have indicated that the current release still "phones home" to the license server, but at least as of the moment, no one has reported being blocked based on their call (although there have been other issues with that server or one like it).
- Many commenters are urging HRD Supporters to drop the application and switch to other packages, including LOG4OM, DXLab, N1MM+, N3FJP, and others.
- VK3AMA, developer of the application JTA!ert, has announced that he will no longer provide support for HRD Version 6 Logging within the app, as of JTA!ert 2.9.0, and will not support HRD v6 going forward. (See sidebar right)
- And the open forum discussions on eHam, QRZ, the Island of Misfit Hams and other sites continue to churn content.

On December 30<sup>th</sup>, a press release from HRD Software LLC was posted on their forums by WA9PIE announcing that W4PC was leaving the company. (See below). In light of the revelations regarding W4PC's customer service interactions, this was not entirely unexpected. Whether this will quell the controversy, or if other significant changes are forthcoming, remains unknown.

More than a few have wondered if HRD LLC can survive the firestorm that erupted since this news broke. The lack of news remains bleak. There is rampant speculation that so many users are allegedly abandoning the package that it will not remain on the market for long. Others are wondering if a change in the ownership arrangements will take place and/or become necessary. Yet others are clamoring for another company or group of individuals to purchase the HRD software application, alleging that the current ownership/management have become "tainted" to keep the company viable. And there are those demanding that the posters cease, and give WA9PIE "more time" to implement his changes to turn things around, that the company will survive.

The departure of W4PC is a start. Where things will end remain to be seen.

## HRD Software, LLC Announces Departure of Co-Founder Rick Ruhl W4PC To Pursue Other Interests

HRD Software, LLC [Press Release](#)

Tampa, FL; Dallas, TX; St. Paul, MN — December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016 — HRD Software, LLC, producer of Ham Radio Deluxe, the world's leading software application suite for ham radio operators, announces the departure of co-founder, Rick Ruhl (W4PC) to pursue other interests. This change becomes effective as of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016.

"After twenty years, I'm retiring from the ham radio market," stated Ruhl.

Co-founder, Michael Carper (WA9PIE) continued, "Ham Radio Deluxe software would have been abandoned in 2011 without Rick's partnership. Over the past five years, we have introduced many new features and resolved many long-standing defects in the software. Rick's day-to-day leadership in running the business has contributed to the vitality and functionality of Ham Radio Deluxe."

Co-founders Carper and Randy Gawtry (KØGBH) expect that there will be a transition period that will begin in early 2017.

"On behalf of the entire company, I would like to thank Rick for his contributions over the past five years and wish him well in his future endeavors," concluded Gawtry.

HRD Software, LLC expects to release a revised End User License Agreement shortly to modernize and renew our commitment to our customers.

— Mike Carper WA9PIE

<http://forums.hrdsoftwarellc.com/forum/hrd-6-x-peer-support-forums/hrd-announcements/40696-important-news-regarding-hrd-software-llc>

"To all JTA!ert / HRD V6 users, I will no longer be providing support for HRD V6 logging within JTA!ert. This comes into effect with the next public release of JTA!ert (2.9.0). Affected HRD users can continue to use the current version of JTA!ert (2.8.7) for as long as they want. I will not be able to provide any support for that version, however, if a future HRD release breaks the JTA!ert/HRD integration. The free V5 of HRD will continue to be supported. Moving forward, all future JTA!ert versions will not support HRD V6 logging. I will not be participating in any public or private discussions regarding the reasons for this decision". I sincerely apologise to the affected HRD users."

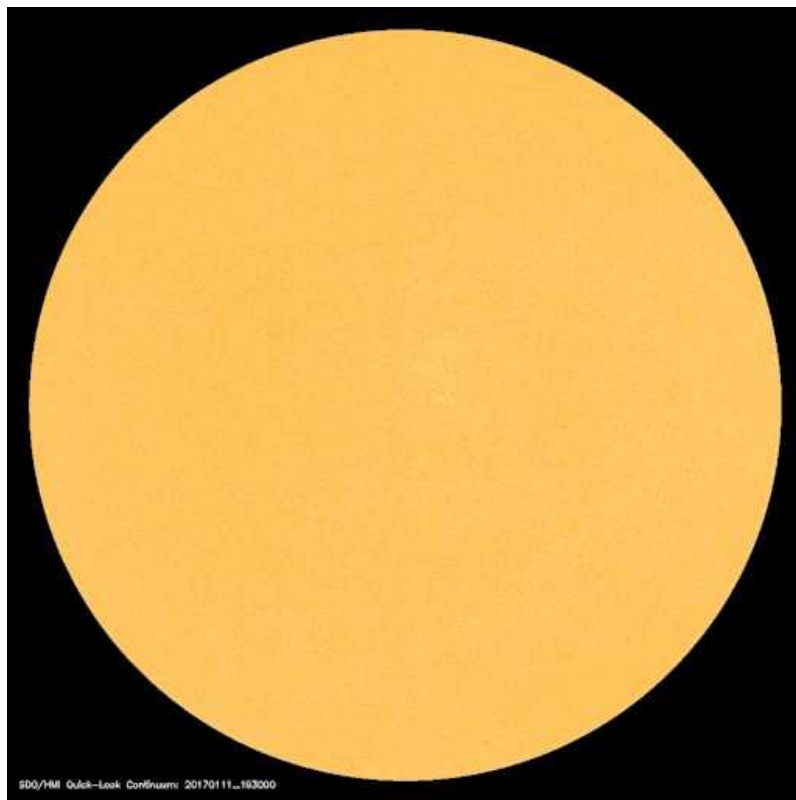
Laurie Cowcher  
VK3AMA



## SUNSPOTS VANISH

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January 12, 2017: So far in 2017, the big story in space weather is sunspots--or rather, the lack thereof. The sun has been blank more than 90% of the time. Only one very tiny spot observed for a few hours on Jan. 3rd interrupted a string of spotless days from New Years through Jan.11th. Devoid of dark cores, yesterday's sun is typical of the year so far:



The last time the sun produced a similar string of spotless days was May of 2010, almost 7 years ago. That was near the end of the previous deep Solar Minimum. The current stretch is a sign that Solar Minimum is coming again. Sunspot numbers rise and fall with an ~11-year period, slowly oscillating between Solar Max and Solar Min. In 2017, the pendulum is swinging toward the bottom.

de <http://spaceweather.com/>

*ED: This might explain why things have fallen off after we made some good digital contacts early in January . . .*

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THIS SPACE AVAILABLE

Contact: K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET

## QSO King Antenna Review

Jody - K3JZD

During a discussion about antennas that took place on the K3MJW reflector, Oscar – WO3O said that he was having success using a 'QSO King' antenna. I had never heard of that one, so that prompted me to do some research. I found out that this is a limited-space End Fed Non-Resonant Wire Antenna that is manufactured and sold directly by NØUR. I found that there are several models, with different band coverages and lengths. Reviews on eHam.net were pretty positive.



<http://tinyurl.com/hgpmuoh>

I have been looking for something for my limited space that will work on 80 meters and the WARC bands. I have been using my 40 meter dipole on 80 meters and 30 meters, and using my 20-15-10 beam on 17 meters, but with some really high SWR with each of these 'misuse' cases. While I was still able to successfully chase some SOTA Activators that way on 30 and 17 meters, my performance on 80 meters was quite dismal. And, every time that I transmitted on 80 meters, my paper shredder in the next room would run. There was a QSO King antenna model that was only 59 feet long, that claimed to cover 80-6 meters as long as you used some kind of a transmatch (tuner) with it. One that is that short would fit in my yard.

While it might have been possible to fabricate something from scratch for less money, NØUR's price seemed fair to me. So, I ordered his 59 foot 80-6 meter model.

Since adding a new antenna is never politically correct at my place, and since I do not have many supports available for wire antennas, I figured it would be best to do some kind of a temporary installation to see how well it worked before starting any negotiations. I was only going to use 100 watts with this antenna. So rather than use the 14 gauge wire that was supplied, I elected to use some black 26 gauge stealth antenna wire and I hung it up on the sly.

I installed it completely horizontal rather than sloping upward. It was just 8 feet off of the ground, running from the corner of my rear deck roof out to my 40 meter dipole support pole. Not directly under my 40 meter dipole the whole way, but closer than I liked. But, I did not have any other support to use out at the far end. And, the far end was pointed to SE, which is less than ideal. I fed it with 100 feet of LMR240, using an 8x8 RF Choke (8 loops in the coax at an 8 inch diameter, right where it connects to the antenna enclosure). I temporarily ran the coax in through the back window. (Since it is a stealth antenna, I could not get any picture of that showed the installed antenna).

I did my initial testing in the afternoon using CW and the Reverse Beacon Network (RBN). My IC-756ProIII was able to tune all of the bands from 80 meters to 10 meters using the internal transmatch (tuner). I was able to get RBN Monitoring Reports on 80-40-30-20-17-15 meters. No one seems to be monitoring 12 or 10 meters right now. However, my field strength meter showed more RF in the shack than I like to see, and my shack computer's speakers were acting like a side-tone monitor on some of the bands. I added a counterpoise wire and ran it over and connected it to my external antenna grounding system. That eliminated 90% of the RF in the shack and quieted down my computer's speakers. I then retested using CW and the RBN. I got improved RBN Monitoring Reports on all of the same six bands with this counterpoise/ground wire connected.

Since my primary goal was to get something usable on 80 meters, and since the RBN reports on 80 meters were pretty fair, early that evening I fired up JT65 and started calling CQ on 80 meters. I'm not real familiar with 80



meter propagation, but from what I was seeing on JT65 it looked like a lot of QSB. While I did not get the level of response to my CQs that I will get on 40 meter JT65, I nonetheless got answers and I made quite a few 600 to 800 mile QSOs during the early evening hours. Remember, I'm doing this with a short compromise 80 meter antenna that is only 8 feet off of the ground and only running 20 watts. And, the actual SWR of this antenna on 80 meters is 4.5:1.

I went back to doing some more 80 meter JT65 work late in the evening and into early the next morning. By then, I was having West Coast stations answering my CQs. I saw some European DX in there from time to time, but none of them jumped on my CQs (although, I did see some weak signals answering me that I could not decode). I chased a European Russian station and to my surprise, managed to work him. And I got a decent signal report from him. That was a nice 4886 mile validation of what this antenna installed just eight feet off of the ground can do on 80 meters. The next night I worked a JT65 station in Ukraine on 80 meters - he was 5550 miles away. Nice to be able to have a repeat performance.

I will not be able to compete with the 80 meter beams, four squares, two squares, full size 80 meter wires, or long wires with this shortened compromise antenna. But, from the testing that I did while it was just 8 feet off of the ground, I think that it is a keeper for using on 80 meters and the WARC bands that I really do not have any other good antenna for. So, now it is time to start thinking about a permanent installation where it will be higher at the far end.. And what I can do to use to get that height. Oh yeah, then it will become negotiating time as it will no longer be a stealth antenna.

While I did not have any reason to open the enclosure containing the toroid, everything that I saw from the outside of the enclosure was good quality and well constructed. Based on my experiences with it so far, I think that I can safely recommend this as a good antenna solution for anyone with an internal or external transmatch (tuner), and a similar need for a shortened end-fed antenna that covers a lot of HF bands.

Jody - K3JZD

### Skyview Digital Challenge Modes

By the time you receive this, the January JT65 Mode will be history. While I was working JT65, I saw a lot more of our members in there giving it a try this year. So, I'm expecting to see a lot more logs show up. Propagation was not the greatest at times during January, but there were some pretty good days and evenings. Hopefully everyone tried 40 meters and/or 80 meters to see what is possible and to get the bonuses for using those bands.

February's Challenge Mode is RTTY. RTTY is not used much in day-to-day operation. But, whenever there is a RTTY contest, everyone comes out of the closet and it is usually wall to wall RTTY on the bands that are open.

I decided February would be a great month to do RTTY because there are several RTTY Contests during the month. The big ones will be the CQ WPX RTTY Contest on February 11-12th. And the North American QSO Party, RTTY on February 25-26th. There is also a Mexico RTTY International Contest on February 4-5th. So, get your favorite RTTY software (MMTTY or whatever) hooked up to N1MM+ and work some RTTY DX. And yes, you will find RTTY DX on 40 and 80 meters.

March's Challenge Mode will be PSK31. After doing JT65 and RTTY, I'm thinking that you will find PSK31 to be more challenging. While PSK31 is quite popular, the QSB will get in your way while you are chasing DX. Setup some very brief macros in your favorite PSK31 program (fldigi or whatever) to use when working PSK31 DX. Treat PSK31 DX contacts like working a contest, sending them only the minimum information, and repeat it 3-4 times. Just send 'PA', and not your city. If you send them long winded chatty stuff in your macros, you will most likely lose the QSO due to QSB.

Remember that there is some guidance from 2016 on using these modes that can be found in the Files section of the Yahoo K3MJW Reflector. You can also find this same information on <http://www.nelis.net> Click on my QSL card, go to 'Files Page 1', and then follow your nose.

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 . . . .

Are FM Broadcasting's day numbered?. Digital Audio Broadcasting has taken its place in some European countries. But, is it really better quality, or is it just being able to sell spectrum to more people? Here's a look at it:

<http://tinyurl.com/hoty6j7>

Comcast remains America's most hated company—can you believe that ??

<http://tinyurl.com/gsu2wgr>

Ever wonder what the Air Traffic Controllers have to deal with? This is not too exciting later in the evening because most planes are parked. More interesting during the day.

<http://sdrsharp.com:8080/virtualradar/desktop.html>

I'll consider any Kul - Links that you find.  
Email then to me at: K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET  
They might just end up in the next issue



Next Newsletter will be April 1, 2017  
Closing Date For Submissions : March 15, 2017

K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET

## Issue Wrap-up

In closing, I want to highlight Cooky's contributions. His shack photo is definitely Au Natural. His report on why and how we now have the new 80 Meter Phased Array is quite concise. And his documenting and passing along the technique that Don – WA3HGW showed him will be very useful to me whenever I need to put a new tip on my 1955 vintage Weller Soldering Gun.

As each of us grew up and learned to use our native language, we were taught sentence structure, nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs (and probably some more stuff). We were taught that sentences need to have a verb. To help us remember that, we were told that the verb was the "Action Word" in a sentence. How does this relate to Skyview? Well, here is a little exercise for you that will explain it.

For each of the following Action Words, write a sentence which uses both that Action Word and the proper noun "Cooky":

cut, trim, maintain, design, create, locate, buy, build, setup, connect, adjust, tune, test, repair, ship, replace, relocate, receive, haul, evaluate, sell, climb, lift, attach, aim, clean, replenish, count, find, furnish, frame, arrange, download, install, configure, schedule, coordinate, oversee, motivate, teach, elmer, crimp, solder, announce, operate, log, report, track, cook, represent, promote, write, document, photograph, archive.

Have I forgotten anything?

Cooky, from all us at Skyview, thank you for everything that you do for our club. I could write just about all my sentences using what I have observed in 2016 alone. If you were to take a 12 month long sabbatical to tour the world (to visit all of the automobile museums, or something), we would have a very large number of "Skyview Action Words" to redistribute.

Jody—K3JZD



## Q5er – The Official Newsletter of the Skyview Radio Society



Q5er Editor & Publisher: Jody Nelis - K3JZD

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email your comments and article submissions to:  
**K3JZD AT ARRL DOT 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 ??