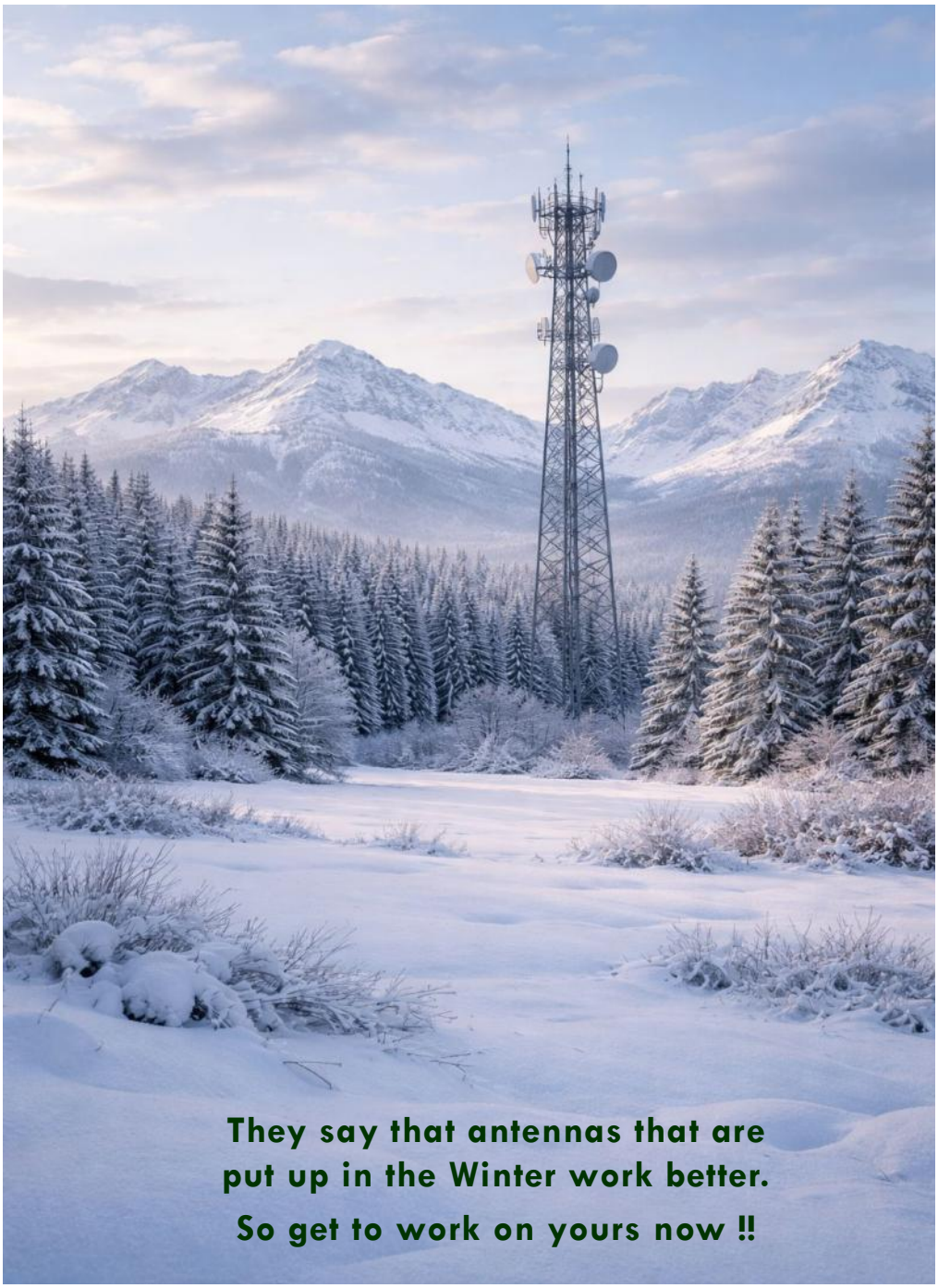
SKYVIEW
Skyview Radio Society, K3MJW
K3MJW
2335 Turkey Ridge Road
New Kensington, PA 15068

Q5er – The Official Newsletter of the Skyview Radio Society



2026 is Skyview's 66th Anniversary !!

February 1, 2026

- Nearby Lightening Strike
- Skyview VE Testing
- Finding COM Ports Quickly
- First KDKA Broadcast Facts
- Pop! (Followed by Wet)
- Something to Consider
- A Great Flashlight
- General Class Training
- . . . . And More . . .
-

Sunspot Cycle is on the Down Side

Exercise the 10-12-15-17-20 Meter bands on the Open Days

Inside this issue:

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

Skyview's Smoke & Solder Nights are popular. As long as it does conflict with a holiday, the Smoke and Solder Team will be at the Skyview Clubhouse on Thursday evenings. The team is generally there early to allow adequate time.

There are often new projects to work on. You need to pay attention to the K3MJW groups.io reflector to be aware of what is coming up and to sign up for project kits whenever they are available.

If you are having some kind of a problem with a piece of your equipment, taking it to Smoke and Solder Night is a good way to get some assistance with diagnosing it. And perhaps repairing it.

The Cover photo was created by ChatGPT. ChatGPT is good, but it needs a whole lot more training to learn what ham antennas look like.

Jody - K3JZD

Remember: The number of people older than you never increases, it only decreases

Ham Radio is a Contact Sport

From the Treasurer

If you made a donation to Skyview anytime during 2025, and you need a receipt letter but did not get one yet, then notify me and I will see that one gets to you.

If you still have not sent in your 2026 Dues, then you need to do so now. Skyview has activities and events for everyone. You do not want to be left out.

Upcoming activities and events are announced at the monthly business meetings, on the Thursday night nets and on the K3MJW groups.io reflector. (This newsletter is only published bi-monthly, so upcoming activities and event are not usually listed here).

Jody - K3JZD

ADVENTURE: The respectful pursuit of trouble.

Skyview Radio Society is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a charitable non-profit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code. Donations to Skyview are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

As much as I hate to point it out, COVID is not 100% gone. There are still daily hospitalization admissions for the more serious COVID cases.

Sharing is not caring. If you are not feeling well, please stay home.

All animals, except man, know that the principal business of life is to enjoy it - Samuel Butler

Skyview Business Meeting Minutes

de Don - WA3HGW

Skyview Radio Society

Monthly Business Meeting – January 6, 2026

Call to Order: 7:30 PM by President Brian Sauk, KC3VNB.

Attending – 29 members: N3WMC, NM3A, KC3CBQ, K3JAS, AB3GY, K3STL, N3DRB, WA3KFS, K3FAZ, AC3IE, KC3LVG, W3IU, W1MP, NJ3R, W3UY, KA3EKO, KC3PXQ, KC3VNB, WA3HGW, AG3I, KA3CBA, WC3O, KE3IF, K3JZD, AC3GB, AC3KI, KU3J, KC3BYT and N2GBR.

Meeting Minutes: The minutes of the December 2, 2025 meeting were distributed for review. A motion to accept the minutes as presented was made by N3WMC and seconded by AC3KI. The motion passed without objection.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Jody, K3JZD, reviewed the 31 December 2025 Financial Report (attached). Operation costs for 2025 compared with 2024 were about the same. Donations were down slightly while expenses increased slightly. Increased expenses were mostly from utilities, mainly electric and propane. There was a small surplus in the 2025 Operations Fund, which will be transferred to our Equipment Self Insurance Fund. Two T-Bills matured and four T-Bills were purchased, with the interest put in the Clubhouse Expansion capitol improvement budget. Unallocated fund income was from 50/50 donation, VE testing and the KD3KA operating event. Unallocated funds Expenses were for a new replacement AED. There was also a $2,000 donation to the generator fund. A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report was made by AG3I and seconded by AC3GB. The motion passed without objection.

Membership Report: Tom, AB3GY, advised there are no new membership applications this month. Membership at the end of 2025 is 169. There were 17 new members joining in 2025. Member renewals are at 70%, which is excellent right at the start of the year. Tom noted the deadline for banquet reservations is here, and that gluten free meals are available with advance request.

Radio Officer Report: Bob, WC3O, reported that all radios were operating normally, and survived the last weekend ARRL RTTY Roundup. (We are presently #2 USA for Multi/Multi High Power) Unfortunately the 80 meter phased vertical array didn't fare too well during the wind storms a few weeks ago. The vertical element extending from the top of the east tower broke off and was bent. Both antennas are lowered to the ground until repaired. There are some trees to be removed that could fall on the west tower.

Kitchen Report: Bob, WC3O, reported that kitchen current balance is $133. Needed supplies will be purchased. Upgraded piping at the hot water heater was installed, so we have hot water once more.

VE Report: There were five candidates in December. One upgraded to Extra class, one passed Technician and General and one new Technician. At the time of this writing, there are two candidates for the January VE session.

Newsletter: The December Q5er is now out with a full 48 pages of articles. New material is requested by January 15 for the February issue.

Building Committee: Marty, AG3I, reported the project is still on track for a January meeting with the township, which is not yet scheduled. If all goes well, we should look forward to a ground breaking sometime in the spring of 2026.

Calendar of Events:
January 10 – WASH 2 meter simplex contest. 7 to 9 PM EST. Electronic logging is required this year.
January 10 & 11 – NAQP CW contest.
January 17 – Skyview banquet.
January 17 & 18 – NAQP SSB contest.
January 23 to 25 – CQ 160 meter CW contest.
January 24 & 25 – Winter Field Day.
January 31 – Trip to DX Engineering and tour of K3LR.
February 28 – Breezeshooters Groundwave Contest, CW.
February 22 – WashFest hamfest – South Park Twp.
March 14 - Breezeshooters Groundwave Contest, Phone.
March 15 (date tentative) – You'll Shoot Yer Eye Out Kid.
March 21 - Breezeshooters Groundwave Contest, Digital.
May 14 – Four Days in May - QRP event, kickoff to the Dayton Hamvention.
May 15 to 17 – The one and only Dayton Hamvention, Xenia Ohio. Be there!
June 14 – Breezeshooters Hamfest. (Setup on June 13.)

Old Business: None

New Business: Discussed date for Iron City distillery tour. Tentative date January 24. It was pointed out that this is Winter Field Day. Update: At the time of this writing, the new date is February 4 at 4:30 PM.

Weather Night:
K3FAZ reviewed the recent weather patterns; winter and then spring-like, back and forth. January weather Night will be a presentation river and stream ice plus water gauge readings, provided by K3FAZ.

Elmer Night: Joel, KC3LVG, will have a demonstration on 3-D printing.

Smoke and Solder: Various projects underway. Dan, NM3A started a group project to build a 12 VDC to 5 volt USB converter as described in the December Q5er. Also there was building a V Beam for POTA..

Net Report: 12/4 at 52 check-ins KC3PXQ, 12/11 at 36 check-ins KC3TTK, 12/18 at 36 check-ins K3FAZ, 12/25 at 25 check-ins K3WM. Average is 40.35 check-ins for the month. The December winner is KC3PXQ.

The 2025 yearly average is 40.35. The all-time monthly average is 51.55, based on data from 2022 to date. All time weekly check-in maximum was 54 on 3/14/24 and the weekly minimum was 23 on 11/23/23 and 7/2/24, noting both minimums are near national holidays.

50/50 Drawing: Total amount collected is $40 with $20 going to Paul, AC3IE. Thanks to Paul for donating the proceeds to the club treasury.

Meeting Adjourned: Brian, KC3VNB, requested a motion to adjourn The motion was made by KC3PXQ and seconded by K3JAS. The motion passed without objection. The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Don Stewart – WA3HGW
Secretary; Skyview Radio Society, Inc.

Handyman Wanted

Skyview has a opening for a Facilities Manager.

Someone who can keep an eye on things.

Someone who enjoys doing minor repairs.

Someone who enjoys making minor improvements

Someone who can supervise when a task requires the assistance of other Skyview Members

Someone who can supervise whenever more complex work needs to be contracted out.

This is an appointed volunteer job.

It is not a do everything your self job—lots of members will pitch in when asked to assist.

If you are interested, you can contact me for more information. *k3jzd@arrl.net*

Lightening Strikes — Linda - W1MP

I got this report from one of my District 3 YLRL members, It's a good story, possibly a cautionary tale. Recent Skyview Elmer Nights have covered Good Grounding Practices. There is a lot of good information on Grounding on the Internet. But, as those story shows, there is a a huge amount of energy released in nearby strikes **de Linda W1MP**

- -

Life is full of surprises, and we got a really big one over the summer. My husband and I were both on radio-related Zoom calls, and at 8:20 pm on a Monday our world went BOOM!

A lightning strike took out our power, blew up multiple radios, four antennas, and multiple household electronics (including two computers AND their backup devices,) plus a few household appliances, including the oven and garage door opener. Even the charge port on our Tesla Model Y got zapped and needed replacement, thankfully under warranty.

A lot of careful research, time, and resources were spent by my OM to protect our gear from lightning, but when it hits close and hits big, there's nothing you can do but hope the house doesn't burn down. We smelled smoke in multiple rooms, but there was no fire. A brand new HVAC system survived the surge. Our regular homeowners insurance policy included coverage for the radios and antennas without needing a special electronics rider.

Elecraft repaired our K4D, and a member of our radio club, an electronics wizard, fixed a Ten-Tec Argonaut 6, and an expensive tuner from Germany. Apple support helped us resurrect a computer backup on a two hour call at no charge since we had Apple Care. Even with the challenges, there's been so much to be grateful for.

We have one loop antenna up now, and Santa is bringing an Inverted L to replace the one that was vaporized. There will be more electronic goodies under the Christmas tree, and we will slowly continue the build out of the ham shack. Our Christmas miracle is that we are still here in our house to celebrate together.

Skyview VE Sessions

Skyview provides VE Testing at the Skyview Clubhouse each month (Details provided later, near the end of this newsletter)

Here are the recent success stories

December 2025

KD3CIE - Rich Clements - General

KD3CIG - Cheryl Houge - Technician

KC3LVG - Joel Cox - Extra

KA3BZQ - Jan Slater - Extra

January 2026

KD3CLV - Robert Yost - Technician

KD3AJX - Jason Jacoby - General

KD3CLQ - Zachary Marino - Technician

2025 Testing Session Summary

24 Exams Given

18 Exams Passed

(10 New Technicans—8 Upgrades)

de Bill - N3WMC

A Tip From Your Old Uncle Bob

Bob – WC3O

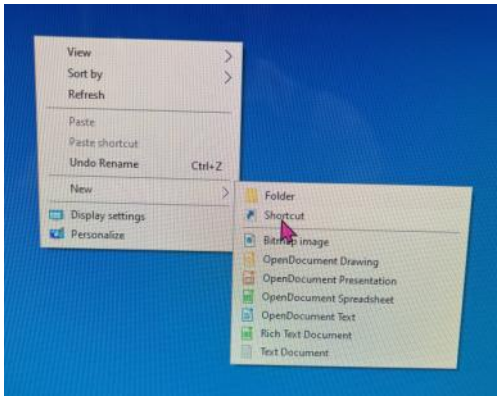
If you connect your radio to a computer you always land up working with COM ports. If you don't have your COM ports configured correctly, nothing works.

To see what COM ports are available and their configuration you need to look at your computer's "Device Manager". But how do you find Device Manager? You can get there in a number of ways. You right-click here, click over there. Look under here, Click over there. Every time WINDOWS changes, they move it. What a pain.

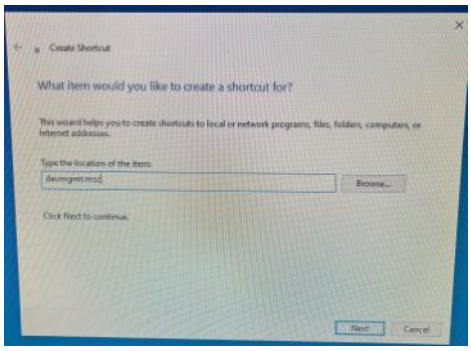
Here is a simple way to always have Device Manager at your fingertips. The actual name of Device Manager is devmgmt,msc

Do this:

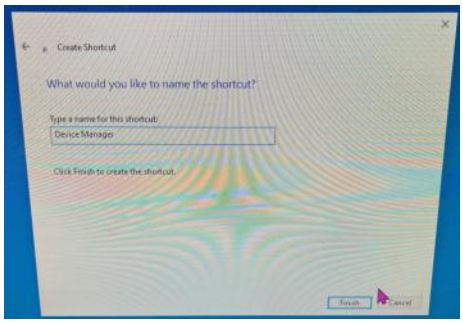
- Go to your computer desktop
- Right-click in an open area and in the options list it says "New"
- Hover your mouse over "New" and you'll see two options, Folder and Shortcut



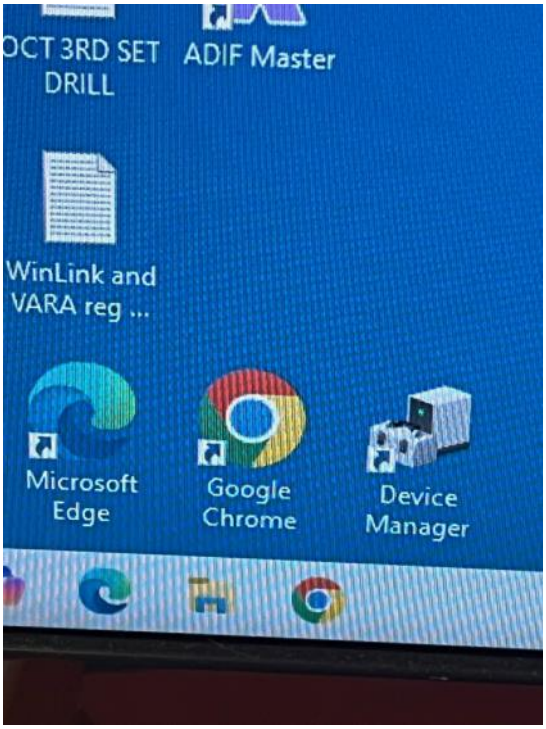
- Click on Shortcut
- In the first dialog box type in devmgmt.msc and click OK



- In the next dialog box type in Device Manager and click OK



This creates a nice shortcut on your desktop. Now you have direct access to Device Manager right from your desktop. Easy peasy lemon squeezey.



de Bob—WC3O

Compact Portable Go Kit Part II

Dan – NM3A

Remember that great little SOTA/POTA Go Kit from December's Q5er?

Well, not so great, as it didn't work too well in the real world. RFI from real world antennas did not play well with the capacitive touch paddle interface. Some further thoughts, a suggestion from Jody, K3JZD, and I have come up with an improved version that actually works in the real world! And I saved a significant amount of weight in the process.

The biggest problem with the first iteration was the capacitive touch paddles that did not work well in the presence of RF. A number of attempts at mitigation of this problem were only marginally effective, so it has been relegated to code practice oscillator service.

VK3IL developed a lightweight pressure touch paddle that is not sensitive to RF.

Skyview Smoke & Solder group built versions of this in November 2025. The kits were made up courtesy of Brian, K3ES. They are light weight, work well with most QRP rigs and there are lots of satisfied customers. Since I still wanted to integrate the paddle into the rig for this kit, I decided to customize the paddles and place them on the corner of the battery box, and integrate the interface into the box. Enter the (tr)uSDX rig with pressure paddles.

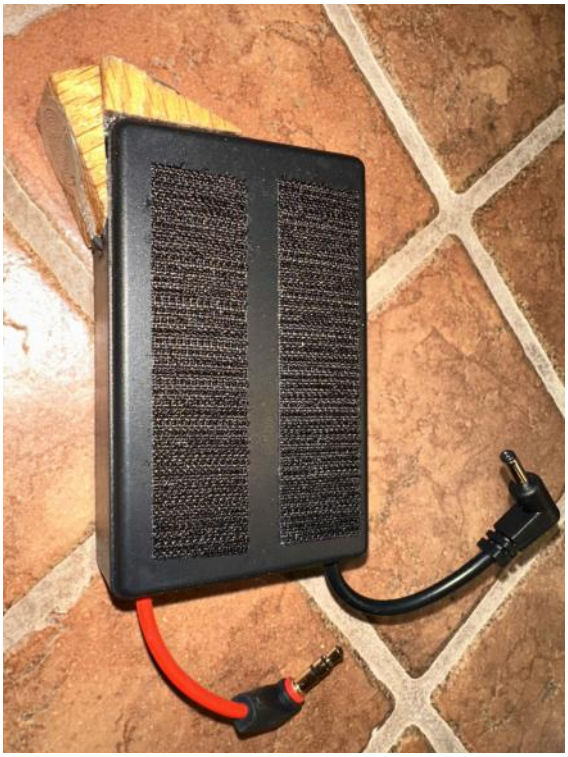
The QMX radio from the first iteration is a great one, but it is a bit heavier than ideal for this lightweight kit. Although not as refined, the (tr)uSDX is lighter weight, has a Classic Bands (80, 40, 20, 15, & 10 meter) version that meshes well with a directly coupled EFHW antenna. I can dedicate the rig to this pack, rather than using one

of my QMX rigs to switch out between Go Kits. These advantages outweigh the disadvantages for this Go Kit.

A plastic project box the length and depth of the (tr)uSDX, but half the height made a perfect auxiliary box for the Go Kit.

Inside the box is a 9V Li Ion (1.3 Ahr) battery, paddle interface, and power switch. The power switch lever is shortened to prevent unintentional power-on during transport. A pencil or fingernail can easily operate the switch when needed. This provides power to the rig via a short 3.5/1.3 mm coaxial plug cable.

The 1.3 Ahr battery will provide at least 3 hours of operation at the most common duty cycle for CW or SSB. Velcro holds the battery in place but allows for easy switch out for a spare or charging.



The VK3IL paddle interface PCB is held to the inside with heavy duty double sided tape and a short cable attaches the paddle interface to the rig. Velcro holds the box to the bottom of the radio.

The paddle pressure sensors are put on wedges that are attached to the corner of the battery box. They are not TP-III or Begali class, but they are integral, lightweight, and effective.

The home made EFHW for 40 meters uses 28 gauge silicone wire with integral 9:1 unun, counterpoise, choke, and male BNC to mate directly with the radio's semi-permanently attached SMA to BNC adapter.

With a lightweight winder, this only adds 2 ½ ounces to the kit. In almost any deployment, 40, 20, 15, and 10 meters are less than 2:1 SWR and usually less than 1.5:1. Using 9 volts for my 12 volt transceiver lowers the power output to about 2 to 3 watts and also raises the threshold for damage to the final from poor SWR. The (tr)uSDX uses an FDT86256 final which has a fairly high abuse tolerance. All this helps protect the final from failure due to poor matching

Basic Go Kit Contents: (12 ½ oz) (1 oz =~ 29 g)

- Soft bag - no additional padding needed (24 g)
- (tr)uSDX Classic Bands rig (80, 40, 20, 15, 10m) (138 g)
- SMA to BNC adapter, tethered 3D BNC protector
- Foam cut out for knob, OLED screen, and button protection (<1 g)
- Plastic battery box w/ power switch & integrated VK3IL style touch paddle (86 g)
- 9V Li Ion battery
- EFHW: 40 meters w/ integral 49:1 unun, 6 foot counterpoise, choke, and BNC (70 g)
- Ear pods, corded (10 g) Velcro wrap (10 g) Paper towel tube (10 g)
- Log book (Rite in the Rain #371FX-M) & golf pencil (28 g)

Options: (add 3 ½ oz)

- Throw line: 50 feet of 1mm nylon braided cord. (16g)
- (Throw weight to be locally acquired on site)
- Light weight carabineer (8g)
- Spare battery (30g)
- Charge cord (10 g)
- Microphone/PTT & cable (30g)
- Radio cheat sheets (14g)

All of this in a small cloth bag that fits in any small space of a backpack, a waist pack, or even in an overnight bag. Logging can be on the small log book with pencil, or a phone app. Notice that there are no separate spares of any kind in the basic kit. This is to keep the weight and volume down. A spare battery can be added if multiple activations are planned. There is a PTT switch integrated into the radio that can be used as a straight key in a pinch. There is an integrated mic in the rig for the occasional SSB QSO. A light weight 11 foot telescoping pole (~10 oz) could be added. Nice to have, but rarely needed, as the antenna looped over bushes and low branches is effective.

The basic kit with options only weighs a pound. The significant weight savings from the earlier iteration come from a lighter radio, a 3D printed radio case, plastic battery box, and a foam radio protector, rather than a metal case and a 3D printed cover. This makes it about 8 ounces lighter - a win all the way around.

A try out SOTA run on W3/PT-003 (Seven Springs Mountain) was successful. I had 10 Qs in 15 minutes on 40 meters. I spent and additional 5 minutes listening on 15 and 20 meters, but no transmissions there. Since it was rather windy and chilly, I kept it short. The EFHW was simply looped over low branches (6-7 feet) rather than throwing a line up in a tree. Setup and tear down was under 5 minutes each.

Perfect? Well, not quite... As the prophet Cookie once said, "Nothin's easy." Terrible clicks on the transmit side tone. Since then I discovered that this particular serial number does not like QSK. Turning Semi_QSK ON made the side tone clicks disappear.

There was also significant receive noise with occasional squealing. Although I could hear stations through this, it made weak stations a challenge. After I re-soldered a number of (factory soldered) ICs and played with it in the shack for a few days; the noise was largely gone and the squealing has not returned. However, no definitive reason found to explain the noise or its disappearance. It appears to be fine at this point, but it is not satisfying to have found no specific problems.

A second SOTA activation in cold weather went well with good reception. But a further issue was that the original (tr)uSDX blue on black OLED screen was nearly impossible to read in bright sunlight that day; a common issue with these displays. This prevented me from changing bands as it was too difficult to see exactly what frequency the radio was tuned to. A paper towel tube can mitigate that issue, but it's rather cumbersome. However, I found a Yellow on Black OLED display on eBay.

Replacing the original display with the yel/blk made a world of difference. It is now readable in bright full sunlight. There is no additional RFI and it uses 10 mA less power! A win all the way around.

So it is effective when a lightweight Go Kit is in order. Finally, I truly have no reason to leave a rig behind on long hikes!

de Dan —NM3A

(tr)uSDX is the successor of the uSDX Project. It´s the Result of the Collaboration between PE1NNZ and DL2MAN.

https://dl2man.de/

Please Mash the Button

Bob - WC3O

A very common way of making buttons work on modern equipment is to make a pair of contact pads on a circuit board and then make rubber buttons that overlay above the circuit board pads. Each rubber button has a pad with conductive paint that mates with the pair of contacts on the circuit board and triggers a feature. Over time that conductive paint wears and no longer makes consistent contact with the board. The electronic component (a radio or whatever) is still perfectly good, but the buttons no longer work.

That's bad.

Over the years I have seen repair kits to fix the issue. They are usually a conductive paint that you would apply over the old conductive paint. I have tried these repair kits with close to no success.

A few weeks ago we had a customer come into the shop. He has this old Jaguar. His key FOB started getting intermittent and now it didn't work at all. I told him I'd take a look and see what was going on. Sure enough the switches quit working. I went to see about replacing the key FOB and quickly found out that Jaguar is VERY proud of their key FOBs.

Looking at used FOBs, it was the same. Very expensive.

I started looking at possible ways of repairing the original FOB. I found something that I had never seen before. Rather than trying to apply conductive paint to the buttons, I found a kit that uses a plastic membrane with conductive paint on the plastic.

Hmmmmm

I ordered the kit. I found it has a number of different size pads of varied shapes.

Installation is pretty simple. First, clean the pairs of electrical contact pads on the circuit board.

Then, cut out the pad that you want to apply to the board. Peal the adhesive liner off of the new pad and stick it over the pair of pads on the circuit board. Now when you press the rubber button on the FOB, it is in turn pushing down on the new conductive plastic membrane and is making contact.

It worked great! It seems like something that should continue to work and is completely reversible if it doesn't.

So there you have it. Perhaps this solution can work for you. I know some of the buttons on my Ft-100 are going bad. This should be ideal for that.

Give it the old college try and then mash the button.

de Bob - WC3O

ARRL Plan Influenced First KDKA Broadcast – Addendum

Pete - W3WC

For reference, please see the article titled "ARRL Plan Influenced First KDKA Broadcast" in the October 2025 edition of the Q5er, for which these comments provide additional context.

With the added perspective of the ARRL plan to broadcast presidential election returns for the November 2, 1920 election in hand, the first broadcast of KDKA takes on a different appearance.

The first KDKA broadcast has been understood as the start of regularly scheduled commercial radio, with Westinghouse providing the business motivation. Now it can be seen that the first broadcast was not a standalone event but was an extension of a plan that came from the amateur ranks, both in technology and in the subject of what was broadcast.

Starting with what radio had been up to that point, primarily a point-to-point service that replaced wired telegraphy with wireless telegraphy, the genius idea was: 1) to move beyond point-to-point service into a service that is intended for anyone with the equipment and the skill to receive the transmission; 2) to build upon the first major effort to provide content of interest to the public at large, namely ARRL's plan for presidential election returns via Morse code; and 3) to use wireless audio technology as was being demonstrated by Frank Conrad's musical transmissions from his garage radio station.

It was the merging of these factors that produced the leap into commercial radio. Although Westinghouse supplied the business motivation, that by itself was not enough to bring about the first broadcast in the way it occurred. ARRL's transition from facilitating point-to-point message relays between amateur stations (radio relays) to providing what was, in effect, the first news broadcast intended for the public simultaneously in a dozen cities, albeit using Morse code, represented a substantial advancement. Importantly, Frank Conrad's pioneering work with audio broadcasts of music from his garage paralleled this development.

In the context of the time, a broadcast to the public using Morse code made sense. It was just after the end of World War One, and there were many ex-military men who could understand Morse. The prohibition on amateur radio, which had been implemented during the war, was rescinded in October 1919. This allowed for renewed public engagement with radio technology, exemplified by the pioneering experiments of Frank Conrad. Westinghouse, in the person of Vice-President Harry P. Davis, took these ideas and activities and made radio accessible to everyone by adding what would become their first radio newscaster.

It should be observed that while Harry P. Davis was looking for a way to exploit wireless technology as a business interest, he might have decided to begin with music as its initial content. Frank Conrad had already shown there was interest in his musical programs among amateur radio enthusiasts. Davis incorporated music "between times" during the election broadcast, acknowledging Conrad's popular garage shows, but by following the ARRL plan, the significant role it played in the launch of KDKA and commercial radio broadcasting was demonstrated.

de Pete - W3WC

First Westinghouse Radio Broadcast

https://pittsburghantiqueradiosociety.org/

POP!

Cooky - WC3O

We were up the joint playing in the CQ World-Wide CW contest. I was in the other room and when I returned to the radio room Jim, KU3J reported to me that he heard a loud POP in the old bathroom and heard water running.

That ain't good

I opened the door to the old bathroom and water was shooting out near the water heater. Thankfully, there are shut-off valves on either side of the water heater. I quickly shut both valves and surveyed the damage.

The PEX plastic water hose just off of the water heater inlet had expanded and burst open. I could see the section of PEX just off of the water heater outlet was expanded and nearing the point of bursting.

Actually, this is not the first time that this has happened. The same thing happened once before and VERY thankfully, there was someone at the clubhouse when the burst occurred. For some reason, it seems to be a really bad idea to have PEX coming directly off of the water heater.

I looked up the instructions for the water heater and there was no mention or cautions related to this. But I figured that this time we should do something different.

I personally have had no experience with PEX water pipes. Despite this stuff being used on a large scale world-wide, I'm more of the copper and solder kinda guy.

However, a trip to Lowes was in order. I purchased two short stainless steel braided lines and two new water valves that would accommodate a PEX connection on one side and a 1/2 inch NPT connection on the other. I also purchased a small bag of PEX stainless squeeze clamps.

At first I thought I would just use wire cutters to crimp the clamps, but on second thought... I ran out and bought the correct crimpers. The thought of the PEX hose popping off the ill fitted clamp made me think how much cheaper buying the correct crimpers would be... (BTW I also learned that buying the correct PEX hose cutters is also worth the money)

After a little reconfiguring and installation we had hot water again!

The job also came with learning experience. If anyone asks me if I've ever worked with PEX, I can say yes. I would think that it would be hard to burst the stainless steel braided hose and the remaining PEX should be far enough away from the water heater now that it "should" be good.

You really don't want to hear POP!

It sure is nice having hot water back

de Cooky - WC3O

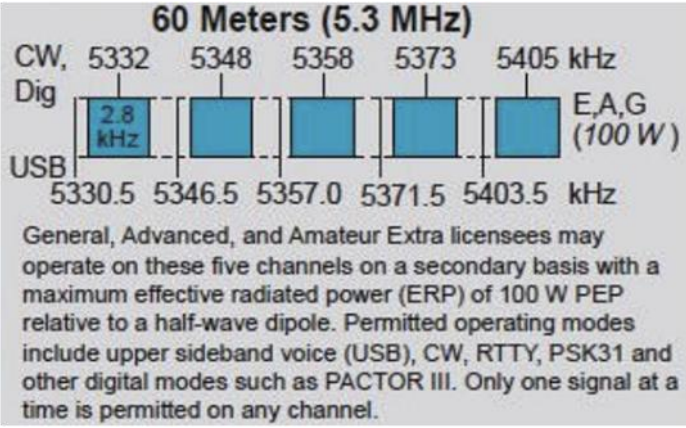
New 60 Meter Band Allocations

Richard - N2GBR

Background: the 60M band is a secondary use amateur band allocation for General, Advanced, and Extra class amateur radio operators.

The 60M band presently has five 'channelized' 2.8 KHz wide allocations that may be used for all-mode USB (5.3305, 5.3465, 5.3570, 5.3715 and 5.4035 Mhz) and CW (5.332, 5.348, 5.385, 5.373 and 5.405 Mhz), with a maximum ERP of 100W.

While that may sound like ten channels, it is only five channels with different CW and USB dial settings. Confusing? Yes it is.



The US Government is the primary user of these frequencies. Amateur operators must stop transmitting whenever any non-amateur communication is detected there.

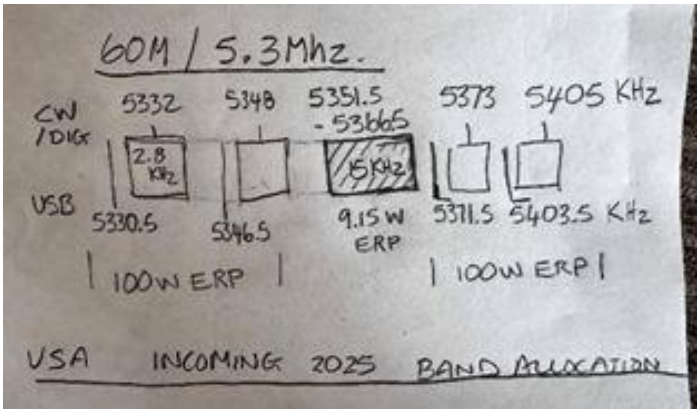
There are not any dictated mode assignments for these five 'channels'. However over time the 5.357 Mhz USB channel has become the FT8 channel. This is somewhat interesting in that the requirement says "Only one signal at a time is permitted on any channel." However many FT8 signals will fit within the 2.8 KHz wide 'channel. It does not seem to have resulted in any FCC violations.

Upcoming 2026 Changes:

On February 13, 2026, the center 100 watt ERP 'channel' (5368 MHz USB or 5358 MHz CW) will go away. In its place will be a new 15 KHz wide region from 5351.5 MHz to 5365.5 MHz for General, Advanced, and Extra licensees. There will not be any restrictions on where you operate within in this new range, other than to stay within it All digital modes will be allowed here. But, this new 15 KHz wide will be limited to a maximum of 9.1W ERP. The other four original 'channels' will remain as is, allowing 100 W ERP. Even more confusing? Yes.

What do these changes mean to us?

1. The 15Kz bandwidth suggests greater opportunities for QRP CW operators. With typical bandwidth of 150-200 KHz per signal, this could allow 50+ CW signals in this new allocated bandwidth.



New 2026 Allocation

2. QRP operators in this new region would no longer be blown away by the 100w ERP users not hearing the weak QRP signals! This would be a plus

But with any change, there comes some turmoil. Some in the FT8 community feel that "their channel" is being cut by 10dB of output power. A few are talking about grabbing another 100 watt channel. Channel 2 seems to be the popular choice when asked.

However some of the more astute FT8 ops have brought up that changing channels in the USA will put them pretty much in exile from the rest of the world. The DX locations like Europe are all limited to using an allocation that lines up with our current Channel 3 for FT8 QSOs. And our Channel 2 frequency is forbidden elsewhere.

In addition, the Europeans are already making DX contacts using FT8 despite the 15 watt EIRP that they are limited to. Many of the US ops already run less than 25 watts. So FT8 with 9.1 watt ERP can work here.

Also a factor, different radios offer different capabilities on 60 Meters. If you have a radio that will tune the whole 60M area and allow you to freely transmit on any mode within that whole area, then you are all set. Otherwise, you may be limited by what your radio will allow.

Practical use of 5.3Mz band?

I have been operating on the 60M band during my Summits on the Air (SOTA) Activations since 2018. I'm usually using QRP CW. I do not use FT8.

60M fills in the propagation gap between 80M and 40M nicely. While there can be overlap, there can also be times where 60M works where neither 80m or 40M will.

Initially I added extensions to my 40M linked dipole to be able to use it on 60m. Later I began to use an 85 foot long End Fed Random Wire (EFRW), which also tunes 80M with my KX2. While this 85 foot radiator is pretty long, and takes a bit more time to deploy, it is not completely ridiculous.

Ok, but why then is it worth using longer and more difficult to deploy antennas in the field? I found that 60M with an Inverted "L" EFHW or Linked dipole with center up at 30ft will provide the elusive NVIS (Near Vertical Incidence Skywave) effect and perform as a great local/regional antenna that will by definition allow communication with stations within a 75 to 400 Mile radius throughout the day.

Summary

So, how the use of this new 15 KHz allocation plays out is of interest to me. I'm sure that in the end there will be a "gentlemen's agreement" that will allow all modes to peacefully co-exist here. Possibly using the typical CW at the low end, USB at the high end, and digital modes in the middle. And we will all get along just fine.

So, where can I find a small portable wattmeter that is accurate down to 0.1 Watt?

de Richard - N2GBR

More information can be found at

https://www.arrl.org/60m-channel-allocation

Something to Consider — Jody - K3JZD

If you maintain your own PCs as I do, then you probably also have some Hard Disk Drives (HDDs) that you have removed to replace with larger ones. I generally keep those removed HDDs around as a backup, sometimes putting them into an External USB Drive Enclosure.

Now that Solid State Drives (SSDs) are more common, I have done the same thing with a couple of SSDs that I have replaced to gain some more storage space.

But, I just read that while a HDD will retain its data for a long, long time, a SSD will not. A SSD must be energized 'periodically' in order for it to retain its contents. So, the notion keeping a SSD that you have removed and replaced around as a long-term backup for that data is not practical. It will still be usable if it is put into an External USB Drive and is powered periodically. But just sitting on the shelf ?

This also applies to a laptops containing a SSD. If you have an older laptop that is not currently being used, and you let it sit around with the battery discharged, then the SSD in it will no longer be powered. It might not boot. So, best to recharge it and run it once in a while if you think that you may use it again someday.

I also read where this problem has spread to the Nintendo Cartridges. While they were once made with Read Only Memory chips that had the logic for the game permanently burned into the chip, some of them are now being made with the same technology as the SSDs. If one of those Cartridges is not plugged in and powered up 'periodically', they could lose what has been programmed in them and become useless.

I suspect that this has, or soon will, spread to today's 'smart' refrigerators, washers, driers, dishwashers, and other recently manufactured 'smart' appliances that are now being run by small computers. If these devices are unplugged, set aside, and stored for some period of time, they may not function properly whenever trying to put them back into service.

All that exists right now are vague estimates of 'after some period of time'. There is no magic "I'm going to forget everything after x Days" timetable available. According to what I have read, it will vary by the specific type of Flash Memory used. So 'periodically' will vary all over the place. We won't know what it actually will be until we get there.

Technology improvements have a good side and a bad side. (Don't even think about what an Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) could do to all of this stuff that uses Flash Memory.

de Jody – K3JZD

The TMMM

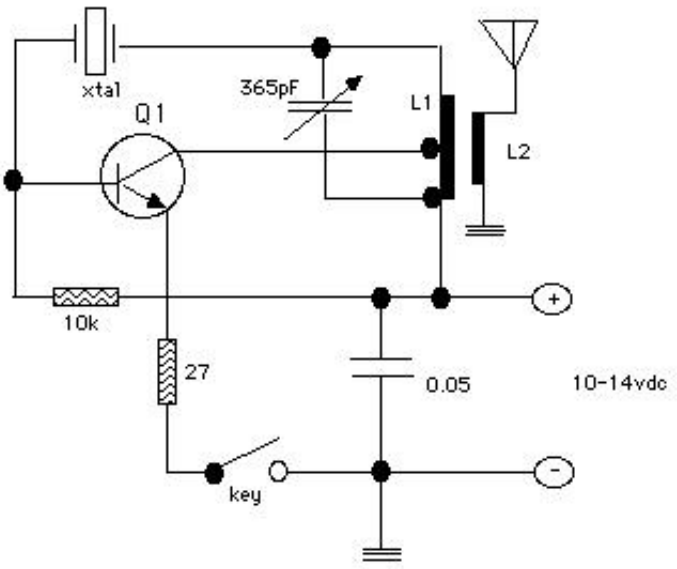
Dan - NM3A

FDIM (Four Days In May) is a premier gathering of QRP enthusiasts every May. (https://qrparci.org/) It is one of the satellite conferences surrounding Hamvention. It starts Thursday with a set of talks on various subjects from experts around the globe.

That evening QRP vendors hawk their wares in the conference room. Friday evening is show and tell of whatever project you've come up with. The evening events are open to anyone, not just registered conference guests. There's also a competition of some sort.

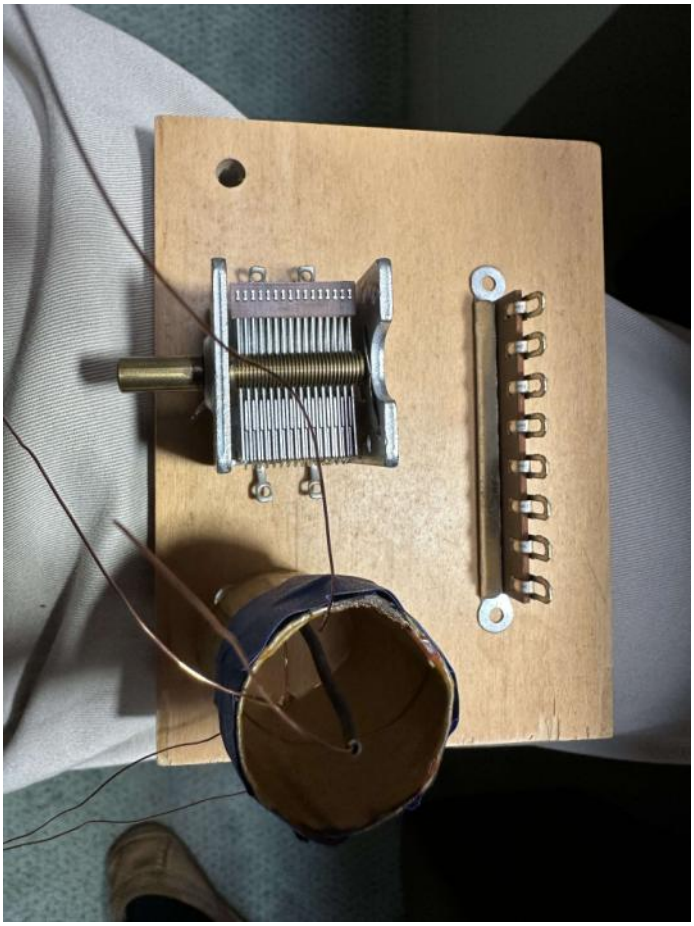
In 2025 the main one was getting maximum power out of a crystal controlled single IC (74xx or 40xx series) chip on forty meters.

This time there was an additional event. The Michigan QRP Club encouraged anyone to pre-build a 40 meter version of their Michigan Mighty Mite (MMM) simple transmitter.



They also promised a prize for anyone demonstrating a working circuit!

So I promptly built one, brought it along and claimed my prize, which was a free one year membership in the Michigan QRP Club.



Mine was built ugly on a scrap piece of wood with a toilet paper roll for the coil form and a chassis solder tab strip to mount the circuit.

The active component in mine is a 2SC2120 from my junk box, but a 2N2222 or any other small signal NPN transistor will work. Mine put out about 250 milliwatts at 12 volts

That evening many showed off their MMMs, some beautiful, most various shades of ugly. One MMM stood out as it did not use a transistor, but a vacuum tube! Grayson Evans, KJ7UM, had designed a MMM equivalent using a 6C4 triode. And he had put together a kit so anyone could replicate it.

I had to buy it as it was just too cool! The kit included everything you needed to build it, including a power supply that gives the necessary 6.3 volts for the filament heater and the 150-250 volt B+ voltage from any 1.5 amp 12 volt source. Grayson calls it the Thermatron Michigan Mitty Might or TMMM for short.

Grayson is all about vacuum tube valves, or Thermatrons as he calls them. He has a web site dedicated to Thermatrons and *Hollow State Design*, his book on the subject. You can buy one of his kits here if you so desire. https://www.hollow-statedesigns.com/

One of the disadvantages of the transistor solid state MMM is that it has very high harmonic content, so a good low pass filter is necessary to use it on the air. Grayson's vacuum tube version is much cleaner and has very low harmonic content, allowing one to use it on the air just as is.

It does have a bit of a chirp, but that's just the charming side of it. Chirp is common with any switched oscillator. (It also may be a function of the power supply I used.) Many radios do not switch oscillators on/off to minimize frequency shifts (chirps) during oscillator start up. They use a buffer circuit and switch to load the subsequent stages. But the TMMM only has one stage.

The TMMM can be paired with any receiver and a manual T/R switch for a functional CW radio. Just be careful as this uses exposed high voltages on the open circuit design. This could be enclosed with a metal or plexiglass cover to minimize shock hazard. The key grounds the cathode of the 6C4, so when not transmitting, or between elements of your CW, there will be high voltage on the key. An enclosed key or a relay interface will eliminate this exposure.

Power output is in the range of 200 to 450 milliwatts, depending on the B+ voltage. Vacuum tubes are inherently high impedance devices, so a 9:1 output coupling is used to transform the tube output impedance to about 50 ohms to match with most ham antennas. Vacuum tubes are very tolerant of impendence mismatches, so this transmitter will happily load most any antenna system (or none, or a short) that you have. Power efficiency is quite another matter.

The switching power supply that I use draws about 800 to 1000 milliamps at 13.8 volts no matter if the transmitter is operating or not! Even with an efficient supply, the filament draws about 2 watts constantly. So, efficient will it be not: Ignoring filament power draw and power supply inefficiencies, transmitter efficiency will still be under 10%.

I installed a female jack instead of soldering the crystal in place.

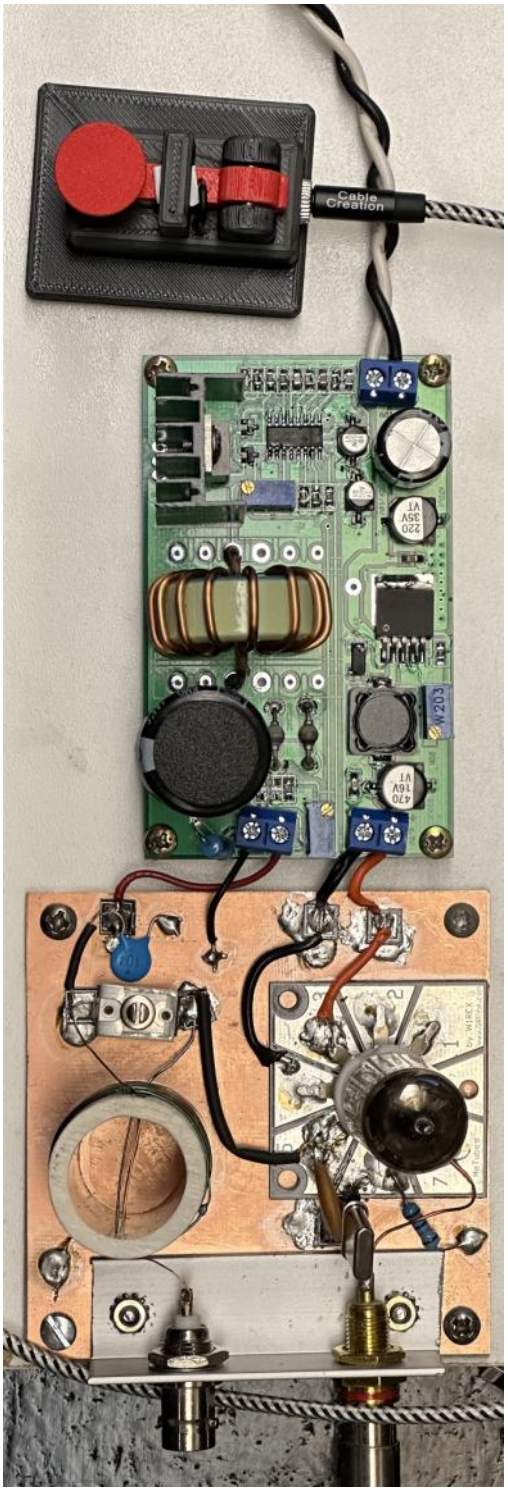
That way I can use any of my 40 meter crystals that I have. If you use this as part of a Tx/Rx system with a manual or powered transmit/receive switch, you can use the receiver as a side tone generator. There will be just enough bleed through of the transmit signal to produce a signal in the receiver without dangerous overload.

On the other hand, if you are using a straight key, you really don't need a transmit side tone. The bleed through will also allow you to tune your receive frequency to your transmit frequency.

I just found a 3D printed miniature key from CW Morse to pair with it.

This key minimizes high voltage shock risk.

This is a good rig to use for Straight Key Night on New Year's Day or any time for SKCC QSOs.



De Dan - NM3A

Amateur Radio 'General Class' Level License Preparation Training Classes

Sponsor: Two Rivers Amateur Radio Club of McKeesport

When : March 12, 2026 from 6PM to 9PM EST

Location: Lincoln VFC 184 meeting room, 4312 Liberty Way, Elizabeth, PA 15037.
Note: This room is located on the second floor of the Fire Station (NOT THE SOCIAL HALL).

Classes will be held weekly on Thursdays from 6 pm to 9 pm for a total of 6 classes.

Last Class: April 16, 2026.

Testing: will be available in the same room on Sunday April 19, 2026 (Day of our Hamfest) at approximately 9am.

Registration: Applicants will be assessed a $25 registration fee payable in advance or at the first class on March 12, 2026.

Note: Upon completion of the classes, the registration fee will be refunded.

If the applicant misses two or more classes, the registration fee will be forfeited and become TRARC funds.

Register: Send an email to Training@trarc.org providing your call sign, name, and phone number.

An ARRL General Class Licensing Manual (A $33 value) will be issued to each applicant for them to keep.

REGISTRATION CLOSES:

AT 11:59pm SUNDAY MARCH 1, 2026
(Registrations received after this date may not receive a manual)

Let There Be Flashlight (a product review)

Cooky - WC3O

Confession:

I've turned into a YouTube junky. I look to YouTube everyday for information and entertainment. While I have never done anything related to water, I find myself drawn to nautical channels such as What's Going On With Shipping. I'm somehow fascinated by this world that I have absolutely zero experience with. Lots to learn. Another channel that I gravitate to is Chief Makoi. Lots of good insight into life at sea from the perspective of a cargo ship's Chief Engineer.

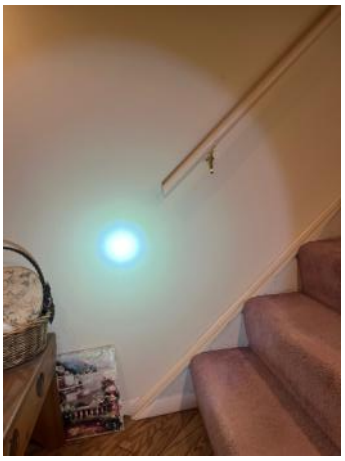
Another confession:

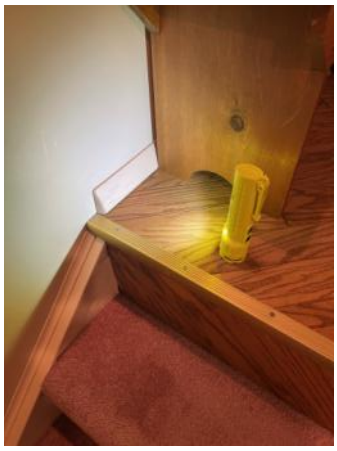
I am also a flashlight junky. Going back into the dark days of the double D cell flashlight with REALLY crappy contacts. You had to keep smacking the flashlight off of something to keep the stupid thing lit. You remember those? Sure you do. Imagine my excitement when Maglite came along! 10 times better, but at the time, still using incandescent bulbs. Power hungry for sure.

Fast Forwarding to modern times, I still really appreciate a high quality flashlight. Watching Chief Makoi's YouTube channel I couldn't help but to notice that they always use a fluorescent yellow flashlight. One time I caught a shot of the brand name. It turns out that they are Nightstick flashlights. I found them for sale on my old pal Ebay. I bought one. I love it! Actually, I have one at home. I have one in my truck. I even bought one for up the joint!

So what's to like?

- They are bright. I'm very sure that there are other flashlights out there that are much brighter, but these are plenty bright enough for me.
- They use 3 AA batteries (You don't need to hope that the battery is charged) If it dies,
- just keep a pack of AA batteries of your choice along with the flashlight) (NOT DURACELL!!!)
- It is actually two flashlights in one. One beam and one flood. You can use either, or both at the same time.
- They are both waterproof and safe in flammable environments.
- They have a nice belt clip. (I modified mine to make it easier to hook and unhook)





- They are BRIGHT fluorescent yellow. Hard to miss. (They also come in other colors too)

If you're like me, I can never get a flashlight aimed on subject without physically holding it. The flood light feature allows you to stand the flashlight upright and aim the floodlight where you need it. Me likes it.

As to the belt clip:

Some belt clips are better than others. The one on this flashlight is TOO GOOD. It's hard to attach, and it's hard to detach. I decided to modify my flashlights to make it easier to attach and detach. Under where the belt clip arm rests there is a plastic spike that sticks up. That spike is the trouble maker. I get a small pair of wire cutters and shorten up the spike. MUCH better. The clip still retains the flashlight just fine, but it's no longer a pain to attach and detach. It also comes with a tether, but I remove that.

So there you have it. The influence of YouTube.

May your light shine brightly

de Cooky - WC3O

Skyview January 2026 Banquet

Photos de Bob - NU3Q

Skyview Members and Guests enjoyed a pleasant evening at the Delmont Fire Hall Banquet Facility

That's a Wrap

Cooky - WC3O

I've always been skeptical about ferrite. It always seemed like black magic as to what they are supposed to do. It tends to be quite expensive to buy what is being sold as "the good stuff". We tend to buy them at the hamfest since the price is better. However, you have NO IDEA what you are buying at this point.

There are a number of different "mixes" that are optimized for different frequency ranges. They do in fact work, but explaining, the proper application of them and the proof of what they are doing is a tad beyond me. I just have to mash the "I believe" button and hope for the best.

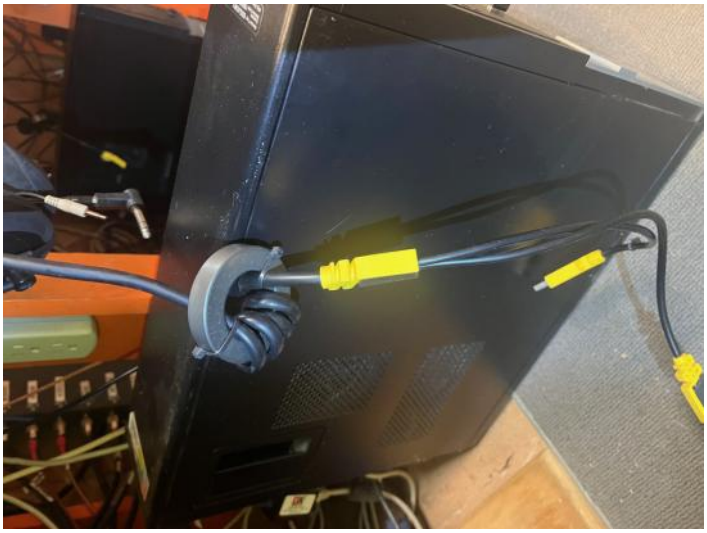
Up at the clubhouse we often do high power contesting. The big issue up there is the close proximity of both, the shack and the various antennas which allows plenty of RF back into the shack to cause RFI issues. In our situation, there's really nothing that can be done about proximity. The only thing we can do is work to minimize the RFI issue.

During the ARRL RTTY Roundup contest in the beginning of January (As well as all other contests that we participate in using high power) we were running into issues on the middle station (YELLOW) and the right side station (BLUE) with the logging software locking up. Shutting down the software and re-starting would solve the problem, for a while. Then it would happen again.

When trying to pin down exactly where the RF is getting in, you need to understand that every wire is an antenna, whether intentional or not. I suspected that the keyboard wires may be the culprit.

I had some mix 31 2.4 inch ferrite cores on hand so I wrapped the keyboard cables up with as many turns as I could fit. So far, it seems to have resolved the issue on those two stations. (I think... you are really never too sure) After the contest was over I installed a core on the left station keyboard cable (GREEN)

Did they work? Got me! So far so good. These cores, along with proper station grounding and bonding help to keep stray RF from doing bad things. It's an ongoing fight. We'll keep a good thought.



What issue do you have?

de Cooky - WC3O
Skyview Radio Officer

Welcome New Members !!

Welcome the following Skyview Radio Society Members who have joined us since publishing the December 2025 newsletter:

— None —

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 31 JAN 26

NM3 A	KC3 GZW	AJ3 O	KC3 VNB
K3 AEB	NY9 H	WC3 O	K3 VRU
KD3 AET	WB3 HFP	WO3 O	N3 VXT
N3 AFS	WA3 HGW	KC3 OCA	KC3 VYK
KD3 AMZ	KB3 HPC	KC3 OCB	W3 VYK
KD3 ANT	K3 HSE	K3 OGN	N3 WAV
KD3 AQF	AK4 HZ	KB3 OMB	W3 WC
NA0 B	AG3 I	K4 PDF	KC3 WCJ
N3 BAH	AC3 IE	KC3 PIM	K3 WM
W3 BRL	KE3 IF	K2 PMD	N3 WMC
KD3 BUF	KC3 IIO	KE3 PO	N3 WMI
W3 BUW	AB3 IK	W3 PRL	KA3 WVU
KD3 BYT	WB3 INB	KC3 PSQ	K3 WWP
KF3 C	W3 IU	KC3 PXQ	N3 XF
KA3 CBA	KU3 J	AC3 Q	W3 XOX
KC3 CBQ	K3 JAS	NU3 Q	KC3 YEZ
K2 CI	WB3 JHC	KC3 QAA	N3 YJN
K3 CLT	N3 JLR	N3 QZU	KC3 YMC
WB6 CQA	KA3 JOU	NJ3 R	W3 YNI
N5 DB	ND9 JR	K3 RMB	W3 YS
K3 DCG	K3 JZD	W3 RRK	KB3 YT
N3 DL	WA3 KFS	I2 RTF	KE3 Z
N3 DRB	AC3 KI	KI2 RTF	K3 ZAU
KB3 DVD	AC0 KK	K3 RWN	KB3 ZFC
KC2 EGL	K3 KR	KQ3 S	KC3 ZOH
KC3 EJC	KC3 KXZ	K3 SBE	W3 ZVX
KA3 EKO	WE3 L	WA3 SCM	
AB3 ER	WA3 LCY	KC3 SDJ	
WA3 ERT	AC3 LD	KC3 SNZ	
N3 ERW	KC3 LHW	KB3 SOU	
K3 ES	WB5 LLI	K3 STL	
KG3 F	KB3 LND	KC3 STV	
WB3 FAE	K3 LR	W3 SW	
K3 FAZ	KC3 LRT	N3 TIN	
KC3 FEI	AB3 LS	W3 TLN	
K3 FH	KC2 LVG	KK3 TM	
K3 FKI	KB3 LYA	N3 TTE	
KC3 FWD	N2 MA	KC3 TTK	
NG3 G	KC3 MBM	AA3 TZ	
AC3 GB	KC3 MIO	AG3 U	
N2 GBR	K3 MJ	NS3 U	
AC3 GE	W1 MP	WU3 U	
K3 GIR	K3 MRN	KB3 UIO	
KB3 GKX	N3 MRU	KC3 UNP	
KC3 GPM	KS3 N	W3 UY	
K3 GT	AC3 NA	KX3 V	
AB3 GY	KB3 NSH	KC3 VCX	

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

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 to some of it . . . . .

— — **Nothing This Month** — —

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 April 1, 2026
Closing Date For Submissions : Mar15, 2026
K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET

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

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

An 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.

**** Skyview VE Testing ****

For Testing Dates, See :
http://www.arrl.org/find-an-amateur-radio-license-exam-session
Time: Usually 8:15 AM

Location: Skyview Clubhouse Meeting Room
2335 Turkey Ridge Rd
New Kensington PA 15068-1936

Contact: Bill Dillen - N3WMC
(724) 882-9612
Email: bdillen@comcast.net
http://www.skyviewradio.net/ve-tests/

Please E-Mail or call to register!!!
– NO WALK INS—MUST REGISTER —

Q5er Editor & Publisher: Jody Nelis - K3JZD

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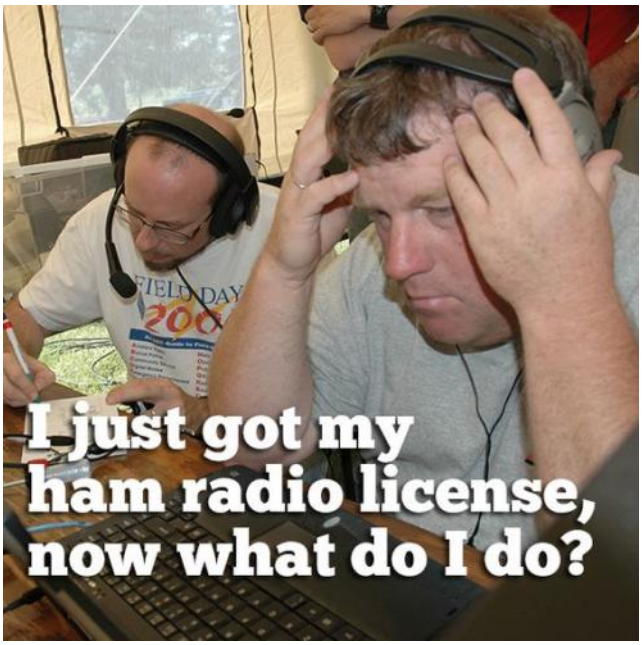
email your comments and article submissions to: **K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET**



That's Easy . . . .

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

And See : https://tinyurl.com/y79tqsr8

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

Subscribe to K3MJW **groups.io** 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 ??

Send in pictures of your Ham Shack