SKYVIEW
Skyview Radio Society, K3MJW
K3MJW
2335 Turkey Ridge Road
New Kensington, PA 15068

Q5er – The Official Newsletter of the Skyview Radio Society

April 1, 2017

A Newsletters Editor's Dream Come True

This edition of the Q5er is chock full of articles that have been submitted by lots of people. Definitely what a newsletter editor loves to see happening.

Bob - K3RMB will playing a role in the Boy Scouts of America Jamboree that will be held at the nearby Summit Bechtel Scout Reserve in West Virginia this year. Bob submitted an article about the preparations that it takes to get ready for this event along with some pictures from the 2013 Jamboree where he had assisted.

Joe - N3TTE submitted an article about safety, which is very timely as we go into the Spring season and make improvements to out antennas.

Chuck - K3CLT submitted three articles for this issue. One takes the mystery out of the signal reports that we use for the digital modes. One describes the difficulties that he had installing his on-glass antenna and 2 meter radio in his new truck. And one describes what it takes to be successful when running HF Mobile.

Dan - KB3FCZ submitted an article about the frequency of the usage of the letters in the English language alphabet, and how the Morse code was designed with that in mind. For those of you learning, or wanting to learn Mores code, this clearly shows the order in which you want to master learning the letters.

Tom - W3TLN submitted an article which talks about getting an unexpected request to change his vanity call sign.

And Richard - N2GBR continues to share with us his trials and successes as he marches toward achieving the coveted SOTA Mountain Goat status with no repeated summits.

I did not want to put any of these great articles on the shelf, so I published them all. And more, as I always have to add something here and there. If I always had this much input, I would probably change to publishing monthly. But, for now, enjoy this nice supersized issue. (And keep those articles coming) Jody — K3JZD

BREAKING NEWS

Technician license class up the joint April 8th and 15th from 9:00am until 3:00pm. VE session at 3:00pm on the 15th, to put that learning to good use.

Short Notice for newsletter readers - but this has been published and discussed on the K3MJW Yahoo Reflector for quite a while now (you do get the automatic email updates sent to you from there don't you?)

- HF Mobile Operation
- DSP Audio Filters
- Frequency of Letters
- W 3 Tommy Loves [who]?
- N2GBR in MD and VA
- UK Ham Did It Hard Way
- Lesson in Awareness
- Free Towers
- And Much More . . . . . .

Hamfesr Season is finally here.

The Skyview Swap n Shop will be on August 27, 2017

Keep That Data Open

And, plan some outdoor ham activities.

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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

As we approach Springtime in PA, we start to come out of Winter hibernation and begin to think about warm weather activities.

For me, my favorite warm weather activities include getting out on my Harley and a getting some bugs in my teeth, getting up to the gun club and doing some target and trap shooting, and getting out to do some portable operating.

I just started doing portable operations last Summer. I started out by using my existing Ten-Tec 555, a short pole, a simple 40 meter dipole, and a small SLAB (Sealed Lead Acid Battery). That did not involve much of a cash outlay, and it showed me what can be done.

I then bought an FT-817, a quick deployable 20-40 meter link dipole antenna, a longer collapsible pole to use to get the center of the antenna up to a better Inverted-V configuration, and some Li-Ion batteries to create a more versatile package for doing my portable operations.

Last Summer I went out and setup at some local parks. I operated from Oak Hollow Park in North Huntington, Northmoreland Park in Apollo, and Boyce Park in Monroeville. Naturally parks situated in higher locations are preferable. And I did a couple of National Parks on the Air activations. Whenever Fall came, I was already pretty well equipped, so I tried doing some Summits on the Air (SOTA) operation.

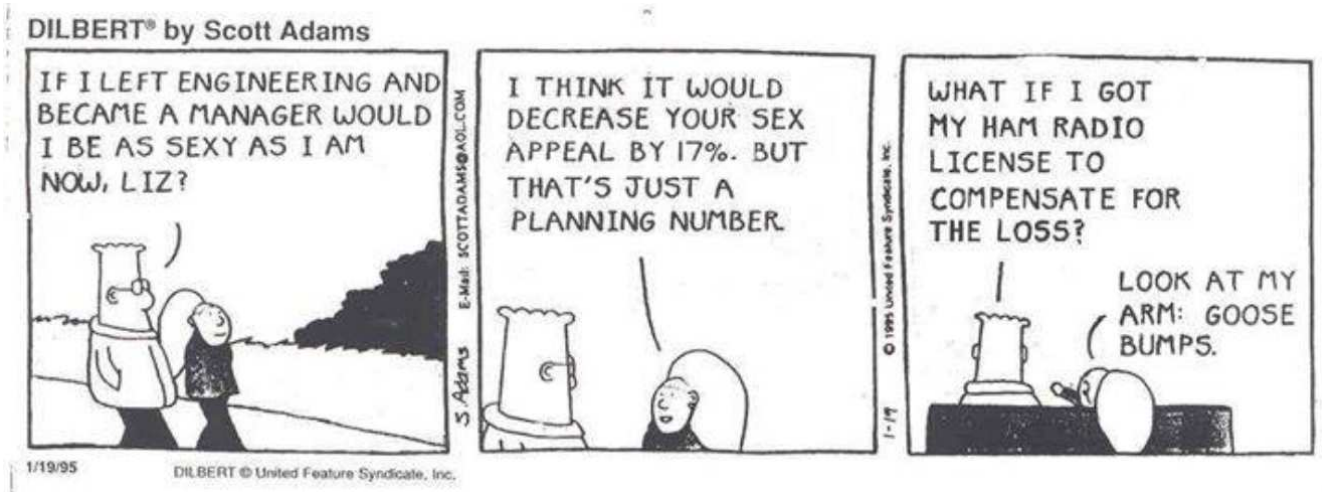
This summer I am going to go look at Bushy Run Battlefield to see if I can operate from there. The high spot there is at elevation 1250, and it is not a long walk from a visitor's parking lot up to that high spot. (That won't be any good during re-enactment weekend though).

Unlike SOTA operations where you do not want to carry a lot of weight, you can travel a little heavier whenever you are doing local parks. Generally you can park close enough to where you will setup to allow making a couple of trips carrying stuff. I will add at least a comfortable folding chair and a small folding table whenever I'm operating from local parks. A bigger heavier SLAB is no problem if you are using a power hungry radio.

You can also operate portable from your own yard. I have done that whenever I have built a new antenna and wanted to verify that it worked OK before taking it out to somewhere else. And, last Fall I operated from the back yard of my place in Conneaut Lake, PA. I had just built some new End Fed Half Wave (EFHW) antennas and I wanted to see if they were would work in the small lot that I have there. The pictures later in this issue show that operation. (They did OK there, but there is not really enough room there for any permanent EFHW antenna installation).

So, if you are looking to add something new, consider trying doing some portable operation. Once you get into it , it is hard to stop.

Jody—K3JZD



ARES/RACES Report for March, 2017 de WQ3Q

Hi gang. There is a good amount of you that are familiar with the ARES and RACES groups whose primary function is to assist served agency responding teams for natural and man-made disasters. You've often heard it said (if not seen it on ham's t-shirts)…"when all else fails, ham radio!"

Well that is not only a phrase of pride, but a phrase of obligation to our communities as well.

The federal government grants us the free use of the airways for our hobby and in return they ask that we be respectful of the governing laws and of other hams on those airways. However, and perhaps most importantly we are asked to do what we can to help in times of need, whether for flooding, severe storm damage and any other special circumstance of communications emergency that affects the communities we live around, or work in.

Skyview has the unique position of being in what I'd like to refer to as the four-corners area of Butler, Allegheny Westmoreland and Armstrong (and even if we stretch it a bit, Indiana) counties. We have members located in all of those counties or near enough to be considered as such. That, along with the size of our group and the quality of hams, and equipment at our disposal makes us an invaluable resource for helping in times of need. Not that we are replacing those we often call "first responders," but rather it is important for us to both report incidents to local authorities at an onset of an emergency but then to be willing to be called on if needed to perform specified communications as requested (and only as requested, by the way.)

I am going to be the liaison for Skyview Radio Society to the local ARES and RACES organizations. My job is to inform our members of activities, trainings, exercises and anything else that will enable us as individuals to do our part in using our hobby for the betterment and safety of where we live. For that reason I will be talking to you via this section in each of the "*Q5er*" newsletters. I also would like to find some of you to offer to be a local contact to help in the county or city that needs it. Please don't shy away from this request. Your neighbors may well depend upon your involvement.

That's it for this time. I'll get more info out in the next Q5er

73,

Rich WQ3Q
Quack Quack

From http://www.arrl.org/ares

Amateur Radio Emergency Service® (ARES)

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service® (ARES) consists of licensed amateurs who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment, with their local ARES leadership, for communications duty in the public service when disaster strikes.

ARES Membership Requirements

Every licensed amateur, regardless of membership in ARRL or any other local or national organization is eligible to apply for membership in ARES. Training may be required or desired to participate fully in ARES. Please inquire at the local level for specific information. Because ARES is an Amateur Radio program, only licensed radio amateurs are eligible for membership. The possession of emergency-powered equipment is desirable, but is not a requirement for membership.

From *http://www.usraces.org/*

Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES)

RACES stands for "Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service," a protocol created by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC Part 97, Section 407). Many government agencies across the country train their Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS) volunteers using the RACES protocol. The volunteers serve their respective jurisdictions pursuant to guidelines and mandates established by local emergency management officials.

RACES volunteer operators are:

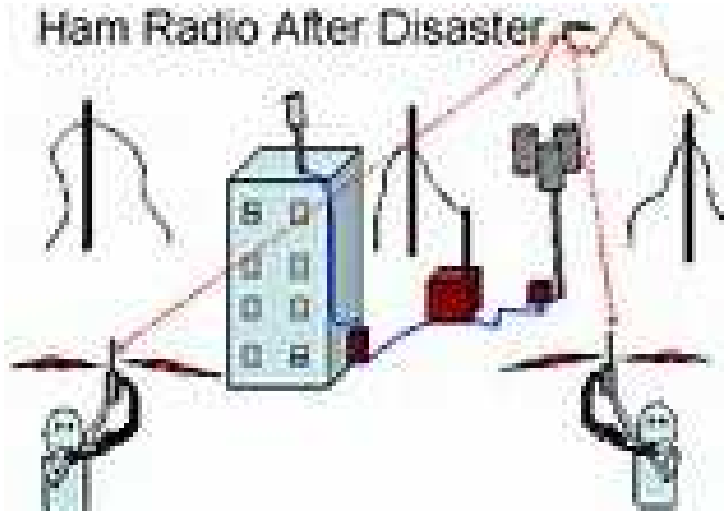
- Licensed Radio Amateurs
- Certified by a civil defense agency
- Able to communicate on Amateur Radio frequencies during drills, exercises and emergencies
- Activated by local, county and state jurisdictions and are the only Amateur Radio operators authorized to transmit during declared emergencies when the President of the United States specifically invokes the *War Powers Act.*

RACES Resource Library:

This web site is intended to assist in the distribution of RACES Auxiliary Emergency Communications information. Updated RACES documentation and other emergency preparedness documents are available through the RACES Resource Library, maintained by RACES volunteers registered with the Arlington County, Virginia Office of Emergency Management, Emergency Support Function #2.

National Incident Management System:

Protocols embraced by RACES volunteers across the nation include the *National Incident Management System* (NIMS), which provides a consistent nationwide template to enable federal, state and local governments, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to work together to protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents.



Public Service Events = ARES/RACES Training

HOW CAN A VANITY CALL GET YOU INTO HOT WATER?

W 3 Tommy Loves [who?]

Two or three years ago I contacted the W3 area ARRL QSL bureau in MD inquiring if I had any incoming QSLs. They responded that I had a couple. I mailed postage paid envelopes to them as requested in 2015.

So in Feb. 2017 I sent an email to the W3 bureau requesting they send any QSLs, even if it was only one. The next day I was surprised to find one of my envelopes in my mail box containing 17 QSLs. The earliest QSO was from 2012. That was I nice surprise and a quick turnaround time.

That evening I received the email (quoted below) from Fred Laun, K3ZO, W3 area QSL manager. He remembered the previous holder of my vanity call, W3TLN. As you can see in his email, quoted below, the previous holder of W3TLN used the phonetics "W3 Tommy Loves Nancy".

I read his reply, to me, to my wife Sandy. She laughed and told me to change my call to W3TLS, "W3 Tommy Loves Sandy". Has anyone else had a request, from their spouse, to change their call sign??

Tom - W3TLN

Thanks Tom for your e-mail to the QSL Bureau.

Our records show that your four envelopes were received here on December 15, 2015. I am copying your letter sorter John, K3TEJ on this reply so that he will be apprised of your wishes.

Thanks for your FB cooperation with the QSL Bureau. Your predecessor with the W3TLN call sign was quite active in phone DX contests from the Baltimore area when I first moved to Washington in the 1960's and the phonetics "W3 Tommy Loves Nancy" are still ringing in my ears.

73, Fred Laun, K3ZO

Manager NCDXA/ARRL Third Call Area Incoming QSL Bureau

On Tue, Feb 7, 2017 at 7:43 PM, W3TLN <tomnagy@consolidated.net> wrote:

Hi Fred;

Would you please send any QSLs in my box, even if it's only one. I mailed envelopes and postage some time ago.

Thank you,

Tom Nagy, W3TLN

The Skyview Spotlight

The Skyview Spotlight for this issue shines on: A1ASS

What was your first exposure to and your first impressions of Ham Radio?

Heard some stuff on my police scanner – it sounded pretty neat.

What triggered your decision to become a Ham? Did you have an Elmer? Who was it?

Nope, no one named Elmer in my family.

Have any other family members who are Hams?

Aunt Mildred looks a little bit like Porky Pig.

When were you first licensed? How old were you whenever you were first licensed?

Not Applicable

Why can't I find your call on QRZ.com?

I asked them that – they said I had to have a license. Who needs them anyway?

What's your name anyway?

I go by Badass – that's why I decided to use A1ASS.

What was your first rig and antenna?

A nice FT901 that I got fixed so it will transmit everywhere and my 5KW amplifier and half a mile of wire hidden up in the woods out behind me (I put it up there so they can't find me).

What modes do you operate? Which is your favorite mode and why?

SSB – What else is there?

Do you volunteer your Ham Radio Skills for Public Service Events?

Nope – there are people who get paid to do that bull****.

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

Having to blast a hole whenever there is some inference on MY Frequency.

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

Getting my house rewired so I could use my 5KW amplifier without the lights going dim.

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

Cheaper than using cell phones maybe??

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

I'd like to see them get rid of these people who think they can police the airwaves – air is supposed to be free you know.

What would another Ham Radio operator be surprised to know about you?

Lots. But nothing that I would want them to know.

What do you tell non-Ham Radio operators about this hobby?

Get yourself the biggest amplifier you can get and get in there and play.

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

Skip the license crap – just do it.

What kind of work do your do, and for who (or if retired, what kind of work did your do, and for who)?

Work? I'm sort of self-employed I guess.

What other hobbies do you have?

Shooting things that move.

Any other Ham Radio stories that you have?

Yeah – here's a funny one. Someone told me about this digital Just Talk 65 stuff and where to go to do it. That sounded like fun. I don't have a 65KW amplifier, but I tuned up my 5KW amplifier real good and set my digital dial to that place that they told me to go to. I just started talking about how my day was going. I figured some others who also wanted to Just Talk would join in. But all I heard when I let up were funny noises. So, I figured I would talk some more. I told some dirty jokes and expressed my opinions about politics and religion. Still no one joined me there. I then did a review of all of the XXX–Rated movies that I have seen in the last month, thinking that would get some people to pipe in and join me. After two hours, I gave up – no one want to Just Talk – maybe they knew that I did not really have a 65KW amplifier and they shunned me. The next day, I was talking to BigBubba. He said that he heard some people whining about how all of the digital stuff got knocked out for two hours yesterday because some lid was on there. I guess that is why no one Just Talked to me – someone must have put a lid on the digital sun spots and broke the Just Talk 65 or something.

Why did I interview you?

Because I'm the only one who volunteered.

Ed: It may be time to retire this feature

A Lesson in Awareness

Joe - N3TTE

With the upcoming antenna and construction season, I've decided to share the following story that brought home to me the importance of being aware of what is happening around you and what is happening to anyone working with you.

In 1979 I was working in the Westinghouse Nuclear Service Division and was on a project team that was running a test on some equipment at an active nuclear power plant during that plant's maintenance outage.

Because this was an active plant there was significant radiation and contamination so workers were tightly limited to the amount of time they could spend inside the plant. Once a worker received his quarterly permitted allotment of radiation, the worker was no longer permitted inside the plant and had to be sent home. So we had to use temporary workers for labor, and these workers were at the bottom on the 'pecking order', so to speak.

As the electrical engineer on the team, it was my job to supervise the installation of the cabling. We had a junction box that was located on a temporary platform about 30 ft from the floor. The edge of the platform was 'protected' by a waist high chain.

A steel beam ran across the platform about forehead high and everyone who worked on the platform hit his head on the beam at least once. Due to the presence of airborne contamination, everyone was sealed in a vinyl suit with a full face respirator. Because of the respirator, all you could see was straight ahead, not up, down or sideways unless you moved your head. (Wearing respirators is why everyone was hitting the beam.)

When it was time to install and connect the cables, I went up on the platform with a laborer. I was connecting some cables to the junction box and as the laborer was moving an airhose I saw him bang his head on the beam.

After he hit his head, the laborer walked over to the edge of the platform. I got up, walked over to him, put my arm around his shoulder and asked 'Are you OK?' After a minute, he said, "yeah" and started to work again and I finished installing the cables.

After we were done for the day, the laborer told me in the plant locker room that he had hit his head so hard that he was dizzy and almost went over the edge of the platform. My going over to him and holding him stopped him from falling off the platform and probably saved his life. (Remember, the safety chain was only waist high and the platform was about 30 ft high.)

At the time, I didn't think anything about what I was doing, or why I was doing it. Asking someone if they are OK is a totally natural thing to do. But in retrospect, asking him if he was OK was probably the most important thing I did that day.

I'm not claiming that this incident changed my life. But it did make me more aware of things that are the really important things in life. And it brought home to me the importance of watching out for the other guy (or gal), especially on a jobsite.

Joe Birsa - N3TTE

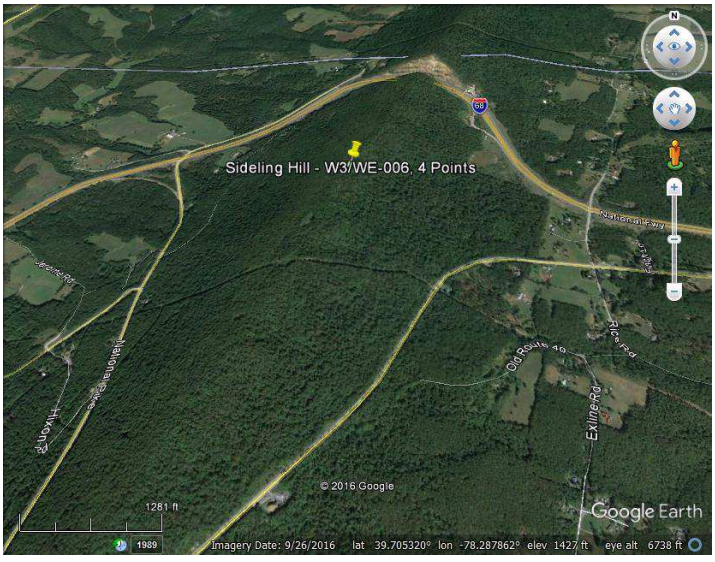
4-6-8-10, A Day Out in Maryland

Richard - N2GBR

The W3 area, from a Summits on the Air (SOTA) perspective, is split into nine Regions (Capital Region, Erie, Pennsylvania Dutch, Philadelphia, Pocono, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Wilds, Susquehanna Valley and , Western). I pass through the Western [Maryland] SOTA Region on my many trips down to VA for work, but usually its travel time and I'm chasing to be somewhere for a meeting, not doing a SOTA activation.

On February 5th, I had another mission in mind for the end of the day... picking up my mother-in-law from the Pittsburgh airport. It seemed like the perfect opportunity to get up early and head EAST, yes East for an early morning start and a day of SOTA activations in Western Maryland.

I left home just after 6 AM and hit the Turnpike in good time to hear the turnpike workers checking in and was left wondering why out of four guys one chose a shotgun over a rifle?? I had packed my KX3 and the FT857 plus a 20/40M link-dipole and a 20/40M EFHW. The MUF was stated at 16Mhz… it was going to be a 7Mhz day in my mind. Weather forecast was somewhere between 30 and 40F, maybe some wind and a little rain. My first summit would be Sideling Hill. which is just a bit West of Hancock , MD.



W3/WE-006 Sideling Hill (4points) Parking is just off the road on a service road heading up to a pair of fenced in communication towers. One of these installations was well marked as Federal, the other owned by an electricity company, I passed them as I struck out on the spine of the hill heading roughly East into the activation zone. The walk wasn't as bad as some, with fewer blown-down trees and even some semblance of a path to follow. After about 15-20 minutes I was in the activation zone. I got the antenna support string into the tree on the second attempt, and pulled the Link-Dipole up to about 20ft elevation.

It was about 14:20UTC when I realized I left the PL259/BNC adapter at home… umm where's that box of antenna connectors that's "always" in my bag, "oh-well" (or words to that effect), over to the KX3.. I tuned around and found a guy calling CQ for the VT QSO party… quick chat with him and then down to business.. As usual, the contact list read as a who's-who of the NA East coast SOTA group.. 21 logged, I unplugged at 15:09UTC.. 21 contacts on 7.189Mhz, 4 Points + 3 Winter Bonus = 7 Points.

W3/WE-003 Warrior Mountain (6 Points) Driving over to Warrior Mtn., let's just say I let the horses run and made good time, which was important as this one was going to be "the Walk" of the day. I passed up a couple of parking spots right on the road to find one a bit buried in the forest, away from interested parties willing to do mischief (I hoped). Entering the wood I had 1.5 miles and about 800ft of ascent to reach the

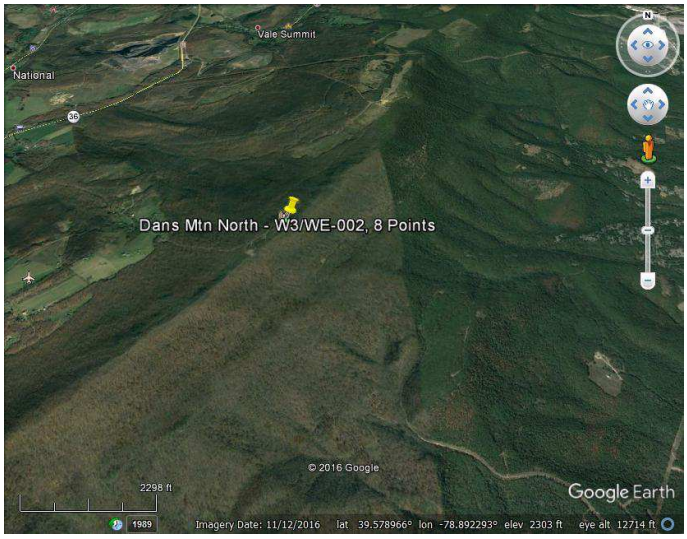
activation zone/summit, that's about 1:30hrs estimated . Navigation was interesting as there are a couple of peaks in close proximity and a head-down and hike could put me on the wrong side of a ridge line and another bucket to drop-into and climb out-of.. Eventually I reached the base of the hill and took it at a murderous pace.

First time success on the antenna launching meant I was up and on-air by 17:26UTC - again on 7Mhz. Activation was uneventful but a cold wind was hurtling up the valley to where I'd set-up. I made a 17 QSO's and caught a Summit to Summit (S2S) with Pat - KI4SVM who was somewhere in NC where he was activating SOTA Summit W4C/WM106. I unplugged at 17:49UTC.. 17 contacts on 7.189Mhz, 6 Points + 3 Winter Bonus = 9 Points (16 points cumulative). I packed up quickly and "ran" down the hill back to my car to get off to the next summit.

The next two summits were very simple.. drive to the top, push up an antenna and operate… not really my thing (I like a good hike), but this was as good a time as any to get them done.

W3/WE-002 Dan's Mountain North (8points), I think the total walk time was 2mins (in my defense there was a dusting of snow on the rocks!) and the snow made the activation ambience much nicer.

I was alone on the peak today, which is unusual I hear.. Normally on a nice weather weekend any other time of the year there are people (kids) scrambling all over the place making antenna set-up a chore. It is hard to see in this picture, but the base rocks are all very colorfully vandalized with spray paint.



I pushed up my SOTAbeams mast after securing it to a guy wire for a tower.. Noise was higher here on 7Mhz, S7 in fact, not really a surprise though… I counted 16 towers on this hill… most with multiple antennas! I was up and on-air by 19:50UTC, I made 13 QSO's including another S2S QSO with Pat who was still on the same hill. I unplugged at 20:05UTC. 8 Points + 3 Winter Bonus = 11 Points (27 points cumulative.)

W3/WE-001 Marsh Hill (10points), Marsh Hill is the jewel in the crown of the Western Region. It is the highest summit in Western Maryland. Unfortunately the WISP mountain ski center has taken over the hill, with the actual Summit peak being right at the head of their ski lifts. Now you drive all the way up to the summit, park your car and wander off to the woods to activate. Pretty boring in my book.

I found a secluded spot and set-up. It was chilly here as it was coming to the end of the day. I was up and on-air by 21:45UTC, I made 8 QSO's before the QRO folks and their splatter obliterated my QRP signal. The highlight was another S2S QSO, this time with Darren - KD5ZZK who was on a hill in W5 land and making his way via SOTA peaks to Florida for the Hamfest down there. I unplugged at 21:58UTC. 10 Points + 3 Winter Bonus = 13 points (40 Points cumulative)

A very successful day out, these 40 Points pushed my activator score to 700; added another 'SOTA Complete' (that means a hill that I have both chased and activated) to 19 and increased my S2S (summit to summit) score to over 600 Points.

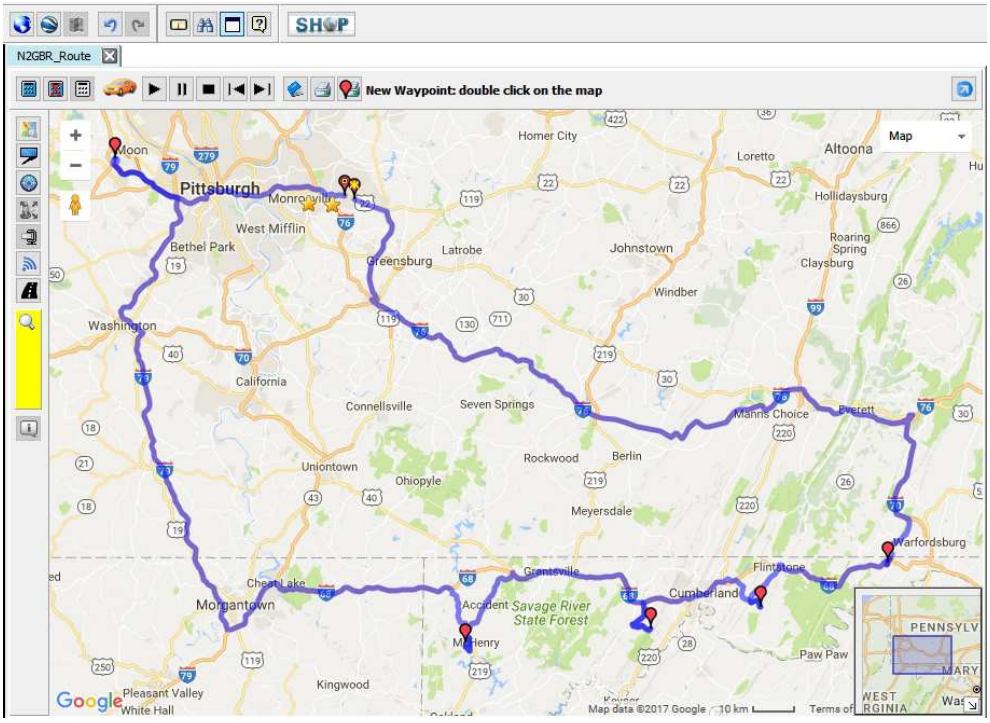
As you've read this far, I'm happy to report that Grandma was met on-time and safely transported home.

Richard // N2GBR

Ed: Worth noting is that in addition to the walking to get up to the summits, this was also about 400 miles of driving whenever one considers that the 'on the way home' stop that Richard made at the Pittsburgh Airport was included in the day's loop.

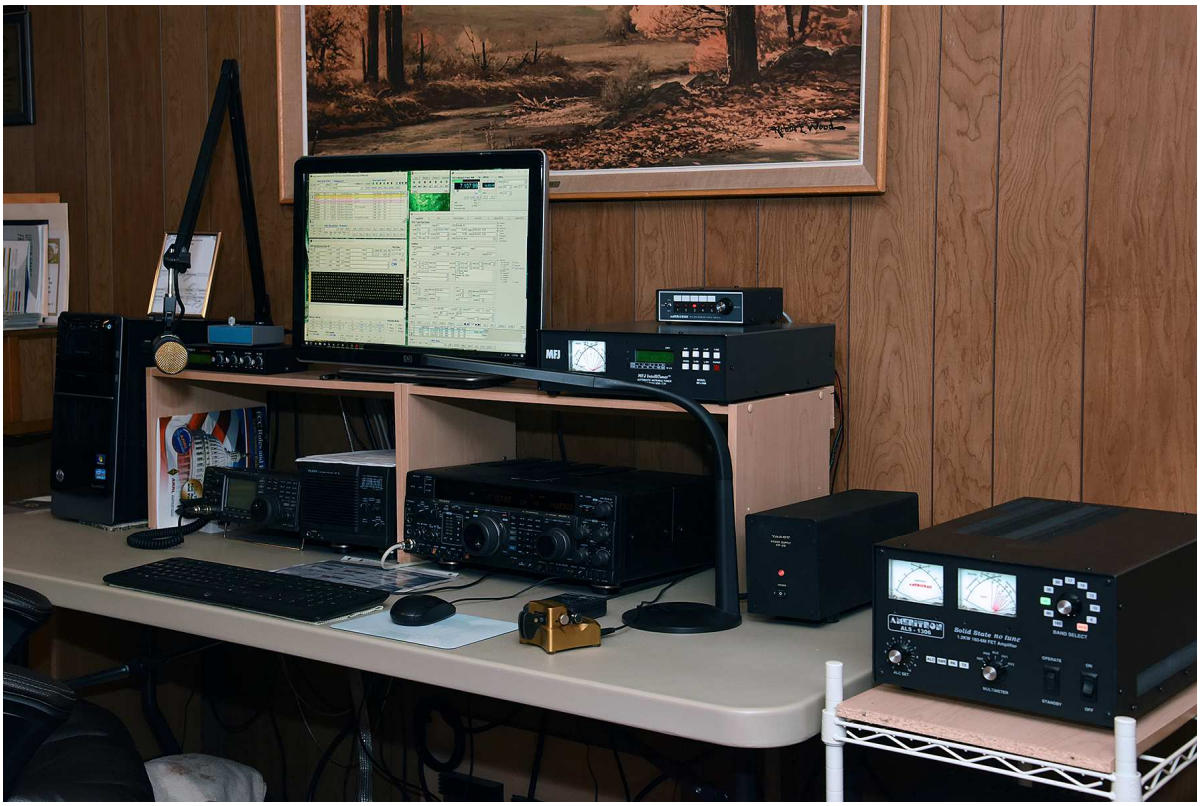
This may not be the exact route that was taken, but this is what my mapping program suggests would be the best route to take.

Quite a day !!



Show Me Yours and I'll Show You Mine

The Featured Hamshack for this issue belongs to: Bob - K3RMB



On Glass Antennas

Chuck - K3CLT

I have been using On Glass Antennas on my vehicles for a few years now and they seem to work OK. 2 meters and 70cm are pretty forgiving. If you can hear the repeater you can usually get back into it.

So I bought a new Ford aluminum body pick up and started to look at possible locations for the radio installation and what I can do for an antenna. I had the On Glass antenna off my other vehicle and liked it because again it worked Ok and made for a Clean Installation. The problem I was facing is that the rear window has the wires in it for the defroster.

I thought about this for awhile and decided to write to Joes Hallas from QST. Joel is always a good source for information and he does his research and gets back to you with in a couple of days. I explained what I wanted to do and what I was dealing with and wanted his take on how the antenna would work.

Joel wrote back and he had concerns about the wire defroster due to the fact that they are grounded. Keeping this in mind I decided to give it a try. I looked at the location of the wires in the glass to see if there was any area where I could install the inside piece and the outside piece without going over a wire. I could not get above the wire on the top of the glass without the inside piece overlapping by about 25%. I put it on the glass and tried it using my HT. Performance was terrible.

The location at the bottom of the glass was a little better but I still had an overlap and most of the whip was below the roof line on the truck so performance was still pretty bad. On top of that I am not sure if the tinting on the glass had any effect on the performance.

I moved the antenna to the front windshield and it worked like a champ. I don't like that location so that's all for the On Glass antenna. I am working on a bracket to mount a regular NMO antenna on the side of the bed keeping it about a foot from the back of the cab.

Now my next challenge is mounting the radio. You would think that with a truck that big there would be plenty of room to mount all the parts and pieces. Nope, the control head for the radio will probably end up inside the console and I am not sure where the speaker is going to end up.

Now I have to write Joel back and tell him the outcome and that he is right again as usual. **de K3CLT**

ED: *Is Chuck the only one who has a good Mobile Radio / Antenna mounting story to tell ???*

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

It has been reported that ALF was an unlicensed pirate operator.

Nonetheless, he gave some nationwide visibility to the hobby.

His operating sessions were more entertaining that Willie's.

And for that, we will make the claim that he was famous.

K2BSA

HAM OF SCOUTING

Amateur Radio Vision - Jamboree 2017

Amateur radio has been a part of the Jamboree experience since at least 1953 when K6BSA was in operation from Irvine Ranch in California. This was followed by K3BSA in 1957 and 1964 at Valley Forge, KØBSA in 1960 from Colorado Springs, K7WSJ at the1967 World Scout Jamboree in Idaho, KF7BSA in 1969 from Idaho, and KJ3BSA in Moraine State Park and KJ7BSA in Idaho for the 1973 Jamboree. K2BSA has been in operation at the Jamboree since 1977. Over that time, it has provided demonstrations of amateur radio to thousands of Scouts, provided training that helped Scouts earn hundreds of Radio Merit Badges, and along the way introduced the fun, technology, and magic of amateur radio.

The 2017 Jamboree operation at the Summit Bechtel Scout Reserve in West Virginia will take advantage of lessons learned during the 2013 Jamboree, the three VHF/UHF repeaters installed by Icom America, as well as other existing infrastructure from 2013. K2BSA plans to:

- Operate a demonstration station with a goal of introducing ten percent of Jamboree participants (about 4,000) to amateur radio
- Teach the Radio Merit Badge with a goal of 400 Scouts earning the badge during the Jamboree
- Provide an ARDF-Foxhunting course with expectations of over 100 teams completing the course
- Provide high visibility events for participants, such as a two-way contact with an astronaut on the International Space Station
- Operate a special event station to make contacts worldwide with amateur radio and Scouting enthusiasts to allow them to participate in the Jamboree

K2BSA will also operate social media and website channels to publicize activities and engage a broad audience to publicize the event and activities.

- Adapted from http://www.k2bsa.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/K2BSA-Jamboree-2017-Overview-V5.pdf

Bob - K3RMB

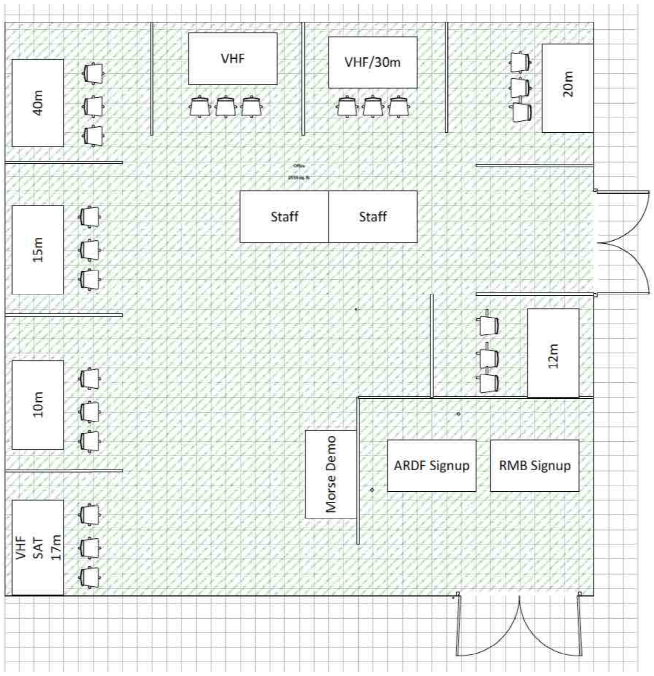
Getting Ready for the "Big Show"

Bob - K3RMB

The National Scout Jamboree, sometimes referred to as the "Big Show", is a gathering of thousands of members of the Boy Scouts of America. Held approximately every four years, the next edition comes up this summer at the Bechtel Summit Reserve, near Beckley, West Virginia. Participants are formed into troops of 40 persons by local councils. Each troop consists of 37 scouts, 2 adult leaders over the age of 21 and one 'Junior Assistant Scoutmaster' aged 18-21. These troops camp together, prepare meals together and can take part in numerous activities such as white water rafting, BMX and Mountain Biking, ATV experience, Rifle & Shotgun, zip lines, skate boards, canopy tours, and more. There is a 'midway' with numerous merit badge opportunities. And don't forget the stadium shows which feature national personalities and performers (Mike Rowe spoke and Two Dog Night performed at the 2013 Jambo). Each troop will also give a day of service to the neighboring West Virginia communities.

The K2BSA Amateur Radio operation at the 2017 National Scout Jamboree will engage 40 volunteer Scouters for a period of 15 days, July 15-29, 2017. As envisioned, the program will introduce approximately 4,000 Scouts to Amateur Radio via demonstration stations; assist 400 scouts to earn the Radio Merit Badge; provide an opportunity for 100 teams to participate in ARDF Fox Hunting; make satellite contacts; and operate a 'Special Event' station to reach out to other amateurs around the world.

The plan is to house the demonstration station in a 40' X 40' tent, divided to provide 8 operating positions. Each position will be dedicated to one band, operating SSB, PSK31, CW (Likely only the 'Special Event' station), FM, D-Star, SSTV, JT65, etc.



Merit Badge Classes will be held in two smaller 20' X 20' tents, each divided into 2 class rooms. Classes will start hourly beginning at 9:00 a.m. and will run for 3-1/2 to 4 hours each. The time will be divided into two teaching segments and a time in the middle for scouts to complete on-the-air contacts.

ARDF Foxhunting and team support services will operate out of one additional 20' X 20' tent.

The Staff is divided into teams: Demonstration Station; Radio Merit Badge; Technical Support; and ARDF. There will also be one person to advertise activities vie social media. Jim Wilson, K5ND is the lead for the K2BSA operation.

Equipment and supplies for the Jamboree are being provided by several major suppliers, including Icom America; DX Engineering; MFJ Enterprises; and ARRL. All equipment is being shipped directly to the Summit.

Unlike the 2013 Jamboree, there will be no opportunity for staff to assemble and test equipment in advance and no local supplier to supply missed items. Consequently, team members who come from all over the country, are currently coordinating activities via Email, conference calls and webinars. The group will physically come together on July 15th and will have only four days to set up the tents, equipment, antennas, computer networks, etc. One day has been allotted, at the end, for tear down, packing and return shipping.

For details on the full Operations plan, check out http://www.k2bsa.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/K2BSA-Jamboree-Ops-V4-1.pdf.

(Photos are by K3RMB, from the 2013 Jamboree)

Is a -13db signal better than a -19db signal report?

Chuck - K3CLT

Last year when Skyview started the Digital Challenge I got to wondering about what the signal reports meant. We all know that a S-9 report is stronger and in some cases better than a S-6 report. We know that but what does these reports we get now? Is a (-) minus number better than a (+) plus number? Well after looking at what I had on my computer screen and the number in my spreadsheet log I had to find the answer.

I went out to the internet and tried to find something there but for the most part I struck out. It could have been to the way that I ask the question or just the number of Internet Experts lurking out there that I could not get an answer.

Well where to look or ask now? I have it; I will go right to the top. I sent out an e-mail to Joel Hallas over at QST and ask him the question. Now we are getting somewhere, or so I thought.

I actually got a double reply from Joel, and here is part of the first one:

db is an abbreviation for "decibel" a logarithmic expression of relative strength, or power ratio. And it goes on from there for a page an a half talking about increasing signal fro 100 watts to 500 watts and formulas to computing that. Along with a little table:

Db	*Power Ratio*
1	*1.25*
2	*1.6*
3	*2.0*
6	*4.0*
10	*10.0*
20	*100.0*

He finished with 'I hope that made sense and answers your question'.

Not to be one to leave something hanging out there in the QRM Joel wrote me back again later that evening. He had passed along the question to Steve Ford WB8IMY. Steve is the Editor in Chief for QST and the local digital modes guru. Here is Steve's reply:

The RRR-13 in my example is the signal report provided by the other operator. A report of -13 means that Chuck's signal is 13db below the other operator's noise floor. If Chuck is receiving the guy at -19db, Chuck's signal is 6db stronger at the other fellows station.

When it comes to JT-9 or JT-65 signal reports, the lower the negative number, the stronger the signal. A report of -5 means you have a very powerful signal at the other end of the path. Minus 1 is considered rock crushing and if it crosses into + territory, it is outrageous.

73. . .Steve WB8IMY

UK Ham Does Summits on the Air Activation the Hard Way

de N2GBR ***02/03/2017***

A radio amateur in the UK, Colin Evans, M1BUU, attained Summits on the Air (SOTA) Mountain Goat status on January 28 on the summit of Whernside, the highest peak in Yorkshire, but he took an unusual approach by waiting until after he reached the summit toconstruct his station equipment. He had taken along a 20-meter QRPme RockMite kit, a homebrew key kit, a vertical antenna kit, and a gas-powered soldering iron.

Conditions were not exactly ideal. Sheltering from wind, rain, and snow in a small tent, Evans was able to constructed the RockMite, key, and antenna in less than 4 hours. Better yet, his first contact with the 250 mW RockMite was with N1EU near Albany, New York, more than 3,000 miles away. He also completed three subsequent contacts with European stations, satisfying the SOTA requirement of four contacts to claim the activation points.

The SOTA Mountain Goat is awarded for gaining 1,000 SOTA Activator points.

"There's a good chance that if you work me, I'll be using a rig that I've built myself," Evans said on his QRZ.com profile. He typically operates QRP and has been involved in the SOTA program since 2004. -- *Thanks to Southgate Amateur Radio News*

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de N2GBR .. as posted on the SOTA Reflector by M1BUU

The general story goes something like this -

I started with SOTA way back in 2004, aged 24. Just after I found SOTA, I also found love - Fiona and I will celebrate our 10th wedding anniversary in April. You know how the story goes.....

Winter time has generally been quiet in terms of family stuff, so it's generally this time of year when I activate, usually January to March.

You've heard of extreme ironing, right?

Extreme ironing en.wikipedia.org3

Extreme ironing (also called EI) is an extreme sport in which people take ironing boards to remote locations and iron items of clothing. According to the Extreme Ironing Bureau, extreme ironing is "the latest danger sport that combines the thrills of an extreme outdoor activity with the satisfaction of a well-pressed shirt." Part of the attraction and interest the media has shown towards extreme ironing seems to center on the issue of whether it is really a sport or not.

http://tinyurl.com/nqnbqjq

Being a prolific builder of radio kits, I thought I would do my own twist on Extreme Ironing - Extreme Solder Ironing!

Today was the day. I took a RockMite kit, a homemade key kit and a homemade vertical antenna kit up to the summit of Whernside G/NP-004. I assembled the kits using a gas powered soldering iron. Thankfully I took my little tent with me, the weather wasn't exactly tropical.

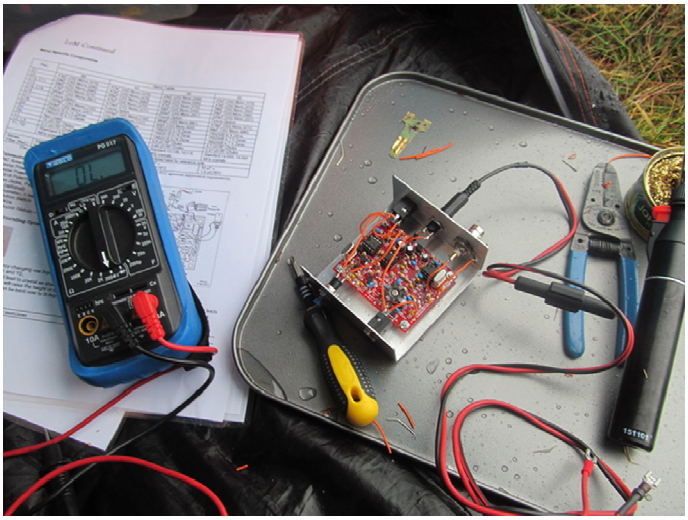
The kits went together well and the RockMite fired up first time without any debugging, although the building took much longer than I had reckoned.

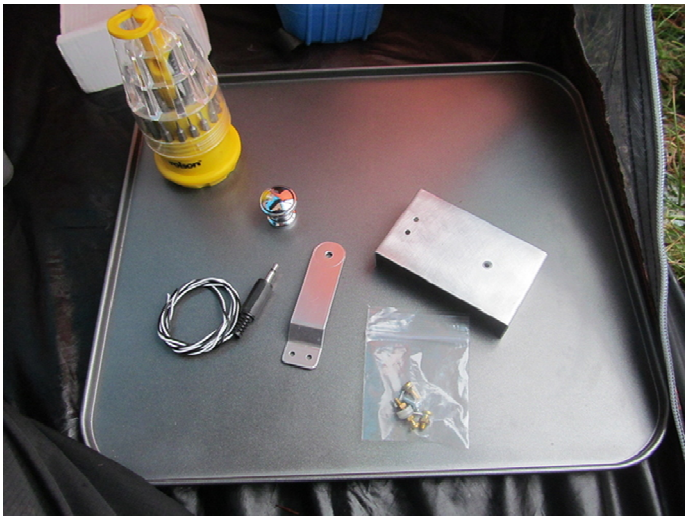
I was late on air, but eventually Barry N1EU found me

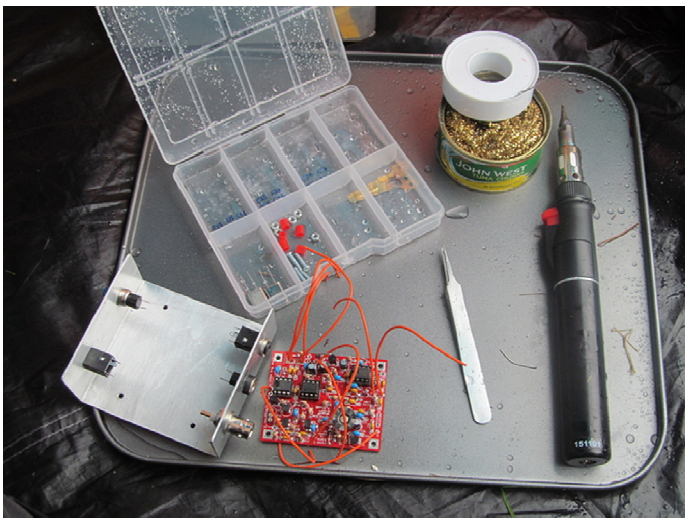
for my first contact. Shortly after followed SP9AMH, OH9XX and finally EU2MM to earn me my needed 6 points. Mountain Goat was in the bag! The QSB was very evident today, QSO's were tough, except with OH9XX, who was ear blasting.

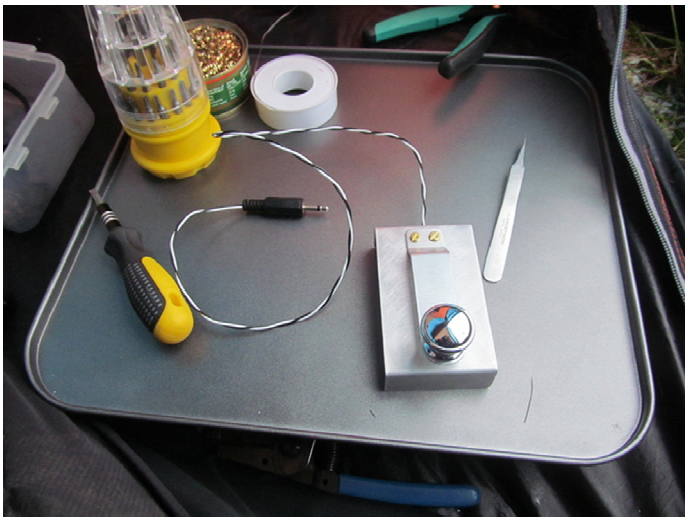
(ED: This is a 400mw Radio)


Weller






JOHN WEST



Firing up the FT817 (I intended to share my success with as many as possible!), I worked a handful more stations on CW and SSB, but my time was rapidly dwindling.

73, Colin - M1BUU

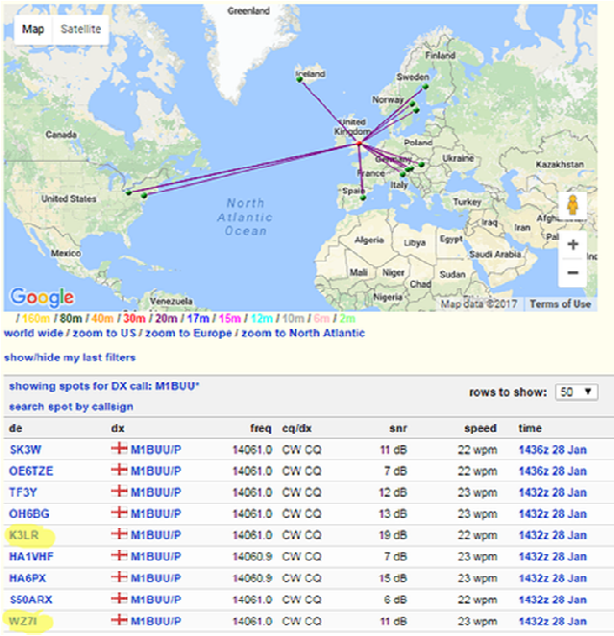
Here is the Audio: http://n1eu.com/mp3/m1buu.mp3

Thanks to Dennis G6YBC (Kanga Products) for sponsoring a RockMite II ver. 1 PCB

Also thanks to Pete G4ISJ for supplying the solder!

I did this for my own amusement but I'm happy that others feel that they can take away something of value to them.

I suppose, to me, this project represents my journey within SOTA, learning how to operate from summits, learning about circuits and honing my construction skills, and also learning Morse to a high enough standard to get by with rubber stamp QSO's. Without a doubt, SOTA has pushed me to be a more complete, rounded, radio amateur. I'm still not great on the mike, so maybe I should try to do more on SSB in the future, although I'll never grow tired of that wonderful feeling after a concise CW QSO, where both ops are in perfect synchronisation, it is truly magical.



de	dx	freq	cq/dx	snr	speed	time
SK3W	M1BUU/P	14061.0	CW CQ	11 dB	22 wpm	1436z 28 Jan
OE6TZE	M1BUU/P	14061.0	CW CQ	7 dB	22 wpm	1436z 28 Jan
TF3Y	M1BUU/P	14061.0	CW CQ	12 dB	23 wpm	1432z 28 Jan
OH6BG	M1BUU/P	14061.0	CW CQ	13 dB	23 wpm	1432z 28 Jan
K3LR	M1BUU/P	14061.0	CW CQ	19 dB	22 wpm	1432z 28 Jan
HA1VHF	M1BUU/P	14060.9	CW CQ	7 dB	23 wpm	1432z 28 Jan
HA6PX	M1BUU/P	14060.9	CW CQ	15 dB	23 wpm	1432z 28 Jan
S50ARX	M1BUU/P	14061.0	CW CQ	6 dB	22 wpm	1432z 28 Jan
WZ7I	M1BUU/P	14061.0	CW CQ	11 dB	23 wpm	1432z 28 Jan

HF Mobile Operation

de Chuck - K3CLT

About 11 years ago I installed a HF radio in my company pick up truck. I was working down in Atlanta at the time so I went to the local HRO and bought a mount and some HamStick antennas. I did some tuning on the antennas using the SWR meter in the Yaesu Ft 857 radio I had installed. 20 meters and 10 meters seemed to go OK. When I tried to tune the 40 meter stick I could not get it to tune in. I went and talked to the store manager at HRO and he ask me how I had the antenna mounted, and did I have any ground straps on it. Well I had a bracket mounted on the side of my tool box and had the tool box clamped down on the bed so I thought that was all that was needed.

The store manager gave me a length of braided ground strap and the MFJ analyzer and some direction as to what to do. I went out and clipped the one end to the mount on the tool box and the other end to a bolt on the door hinge on the truck. Now when I adjusted the antenna the SWR came right down and I was able to adjust it to a pretty low reading.

I used the MFJ meter and adjusted the other HamSticks I had and got all of them tuned in. I bought some of the strapping material and got busy on the truck. I bought some self tapping screws and some flat washers and ran the strapping from the antenna mount on the tool box to the bed and from the bed to the cab. Now I was on the air and making contacts. The noise from the computers on the truck decreased also.

About 5 years later I got a replacement truck a 2008 Chevy. I hooked up my radio and started the truck to see how things sounded. Man did I have the noise. I could hear the fuel pump all the time, and all of the computers. I would turn off the ignition and the noise would continue for 30-45 seconds until everything shut down.

I got a new supply of braided ground strap and went to work. I went from the antenna mount to the bed, from the bed to the cab, from the cab to the radio mount under the rear seat, and from the body to the frame on the left side and from the frame to the exhaust system on the right side.

Bingo, the noise was all gone. I was running with S-0 to S-3 noise level at 70 mph on the turnpike. I moved up from the HamSticks to a High Sierra Sidekick (Screwdriver) antenna and results were the same. I drove back from Illinois one day and did the 13 Colonies Contest and bagged all 13 stations and the bonus station on the way home. I even worked a guy who sounded like WC3O. Small world

I could work the 80 meter net up on the east coast while driving to work in Texas City, Texas. Not too shabby for a 100 watt mobile.

While were talking about radio installations let me touch on hooking up the radio. I always used 10 gauge wires from the battery to the radio. I went to Wal Mart and in the auto section I picked up a couple of fuse blocks that are usually used to hook up the big Boom Box car radios. They give me the ability to bring in the 10 gauge on one side and have a couple of taps on the other end where I connected my HF radio along with my dual bander and my screwdriver antenna power leads. I had both radio bodies mounted under the rear seat of the truck. I never a shortage of power for the radios. It's also nice when replacing batteries to try and get the biggest battery you can fit in the vehicle.

So there you have it. May not be the best for everyone but it worked for me, someone who operated from mobile everyday and made many contacts all over the world. Chuck Tobias - K3CLT

THE FREQUENCY OF LETTERS

de Dan - KB3FCZ

Have you ever wondered about the frequency of the usage of letters? The thought came up in a Morse code class as, what was the logic used to arrange the Morse code characters as they are. Also reflecting on the TV game show, Wheel of Fortune, where certain letters are always selected first, specifically, R S and T are the first letters chosen both by the contestants and by the house in the last game. This all brings the question, is there a frequency to the usage of letters? On the Wheel of Fortune is there an advantage to use one letter over another? In Morse code is there any reason for the order in which they are arranged?

In Morse code one would think that A would be one dot, B would be two dots, C would be 3 dots, D would be 4 dots, E would be one dash, F would be two dashes, G would be three dashes, H would be four dashes, etc.. It does make sense. But it is not that way.

In a search for the Frequency of Letters it was found in the World Book Encyclopedia at the beginning of each letter a definition of and an explanation of the usage of the subject letter. Included in this definition is of the frequency of usage of the subject letter. Example for the letter A the section states that A is about the third most frequently used letter in books, newspapers, and other printed material in English. The following is a table of the alphabet with the Morse code for each letter and a number representing the frequency of usage for that letter. In this usage the number 1 is defined as the most frequently used down to the number 26 as the least frequently used.

Letter	Code	Frequency	Letter	Code	Frequency
A	.-	3	N	-.	5
B	- ...	20	O	---	4
C	-.-.	13	P	.--.	18
D	-..	10	Q	--.-	25
E	.	1	R	.-.	6
F	..-.	15	S	...	8
G	--.	16	T	-	2
H	....	9	U	..-	12
I	..	7	V	...-	21
J	.---	24	W	.--	19
K	-.-	22	X	-..-	23
L	.-..	11	Y	-.--	17
M	--	14	Z	--..	26

If we now look at the above table we see that E with a code of one dot and T with a code of one dash have a frequency of 1 and 2 respectively. We may have something here. The most frequently used letters have the simplest code. And in the Wheel the R, S and T have a frequency number less than ten. Remember that they choose consonants to get money. They skip over the vowels with A at 3, E at 1, I at 7 and O at 4. The only letter that does not fit is N at 5. We will have to see if N is chosen after R, S and T.

Now if we take the above table and sort it to put the frequency column in order we have.

Letter	Code	Frequency	Letter	Code	Frequency
E	.	1	M	--	14
T	-	2	F	..-.	15
A	.-	3	G	--.	16
O	---	4	Y	-.--	17
N	-.	5	P	.--.	18
R	.-.	6	W	.--	19
I	..	7	B	-...	20
S	...	8	V	...-	21
H	....	9	K	-.-	22
D	-..	10	X	-..-	23
L	.-..	11	J	.---	24
U	..-	12	Q	--.-	25
C	-.-.	13	Z	--..	26

The above table shows that the code was arranged to be simple for the frequently used letters and as the simple codes were used up the more complex codes were used for the less frequent letters. We should keep in mind that the code was developed some time ago when the frequency may have been slightly different.

I find that very interesting that there was a logic for the development of the code the way it is now. It was the frequency of use to ease the learning of the letters and to speed the transmission of information. If the most frequent letters involve less characters the letters can be sent faster.

Daniel Patton -- KB3FCZ

(*ED: Most of the guidelines for teaching the code recognize that many words can be formed from the most used characters and suggest teaching in this order)*

99 Points in Three Days... N2GBR goes to Shenandoah

With the winter bonus period in full swing and unseasonably warm weather I jumped on the opportunity for a three-day adventure to the Blue Ridge Parkway and skyline drive / Shenandoah park.

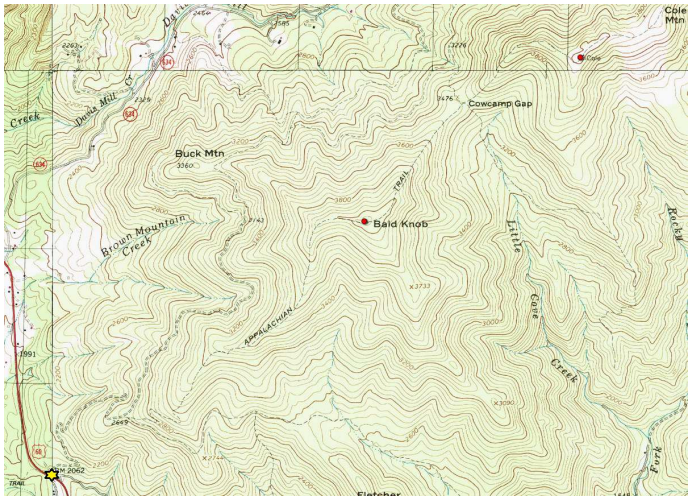
I finally drove out of my driveway around 7pm Monday night, the plan was stop and sleep in the car on the way… I reached Breezewood, grabbed dinner and headed to the back parking lot of the Holiday Inn for a couple of hours sleep. Around 11:30 I woke and decided to press on. My next stop was the rest-stop on I81 about 30miles from Lexington. Here I slept for another 3hours.

Tuesday

Cole Mtn W4V/BR-006 and Bald Knob W4V/BR-004 (Verizon = good, S6 noise 40m)

I arrived at the AT crossing point on RT60 Orinoco / Lexington Turnpike around 6:40am. The route to Cole on the AT is approx 9.2Miles Round trip (RT) and involves about 3500ft of vertical. Out of the car and up the initial climb was pretty hard.. 4+hrs of driving and a short nights' sleep in a car is not the best preparation for a long hike. On the plus side it was looking like a good day for a hike. A touch windy, but around 45F and cloudy.

I reached Cowcamp Gap at 8:50am and the summit at **Cole Mmtn W4V/BR-006**, at 9:45am (4.6miles in 2.5hrs).



Plenty of time for a coffee-break before operating… I slung my Dipole up in the trees along the edge of the open grassy top at about 7ft above ground and at 15:10 sent my first CQ. 22 QSO's in the log including 2E0KVJ and SA4BLM DX stations.. Conditions weren't all that bad.

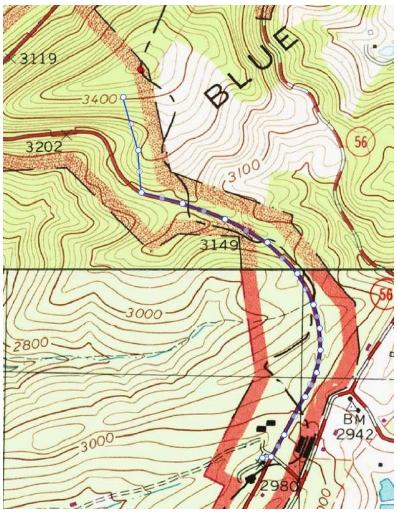
On the hike back over to **Bald Knob (W4V/BR-004)**, I noticed crashed plane bits and pieces.. on the North slope beside the Appalachian Trail.

Back on Bald Knob Summit I found a nice antenna tree and put up my Link dipole at about 20ft. I made around 40 QSO's from 17:30 to 18:24 on 40m and 20m including a QSO with G0RQL (Don) in the UK and some of my friends from my club in NJ, Fred K2DFC and Walt N2WM.. plus Chris KQ2RP.. who wishes my CW skills were better…

Back at the car there was still time left in the day to get one more "easy" hike in ..

"3490" W4V/BR-008 (Verizon = Good, S7noise on 40m)

"3490" is on the BRP and just north of where I was.. I found a parking area to the south and walked up the edge of the parkway and up into the activation zone.. nope I didn't make it to the summit..too much expended already earlier in the day.. The area is heavily wooded and it was a pain to get the antenna strung out across the hillside.. 2.1M RT. Easy. It was a fairly quick activation on 40m only as I was pretty much pooped…



So Day 1.. 13+13+11= 37 points…need food, need rest…

Wednesday

Adding a little Vitamin I (Ibuprofen) on Tuesday night and again on Wednesday morning got me up and going well. I decided to bin the previous plan.. to many unknowns.

I decided to go do Big Flat W4V / BR-009 (a simple drive up), Trayfoot Mtn W4V/HB021 and then either Calf Mtn W4v/BR-015 or "3100" W4V/BR-014.

Big Flat W4V / BR-009 (Verizon = good, S7 noise 40m)

The drive up to Big Flat was nice, and since it's the off season, there wasn't anyone there to get the $25 entry fee for the park.. Unfortunately / fortunately when I reached the turn for Big Flat / aka Loft campground the road was closed… so it would be a walk after all.. which is good since I really don't like drive-ups … even a short walk makes it real..

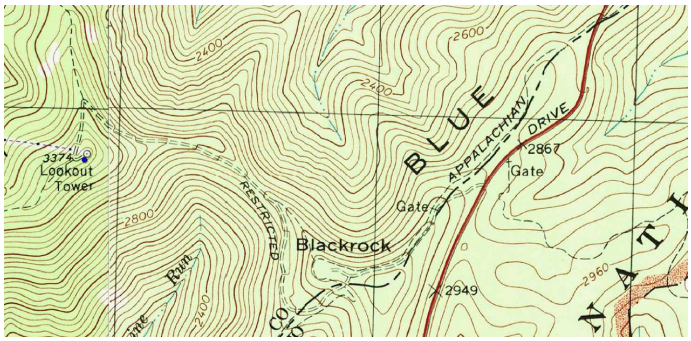
I wandered up the road, disturbing the deer that had called the place theirs since the camping season ended last year, it was raining.. the deer couldn't put it together… an umbrella with legs.. they looked at one another searching for answers.

Once I reached the campground and activation zone, I quickly found a suitable antenna tree and got the antenna up about 25ft… unusually high for me..

29 QSO's in the log on 40m and 20m including another ExPAT Brit (like me), and SA4BLM I gave a 31 signal report. Lars gave me a 33… but he has a great antenna system.

Trayfoot Mtn. W4V/HB-021 (Verizon = good, S5 noise 40m)

I started the hike to Trayfoot from the north where the AT crosses Skyline drive.. sure a little extra hiking.. 2.5M Round Trip. Easy.



The trail finds its way up to Blackrock and then goes right and downhill to an area known for its rattlesnakes… thankfully they were not present during my passage.. it's a 15min climb from the low point, round and up Trayfoot on a Blue Blaze trail.

I set-up on the trail as it was a quiet Wednesday..

I made 28 contacts on 40m and 20m with the dipole up around 10ft.

Back at the car it was time to head south I decided to activated Calf Mtn.

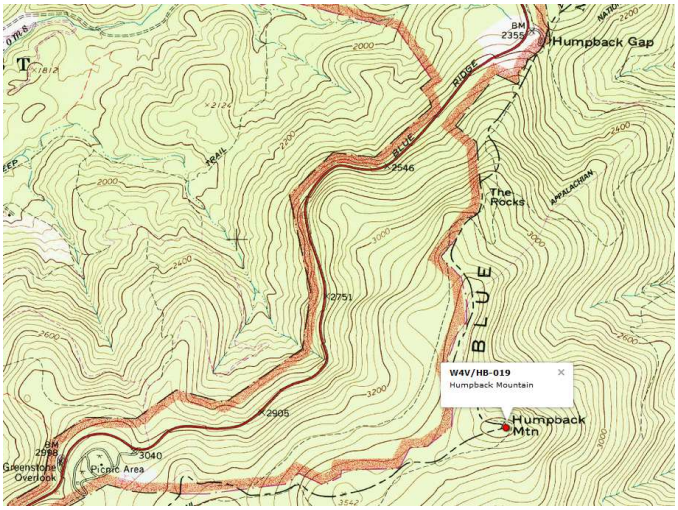
Calf Mtn. W4V/BR-015 (Verizon = good, S5 noise 40m)

For this one you park at Beagle Gap and hike the AT for approx.. 2miles Rounfd Trip.

The summit has lots of trees and brush so I set up on the AT again.. (no one came by). I put up my Dipole around 10ft.

15 QSO's on 40m and 20m and 1 Summit to Summit (S2S) contact with W1DMH up in New England. I pulled the plug on the activation fairly quickly when a sudden rainstorm came in.

I headed back to Waynesboro for a well-earned dinner.



Thursday

Humpback Mtn W4/HB-019 (Verizon= good, S5Noise)

Humpback Mtn is accessible from the north "Humpback Gap" or south "Humpback Mtn picnic area".. I decided to challenge myself and did it from the Humpback rocks parking lot which added about 700ft of accent and a little further walk. It's about 4m RT and 1300ft ascent.

I really enjoyed the walk. The initial path out of the parking lot is a bit stiff, but once you get to closer to the "Rocks" the steep section eases and you have to stop anyway to enjoy the surroundings.. once up at the rocks, the hiking is much easier as you skirt around the mountain to gain the summit.

View north to Skyline Drive mtns..

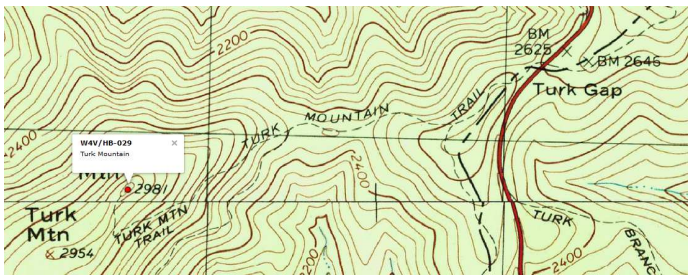
Super comfortable operating position on spongy forest floor at Humpback mountain.. with the link dipole up about 15ft.. I made 17 Qso on 20m and 40m.

Finally I plugged in the paddle and made a CW contact with Emily KB3VVE on 40m..

The walk back was pleasant, but I was left with a query… what is the correct thing to say to someone suffering up a steep hill while you're bounding down it?

Devil's Knob W4V/HB-012

It may have been the Devils knob once but today it's the Wintergreen resort and now seems to be a little piece of heaven.. with plenty of blacktop… well enough to get to the top of the mountain anyway. The summit happens to have an antenna tower and a couple of big storage tanks and enough trees to hang a dipole so that's what I did.



18 QSOs on 40m and 20m operating at 5w (since I forgot to plug in my external battery pack).

It was a drive-up… there's nothing more to say.

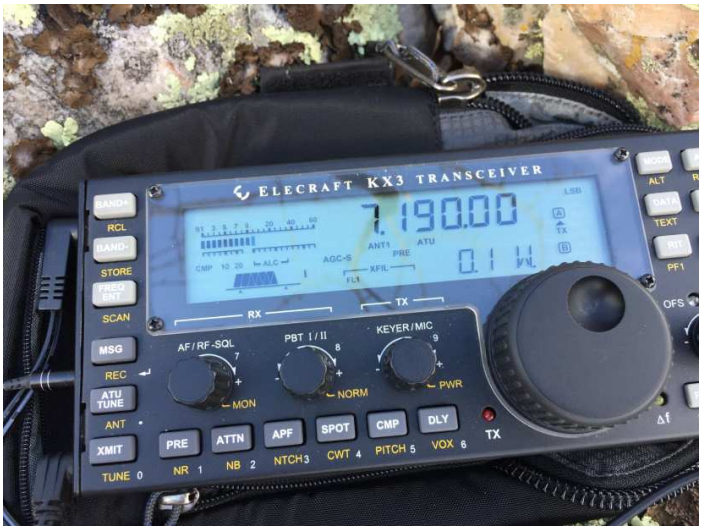
Turk Mtn. W4V/HB-029 (Verizon = good, Noise S7)

Parking at MM94.1 Turk gap. Follow the AT for approx.. 100yrds and then Blue Blaze trail to Turk Mtn… downhill and then uphill (~500ft ascent) round Turk mtn. on a stony trail to the final turn to the right (note that there is a good lookout if you go straight here).. a short 75yrd section puts you on the summit.. follow this to the exposed end of the ridge and great views..

I strung up a dipole at about 6ft height on the very edge and did very well on both 20m and 40m.

Final QSO of the day was with Emily KB3VVE (180miles away) who advised she was running only 5W.. I turned

down the power on the KX3 and we maintained SSB contact until I could reduce it no further.. I received a final 31 report. My QRPp power was 0.1w indicated on the KX3. (roughly 1800miles/watt)



39 QSOs, 3 S2S and 7 DX stations.

yes, my SOTA flag is backwards

Do I look tired yet ??

Summary

3days, 9 activations, 219 QSOs

Approx… 30 miles covered with 6500ft ascent

99 SOTA activator points,

4 Summit to Summits,

3 more SOTA Completes for me.

*(**Ed:** A "SOTA Complete" is a Summit that you have Activated and have also Chased someone else who is now on that Summit)*

802 Activator points now, only 198 to Mountain Goat..

Richard // N2GBR

Date	Summit Ref (name)	Walking mileage (RT)	Ascent (Ft)	QSO	Points	Winter bonus	totals
21-Feb-17	W4V/BR-006 (Cole Mountain)			21	10	3	13
21-Feb-17	W4V/BR-004 (Bald Knob)			41	10	3	13
21-Feb-17	W4V/BR-008 (3490)	11.4	3600	13	8	3	11
22-Feb-17	W4V/BR-009 (Big Flat Mountain)			29	8	3	11
22-Feb-17	W4V/HB-021 (Trayfoot Mountain)			26	8	3	11
22-Feb-17	W4V/BR-015 (Calf Mountain)	10.1	1400	15	6	3	9
23-Feb-17	W4V/HB-019 (Humpback Mountain)			17	8	3	11
23-Feb-17	W4V/HB-012 (Devils Knob)			18	8	3	11
23-Feb-17	W4V/HB-029 (Turk Mountain)	7.9	1800	39	6	3	9
	totals	29.4	6800	219			99

Yaesu FT-817 Trivia de NAQCC News

This info on the FT817 famous QRP rig might be interesting for the NAQCC newsletter. I have no way of verifying, but would not be surprised it is true.

Some interesting information on the FT817.

The FT-817 was first sold in 2000.

Yaesu builds the FT-817 in lots, about 800 units per lot.

Lots 1 and 2 were sold only in Japan. From lot #3, about 80 units were sent to the USA for sale, and were sold a little before Thanksgiving 2000.

One of the first radios sold went to W4WB. This radio has had every W4RT mod tested on it before anything was sold. As of Jan 2014 that radio is still going.

Yaesu originally hoped to sell about 5000 units in the first 3 to 5 years. Currently, the FT-817 has been in production for 14 years, and as lot # 300 approaches, they are nearing a QUARTER-MILLION FT-817s sold! That is 250,000 radios sold. I don't believe there has ever been another radio so popular.

FT-817 Serial Number 8J450506 = 2008 August, Lot 145, SN 0506

Yaesu uses the same serial number scheme for all of their ham gear. The serial number has the form YMLLNNNN where Y = the last digit of the year of manufacture, M is a letter representing the month of manufacture with "C" = January, "D" = February, and so on, the lot number is represented by the two digit LL (00 - 99), and NNNN (0001-9999) is the unit number within lot LL. As an example, 0L030145 means October 2000, lot 3, unit 145. The lot number is not linked to the year & month, i.e., LL does not reset to 00 each year. Service bulletins refer to lot numbers.

There you go. Perhaps someone who just got a radio can send us the serial number, and we can make a guess at it.

73, Ron, N9EER - a know code Extra NAQCC #6145

North American QRP CW Club
http://www.naqcc.info/

Breaking News

Saw in the latest issue of QST that someone saw a type of sunspot that suggested that we may be closer to the bottom of the cycle than some of the other forecasters have been saying. Lets hope he is onto something here.

Spceweatjher.com says:

SUNSPOT COUNTS HIT 7-YEAR LOW: The face of the sun has been blank (no sunspots) for 13 consecutive days. The last time this happened was in April of 2010, near the end of an historically deep Solar Minimum. The current stretch of blank suns heralds a new Solar Minimum expected to arrive in 2019-2020.

Are they both saying good things ?? I guess we will know when it gets here . . . . (sunspots are good).

Review of SOTABeams DSP Audio Filters

Jody – K3JZD

I have four of these SOTABeams DSP Audio Filters. Two that I had bought as bare boards with the filter integration kits and then installed into my own enclosures, and two plug-and-play units that I had bought that were already installed in SOTABeams enclosures and were 'ready to use'.

These external DSP Audio Filters use the audio output coming from your receiver as the input and reduce that audio down to a narrower bandwidth. They work with or without any bandwidth filtering that may be built into the radios. I simply plug a cable coming from my radio's headphone jack into the filter's input jack and then connect my headphones to the filter's output jack.

I bought the first one was a bare board and filter integration kit to use with the FT-817 that I use for my SOTA and other portable operations. This one is configured for CW. It has two switch-selectable bandwidth outputs: 1000 Hz or 300Hz. I was immediately impressed with it. Whenever there are adjacent CW signals, the 1000Hz setting is typically enough to eliminate the interference from nearby CW signals. Whenever there are very close by CW signals, selecting the 300Hz would typically get rid of that interference. Almost as valuable as eliminating the interference from neighboring CW signals, is the elimination of the background noise that comes from reducing the audio bandwidth. Whenever I'm trying to pull in a weak one, narrowing the audio bandwidth gets rid of a great deal of the background noise and allows me to copy very weak signals. I built this one into a small case to facilitate carrying. A piece of Velcro holds it into position on the top of my FT-817 case.

I should note that an external audio filter will not help if there is a very strong adjacent signal that is pumping your AGC and pulsing your volume – you will still get that. If you have RF filtering in your radio to reducing your RF bandwidth setting to help with that. Or you can turn off your AGC, which will keep your volume constant so that you can narrow in on the desired signal.

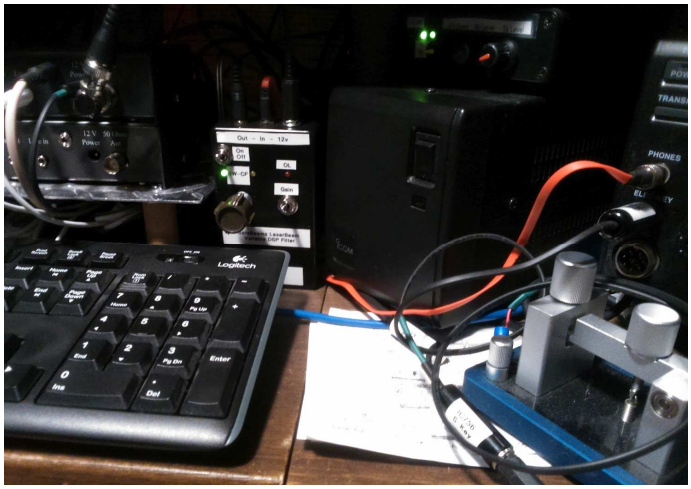
Since I like to keep my backpack that I use for SOTA and my other portable operations intact and ready for pickup and go, I decided that it would be nice to have one of these DSP Audio Filters for the shack. In fact, if one if good, why not two? So, I bought a CW Audio Filter in a 'ready to use' SOTABeams enclosure and a SSB Audio Filter in a 'ready to use' SOTABeams enclosure.

The 'ready to use' CW filter was the same as what I already had for the FT-817, with it's two switch-selectable 1000Hz or 300Hz bandwidth outputs. All I had to do was connect it up, and it worked fine with all of my various shack radios. As expected, the performance was the same. While this 'ready to use' version included an audio amplifier that will drive a small speaker, I have never tried that – I just use it with headphones.

The 'ready to use' SSB filter provides two switch-selectable bandwidth outputs: 2400Hz or 2100Hz. It

uses the same enclosure which contains an audio amplifier – but likewise, I also just use this one with headphones. While going from the normal 3200Hz SSB bandwidth to the filtered 2400Hz bandwidth makes a difference, I do not find that selecting the 2100Hz bandwidth output provides much more of a difference. I would like to see that tighter position be at a bandwidth of 1700Hz, which is just about the narrowest that you can go and still be able to understand SSB audio. During crowded band conditions, the quality of the received audio is not as important as being able to isolate the signal that you are trying to copy in a crowd. And, while this SSB audio filter provides some background noise reduction, it is not to the degree that the narrower CW audio filter provides.

Once I was all setup with these three filters, SOTABeams came out with a variable bandwidth version. This variable DSP Audio Filter would provide me with any audio bandwidth between 200Hz and 3500Hz. So, it would be usable on CW as well as SSB. It would give me the 1700Hz bandwidth that I was looking for when on SSB, and an even tighter bandwidth for CW. So, I ordered one of these bare boards, along with the filter integration kit. I needed a bigger case for this one than for the one that I built for the FT-817 because there were more internal components and a rotary encoder to deal with. But, in my shack, space is limited, so I made this one as small as practical.



I have used this variable audio filter quite a bit now, and am very pleased with it. It has helped a great deal while struggling to pull in weak CW and SSB signals. I will typically keep narrowing the bandwidth until I went

too far, and then open it back up a bit. This variable bandwidth filter also has a mode where you can manipulate the audio passband. You can clip it at one end or the other end (often called low-cut or high-cut), and you can move a narrowed down bandwidth up or down in frequency (often called a shift).

That feature works, but I have not really used this much because I have found that once you start to shift the passband around, it is quite hard to visualize where you are really at with it at the moment. Since this filter uses a rotary encoder which requires multiple turns to go from maximum bandwidth to minimum, there is not any way of getting a visual indication of where you currently have it set. I have found it better to just leave passband centered and tune the radio frequency or down instead. Since it defaults to centered, and at the maximum bandwidth upon power up, I soon added an On-Off switch to allow me to cycle power to quickly get back to that known centered and at the maximum bandwidth setting.

However, I have found that this device is susceptible to stray RF. Not a problem whenever I am using one of these filters with my 5 watt FT-817, nor when I'm running my 5 watt SDRs, nor when I have cranked my IC-756proIII down to 5 watts. But, whenever I'm running my IC-756proIII at 100 watts, I get a hum with the two 'ready to use' units which have the built in amplifiers whenever I transmit in CW or SSB. I get that hum on all bands. Happens when I run them from a battery. I tried putting a toriod on the audio input cable – that did not help. Those two are in metal cases, but the end plates are plastic.

I'm pretty sure that the hum is coming from stray RF getting into the amplifiers in those units, because whenever I use the variable filter which does not have an amplifier (or if I bring in the one from the FT-817 which does not have an amplifier and use it in the shack), and I transmit at 100 watts CW, I will only get a little distortion in the CW side tone. And that mild distortion in the side tone only occurs on certain bands. These filters without amplifiers are quiet whenever I'm transmitting at 100 watts in SSB.

With the caveats mentioned, I recommend these SOTA-Beams DSP Audio Filters. They work well. They are priced quite competitively in comparison to the other DSP audio filters that I have seen out there. If you do not like to build, there are the 'ready-to-use' versions. Once you have gotten used to the significant noise reduction that you get from using them, it is hard to do any weak signal operation without them.

http://www.sotabeams.co.uk/audio-products/

Jody - K3JZD

Hint For Copying CW

For those of you who are working on building your skills in copying CW, I think that your best method is to write down each character that you hear, without considering how it relates to the previous character or to any word that you may think that this character may be forming. Just write down the character and do not dwell on it. If you draw a blank in a character, do not try to figure out what it is - just put a dash there and keep going.

Then, when finished copying, go back and read it. It may look like what is below, or worse. But I'll bet that what you have will be pretty darn readable (if not, keep working on it - you will soon get to that point).

Olny srmat poelpe can raed this. I cdnuolt blveiee that I cluod aulaclty uesdnatnrd what I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid, aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mttaer in what oredr the ltteers in a word are, the olny iprmoatnt tihng is that the first and last ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can still raed it wouthit a porbelm. This is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the word as a wlohe. Amzanig huh? Yaeh and I awlyas tghuhot slpeling was ipmorantt!!!

Jody - K3JZD

Winter Field Day

de Jody - K3JZD

According to the sponsors of this event: "Winter Field Day Association (WFDA) is a dedicated group of Amateur Radio Operators who believe that emergency communications in a winter environment is just as important as the preparations and practice that is done each summer but with some additional unique operational concerns. "

https://www.winterfieldday.com/

Well, while there was not a great deal of interest in participating in this event, Richard - N2GBR took on the challenge. This was the weekend that the Skyview Banquet was held, which limited the time available to participate during the 1900 UTC (2pm EST) Saturday to 1900 UTC (2pm EST) Sunday event window. And, all of the setup had to occur within this event window.

Richard decided to setup on the club grounds on Saturday, go to the banquet, and then come back and sleep there so that he would be all ready to go first thing Sunday morning. He fabricated a new wire antenna, got it installed up in the trees, and pitched his tent.

There were big bonus points for being outdoors, being on batteries, and being at a remote location. So Richard planned on entering as a single QRP station and collecting all of those big bonus points.

There were also band and mode multipliers which were available for making just one contact with each mode and band combination. I came out on Sunday morning to see how things were going. If it was going slowly on SSB, I was prepared to try to get some CW contacts on the various bands to get him more multipliers. While I gave that a try, I had difficulty getting my straight key and my Pico memory keyer to work with his KX3, and was not real successful (poor preparation). I did not want to waste time with that, so, I turned the radio back over to Richard who then went on to make additional SSB contacts. (One of the contacts that Richard made was chasing a SOTA Activator.)

Richard was well equipped with winter camping gear , and had no trouble with the winter weather. One less equipped would have found this emergency preparedness activity to be quite difficult.

John - AC0KK was on bear watch whenever I arrived.

Happy and loving it at a brisk 29 degrees !!

Portable Operations

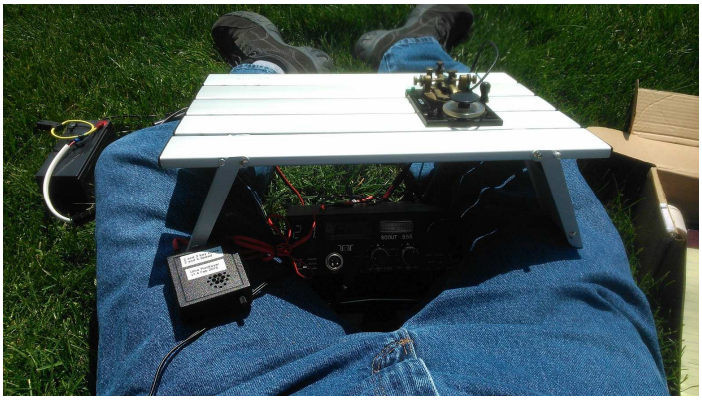
Jody - K3JZD

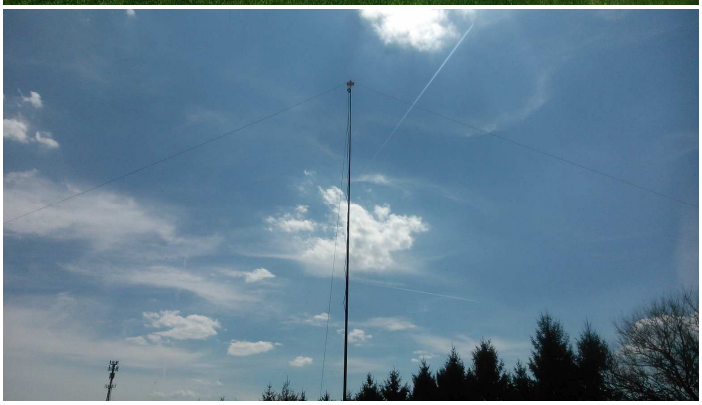
As discussed in the Editorial, I have done some portable back yard and local park operations. Here are a few of the pictures which show those portable operations.

Oak Hollow Park - North Huntington

Ten-Tec 555 (under table) - Short Pole - Inverted V Dipole

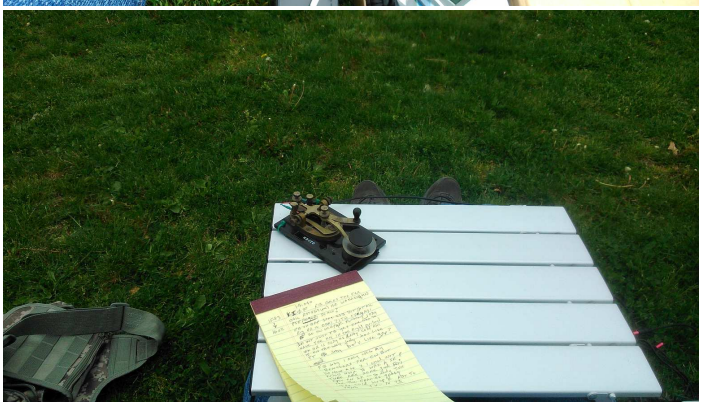
Found out had to get out of here before 15:30 because at that time thundering heard of soccer players came running though here. Guess it was their warm up run before practice. I had to direct traffic to keep them from running right through my antenna wires.





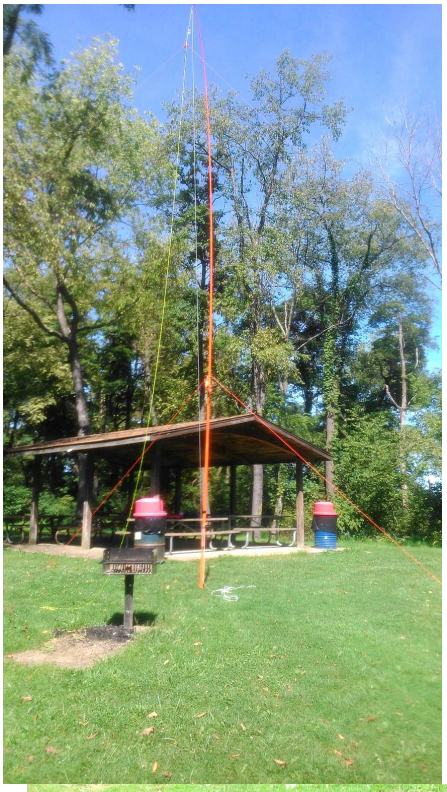
Northmoreland Park - Apollo

Yaesu FT-817 - Long Pole - Inverted V Linked Dipole



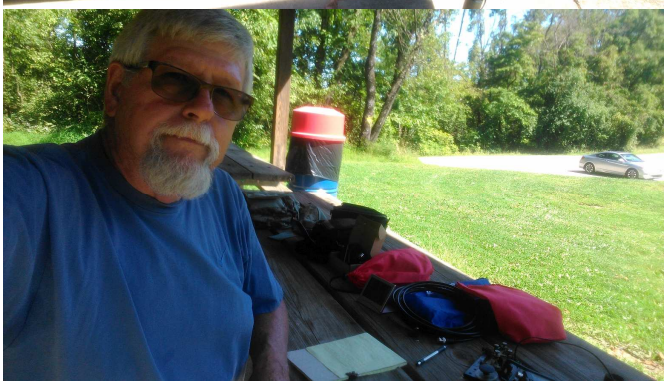
Boyce Park - Monroeville

Yaesu FT-817 - Medium Pole - Inverted V Linked Dipole



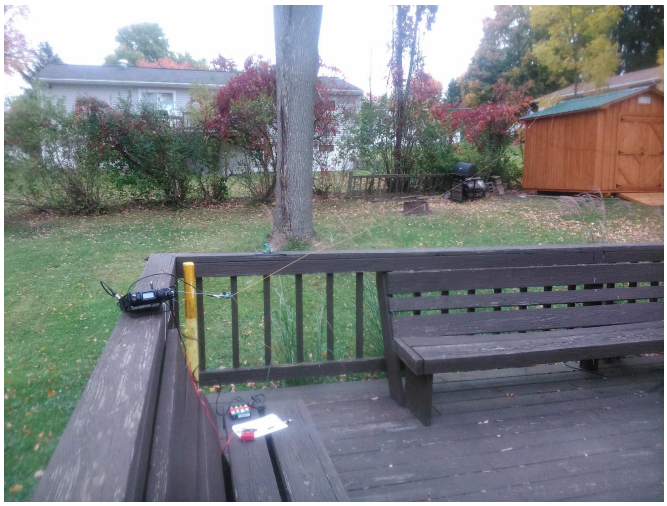
Was a weekday — the shelters were empty. Took advantage of that.

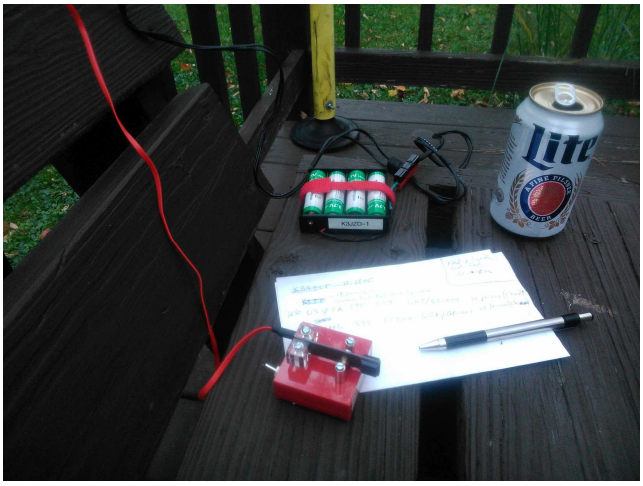
But had the same problem with Soccer kids running through this area around 1530. The soccer fields were across the road from this shelter. But at least their normal path went around me this time. Was nice to have some shade for a change



Conneaut Lake Back Yard

Yaesu FT-817 - 20 and 40 meter End Fed Half Waves



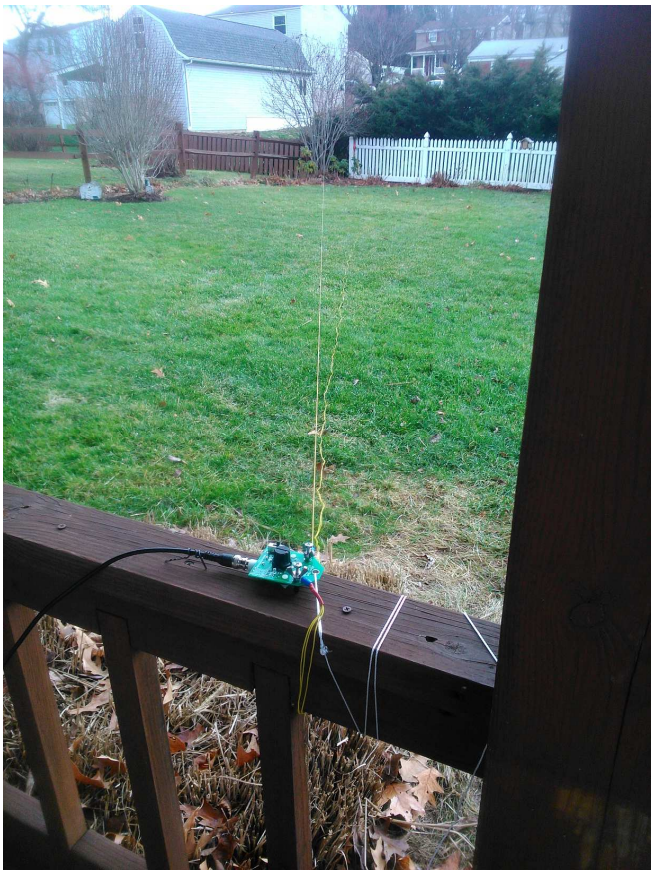


(The refrigerator was close by when here)

Home Back Yard Operations

Was trimming my 40-20 meter linked dipole to get it resonant on the frequencies that I commonly use. Best test is to make some QSOs

I bought the orange pole and used orange ropes to avoid leaving anything behind - I wanted stuff that would not blend in with the grass and leaves.



I built this 20-30-40 meter trapped end fed half wave antenna. During initial testing, I just had the far end up about 6 feet high, tied to the shrub back by the fence. After doing the tests and final tweaking with the antenna analyzer, I was on 20 meters sending TEST DE K3JZD to see if I could get some RBN (Reverse Beacon Network) reports. I ended up getting a call from a station in Oregon.

After adding the liquid insulation to the traps, I set it up again, only with the 25 foot pole at the far end. Got good reports from RBN and made a quick QSO on each of the three bands. Did not continue as it was a cold day in December. Decided it was ready for use out on a SOTA summit.

So, different places, different times, small changes in the equipment over time. Good fun in each portable operating situation. Jody - K3JZD

World Wide Flora and Fauna Parks Program

ED: *The following two articles were extracted from the February 1, 2017 edition of the On-Line County Hunter News, published monthly by N4CD.*
www.countyhunter.com www.CHNewsonline.com

I edited both to create readers digest versions. The World Wide Flora and Fauna (WWFF) award program is a bit like the National Parks On The Air (NPOTA) event that ran throughout 2016 in that there is an opportunity for 'score keeping' if you choose to do so. However, I see it as more of a way to insure that you make some QSOs whenever you are out operating at a portable location. Not as strenuous as Summits on the Air (SOTA) is because it does not involve climbing up to summits. And there are more local WWFF parks around here than there were for the NPOTA program. So, here's a pretty good way to go out and try doing some portable operation.

Parks on the Air - POTA

For the past 30 years, mainly in Europe, folks have been chasing parks as part of the World Wide Flora and Fauna award program. Jason, W3AAX, is the US coordinator.

There are hundreds and hundreds of entities – more than there were 'parks' for the recently ended National Parks on the Air. Thousands, really!

Most of the NPOTA units also qualified for WWFF, which uses designators starting with KFF followed by four numbers.

To get started on this, if you'd like to continue on a similar program, although not managed through LoTW, check out: https://wwff-kff.com/

Here's a map showing the parks of WWFF and their designators. There are many more than there were NPOTA units, with many states that had few NP units having dozens of WWFF Parks. (Most of the 'state parks' are part of WWFF).
http://tinyurl.com/znoq5da

Logging is done through a web site – using uploaded ADIF files – and you get confirmations in the WWFF database. Unlike NPOTA and LoTW, WWFF only uses contacts that are uploaded by the activator. There is no need for chasers to update – they log in and see what parks they have credit for. Simpler than NPOTA.

You spot yourself so that others know you are out there, using Dxsummit.fi, listing your KFF-XXXX location identifier. **De N4CD**

On the Road with N4CD

There's a new game in town! I tried activating WWFF parks for a weekend to see how many chasers would show up to see if it would be worthwhile.

Ole Sol didn't cooperate with high A index both days on this weekend, but I still had good time and gave the car some exercise to keep it in good running shape for country hunting activations.

On Saturday, I activated nearby Lake Ray Roberts State Park (TX). I did 70 QSOs there, on 20, 30, 40m ssb/cw. 70 contacts isn't great, especially when 20 of them were people working me on 2 or 3 bands or modes, but it's a start and got me out of the house on a cold January day.

On Sunday, I activated three other nearby parks: Eisenhower State Park (TX), Texoma State Park (OK), and Bonham State Park (TX). I averaged 75 QSOs for each of these three. So there is chaser interest.

So that was the first weekend out doing the WWFF's..... 325 miles of driving all together and 13 gallons of gas used. 4 parks activated. (4 counties too). Sat for a couple hours with engine idling burning gas. Was sunny today but it was only in the 30s. Gas is $2.19/gal in TX. A bit cheaper up in OK.

I have no idea whether this will catch on as time goes on.

De N4CD

Summer Construction Season Joe - K3TTE

It is Orange Barrel Season again. Some say that the Orange Barrel should be the PA State Tree.

Those of you who take Route 909 to Route 366 to get to the joint will be a bit inconvenienced again this Fall. And this comes after last years construction on Route 366. A small bridge on Route 909 is going to be removed. The area that it spanned will be filled in and then repaved.

But, all is not lost. It sounds like you will still be able to go up Logans Ferry Road and then take Webster Road to drop back down onto Route 366.

WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH HILLS WASHRag

Once again I am enjoying the latest WASHRag issues. There is far too much interesting information on this issue for me to even think about reusing any of it. Since that is not atypical, I am going to suggest that if you want some additional good ham radio reading, you should take advantage of their offer to have it sent to you:

> If you've downloaded the ***WASH*Rag** from the N3SH web site, or picked up a copy from a friend… you can sign up to have the PDF copy sent directly to your email You **do NOT** have to be a member of **WASH**!
>
> Just send an email to wa3sh-subscribe@yahoogroups.com and the automation should take care of the rest!

Welcome New Members !!

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

N2MA Al Houston Mars (PA)

NJ3R Ron Blobner Gibsonia

KC3HRO Dean Gillespie Pgh 15216

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.

>>>>>> WARNING <<<<<<

A new Alarm System has been installed up at the joint. Do Not go in on your own until you learn how to disarm and rearm it.

Outdoor things to do:

- Backyard Operation
- Park Operation
- WWFF Activations
- Country Hunter Activations
- Public Service Events

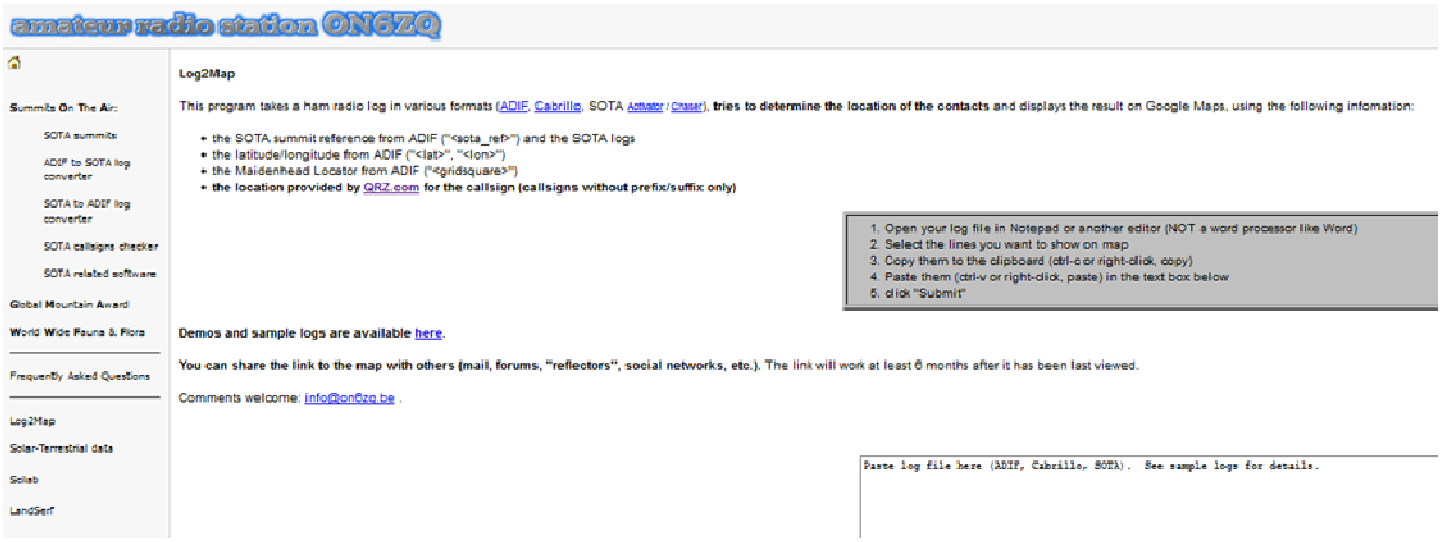
If your back yard looked like this, you would probably be operating from your back yard a lot !!

1600 QSO's and 2years of SOTA on a MAP

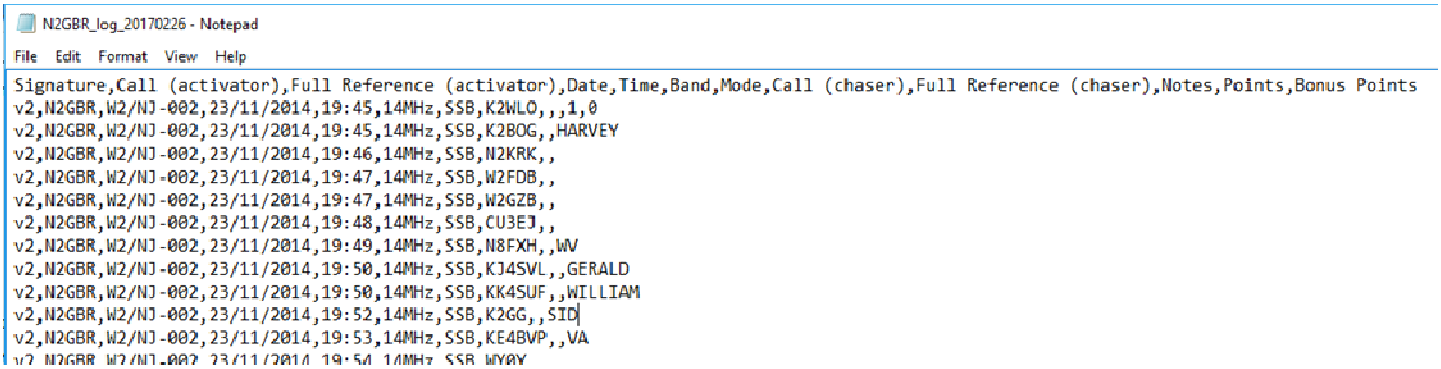
de N2GBR

Belgian HAM ON6ZQ has some interesting items on his website. As a SOTA activator who professes to use NVIS style antenna set-ups with QRP power levels (sometimes 25w), I'm always interested in seeing how my signal is getting out and look at coverage maps developed from my QSO's.

The LOG2 MAP feature on ON6ZQ's web site enables me to do this with ease.



Once we have completed a SOTA activation, we enter our log and record it on the SOTA web-site. Now that the LOG is on their database, we can download it as a SOTA V2 log (if it wasn't in that format already). The SOTA V2 log can then be copied and pasted into the Log2Map page dialogue entry box.



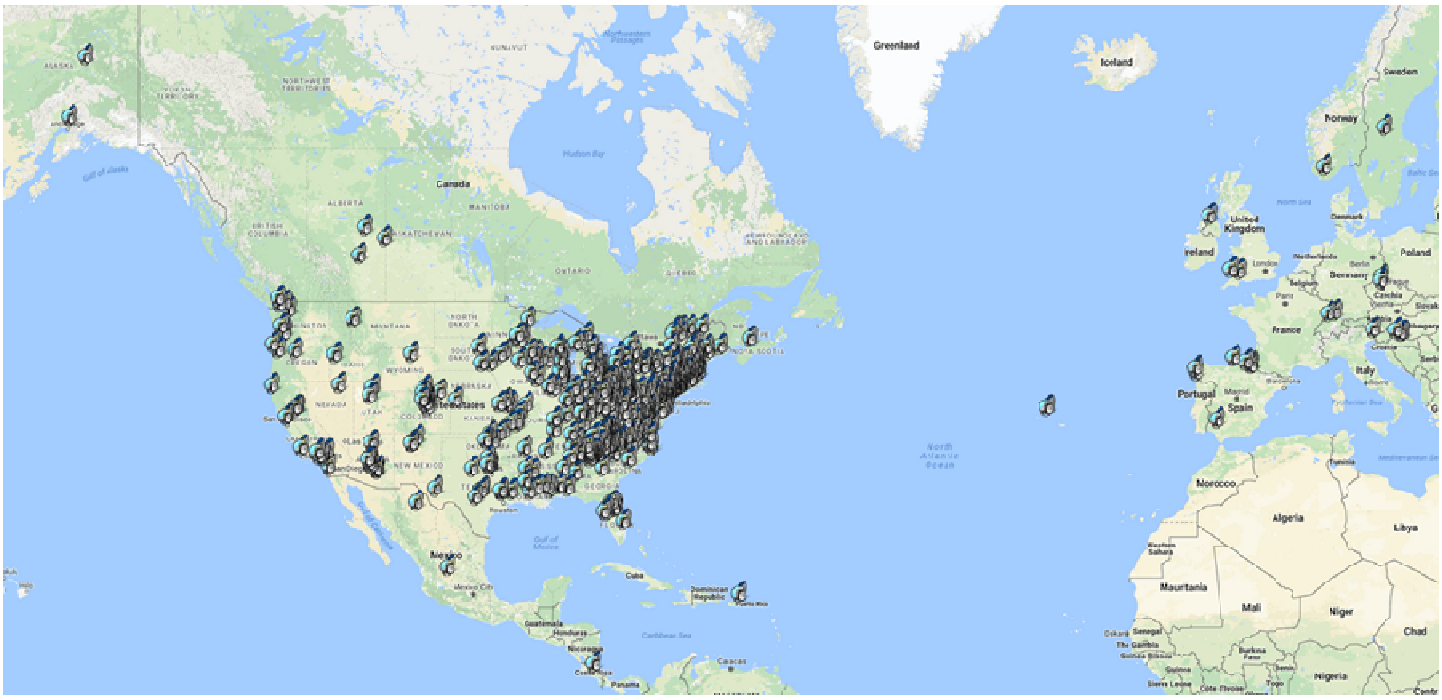
There are two key outputs from the page.. of primary interest is the map of contacts (using QRZ address) additionally ERRORS are listed for further investigation.

Following is the output for all of my ~1600 SOTA QSO's I have made in the last two years.

… I just Need North Dakota for WAS from a SOTA Peak..

Main site address: http://www.on6zq.be

Richard // N2GBR



Location of the Contacts That N2GBR Has Made From His Various SOTA Summit Activations

Just think about it. YOU could be using this space !!

You could be sharing your thoughts about a new radio, antenna, or accessory.

You could be sharing your thoughts about a great contact that you had.

You could be telling us about some great software you found or use.

You could be telling us all about another great hobby that you have.

You could be sharing a memorable life experience with us.

This is your forum — use it.

All that NOISE NOISE NOISE!

de WC3O

We recently installed a receive antenna array at the club. For years people in the know have told me how great receive antennas are. I was very skeptical. Typically, a receive antenna is very small and low to the ground. So why a receive antenna? Receive antennas are normally used on the lower HF bands such as 40, 80 and 160 meters, as well as SWLing. On these bands signal strength is usually the least of your concerns. You typically have HUGE amounts of signal. However, you also have HUGE amounts of noise. The noise can be man-made, atmospheric, or both. Often times you will hear a signal in there, but you can't tell what they are saying because the signal is buried in the noise. It seems counterproductive to be listening on an antenna that is nowhere near as good as your transmit antenna.

On these lower bands it's not so much about signal level, as it is about "signal to noise ratio". With receive antennas your desired received signal may be much weaker than it would be on your transmit antenna. However, the noise is even weaker yet and thus, you can receive signals that you could never hear using your transmit antenna to receive. Actually this concept works GREAT!

When you are thinking about receive antennas you have basically three choices:

One of the oldest receive antennas is the Beverage antenna. No, this has nothing to do with what you're drinking. It is named after the guy that invented the technique in 1921. The beverage typically involves a long length of wire installed close to the ground with a terminating resistor on one side and a transformer on the other side. This antenna was the mainstay of many contesters and DXers for many years, until recently. Some beverage users have moved to actually just laying the wire on the ground, you will sometimes read about a BOG, that's a Beverage On Ground antenna. You need some serious real estate for one of these antennas. Many contesters have giving up their Beverage antennas in favor of the antennas describe below

The receive loop antenna: This is a small loop of wire often used with a receive pre-amp to boost the signal level. Loops work ok and have a very sharp null. This null can be used to null out a noise source coming from a specific direction. The loop can either be a small magnetic type loop and just a loop of wire strung in a tree. These antennas are fairly popular.

Phased receive antennas: This is what we have installed at the club. Our system uses two small vertical antennas (108 inches), each antenna is equipped with a receive pre-amp at the base. The spacing between the two antennas depends on the band you would like to optimize for phasing control. Ours is optimized for 80 meters, but this spacing is not very critical. Two 75 ohm feedlines go to a phase controller in the radio room. The phase controller has a large knob that enables you to "electronically steer" where the antenna is listening, or NOT listening. A case for not listening is to null out a local noise source. This can make a huge difference when receiving weak signals on the low bands. There are other systems similar to this that use 4, or even 8 receive antennas. This provides more directivity. Some people use active antennas (Uses a pre-amp to boost signal) or non-active antennas (Larger small antennas).

The difference these receive antennas make is amazing. Even if you are not using the receive antenna for DXing or contesting, they make all the difference when it comes to listening fatigue. Hanging out with you buddies on 80 or 160 meters will be a MUCH more enjoyable experience. You can watch demonstrations on You Tube. Do a search for DX Engineering NCC-1, this is what we have at the club. You'll see what I am talking abut.

Stay tuned. I will be getting into the details of how best to use the NCC-1 at the clubhouse.

In the meantime I'll see you on the radio.

vy73

Bob WC3O

Using Digital Modes With Icom Radios (Etc) Jody - K3JZD

Those of you who have an Icom radio and are using digital modes will be interested in this thread from the ic756pro3 Yahoo Group (I do not know which other Icom radios that this may also apply to – check your manual).

From time to time, I will forget about this while I'm using my IC-756pro3 on digital modes. Since I will usually stop whatever I'm doing to go and chase a SOTA station who may be on CW or SSB, my hand microphone is generally always connected and laying right in front of the radio. If I fail to disconnect it whenever I am using a digital mode with USB mode selected on the radio, it will pick up the fan noise from the radio and power supply as well as the stuff coming in on the 2 meter radio and any other noise that is occurring in the shack. My digital performance has definitely suffered whenever I have forgotten to unplug my microphone. This thread has an answer for that (ie: read the manual)

==========

Hi group...

Is it normal for my digital mode audio to pass into the radio when in USB or LSB mode?

I'm feeding the TX audio tones from the PC to the rear ACCY jack, but I just noticed the radio transmits the tones regardless of whether I'm in LSB, USB, LSB-D or USB-D mode. The only difference is the mic is disabled in the "D" mode setting. Is this normal? I thought the radio had to be in either USD-D or LSB-D in order for the tones to pass??

Max K2DFC

==========

Max, Use the USB-D mode. As you indicated when in -D mode the mic is off when transmitting.

Imagine having a dog barking in the background when transmitting a PSK31 signal---talk about a weird sound!

Not unless you are CQing Dog X-ray!

Bruce N7XGR

==========

Or, just don't have a mic connected when operating digital.

Max K2DFC

==========

Hi Bruce,

As regards canine operators, the record is held by my previous Boxer, Max. He used to give on-air "recitals" on his squeaky ball whilst I was operating SSB. Once he dropped the ball under the radio table, then dived in after it, slammed down the foot-switch with his front paws and barked loudly!

That foot-switch went to a new, loving home the next day. I now only use a pressed switch on the microphone.

73, Adam VA7OJ/AB4OJ

==========

Stock photo from Internet (not Max)

Why Can't Free Towers Be Delivered?

Jody - K3JZD

We at Skyview have a rule – never say 'No Thanks' when offered a free tower. But, why can't they be delivered?? Right after the offer to give a tower to the club, there is always this little catch phrase that follows: "You just have to come take it down and haul it". Darn (or something like that).

Well this latest offer was a good one. A 60ft free standing commercial steel tower that should last a little longer than forever. BUT, unlike a nice aluminum ham tower, that generally sits on a hinged base and consists of 10ft sections, this sucker is sitting over base bolts and consists of three 20ft sections. Not aluminum. Not hinged. So no just getting a few guys together and walking this baby down to the ground and disassembling it there.

First thought was to pay to have a mobile crane come in, lift it off of the base and lay it down on the ground for us. But, it is is a location that is up in the woods, on top of a hill, accessible by a narrow and steep dirt road which would probably require a 4WD vehicle. Thus, the less expensive crane companies and tower installers might not be real interested in doing this take-down job.

So, Cooky invented a new type of Skyview Gin Pole to use to take the top two sections down. And he came up with a plan to lift the base section up off of its bolts and then topple it over in a way that it should survive the landing. And also a plan to drag it out of the woods to get it down to a paved road where we can load it onto a truck.

Cooky - AC3O. Dewey - W3VYK, and Bill (Boats) – W3BUW figuring out how to clamp the Skyview Gin Pole to the tower.

Would you believe that there were some muffler clamps involved?

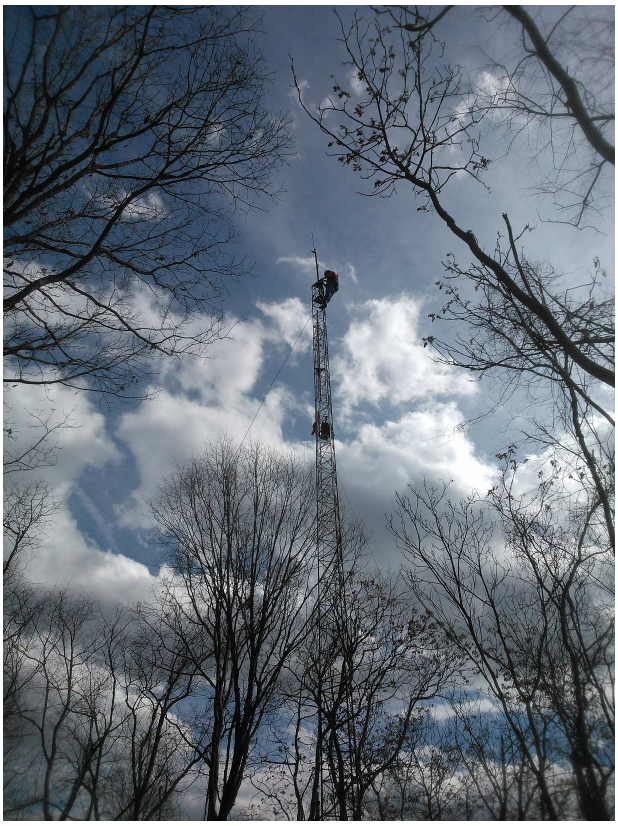
Cooky doing his pre-climb yoga meditation . . . . . .

Then up he goes . . . .up to where the view is better

Cooky and Dewey had been here earlier to remove a lot of trees from the area to make it accessible, and to remove the beam and rotator that were on this tower.

(Note in these pictures how small the section of free standing aluminum ham tower is in comparison to the commercial free standing steel tower)

End of Day 1 - the Skyview Gin Pole is in place



Day 2 - Removing the mast from the very top

Bolts coming out of top section.

Showtime !!

The rigging went to Cooky's Truck

The plan was to slowly drive forward and lower the section gently.

And it came down gently as planned - Top Section is safely on the ground - And, yes, it is heavy.

Day 2 was:
Cooky -WC3O,
Dewey -W3VYK,
Don - WA3HGW

With Don doing some climbing to help get the Gin Pole in position and secured for doing the next section

End of Day 2 ended a lot like Day 1 did , with the Gin Pole in place and all ready to go.

Day 3 Crew: Cooky - WC3O, Dewey - W3VYK, Bill - W3BUW, and Don - WA3HGW (With Dewey also doing some climbing today). (actually there was a day 2 1/2 where Cooky and Dewey came up and removed some grout from the base).

Like The Top Section, the Middle Section was lowered slowly and softly using the 'Skyview Gin Pole'.

Now the Bottom Section - No Gin Pole here - Cooky says use some tires in case it comes down harder than expected

On the way down

Tie the rope to the tower, put a pulley on a tree in the back, hook the rope to the trusty Toyota, cut the two bolts half way through on the side were we want it to fall, lift up the third leg, to get it started in that direction, then lower it gently by driving forward.

I think Don is describing how it came down nice and gently (or maybe he is telling me telling me where I can put my camera)

This bottom section is quite a bit heavier than the top and middle sections were.

I once asked a guy who sells towers why it cost so much to go from a 60 foot tower to an 80 foot tower when it is just adding another 20 foot section. He set me straight; said the additional 20 foot section gets added to the bottom, not the top. Now I fully understand that.

So, one 60 foot self supporting commercial steel tower down and out.

Well, down, but not out yet.

Getting those three heavy 20 foot steel tower sections off of that hill up in the woods, onto a truck, and out to the joint will be another challenge.

Stay tuned for that story.

Jody - K3JZD

WC3O Photo

The Tower Takedown Crew

Bill - W3BUW Jody - K3JZD (rear) Cooky - WC3O Dewey - W3VYK Don - WA3HGW

A Blast from the past.. Nike AJAX

de Richard - N2GBR

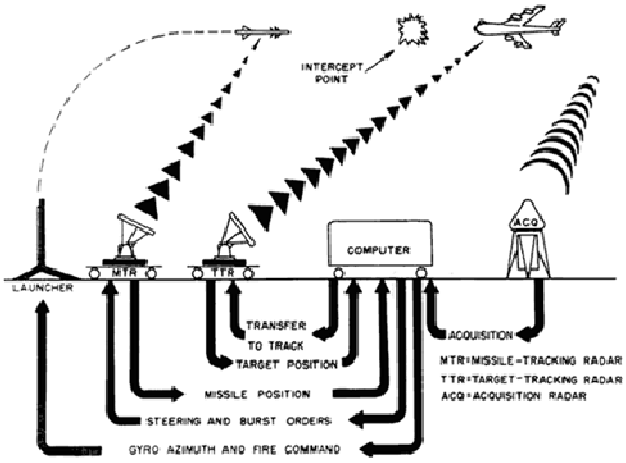
One of the interesting aspects of our hobby is that the people who call themselves HAM's, as a group, are pretty interesting. Coming from all walks of life they seem to have some common traits, one of which, in my opinion, is an interest in all things technical. So, I hope this little article will interest you readers.

I don't remember how I came across the Nike AJAX story / history but it peak'd my interest and as you know that's all it takes for us. Summoning my full Google-foo powers I embarked on some internets research and learned more about the why the system was created and how it worked..

A concise summary…

The US army **Nike Ajax** was the world's first (1954) operational surface-to-air missile (SAM) the system was designed to attack bomber aircraft presumed to carry nuclear weapons that would be flying fast and high (50,000ft+).

There were close to 300 Nike sites around the US.



The system comprised; an acquisition RADAR, target position RADAR, a Missile steering RADAR, Missile launchers and targeting computer system.

In a typical installation as found usually in multiple locations around a Major city, or industrial area, there would be several missile launchers on site.

The missile and it's solid rocket booster are approx. 32ft long on the launcher platform. Once fired, the missile had a top speed of around 1400mph.The missile was not intended to hit the incoming aircraft directly, but rather be detonated when in close proximity to the target. The explosive Payload of the missile was actually located in three areas throughout the device (not just in the tip)

The Launcher platform was stored underground and covered from the elements when not deployed. In many of the decommissioned launch sites the missile positions can still be identified by the large steel doors of the silos.

Pittsburgh Defense

There were 12 Nike sites around Pittsburgh, I have no idea why they're not sequentially numbered? The table on the next page provides more information about each site including location and what's there now.. in case you want to take a road-trip.

So some of these can be seen in Google maps Aerial view and some visited… although I haven't done any myself…. YET. In case you're travelling to CA, there is a fully restored NIKE site (SF-88) with visitor access by the Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco. (https://www.nps.gov/goga/nike-missile-site.htm)

In summary, I hope you found this somewhat interesting? It was a great surprise one day while I was out and about in central PA on my way to a SOTA site that I found a Nike Ajax launcher complete with booster and missile in front of the VFW in Rockhill, PA.

Richard Jones // N2GBR

You may have to zoom in on the next page to be able to read it

Ed: *As a little trivia, The Irwin Area Amateur Radio Association had a club room in the Irwin Nike Site surface buildings and used the existing tower for the 146.325 Repeater while the facilities were owned by North Huntington Township. Some of the more adventuresome members explored the underground areas (I missed that exploration party). The IAARA got booted out whenever the site was sold to the YMCA.*

PI-02	Nike 1B, 2C/30A/12L-A	Rural Ridge	A few buildings in use by Teen Challenge; drug & alcohol rehab center. No radar towers.	PennDOT training site. Magazine area is used for earth moving equipment training. Magazines visible, some snow plows being stored on them.
			40°34'15"N 079°49'47"W	40°35'48"N 079°49'21"W
PI-08	Nike 3B/18H, 30A/12L-U	Dorseyville/ Indianola	American Indian Center Singing Winds Site. Well preserved site with numerous IFC buildings in use. Several radar towers standing.	Barracks building in use, most other buildings razed. Large areas of concrete piles visible in aerial imagery. Magazines visible, earth grading equipment moving dirt around area.
			40°34'49"N 079°53'43"W	40°35'54"N 079°53'31"W
PI-25	Nike 1B, 2C/30A/12L-A	Plum, Pennsylvania/ Monroeville, Pennsylvania	Barracks and some minor buildings intcdt, also new industrial building constructed on back of site. No radar towers.	Redeveloped into A.E. O'Block Junior High, and Adlai Stevenson Elementary School. Some concrete foundations visible, Magazine now used as auxiliary gym.
			40°27'40"N 079°43'24"W	40°28'20"N 079°42'52"W
PI-36	Nike 1B, 2C/18H, 30A/10L-U	Irwin, Pennsylvania	Some IFC buildings in use. Redeveloped into Norwin Soccer Club, Norwin YMCA, Oak Hollow Seniors Center.	Off Nike Road. Obliterated. Residential housing plan.
			40°20'42"N 079°41'55"W	40°20'46"N 079°41'01"W
PI-37	Nike 3B/18H, 30A/12L-U	Cowansburg/ Herminie, Pennsylvania	Site appears unused. Many buildings standing, some razed. Several radar towers standing.	In use for light industry. Many buildings still in use, magazines still electrified and operable, used by owner for storage.
			40°16'22"N 079°45'48"W	40°15'45"N 079°45'54"W
PI-42	Nike 1B, 2C/30A/12L-A	Elizabeth, Pennsylvania	A few old IFC buildings in use, no radar towers. Used by the Elizabeth Forward School District.	Some buildings standing, used by the Twin Pines Council of Governments as a Police Firing Range. Magazine exists, concreted over. May be used as a parking lot.
			40°15'02"N 079°51'23"W	40°13'54"N 079°50'12"W
PI-48	Nike 3B/18H, 30A/12L-U	Elrama, Pennsylvania	Still in Army control, being used by the PAARNG; D/876th Engineer Battalion. Some buildings still in use, others torn down. No radar towers standing.	Abandoned. Was in use by Army Reserve and PA National Guard. Buildings still standing. Magazines visible, concrete heavily cracked.
			40°15'09"N 079°57'06"W	40°15'15"N 079°57'59"W
PI-52	Nike 1B, 2C/30A/12L-A	Finleyville, Pennsylvania	Most of site now South Hills Christian School. Some buildings in use, others very deteriorated. No signs of radar towers.	Mostly redeveloped, magazine area in poor condition, used as storage yard and parking lot.
			40°16'37"N 080°01'42"W	40°15'53"N 080°01'04"W
PI-62	Nike 1B, 2C/30A/12L-A	Bridgeville/Hickman, Pennsylvania	Appears abandoned. One building standing, empty parking lots in deteriorating condition. No radar towers.	Some buildings standing, used for school bus storage. Magazines visible, condition unknown.
			40°23'14"N 080°08'22"W	40°22'16"N 080°09'51"W
PI-71	Nike 1B, 2C/18H, 30A/10L-U	Corapolis/Beacon, Pennsylvania	Robinson Dept. of Public Works, poor condition, being used as a storage yard.	Abandoned. No buildings or signs of magazines. Appear to have been dug up and filled with earth.
			40°28'54"N 080°08'36"W	
				40°29'01"N 080°09'50"W
PI-92	Nike 1B, 2C/30A/12L-A	Bryant/North Park	Property given to North Allegheny School District.	Part of Allegheny County Police and Fire Training Academy. Magazines badly deteriorated, some used as parking lot.
			40°34'31"N 080°00'05"W	40°35'25"N 080°00'33"W
PI-93	Nike 1B, 2C/18H, 30A/10L-H	West View, Pennsylvania	Used by Army Corps of Engineers.	Obliterated, residential housing plan.
				40°30'53"N 080°04'49"W
			40°31'38"N 080°03'44"W	

ZD

THIS SPACE AVAILABLE

Contact: K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET

This is a genuine ad from 1964 when WD 40 was first released. Their Ad Department sure had a delightful way with words.

Skyview Digital Challenge Modes

By the time you receive this, the first three months will be history. We did the JT65 Mode in January JT65, the RTTY Mode in February, and the PSK31 Mode in March.

Propagation was not the greatest much of that time, but there were some pretty good days and evenings. I did not find anything exotic, it was mostly European contacts. (I did work KJØDY on PSK31 though). Hopefully everyone tried 40 meters and/or 80 meters to see what is possible there and to try for the bonus multipliers for using those bands.

April's Challenge Mode is JT9. If you got the hang of doing JT65, then you will be able to jump right into JT9 because JT9 uses the same protocol as JT65. JT9 uses less bandwidth and still gets the job done with weak signals. So, it is easier to find an empty spot to call CQ.

Hopefully everyone that participated in the Skyview Digital Challenge learned some things about using digital modes and enjoyed themselves.

It does not take an organized effort like this for you to give these digital modes a try. You can have a go at it anytime that you please. We now have more folks who can give you advice on getting setup and operating them.

There is some guidance from 2016 on using the se various digital 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 the 'Files Page 1', and then follow your nose.

Jody—K3JZD

**** Skyview VE Testing ****

Skyview Radio Society Contact person: Bob Worek, AG3U e-mail: ag3u at arrl.net 724-410-1028
Location: Skyview Radio Society clubhouse. 2335 Turkey Ridge Road. New Kensington,PA 15068.
Please schedule in advance, walk-ins accepted. Exam may be cancelled if no candidates are scheduled.
Testing schedule, what you need to bring, directions, and map are all on http://www.Skyviewradio.net

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 . . . . .

K7UN The Comstock Memorial Station Contest Station
With some serious antennas
http://www.w7rn.com/the-antenna-farm/

Some nice pictures and Videos of the recent antenna work Shows what looks to be a 40m or an 80m beam on the ground and being installed
http://tinyurl.com/hyxv2ez

Chuck's article earlier in this issue discussed decibels. Here is a brief discussion of decibels if you would like to know more about them
http://tinyurl.com/gw3k69p

Then there is the first SOTA North American Female Mountain Goat. Here is a video of her Mountain Goat Activation.
http://tinyurl.com/h3ftjj9

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 June 1, 2017
Closing Date For Submissions : May 15, 2017
K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET

Issue Wrap-up

Wow — lots of pages. Never could have done this with a printed newsletter. And, if you did not get enough here, check out the additional pictures that are on the Skyview facebook page.

My neighbors and friends will ask me if I'm still doing this ham radio stuff now that we have cell phones and the Internet. They seem surprised to hear that it is still an alive and vibrant hobby. I do want a neighborhood full of hams creating interference for me, so I have to confess that I do not attempt to recruit my nearby neighbors. But, I still make an attempt with friends. I could share this newsletter with them to show them some of the things that we do. But the problem is, as it always has been, there are way too many things that would not make a whole lot of sense to them. It is really hard to do an elevator pitch on this hobby.

The Skyview Tech class did not get a lot of coverage here, because it was conceived right after the previous issue came out and it will be happening very soon (may still be possible to sign up for it - send an email to radiofreebob **at** gmail.com to see if there is still space available. Hopefully this class will be well attended and will generate some new hams.

I heard it mentioned that there were not many young people seen at the WASHfest event. I could not argue with that observation. The efforts that Bob - K3RMB makes with the scouts is certainly ideal for trying to interest some youngsters in our hobby.

And, I guess there ended up being a number of timely articles about the joy of playing radio outdoors in this issue. Since our nice weather is coming soon, now it the time to be preparing for getting some sun on you while you are operating your radio. Takes a little doing to get your outdoor operating kit together, but it is not really that hard to do. Jody—K3JZD

Q5er Editor & Publisher: Jody Nelis - K3JZD

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 ??