



Q5er – The Official Newsletter of the Skyview Radio Society

Don't Miss Out On Any Real Time Skyview News

The Skyview K3MJW Groups.io Reflector (aka "the club reflector") is where the Real Time Club News and Event Notifications get distributed to Skyview Members and other interested parties. (We no longer use Yahoo Groups).

You really should sign up with Groups.io, and have the messages that are posted to the Skyview K3MJW Reflector forwarded to your email. Groups.io is privately owned — it is not affiliated with Google. There is no charge for this service, and I have not seen where they have marketed my email address.

Here is how to get signed up:

- Go to <https://groups.io/g/k3mjw> (don't miss the "/g/" in there)
 - Scroll down and click on the blue [Apply For Membership In This Group] button. ***
 - Put in your email address and click on the green [Confirm Email Address] button.
 - Check your email – follow the instructions in the email that you received from Groups.io.
 - Then, once you go back to <https://groupd.io/g/k3mjw> , you will see 'K3MJW' in your Groups List.
 - Click on 'K3MJW' and you will see the Messages which have been posted.
 - Click on [Subscription] at the upper left. Select the 'Email Delivery; and choose the option that you want. (There are not a great deal of messages generated – most of us select 'Individual Messages' to get the new messages in our email in real time).
 - You can change your 'Email Delivery' selection that at any time. If you belong to more than one Group, each Group can have their own 'Email Delivery' selection.
 - Once you are all setup, then you can reply to messages and you can also originate new topics.
- *** You may have to be signed up as a Groups.io Member before you can ask to join the K3MJW Group. Follow the Groups.io instructions.

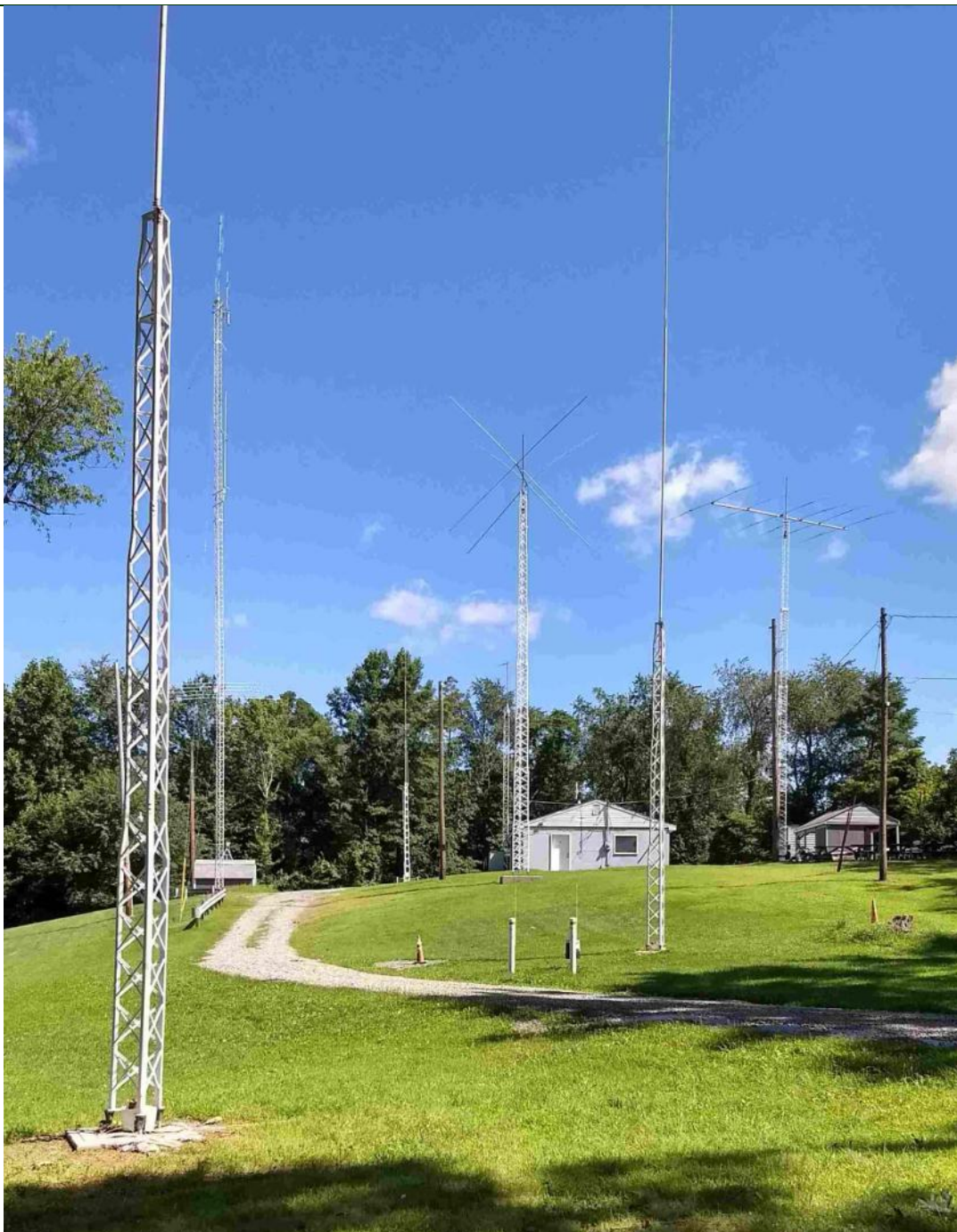
April 1, 2019

- Little Black Box
- Here's to you, Hoboken
- WA7BNM Event Calendar
- Woodworker(s) Wanted
- Sunspots (Depressing)
- For Sale
- A Personal Computer Story
- And More

Sunspots?
I don't need no stinking Sunspots.
I have 40 meters and 80 Meters.

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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 Groups.io Reflector at : <https://groups.io/g/K3MJW>

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

Guests are always welcome !!

From the Editor

Well, here we are — 01APR19. The difficult transition into Daylight Savings Time has occurred (I would vote to stay on that all year around and eliminate adapting to transitioning twice a year).

Spring has officially started. Which I guess means we are now officially into the rainy season. I guess the biggest event over the past Winter was the big windstorm on February 24th. It was another good year where I never had to put any gasoline into my snow blower.

With the wet Winter, the grass at the joint took a beating from all of the cars driving on the soggy turf. Try to avoid tearing it up any further.

Time to start thinking about Field Day — June 22-23 . Good fun. Technicians Class License holders can get a taste of working HF during Field Day.

I hope that you enjoy this issue. And I look forward to receiving your contributions to this newsletter.

Jody - K3JZD

From the Treasurer

We are in pretty good shape financially. The small dues increase and the donations that accompanied the dues have pretty much covered our estimated annual fixed expenses. Thanks to everyone who has continued remain a Skyview Member. And thanks to all of you new members for choosing Skyview.

The Winter was generally mild. We have a high efficiency furnace, and we had insulated the attic in the Fall. But , but we still burned a fair amount of propane. It is annoying that the cost of propane has remained high while the price of natural gas has declined. But, as I hear it, fuel oil is just as bad, if not worse.

Get ready to volunteer to help with some of our projects this Summer. We try to do as much around the joint as possible ourselves to avoid hiring outside labor. The work parties are always good ‘mixers’ where you can get to know your fellow members much better.

Jody - K3JZD



From the Center Seat

de Bill - N3NMC

Rain, snow, cold and bad bands. Curse that groundhog. (ed: I didn't know that Punxy Phil was also responsible for a lack of sunspots — we will have to discuss that with Tamitha Skov on April 16th).

Well it's the next addition of the Q 5er so let's see what has happened at the Joint.

The Skyview banquet and hog roping contest went well. We had great attendance, the food was awesome, and ohhh the cake was just buttery smooth(Thanks Cap). I hear tell that some of the leftover chicken flew the coop but mysteriously reappeared in a KFC bucket. Mmm ,will wonders never cease. Delmont VFD did a great job as usual and good to see Mike Pelz N3MRU back helping again.

At the January BOD many items were proposed and accepted. Check the club reflector for all the Items.

Casey Silliman came up and demonstrated the AED unit. Unfortunately we could not get any volunteers to test it. The AED is now ours and has been hung in the meeting room. Dave N3TIN found a nice case for it.

Cookie is waiting for the other 2 DXE automatic band pass filters. A temporary production problem at DX Engineering is delaying them.

Also looking at stump removal, expanding the upper parking lot and many other projects.

The boys of RTTY did a great job on the CQWW contest, bettering the score from the last 2 years. Also the NAQP RTTY yielded some good results with some newbie's tickling the RTTY keys.

Two of the biggest projects, the 40M tower and the new building projects are moving forward. There is still a lot of planning to do and we hope to have these moving soon. Anytime you take on two projects like this it is bound to meet with some problems. We can only hope to minimize these.

This club was founded for the membership. All projects such as these should be decided by the membership. Please voice your opinion at meetings about any concerns you have.

This is a great hobby, but is just that a hobby. Most everyone comes up to the joint to relax, talk and just have some fun, not have their blood pressure raised. Enjoy it . We have a great group at Skyview with a lot of diversity and experiences. Take advantage of this and above all have fun .

73 de Bill N3WMC



RTTY contesting at Skyview

de Bob - WC3O

Where to begin? From a personal perspective, I first became licensed in 1979. I was a ham for many years before I got involved with contesting. I would hear various contests on the air and thought to myself it was silly and boring. At the time I had no friends that were contesters and had no real exposure to what might be fun about the contesting experience.

Enter Skyview:

When I first started hanging around at Skyview I had the opportunity to meet some contesters. It wasn't until I had the opportunity to watch these guy practice their skills that I started to understand what might be interesting about this aspect of our hobby. I would sit behind the likes of George, N3GJ and Doc, K3MD and watch them contest with CW. I would marvel at their ability to quickly copy, input and respond to very fast CW signals, even when the signals were way down in the mud. At the time I was nowhere near good enough at CW to attempt such an adventure. Watching these guys work is what inspired me to work on improving my CW skills. (Today CW is my favorite contesting mode) Thanks guys!

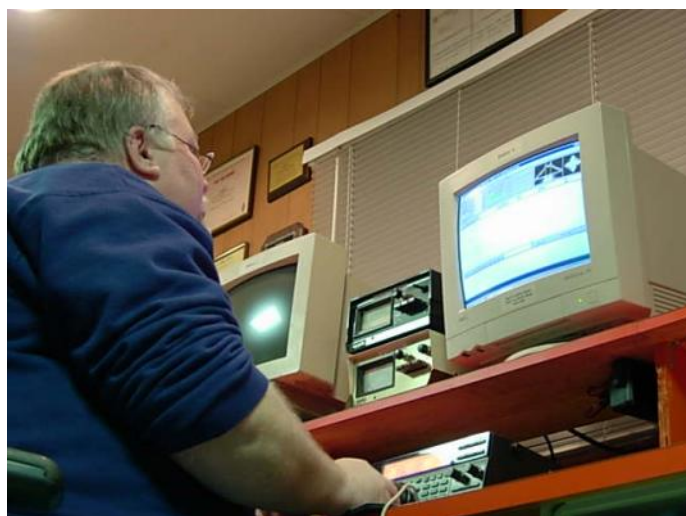
(By the way, they still leave me in the dust...)



N3TYP - N3GJ - W3BUW - K3RWN

Enter RTTY contesting at Skyview:

At the time, we (Skyview) never even attempted a RTTY contest. The popularity of RTTY contesting was on the rise due to the ability to transmit and receive RTTY with an ordinary computer/sound card. Using the free program MMTTY yielded very good results. Programmers that wrote contest logging software adapted their programs to use MMTTY as a plug-in and the two programs, logging and RTTY engine, basically merged into one great program and allowed for very fast RTTY exchanges and logging.



W3BUW At Work

As a budding contester I had A LOT to learn about this realm. I fully blame Rich, K3RWN for Skyview's involvement in RTTY contesting. It was Rich that first proposed the idea that we participate in a RTTY contest at Skyview. I, had NO idea. One of the aspects I did not understand at the time was how important the logging program is as to how well you can do in a contest. Rich introduced us to Writelog. This was/is a Windows based logging program that opened my eye as to what a good logging program can do to enhance your score.

RTTY contesting is VERY hard on equipment. You are basically dropping a dead carrier while you are transmitting. You are doing this for LONG periods of time.

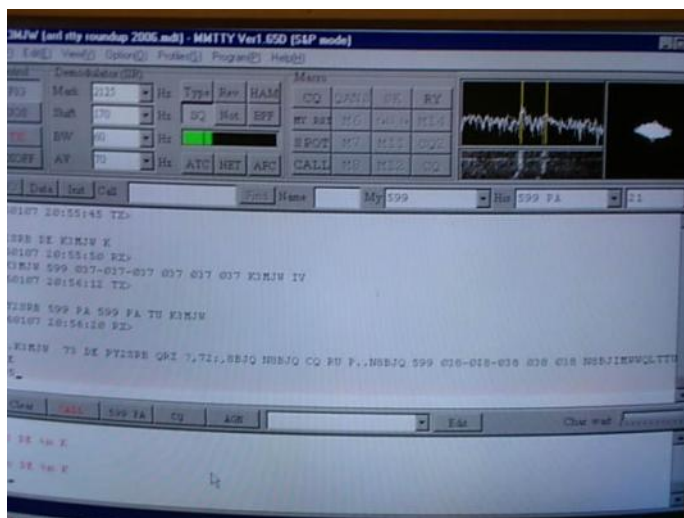
You are generating LOTS of heat. All components involved get a hard workout, from the radio to the antenna and everything in between. Each component in the RF chain must be up to the task. If you are a good contester you are doing one of two things, either transmitting or logging a contact. This makes for a very high duty cycle compared to regular modes such as phone or CW. RTTY is REALLY tough on equipment .



RTTY Soup

For our first attempt at RTTY contesting we used the only radio the club had at this time, an ICOM IC-736. Great radio, but the receive for RTTY was as wide as a barn door which made copying RTTY on a very crowded band very difficult. We then came up with an ICOM IC-746. That receiver on RTTY was MUCH tighter and allowed us to obtain much higher scores. At the time we had an Ameritron AL-572 amplifier. That amp was capable of 1300 watts PEP on SSB. That is NOT a heavy duty amp and you don't even think about running big power with it on RTTY! For RTTY we ran this amp at only 500 watts. Even at only 500 watts the plates on the tubes glowed RED hot. Surprisingly the 572 amps held up well despite the hell we put them through. (We eventually had two of these amps) When an Ameritron AL-1500 became available from a silent key estate we jumped at the chance. Along with a very generous donation, we now had an amp that could survive doing RTTY contesting at @ 1200 watts! (The AL-1500 will easily make

1500 watts with around 50 watts drive and uses the rugged 8877 (3CX1500) tube) Another advantage of using the AL-1500 was that the radio only needed to make around 40 watts rather than 100 watts. This is MUCH easier on the radio AND helps produce a cleaner transmitted signal, thus further reducing inter-station interference. Again, our scores went up.



RTTY Soup After Being Processed by MMTTY

Inter-station interference was a big problem for us. While the main A station was transmitting, the B station receive was completely wiped out by the strong nearby transmitter. Rich, K3RWN suggested the club purchase three ICE model 419 switchable band-pass filters. While it was a big investment, those filters made all the difference in the world. We could now have the A station running a frequency on one band, while the B station looked for all-important mults on another band without the receiver being beat-up by the A station's near-constant transmitting. Again, our score went up!

Looking back at my pictures it looks like the very first RTTY contest Skyview participated in was the 2006 ARRL RTTY Round-up.

Those were fun times. Quite honestly I sucked at RTTY contesting, at first. Getting the timing right, learning to listen, making the right moves, all these things (and many more) are lessons learned from experience. Rich was well familiar with Writelog, but I was not. This re-

sulted in phone calls to Rich at odd hours when he wasn't there with questions. Lots of questions.

At the time Writelog suffered from a lot of glitches that resulted in many computer re-boots, network issues and strange configuration glitches. I finally got frustrated and made a command decision to switch to N1MM logging software. I had experimented with N1MM at home and it seemed to work very well, and consistently. It even looks similar to Writelog in many ways. N1MM and the current N1MM+ have performed VERY well for us over the years. While I am very sure Writelog has long resolved all of the issues we were having, I'm still glad we switched to N1MM.

In 2008 Skyview took 1st place USA in the CQ WW RTTY contest! Folks, that's not bad! Over time RTTY contesting has gained favor with some really big-time contest station owners, making it harder for us to ping 1st place. Through the years we are always within the top 10 USA. Sometimes even as high as second place. When you consider the size of the big contest stations we are competing with (K9CT, N0NI, and others) and the fact that they typically use all seasoned contesters, our scores are pretty damn impressive.



2008 CQ WW RTTY Contest Award

Other fun Skyview RTTY facts:

For Skyview's 50th anniversary in 2010 a group of Skyview RTTY contesters took a trip to the island of Curaçao, to the contest super-station PJ2T! They operated

in the CQ WW RTTY contest as PJ2S (for Skyview). They had way too much fun. I didn't go. I've been kicking myself ever since.

In 2012 the Skyview RTTY contest gang went up to Prince Edward Island and operated CQ WW RTTY from the VY2TT contest super-station as WC3O/VY2. This time I did go. We had such a blast we still talk about it today. We suffered a 4 hour power outage that clobbered our score, but we still made 1st place Canada! I so dearly want to go back.



W3BUW WB3FXC N3LZP

In recent years our RTTY contest efforts have been, well, strained. In the early years we had a ready pool of folks that were happy to come up and operate. They were there early and stayed late. These days it seems much harder to get people up to come up and operate. It becomes an up-hill push. I'm not into that.

Let's switch the discussion to repeaters for a minute. I've written that repeaters are much more than just a transmitter, receiver, duplexers and antenna. Repeaters ARE a virtual meeting place. A place you can go with your friends and have great discussions. A group of people that is a unique fraternity with many common interests. What could be better? People talk about the heyday of repeater as being years ago. Bullshit! TODAY is the heyday! All we need is YOU. Recently the 64 repeater has been quite active. As Radio Officer, you have no idea what a warm-fuzzy feeling that gives me. New hams, old

hams. And now we have DMR, D-STAR, System Fusion, EchoLink, WIRES-X, Talk Groups, Reflectors and much more. Why wouldn't TODAY be the heyday of repeaters? All that is needed is "YOU".

OK, back to RTTY:

Skyview has had a really great past when it comes to RTTY contesting. However, TODAY we have much better radios, much better amplifiers, much better filtering, much better antennas. TODAY should be the heyday of Skyview RTTY contesting. Opportunity is knocking. . .

RTTY contesting, much like our repeater, is about getting together with friends that you have much in common with. It's about the team effort. With a larger team participation, there is more opportunity for rag chewing. It's about having fun. Are you busy with stuff at home? Guess what – All that crap will be there when you get back. Greatly improve your operating skills and knowledge. Learn new things. Do as well as you can today, and be better tomorrow. Come early and stay late. Sleep over. Make GREAT meals. Tell stories. Let's be the best we can.

Heyday? That would be today, if you let it.

Sincerely, your Radio Officer

Bob Bastone - WC3O



ed : Hams interfaced used mechanical teletype machines to their Transmitters and Receivers to do on the air RTTY. No F1—F2—F3 operation here. It was type it in as you Transmit and read from the paper printout to interpret what you Receive. Contests , with pencil and paper logging, were 'fun'.

in the early days of personal computers, it was common to obtain a used mechanical teletype machine and use it for keyboard 'Input' and printed 'Output'.

Hobbyists eventually developed interface boards to obtain their computer 'Input' from a surplus mainframe computer keyboard and their 'Output' go to a television screen. They were initially called 'Glass Teletypes' before someone came up with idea of calling them 'Monitors'.

Hams adopted this 'Glass Teletype' hardware for their RTTY operation. But, now logging became more difficult because you had to quickly read the information off of a screen before it scrolled off the bottom.

Eventually, as they became affordable, hams began to utilize the small home computers with their keyboards and monitors, and fabricated customized interface boards to connect to their radios in order to do RTTY.

Today, as Bob has just described, it is a whole lot easier to setup your computer and your radio to do RTTY. And today it is a whole lot easier to learn how to operate RTTY. I find RTTY contests to be a lot easier to do than SSB or CW Contests.

There is Moonbounce, and Then There is

Has your AM radio band been full of static, faint signals, and what seems like adjacent-station interference lately? It isn't your radio folks, but signals transmitted from earth — back in the 1930s.

Modern civilization's radio transmissions are now beginning to bounce back to earth, causing interference to existing stations which are on the same frequency the signals were sent some 84 years ago. Some of these signals however are being heard clearly, as if they were live.

Radio listeners all over the world are now witnessing this phenomenon and has piqued interest in numerous space research organizations, interest groups, and historical societies.

In a phone interview, John Q. Randall of the SETI Institute said that the phenomenon has probably been happening for some time, but we are just starting to hear some of the bounced signals clearly because radio transmitters were significantly improved starting in the 1930s.

There are also several theories of how and why this is happening. "There are many theories being presented, but the most compelling so far is that these transmissions may have started bouncing off a large planet or moon many million miles away some 42 years ago, similar to artificial satellites in use for television now, but in a larger scale," Randall said. "It took another 42 years to travel back to earth, so now we are basically witnessing history first hand" he adds.

One notable radio broadcast, [Herbert Morrison's account of the Hindenburg disaster in 1937](#) ("Oh the humanity") was recorded by a Ham radio operator in the Philippines. Henry Palabyab, callsign DU1PHL, was recording on audio tape a signal from a transmitter experiment on his modified Ham radio's 345-meter AM band, when he chanced upon the famous radio broadcast.

A radio studio in the 1930s "I was testing this home-brewed transmitter, recording my voice on 890 KHz, and the radio broadcast came in," Palabyab said. "At first, I thought it may be a rebroadcast from a local station, but I later found out that other frequencies are receiving signals around the 1930s when I heard the station IDs and did some research," he adds.

Eric Norcado, a member of the Extra Terrestrial Communications Experts and Homebrew (ET-COME-HOME) said that excitement is building up because "the Hindenburg disaster, which happened on May 6, 1937 was recorded by Palabyab on January 15, 2014, the 'War of the Worlds' broadcast by Orson Welles on CBS radio happened in October 30, 1938." In less than two years,

Norcado said that the world will "re-live an important part of radio history, one that shook the world, all over again."

Norcado also made a suggestion to those who still owns an analog 'picture tube' television set, to hold on to them as there is going to be a big chance that television broadcasts maybe bouncing back in the next few years as well. "Television broadcasts started around 1936, so we are probably only getting static right now. However, television in the United States really started in 1939 and was booming starting in 1948," Norcado said.

Contributed by Chuck — K3CLT



The Last Man Standing

de John - K3STL

Last Man Standing is a sitcom television show on FOX network starring Tim Allen. Tim Allen and the sitcom's producer John Amodeo are real-life licensed amateur radio operators and the sitcom features a secondary amateur radio storyline.



Tim Allen -- KK6OTD

Tim Allen's character on the sitcom, Mike Baxter, uses the fictitious call sign KA0XTT. Interestingly, the ARRL provided fictitious award certificates such as DXCC, WAS, WAC, and even an ARRL Morse Code Proficiency award that are on display at the so-called "Seinfeld Stage" on the CBS Studio Center lot in Studio City, California.

The Last Man Standing amateur radio station is officially licensed through the FCC as KA6LMS and occasionally Rob Antonacci, AA6RA, brings the station to live after filming for the day and works amateurs from all over the world. This is a great opportunity for amateurs to work a nationally recognized amateur radio station. QSL cards are exchanged for those who make contact with KA6LMS and send a SASE.

As an avid DX chaser with QSL cards from all over the world who loves showing those QSL cards to my family and friends, I thought my non-ham friends would think it's neat that I had talked to an amateur radio station on a television show and had a QSL card. And it sounded pretty easy to obtain.

Sometimes the schedule of operations is posted. On the first evening that I tried, I patiently waited on 40 meters to make the contact. Unfortunately, band conditions are at their worst as of late and KA6LMS could not be heard from Pittsburgh. I hung in there for as long as possible and heard a few stations luckily making their contact until KA6LMS went QRT.

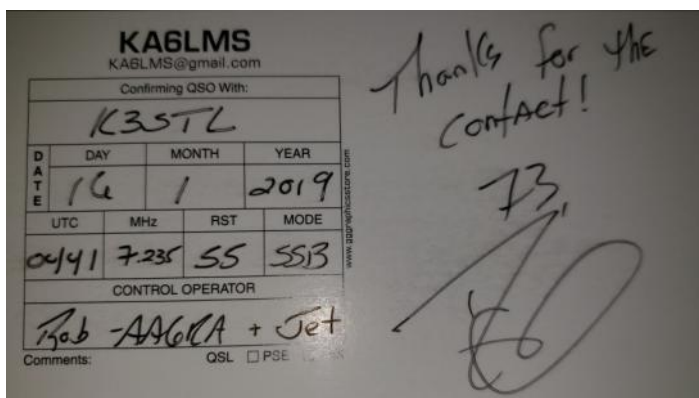
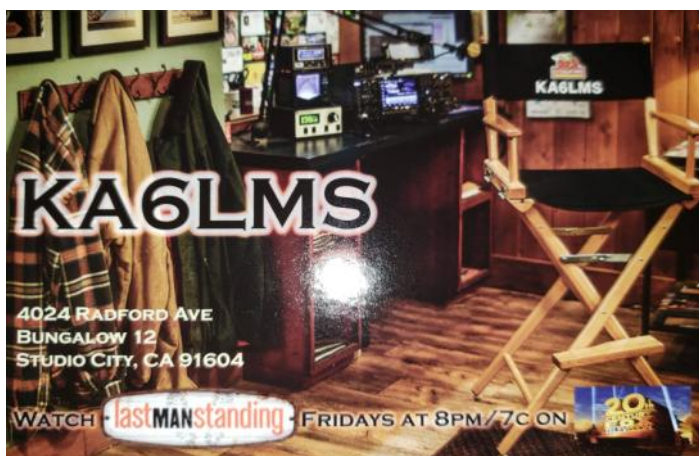
The next scheduled operation was a couple weeks later, after filming was over at 11:00 PM (Eastern). This time it was different because Rob, AA6RA has Jet Jurgensmeyer, who plays Boyd on the show, as a guest listener and Jet is interested in becoming a licensed ham. I asked Bob, WC3O, to stay up late and try to work KA6LMS. Bob, too, was interested in earning this QSL card and was eager to stay up late to give it a try.

The clock strikes 11:00 PM and nothing is heard. Then 11:10, 11:15... the minutes seemed like hours, but the studio was not finished filming and we had to wait. Finally, KA6LMS is spotted on DX Summit and I tune to the correct frequency for making a contact, only to hear static. Band conditions were poor yet again! After unsuccessfully trying a few antennas to see if anything could be heard and sitting there sulking in defeat for yet another evening, Bob said "Did you try the receive antenna?" The receive antenna is a small antenna that Bob made utilizing a DX Engineering control box. The advantage to this antenna is that although it is a very poor antenna, it attenuates much of the static noise to allow for hearing communications.

I fire up the receive antenna and, while tuning, hear a faint voice. I say to Bob "It's them! I can barely hear them, but can hear them!" KA6LMS is barely heard, but after all of this waiting, I had to give it my best shot and proudly throw my call sign in the pileup. After Rob, AA6RA, finished with a contact he asks is K3STL still there? I was quite surprised the pileup was broke through and happily contacted Rob and had a short QSO so that others could enjoy the opportunity. Next, Bob, WC3O, gets in the seat and works them on the first try with his voice that is much quieter than mine. Talk about a great antenna system!

The next morning, Bob and I put our QSL cards in the mail with hopes of receiving a card in return. About two weeks later Bob asks if my QSL card was received because his was received the day prior. I'm thinking if Bob received his card, mine must be at the post office. My night out ended early for a special trip to the post office, where my KA6LMS QSL card was waiting. I brought that QSL card to work the next day and like a little kid showed it to everyone.

A few good memories were made throughout my ham radio years, but this memory is one of my favorites. So remember the next time you want to work that DX (or stateside) station and band conditions are poor, or you can't break the pileup, to keep trying your best and you, too, may be the last man standing!



Little Black Box

*By Max P. Vander Horck, WA6HUW
Published in QST, November 1966, page 33
Used by permission of ARRL's KB1EIB*

A little black box of jewels and rocks,
with lanterns that flicker and glow,
Make lighter the gloom in my little back room,
where often I haste to go.

An anthem it peals of whistles and squeals
and of voices so ghostly and queer,
That you'd never decry, should you chance to pass by,
what a brotherhood foregathers here!

Each separate tone has a soul of its own;
each voice is the voice of a friend,
United through space in this gathering-place
at the radiant rainbow's end.

Reverberant sounds ride the wave that rebounds,
like the waves of the sea from afar.
Reporting the doings, the comings and going
of brothers, wherever they are.

A curious band, spread over the land,
yet joined from equator to poles,
Disperses the gloom in each little back room
by this magic communion of souls.

I could part with a lot of the things that I've got,
but I'll carry my love to the tomb,
Of that little black box and the joys it unlocks
when I enter that little back room.

WA7BNM Contest Calendar Came Through Again

de Jody—K3JZD

I was not able to get out during the February weekend of the WASHfest (which many of you may remember as the weekend of the big windstorm). So I had to find some indoor things to do that were more exciting than cleaning out the garage. I checked the WA7BNM Contest Calendar and I was able to find some low pressure events to work. There is always a lot listed on this calendar- you have to analyze the events to see what looks interesting. <https://www.contestcalendar.com/weeklycont.php>

On that Saturday I worked some of the South Carolina QSO Party — SC would be available on 40m most of the day. Not a serious effort, just for the fun of it. SC has a lot more counties than you would expect to find there. I submitted a log, but I had failed to note that SC allows mobile and portable stations to straddle a county line and have that be considered as operating from both counties simultaneously. I could have claimed two contacts, one for each of those counties, each time that I worked the roving mobile stations that were running around and frequently doing that county line straddling.

That would have helped my QSO count and might have added a county or two. But, those mobile stations were using high speed N1MM+ generated CW, which made copying them a chore - they were sending something after the county abbreviation that I did copy, but I was not able to pick up what all it was that they were sending after the county. Oh well, it was just for fun anyway.

That Sunday could have been the NC QSO party. But instead But, I opted to participate in the Classic [Radio] Exchange. This particular weekend it was Phone operation - the CW operation had occurred in January. In this event, your multiplier is the age of the radios that you used. So, I dusted off my Swan 350 transceiver. That is a 1964 radio – 55 years old – seemed a decent multiplier for this event. While that radio has gone through a few sets of final tubes, it has never been recapped. I crossed my fingers and put the power to it. A little AC hum. But no snap, crackle, or pop. And no smoke. So I was good to go with it.

That old transceiver is rated at 350 watts Input – I saw about 300 watts Output on my SWR/Wattmeter on SSB voice peaks which surprised me. I guess I hit it pretty hard on SSB. I made 24 SSB contacts on 40m and 2 SSB contacts on 20m that day. That was more activity that I really expected to find.

Then I read the rules some more. Turns out that even though I had only used one radio, I would be in the 'Up to Three Radios' class. Hmm—should have known that sooner I guess. But, it turns out that the event would go on for one more day - on the following Tuesday.

So, for Tuesday, I decided to dust off my Kenwood TS-520S (1977 Radio – 42 years old), and my Ten-Tec Scout 555 (1994 radio – 25 years old) to see if I could make some contacts with each of them. Once again using 20m and 40m, I was able to make 7 SSB QSOs with the 50w Scout and 16 SSB QSOs with the TS-520S that was showing about 150w output on SSB voice peaks. Not bad for a weekday - but I guess most folks with the old radios were old timers and retired.

That gave me give me a new multiplier of 122 (55+42+25). Sent in my log for the 'Up to Three Radios' class. But, the guys with stuff like the old Collins gear, who could sum up the ages of their separate Receiver, Transmitter, and Amplifier, and count that as just 'one radio', will have it all over me whenever it comes to overall scores. For me, it was just a good excuse to exercise my older radios and have some fun. It was also interesting to hear about what kinds of radios the other participants were running.

So, whenever you run into a situation where you have some time, and are looking for some low pressure event to participate in, check the WA7BNM Contest Calendar. It may lead you into trying some new things.

Jody - K3JZD

Here's to you, Hoboken!

de Bob - WC3O



I've seen pictures of these classic towers for years and never realized that they were manufactured right here in Pittsburgh! Who knew?

So next time you're cruising through Hoboken/Blawnox be sure to note the mural on the side of the Starlite Lounge and rejoice in the rich history of our region.

<http://j-hawkins.com/blaw-knox.html>



If you drive through the little borough of Blawnox heading north on Freeport Road you may notice a large mural painted on the side of the Starlite Lounge. There is a picture of an old steam engine and a large radio tower. On the front of the engine it says "Hoboken Line". What's that all about?

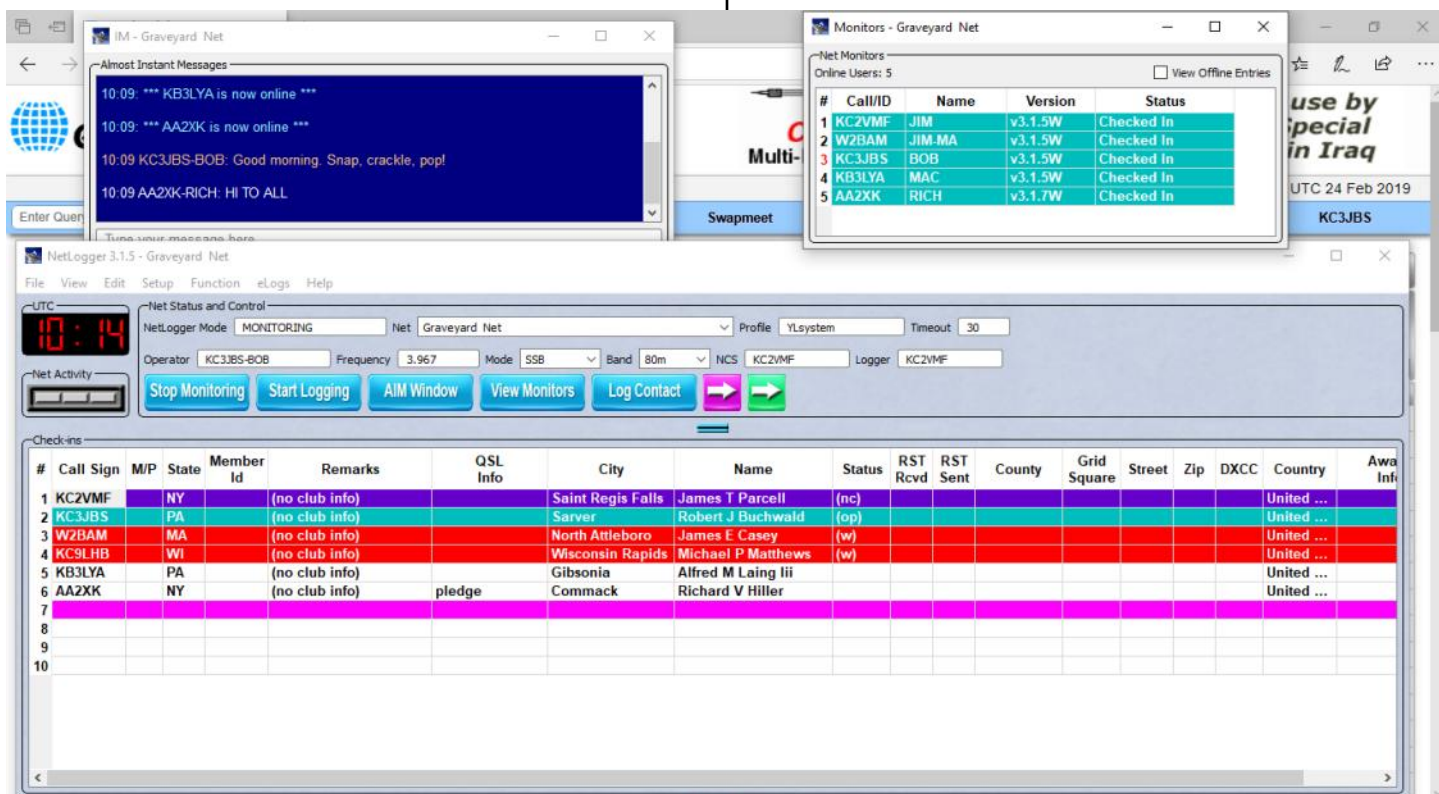
Well, the original name of Blawnox was Hoboken. The borough was later re-named Blawnox, which was derived from the Blaw-Knox Steel Company. What did they manufacture??? Lots of industrial things, including radio towers.

You may have heard of famous old radio stations such as WSM, WLW, WBT and others having a Blaw-Knox tower. The Blaw-Knox tower is characterized by its unique diamond shape. The tower is guyed only in the wide center.

The tallest Blaw-Knox tower is 1030 feet tall and was erected in Hungry. The closest Blaw-Knox diamond tower is at WBNS in Columbus, OH. I'm not sure of this, but I think the tower for WESA (EX WDUQ) on Mount Washington is a Blaw-Knox tower. While it is not the classic diamond design, it does look like half of the diamond. I remember hearing this somewhere, but I am not sure it's true.

Followup For Netlogger

de Bob - KB3JBS



I think I managed to cover the basics during my presentation at the Joint on January 29th. But I want to expand a little on using the features that are most useful.

Here is a screen shot of a live Netlogger session getting ready to begin the net. Both the AIM (Almost Instant Messenger), and the View Monitors windows are situated above the main program. The Net Controller (NC) here is KC2VMF and he opened the net using the "Create Net" button.

If you look at the screen, you can see 4 large blue buttons. I'll cover these a little more, but first you need to download and install the Netlogger software from their website, www.netlogger.org.

This should be installed on the computer you use in your shack. You can also install it on your laptop for portability. You'll need to use your call sign to install. The best part is that it's absolutely free, but they do ask for donations if you choose. Install it as a stand-alone, and I'll talk about being a Net Controller (NC), when I get to that button.

In the above screen the first button says "Stop Monitoring" because it's currently a net that I've checked into. I'm the first to check-in when Jim, the NC, opened the net using the "Create Net" button.

CAUTION: If you create a net and open it, you MUST close the net when it's finished. If you don't, you will receive an email directly from the Netlogger group with a warning that if it continues, the net will be barred from future use! I know because it happened to me!

When you are on a net, you can hit the "Stop monitoring" button at any time, and that button will change to "Select Net". Hitting that button will open a window showing all the nets that are currently available using Netlogger. Please remember that Netlogger is a tool only being used by certain nets. There are hundreds more nets that don't use the program. That means you also need to keep a pencil and paper log, because many on the net that is using Netlogger do not use the program. They get on the net by answering when the NC asks for "New Check-Ins". The NC then enters them into Netlogger, and they will pop up on the program in the order of

their check-in. Everyone can see the order on Netlogger. The “Stop Monitoring” button will also change to “Select Net” when the NC properly closes the net.

Hitting the “Select Net” button and highlighting any of the nets that appear, gives you another button at the bottom right corner of this window called “Monitor Net”. Clicking on that will bring up the screen similar to the one at the top of this document. It will show the net you are monitoring and every call sign on the net in Netlogger. If the NC knows what they’re doing, those not using Netlogger will also be there.

The next button is “Create Net”. Use this button if you want to be a Net Controller and open the net. It will open a window with various items to type in, including a password. Write that down before going on. Your call sign is automatically the user name. Again, don’t forget my caution above, making sure you close the net!

Next is the “Aim” button, which opens an “Almost Instant Messenger” window that allows you to enter a text message. You need to get the cursor blinking in the “Type Your Message Here” area. After hitting enter, it may take anywhere from a second to a minute to appear in the window above. Everyone using Netlogger will receive that message, so please be courteous!

Earlier, I mentioned portability on a laptop. If you are away and have Internet access, you can run Netlogger and monitor the nets at any time, and use the AIM window to let them know you miss them, LOL!

The last button I’m going to cover in this article is “View Monitors”. Another window will open showing all checked-in call signs, along with those not checked-in. They will have the end label of “Lurking”. I think the Netlogger developers have a little sense of humor. If the NC asks for check-ins and they don’t answer, they will stay as lurkers. The NC must enter their call signs into Netlogger for them to appear. Some NC’s automatically enter every call sign in the “Monitors” window, meaning they’re automatically checked-in by the NC.

Also, if you right-click on many items, a menu will pop up. One of the items is QRZ Lookup. Very useful!

That’s enough for now. I can continue on some of the finer issues of Netlogger in the future, but remember that I’m still trying to learn as much as I can with limited time on the radio. If you learn anything not covered so far, please share.

Bob Buchwald, KC3JBS



Ham Radio is a Contact Sport

Batteries for Portable QRP Operations

de Jody - K3JZD

This article from the January 2019 edition of the North American QRP CW Club (NAQCC) Key Clicks Newsletter is reprinted by permission . <http://www.naqcc.info>

I began doing portable QRP operation in parks several years ago. One thing that has evolved has been my choice of batteries. While my Yaesu FT-817 has an internal battery, using it only provides 2.5 watts out. I needed to use an external battery to get the full 5 watts out. I started out by using a small 1.4 Ah sealed lead acid battery (SLAB). While small and fairly light, I soon found out that 1.4 Ah did not provide me with very much capacity. The voltage dropped pretty fast.

I then bought a Amstron HR1234W2F high rate AGM battery. It was rated at 5-9 Ah, depending upon how it was discharged. It had plenty of capacity - I never ran that battery down with my FT-817 during any park outing. It always got the job done for me. But, this battery weighs in at 5.7 pounds.

Whenever I volunteered to go out onto the North Country Trail for the "Light up the Trail" event back in 2016, I envisioned a lot of activity and I did not want to risk running out of battery. So, I borrowed a Genesis XE13X 13 Ah deep discharge battery to use during that outing. Well, carrying that 12 pound battery over two miles of the North Country Trail to get to the high spot that I had selected turned out to be a chore. I think both of my arms got longer that day. As it turned out, the weather was really bad all along the trail, the activity was much lower than anticipated, and I used very little of that big heavy battery. This outing taught me that carrying a 12 pound battery was not a good plan.

While I still do some park operations, they are now typically at parks that are further out and at higher elevations. I have begun to do Summits On The Air (SOTA) activations. So, nowadays everything I need goes into my backpack, where size and weight matters. Whenever I had that 5.7 pound SLAB in my backpack, I knew that it was there !!

From listening to the SOTA gurus, I soon learned that smaller and lighter is better. And that having a spare battery is a good plan as it often takes a lot of uphill walking to get to a SOTA activation site. After doing that walking, one does not want to have to abort the activation due to a battery failure.

So I switched to using battery packs that were made up of four inexpensive Westinghouse branded 2000 mAh 18650 Li-Ion cells. I found these Westinghouse branded batteries in the

garden department at Wal-Mart and on-line. I found the four-cell battery holders on eBay, and I added heavier wiring and PowerPole connectors. Each four cell pack weights 7 ounces. So, carrying two of these 4 cell packs was easy compared to that 5.7 pound SLAB. I measured it once I and found that I was getting very close to the rated 2000 mAh from these Westinghouse branded cells (many no-name eBay specials do not come anywhere close to providing their advertised capacity). I have done some SOTA activations where I will do two summits in one day, with about 20-25 QSOs during each activation, and have only used one battery pack. I do have to watch the battery voltage so that I do not let it go below 10.0 volts though.

But, it takes a little fussing around to use these Li-Ion cells. I like to cycle them, so whenever I come home from an outing I take a partially discharged pack down to 10.0 volts before recharging. I built a small Arduino based device to watch the pack voltage as the battery is being discharged into a small incandescent automobile backup lamp that draws about 2.0 amps. Whenever the Arduino sees that the battery pack has dropped down to 10.0 volts, it automatically disconnects the battery from the lamp and keeps it disconnected. I bought a battery charger that charges all four cells at once, but individually. So I have to take the four cells out of the holder to charge them and then put them back into the holder once they are charged. And I always check the voltages of the individual cells before and after charging to make sure that I do not have a weak cell in my set of four un-managed cells. And I do charge these batteries in an open area on my rear patio as Li-Ions can catch fire while being charged.



Q5er – The Official Newsletter of the Skyview Radio Society

Four 16850 Li-Ion cells are 16.4 volts when fully charged. A bit above the 13.8 volts specified by Yaesu for the FT-817. While not recommended, I have connected these packs directly to my FT-817. They tend to lose a little voltage as soon as I begin to transmit, so that full voltage is not imposed for real long. So far, I have not seen any adverse effects from doing this (however, your mileage may vary).

But whenever I got my KX3, the KX3 said no-way and immediately shut down as soon as it saw that 16.4 volts. So, I had to make up an inline adapter with two diodes in series to lower the voltage to below 15.0 volts to make the KX3 happy. Then I have to watch the watch the External Supply Voltage on the KX3 display and take that voltage dropping adapter out of the line whenever I see it reading around 12.0 volts. So, it actually takes quite a bit of fussing to use these four cell packs of 16850 Li-Ions.

While my packs of four unmanaged 18650 Li-Ion cells have been working well for me for a couple of years now, I recently bought a no-fuss, idiot-proof, KISS, Bioenno Power 3000 mAh LifePO4 battery pack and matching charger to see what I was missing. This is a 12v nominal battery pack which automatically manages and balances the individual cells whenever it is in use and automatically shuts itself off whenever it drops down to 10.0 volts. So, there is no chance of my running this battery down too far and damaging it. It came with Power-Pole connectors, so it was plug and play. With the matching Bioenno Power charger, it is simply connect it right to the battery pack and plug it in. The pack does the automatic load balancing when charging. These batteries do not need to be cycled and 12 volts is enough to produce a full 5 watts out on both the FT-817 and the KX3. And I'm told that the managed LifePO4 batteries in this pack will not catch fire.

Since I was able to get two SOTA activations from a 2000 mAh Li-Ion pack, then I should get three SOTA activations from this 3000 mAh LifePO4. On the plus side, it is certainly a KISS system, and it has increased capacity. On the negative side, it is heavier (13 oz compared to the 7 oz Li-Ion four cell pack), is a little larger, and is more expensive. The size and weight increase is no big deal whenever I'm doing a park activation, but impacts whenever I'm doing a SOTA activation. The larger issue whenever I do a SOTA activation where I have to walk a ways and be self sufficient, is the need to carry a spare battery. I could just buy a second Bioenno Power battery, and always carry two of them. But, that would be 1 lb – 10z of batteries compared 14 ounces with the Li-Ions. I could carry one of my Li-Ions as the spare, but that means having to also carry the voltage dropping diode adapter in case I have to use that spare. For the time being, I'm using with the second option. In the end, I suspect I'll capitulate and just buy a second Bioenno Power battery to keep it totally KISS.

Hopefully any of you who are considering getting out and getting some fresh air while doing some portable QRP operations will get something out of this tale of the path that I have gone down. It should convince you skip the first few steps with the SLABs if you intend to do your operation anywhere that you will have to carry the whole thing on your back for any distance. I'm sure that there are other very suitable batteries available – I just discussed the ones that had been recommended to me and that I have had experience with.

Jody - K3JZD - NAQCC 7936



A Personal Computer Story

They're saying it's time to retire desktop machines. Must I really bid farewell to my old friend Mac?

IT WAS A DAY much like any other. The sun shone. The wind blew. Breakfast was on the table. That didn't make what I had to do any easier. "Are you ready, Mac?" I said to my old PC. He didn't say anything back. He knew where we had to go. He didn't like it, but he didn't put up much of a fuss. It's not in his operating system to do so. He just does whatever I want him to. Always has. That's what made this whole thing so darn hard.

It was just the day before that I heard it was time to take him away. Mr. Steve Jobs said so. I read it on the Internet. He was at some conference in a swanky ballroom, and he was pretty clear about it. He said that my old pal's time was up, that he'd done his work in this world, and his day was done. It was time for him to relax now, to sit on the shelf while other, lighter, younger, faster players stepped up to the plate. That day comes for us all, be we hardware or software, and I guess it was Mac's day of destiny. Mr. Jobs is never wrong—we all know that.

So it was time for me to take my old pal to the Home. He'll be happier there, I told myself as we drove out of the city and into the rag end of an outer suburb. The Home for Old Technology sits on a tiny plot of land not far from the railroad tracks that separate the future from the past. Nobody pays it much mind, until they have a loved one who has to go there. We rolled up around noon. "Don't take me in there," Mac said to me, very quietly. We went anyway.

I noticed a bulky box with lots of buttons on it sitting on the front porch, staring into the middle distance. I recognized it. "Good morning, ma'am," I said to the Twix machine. "I haven't seen one of you in a long time."

"Do you have any of that greasy paper I used to like so much?" asked the Twix, a predecessor to the Fax. I told her no, they don't make paper like that anymore, and even if they did, it would be too expensive. She made a kind of sad, empty, grinding noise. I took my friend inside.

An eight-track tape player was looking around for cartridges. Over by the window, sort of huddling together for warmth, were a record player, just spinning its turntable, a Sony Walkman coughing on a jammed-up cassette tape, a Discman CD player, and—tragically for one so young—a first-generation iPod. "Hey, buddy," the iPod said. "Got a charge?" I didn't. Not that it would have done much good. Those guys could never hold one for very long anyhow.

We went to the main office to check my PC into the facility. "Well, here's our new resident!" said an overly cheery attendant, ushering my buddy into the solarium. "Let me introduce you to your new roommates," she continued, the way those people do. "Here's Mr. Lexitron and Ms. Wang—you remember her. And look who else is here! Mr. Kaypro—your old lunchbox with the eight-inch green-on-black screen! See how much fun they're having playing Pong?"

"Don't make me stay here," said Mac, then.

"But Steve Jobs says you're dead, Mac," I said. "And his opinion is echoed by pundits at virtually every tech conference now. I don't know what else to do."

"Take me home, please, boss," he said. "Put me in the attic. Anything. Just don't leave me here." We stood looking at each other. In an adjacent room there was a horrible clicking noise, followed by silence. "Don't worry about that!" said the attendant. "That's just another mobile phone looking for a wall charger whose tip is no longer manufactured!"

I got Mac out of there. When we got him home, I set him up at the kitchen table, and we worked together for a while. "See," he said to me with uncommon tenderness. "I can still do just about everything, even if I don't have a touchscreen or 3G."

"I know, man," I said. Then I powered him down and put him to sleep. His time will come, I know. But not yet. Not just because somebody trying to sell me something new and shiny told me so. ■

For Sale

I have a complete Yaesu FT-2000 Station for sale:

- FT-2000 with latest firmware updates installed
- CT-119 firmware update cable
- optional 500 Hz narrow filter installed in the sub-RX
- FH-2 remote control keypad
- MD-100 dynamic desk mic
- All 3 micro-tuners for 160 - 80/40 - and 20/30 meter bands
- DMU-2000 display unit, including a 15" flat screen monitor (very useful for accessing the 147 menu selections of the FT-2000 and saving or reloading them from the SD memory card) Latest firmware installed.
- All manuals, including service manual...some in digital format, some in print.
- All original shipping boxes, though I don't wish to ship. I'm looking for a local sale.
- It is currently set up on my dining room table (see attached picture) so you can try before you buy! It is all in working order and perfect condition....not a scratch on it that I can see...a non smoking environment. \$900 cash will make it yours.
- The Signalink USB unit for the digital modes is available with this package, too, for an extra \$50.

73 - George - W3ANX - 724-733-8035



Woodworker(s) Wanted

We have lost the two members who used to come through for us whenever we needed some custom thingie made out of wood.

No major projects - just small things. Like a custom shelf or bracket to hold something in the radio room — see the support for the Receiving Antenna Controller that is at the left station. Or things like the blank contoured and finished boards that we add the Past President's plaques and Silent Key plaques to.

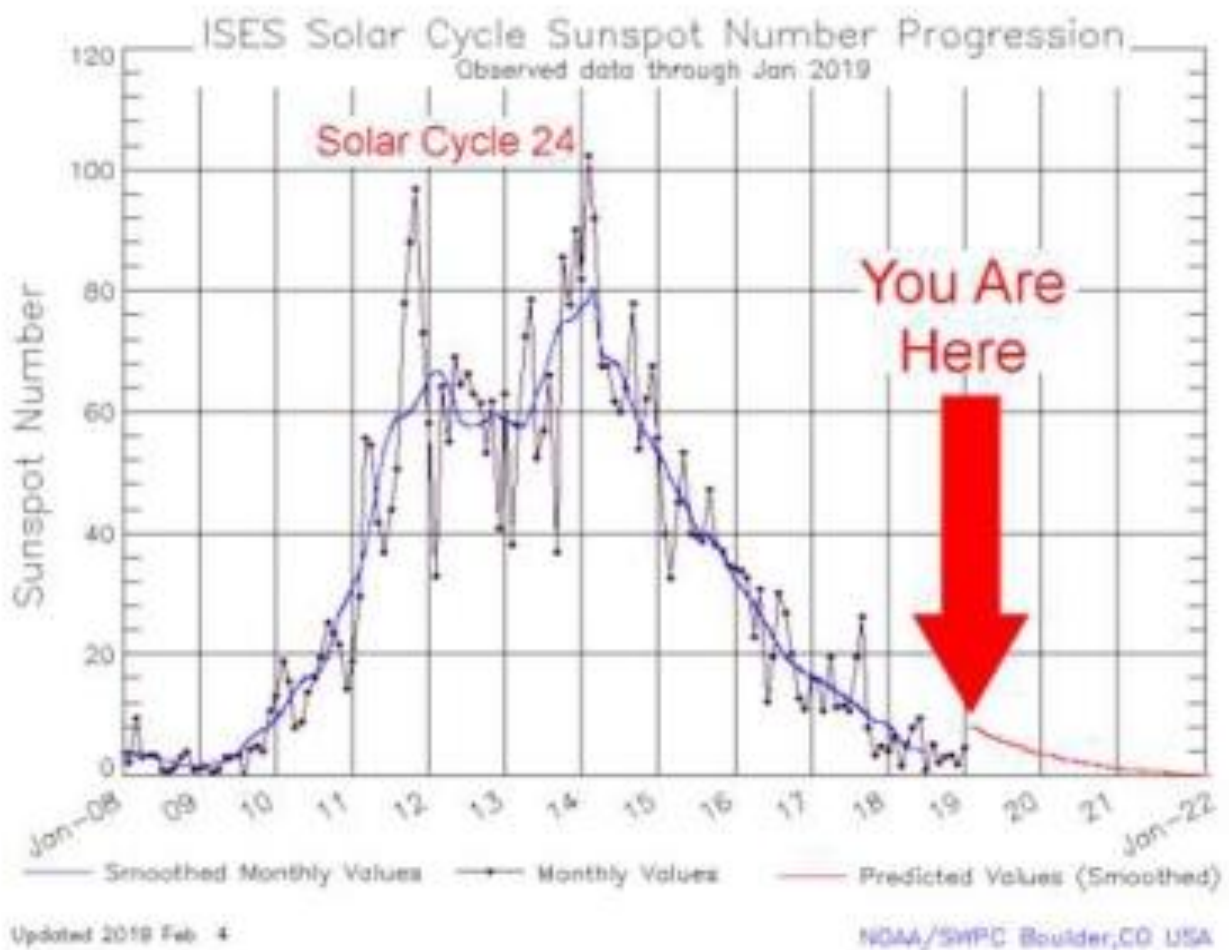
So, if you also enjoy doing custom woodworking projects in your home workshop, raise your hand so we know to call on you whenever the next need arises.



From the Depressing News Department - Dateline 01MAR19

A MONTH WITHOUT SUNSPOTS: The sun has just passed an entire calendar month with no sunspots. The last time this happened, in August 2008, the sun was in the nadir of a century-class Solar Minimum. The current stretch of blank suns shows that Solar Minimum has returned, and it could be as deep as the last one. Visit Spaceweather.com for more information and current sunspot counts.

NEW: Sign up for [Space Weather Alerts](#) and get an instant text message when auroras appear.



Above: Sunspot counts for the last 11 years. Credit: NOAA's Space Weather Prediction Center

**I saved this space for
YOU**

But, I did not get anything from YOU

**But, I will hold it open for
YOU
to use in the next issue**

Submissions to : K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET

Ham Ads Accepted

Have you bought some new equipment and need to sell something to make some room in the shack?

First try the real-time K3MJW Groups.io Reflector .

If that does not work for you, or if you want to include pictures, you can advertise here.

This newsletter goes out to other clubs and is also available to anyone who wants to go to the web site to get it. So, you may reach a larger audience.

Submit to : K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET

Newsletter Fillers or ??

While I will put some stuff in here that I have found in another club's newsletter or on the Internet, I would prefer to put your stuff in here instead.

I am always happy to get articles which discuss your opinion on some new radio, antenna, or other ham gear that you have purchased. I am not looking for QST type technical dissertations - am looking for operating experiences with it. What's great? What's good? What is not so great?

I am always happy to get your pictures: Shacks, radios, mobile setups, antennas, customizations, etc.

Lots of new folks will benefit from you sharing your experiences.

Welcome New Members !!

Welcome the following Skyview Radio Society Members who have joined us since publishing the February 2019 newsletter:

**KC3KXG - Rich Rattanni
Verona**

**AG3I - Marty Newingham
Greensburg**

**NS3U - Tom Kaib
Irwin**

**KC3LZH - Matt Snyder
Monroeville**

Remember that something is going on up at 'the joint' every Tuesday. Sign up for the K3MJW Groups.io Reflector to get the latest news and event announcements by email.

If you are a reader who is interested in becoming a Skyview 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.

Skyview Radio Society Roster as of 31MAR19

NM3A	WD3HAY	KC3LRT	I2RTF
WB3ACC	KB3HGJ	AB3LS	K3RWN
W3ANX	WA3HGW	KC3LVC	KA3RXY
KC3AY	KA3HPM	N2MA	KQ3S
NA0B	KC3HRO	KC3MBM	KD4SBJ
N3BPB	KB3HXP	KC3MIQ	KB3SEU
W3BUW	KC3IIO	K3MJ	KB3SOU
KC3CBQ	W3IU	K3MRN	K3STL
K3CLT	K3JAS	N3MRU	KB3SVJ
K3DCG	KC3JBS	KG4MSB	N3TIN
KC3DIA	N3JLR	KB3NSH	W3TLN
KC4EGG	KA3JOU	AJ3O	N3TTE
KC3EJC	N3JPB	AK3O	AG3U
AB3ER	ND3JR	WC3O	K3VRU
KC3EVT	KC3JSF	K3OGN	W3VYK
KB3EYY	KB3JXG	KB3OMB	N3WAV
KC3FEI	KC3JXO	KR3P	K3WKP
K3FH	K3JZD	NK3P	N3WMC
K3FKI	KC3KEI	W3PRL	W3WTJ
KC3FWD	WA3KFS	AE8Q	KZ3Y
N2GBR	KB3KHR	WQ3Q	KB3YJQ
KC3GIL	AC0KK	NJ3R	W3YNI
KC3GIN	N3KNB	KB3RBV	W3YNX
AB3GY	W4KV	N3RHT	
KC3GZW	WA3LCY	K3RMB	
NC3H	KC3LHW	W3RRK	

Notes: Only Call Signs are being published. Refer to QRZ.COM for more information. (Unable to publish those without Call Signs.)



Cell Phones and Ham Radio

“Cell Phones allow you to talk to your friends.

However, Ham Radio allows you to make new friends.”

Ashton Feller - KD9HRG - Age 13
(From June 2017 CQ Magazine)

**** Skyview VE Testing ****

For EVERYTHING that you need to know, go to:

<https://www.facebook.com/SkyviewRadioSocietyHamRadioTesting/>

(This will tell you what you need to bring with you)

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.

Directions, and map are on
<http://www.Skyviewradio.net>

Please schedule in advance. While walk-ins accepted, exam may be cancelled if no candidates are scheduled.

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

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

This Space For Rent

**Become Well Known
Publish in the Q5er**

The Q5er goes to other clubs and is available to all on our web site.

Submissions to : [K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET](mailto:K3JZD@ARRL.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

The Beaver Valley Amateur Radio Association has a very active Facebook page at

<https://www.facebook.com/w3sgj/>

It is worth checking out from time to time.

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

Previous Issues

Previous Issues of the Q5er are available at

<http://www.nelis.net>

Next Newsletter will be June 1, 2019
Closing Date For Submissions : May 15, 2019

[K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET](mailto:K3JZD@ARRL.NET)

Issue Wrap-up

I'm sure that you skipped over some of the stuff that you were not really interested in. Hopefully there was enough in here to make it worth opening.

Lots of variety in this issue , thanks to all of my contributors. The newsletter is a pleasure to assemble when I have a lot of input. I'm always looking for ham related clip art to use as fillers when I have half a page or half a column left. So, if you see some good ham related clip art in your travels, copy it and email it to me.

As usual, not much real club boilerplate or timely club news in here. The club web page, the club Facebook page, and the K3MJW Groups.io reflector all have the basic club info and the more timely club news. This newsletter is really for 'all else'. So, send me your 'all else' stuff.

Jody - K3JZD

Here is what I feel is a very worthwhile Facebook group :

<http://tinyurl.com/y873zl6c>

It is called "*Amateur (Ham) Radio on a Budget*", and is a very dynamic group.

Lots of people exploring lots of ideas and lots of new people sharing experiences.

Kind of a on-line Elmering Group which would be helpful to new hams.

Jody - K3JZD

Breaking News . . .

ED: Hmmm – I guess we do really not need HF radios to know when we are having geomagnetic storms . . .
. . . . Where did I leave my tinfoil hat ??

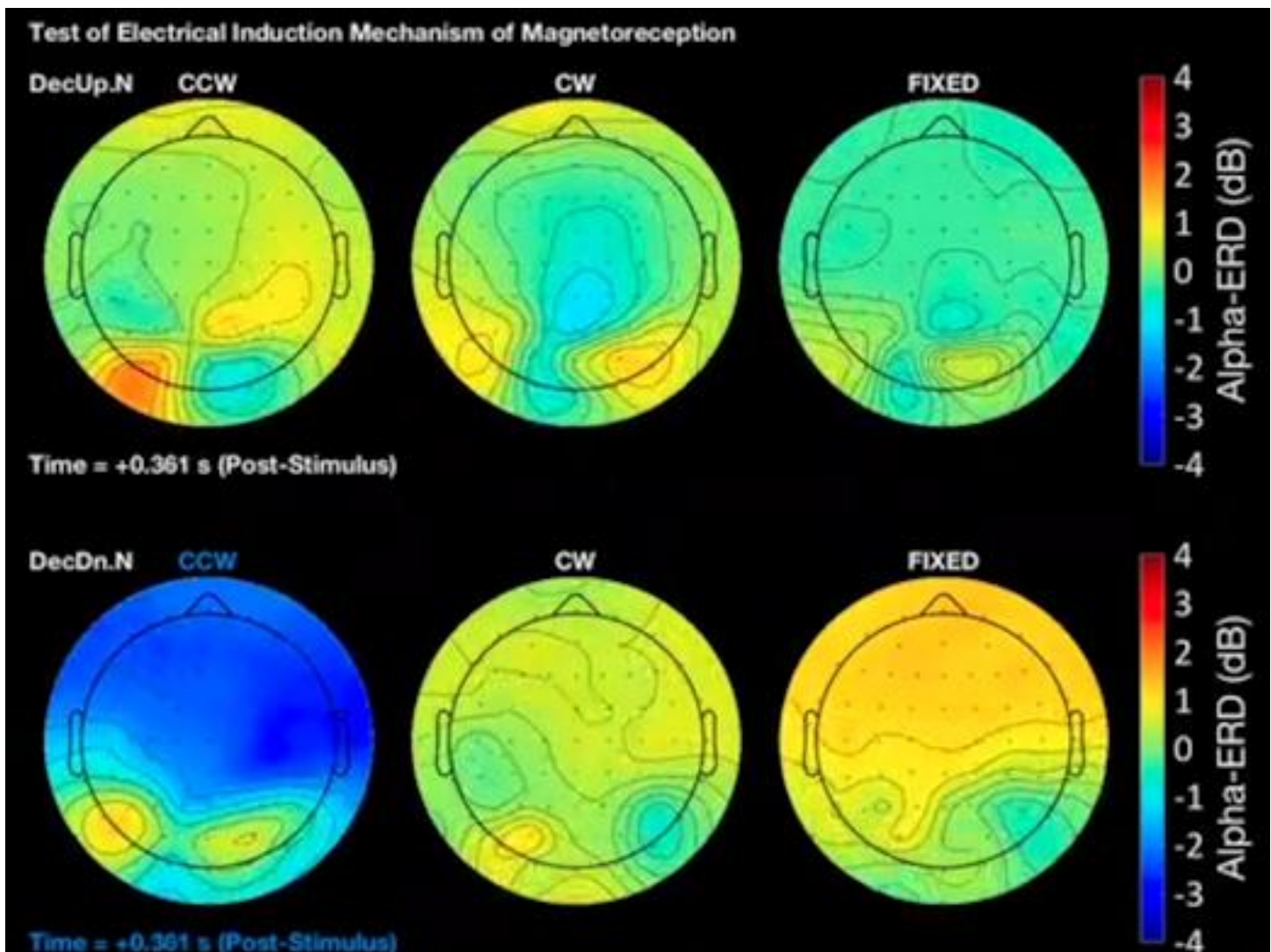
Space Weather News for March 28, 2019

<http://spaceweather.com>

<https://www.spaceweatheralerts.com>

CAN HUMANS SENSE GEOMAGNETIC STORMS? New research published by neuroscientists at Caltech shows that sudden changes in Earth's magnetic field affect human brainwaves--specifically, depressing alpha waves associated with wakeful relaxation. This raises the possibility that humans can sense geomagnetic storms. Learn more about the link between human biology and space weather on today's edition of Spaceweather.com

NEW: Sign up for [Space Weather Alerts](#) and get an instant text message when geomagnetic storms begin.



Above: Changes in alpha brainwave amplitude following rotations of an Earth-strength magnetic field. The darker the blue color, the more dramatic the change. [Full story.](#)



Q5er Editor & Publisher: Jody Nelis - K3JZD

This newsletter may be freely forwarded.

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email your comments and article submissions to: [K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET](mailto:K3JZD@ARRL.NET)



I just got my ham radio license, now what do I do?

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>

Subscribe to K3MJW [groups.io](https://groups.io/g/K3MJW) reflector for All Current News & Activities : <https://groups.io/g/K3MJW>
If you want to keep up with what is going on NOW, that is the place - have it forward msgs to your email



Is this how your dining room looks ??

Where are the pictures of your shack ??