

K9YA Telegraph

Robert F. Heytow Memorial Radio Club

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One Era Ends, Another Begins

Be Your Own Awards Manager

Philip Cala-Lazar, K9PL

Three ARRL awards discontinued (Feb 12, 2004) — Effective immediately, the ARRL Awards Branch has discontinued the Rag Chewers' Club, the Old Timer's Club and the

Friendship Award. ARRL Membership Services Manager Wayne Mills, N7NG, says that the number of amateurs applying for awards in general has declined significantly over the years, and interest in these three awards had slowed to a trickle. DXCC and WAS remain among the most popular ARRL Awards, he said, but the eliminated awards "had outlived their interest level."

The times, they are a changing. The demise of two venerable, and one not so venerable, awards signifies another fundamental shift in the character of the Amateur Radio Service. According to the ARRL's press release, "... the number of amateurs applying for awards in general has declined significantly over the years. ... " If so, the almost universal pursuit of plastering the shack with certificates (wallpaper) is another practice now being consigned to the history books.

On the other hand, from what I see of others' shacks and the shacks pictured on QSL cards and Web sites, not all wallpaper collecting has yet achieved the quaint obsolescence attributed to it.

**BY THEIR INITIALS YOU SHALL KNOW THEM —
RCC, FA & OTC**

From the ARRL publication, *An Introduction to: Operating an Amateur Radio Station* (1976), to gain membership in the Rag Chewers' Club (RCC), "All you have to do is converse with another amateur for a half hour or more and report the conversation to ARRL Headquarters." Membership in the RCC was free to W/VE members and DX and 25 cents to others. At its demise, the ARRL priced the RCC at \$10, certainly a disincentive to new Hams, especially the League's targeted younger age group, already burdened with the expense of constructing a new station.

*"The times, they
are a changing."*

The ARRL Friendship Award (FA), established 1993 was, according to the FA application form, "... available to any ARRL member who submits log extracts that show two-way communications with 26 stations

whose callsigns end with each of the 26 letters of the alphabet. (For example: W4RA, KØORB, W3ABC. ... K1ZZ.)"

Membership in the Old Timer's Club (OTC) was attainable upon application by any Ham licensed for 20 years or more.

For many Hams, membership in the RCC brought them their first certificate of achievement, earning the blue document a place of honor on pristine shack walls. The RCC was tangible evidence of practicing what newly-minted operators learned in preparation for their exams. Down the log, with further diligence and on-the-air effort, the FA was achievable and frameable.

CONTINUED - SEE AWARDS ON PAGE 8



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ANT HR IS FLAG POLE — HW CPY?

Mike Dinelli, N9BOR



What Antenna?

After settling in and unpacking most of the moving boxes, Bill installed an attic dipole for 20- and 40-meters. It was time to get back on-the-air. Unfortunately, the results were dismal with extremely high noise levels and incurable TVI — not good for keeping a low profile. After months of brainstorming and getting nowhere, Bill was ready to pull the plug on ham radio, his lifelong avocation.

THE DISCOVERY

It was a lazy Sunday afternoon, when I decided to look for a CW ragchew. A quick CQ and it started. After our introductions, Jim told me he was using a flag pole antenna. I read about hams using flag poles as antennas, but I never actually worked one. He told me he retired and moved into a no-antenna subdivision. He tried an attic antenna, but it just didn't work. Then he stumbled upon the Force 12 Flag Pole antenna and thought he would give it a try. His CCRs prohibited antennas, but not flag poles! As we settled into our ragchew, it became apparent that he not only enjoyed using his flag

pole antenna — he took pleasure in *talking* about it too.

After the QSO, I shot off an e-mail to Bill, which included a link to Force 12's Web site. Bill did some checking and discovered his subdivision also had no prohibition against flag poles. Bill ordered the flag pole antenna for \$119.95 plus \$24.95 for the installation kit. The installation kit included a short coaxial pigtail and four radials.

The antenna was on back order and actually took a few weeks longer than originally quoted by Force 12. When the antenna finally arrived, Bill discovered the fiberglass base insulator was missing. Before he had a chance to complain, Bill received a phone call from Force 12 saying that the part was shipped and on the way.

“The installation was simple.”

The flag pole antenna consists of (4) four foot, swaged, aluminum tubing sections. The two inch diameter tubing is made from 6061-T6 aircraft-grade aluminum. When fully assembled the antenna is 15 ½ feet long. This

is a *real* flag pole and comes with all necessary hardware for hoisting Old Glory and even includes a flag!

The installation was simple.

1. Dig a small hole about eighteen inches deep (a post hole digger helps here).
2. Drop in a PVC sleeve, some gravel and mix up a bag of Sakrete®. At this point, it's important to make sure the PVC sleeve is plumb.
3. The next day, drop in the mast, unwind the radials, connect the coax and raise your flag.

Since this antenna is rather short, the instructions recommend you wind a choke balun about 25 feet from the antenna. Doing so will cause the feedline to radiate and become an integral part of the antenna system. The choke balun prevents RF from returning down the coax shield and entering the shack.

INITIAL TESTING

As soon as Bill screwed the PL-259 into his rig, he noticed the noise level was down six S-units over the attic dipole. As he tuned the bands, signals were popping up one after another. With RF applied to his new antenna, he discovered he could easily achieve a 1:1 VSWR on 10- through 40-meters using his rig's built-in antenna tuner. At this point, Bill knew he had his ham radio back.

QSOs come easy on the flag pole and he's even starting to rekindle the DX bug. A day after completing the installation, I received this e-mail.

I just have to tell you about my latest QSO. I was listening on 10-meters and there were only a few stations on the band. As I was tuning around I heard ZK1CG put out a CQ and I called him. To my surprise, he came right back and we had a real solid QSO for about five minutes. His name was Victor and he was using a vertical antenna. He was a solid 5/7 and he gave me a 5/7 (report) also. He was in South Cook Islands.

He told me that I was the first person that he worked that was using a flag pole as an antenna and I confirmed that at the time, I was flying the USA flag. Boy that was fun!

Reviews on *eHam.net* indicate that adding an additional four foot section (\$17.00 from Force 12) provides better efficiency on 40m and even allows operation on 80m and 160m. Several

reviewers also suggested that adding more radials will greatly improve the ground system.

The Force 12 Web site reveals they will soon offer a switchable base loading system to increase efficiency on the low bands. They also suggest the addition of a section or two to improve low band performance.

WHEN THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WAY

The Force 12 Flag Pole antenna is an excellent (and inexpensive) way to get on the air in a stealthy and patriotic way. While an attic or indoor antenna is better than nothing, an outdoor antenna will beat it every time. Besides improving your signal, the flag pole antenna provides good fodder for lengthy Sunday afternoon ragchews.

"Boy, that was fun!"

My buddy, "Bill" asked me to withhold his identity so he may maintain a low profile in his community. Force 12 was contacted regarding availability of the base loading system, however they did not respond by the time this article

went to press. ■



Old Glory

K9YA Code Practice Nets

Fast Net

Every first Wednesday of the month, 7.137 MHz (plus or minus QRM) at 7:00 P.M. (0100 Z, Thursday). Check in, exchange FISTS numbers or hang around for a chat. The Fast Net is called at 20+ wpm.

Slow Net

Every 2nd, 3rd and 4th Wednesday of the month, 7.137 MHz (plus or minus QRM) at 7:00 P.M. (0100 Z, Thursday). Check in, exchange FISTS numbers or hang around for a chat. The Slow Net is called at 10-wpm, but speed will be adjusted to that of the slowest operator.

Help!

Paul Hendershott, W9BBR



Brenda Hendershott

Nothing stirs my soul more than the anticipation of a long awaited hamfest. I can still remember the days leading up to my first official hamfest. I was 18-years-old and had been working all summer long to save money for college. With my dad's reluctant blessing, I was also going to reward myself with a brand new Icom two-meter mobile rig that I

hoped to pick up at a hamfest being held at McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey.

It was a sweltering day in July. By 7:30 a.m. it was already in the high 80s. I had my nine-year-old, pig-tailed, little sister with me for company and a new, used Toyota my dad bought from a neighbor. It was going to be a perfect day, I could just tell! An hour-and-a-half later, and now only seven miles away from the hamfest on the New Jersey turnpike, an odyssey began that I think back on often. Whenever life throws an unexpected curve ball my way or I wonder if my day could possibly get any worse, I think back on this day and smile, and say to myself – why, yes it could!

The car just died. No particular reason – it just gave up the ghost as cars often do. Being young and idealistic I wasn't worried. I knew that some good natured soul would stop and help me and my sister out of our troubles. Well, the first hour passed with us alone, on the side of the road, singing kids' songs in the summer heat. We eventually ran out of songs and decided to get a little more aggressive in our plea for help. I drew up a sign with a Magic Marker that simply said "HELP." Lots of motorists drove by, smiled at me, waved at me, but for some reason, didn't want

to stop to actually help me. Aha! I knew what would work. So I sat in the car, and had my poor, pathetic looking, little sister with now drooping pigtails hold up the sign. Surely, no one could pass her by without helping.

Well, the third hour on the side of that road was the worst. Finally a tow truck arrived and there were still four hours left of the hamfest, so I started to feel everything would be ok. Five minutes later going around the curve of the exit ramp, sitting inside our broken car, on the back of the flat bed tow truck (apparently no room for us inside the cab of the truck), I looked ahead through the tow truck's rear window and into the driver's rear-view mirror and saw the driver asleep at the wheel. Before I could utter a word, the tow truck smashed into the curve of the guard rail. The driver popped awake just in time to take control of the truck and kept us all from tumbling down into the ravine. But all this was ok, because I was still going to get my new radio at the hamfest. I just knew it!

"Being young and idealistic I wasn't worried."

Now things were really getting tight. Only an hour and a half left of the hamfest. No problem – I'll just run in, find a new equipment dealer, get the radio, and browse around at the next hamfest. With the car running again, I did my best Mario Andretti impression and got there with an hour to spare! As I pulled into the entrance to McGuire AFB, I saw a huddle of cars with all sorts of homebrew antennas, so I pulled over to find out where to go. They all had big smiles on their faces as I came up to them. "Where do I turn to park for the hamfest?" I asked. "Right here," they all replied in unison. "Well, where is everybody? Did I miss the hamfest? Is it already over?" I was starting to panic.

Then one of the guys pulled out his June edition of *QST* and pointed to one of the pages. He said, "Son, sorry to have to tell you this, but there was a misprint – the hamfest is tomorrow, Sunday...not today."

Hamfest Food: Fun Facts

"Just the Fats, Ma'am"

Hamfests, what memories they evoke. Communing with friends; strolling past vendors displaying a complete history of boatanchor gear (in six linear feet); gathering components for that soon to be completed, decades-old project; gee-whizzing over new rigs; and food!

In its continuing efforts to serve the Ham Radio community, the *K9YA Telegraph* presents the following guide to selected Hamfest food, beverages and snacks. We list only calories, protein (grams) and total fat (grams) per serving; for complete nutritive values see the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) publication, *Nutritive Value of Food* (2002) from which, unless otherwise noted, this data is drawn.

	<u>Calories, Protein, Fat</u>
Burrito	
With beans and cheese	189, 8, 6
With beans and meat	255, 11, 9
Chicken fillet (sandwich, plain) (breaded and fried)	515, 24, 29
Chicken pieces , boneless, breaded and fried, plain, six pieces	319, 18, 21
Chili con carne	256, 25, 8
Fish sandwich , with tartar sauce and cheese	523, 21, 29
French fries small medium large	291, 4, 16 458, 6, 25 578, 7, 31
Hamburger , Regular size, with condiments Single patty Double patty	272, 12, 10 540, 34, 27
Cheeseburger Double patty Single patty	417, 21, 21 295, 16, 14
Hot dog Plain w/chili	242, 10, 15 296, 14, 13

Corndog 460, 17, 19

Nachos,
w/cheese 346, 9, 19

Onion rings,
breaded/fried 276, 4, 16

Pizza (1/8 of 12" pie)
Cheese 140, 8, 3
Meat 184, 13, 5
Pepperoni 181, 10, 7

Submarine sandwich
(6" long), with oil and
vinegar
Cold cuts 456, 22, 19
(with lettuce, cheese,
salami, ham, tomato,
onion)

Roast beef 410, 29, 13
(with tomato, lettuce, mayo)
Tuna salad 584, 30, 28
(with mayo, lettuce)

Taco, beef
1 small 369, 21, 21
1 large 568, 32, 32

Shake, 16 fl. ozs.
Chocolate 423, 11, 12
Vanilla 370, 12, 10

Cotton candy* (2.099 oz.) 220, 3, 0

Danish pastry
Cheese filled 353, 6, 25
Fruit filled 335, 5, 16

Doughnut
Cake, medium 198, 2, 11
Yeast leavened,
glazed, medium 242, 4, 14

Elephant ears** 719, 7, 32

Ice milk, soft,
vanilla, in cone 164, 4, 6

Beer, 12 fl. oz. 146, 1, 0
Cola, 12 fl. oz. 152, 0, 0
Lemonade, 8 fl. oz. 99, Trace, 0

* www.jaysfoods.com

** www.allrecipes.com



Mmmm... donuts

Your Technician Accent

"Quiet Numbskulls, I'm Broadcasting."

Jack Squat, P5/KABØOM



*Jack Squat,
P5/KABØOM*

There are nearly 700,000 licensed radio amateurs in the United States and that number continues to grow. Most new hams will get their start in the 2-meter band using repeaters, and many of those new licensees are finding it difficult to learn proper on-air operating techniques. This article concentrates on the use

of catch phrases and voice styles to assimilate quickly in the *hobby*.

LISTENING IS OVERRATED

Now that you're licensed, your listening days are over — it's time to be heard! You can't learn good operating practices by listening; you have to actually *key* your Handie Talkie and start talking. For the timid, simply kerchunking a repeater is a good start. Kerchunking is the art of pressing the push-to-talk button just long enough to access a repeater. If you can hear a squelch tail or courtesy beep on the output frequency, you're on the fast track to becoming an A-1 Op.

It's best to *multi-chunk* to get a good rhythm going. It's not as easy as you think because you have to time it just right. If you practice a little everyday, soon you'll be kerchunking like an old timer.

WHY WON'T ANYONE TALK TO ME?

Sometimes it is difficult to get someone to answer your general call on a repeater. So, the best way to get started is to interrupt an existing conversation.

Even though you might not have anything pertinent to add to the discussion, it is perfectly acceptable to break in. Say your callsign several times remembering to spell it out using ITU or *similar* phonetics. Once your call is acknowledged, tell everyone your first name or "first personal" as we like to call it. Then let each party know how much they are *pushing* on your S-meter. Tell them your "20" or location and then turn it back to *all* parties in the conversation.

Let's listen in on a typical QSO (Q-signals are essential on 2-meter FM). It would go something like this.

WD9598: Charlie, I almost have my PIC project ready for programming. What do you use to program your microcontrollers? K9A1A from WD9598 mobile.

*"You can't learn
good operating
practices
by listening."*

KB9ABCD: K-B-9-A-B-C-D, K-B-9-A-B-C-D, this is KILO BAKER NINER ALPHER BRAVO CHARLIE DELTER breaking.

Pause

K9A1A: Acknowledging the Kilo Bozo 9 station. Do you have emergency traffic? Over.

Pause

K9A1A: Q-R Zed?

Pause

K9A1A: Bud, I guess the breaking station is gone. I built a simple programmer. If you want I can e-mail you the schematic or you could even borrow mine for awhile. WD9598 mobile, K9A1A.

KB9ABCD: This is KILO BRAVO NINER ALPHER BRAVO CHARLIE DELTER. Both

you guys are pushing 20 over 9 on my meter. My 20 is Chicago, CHARLIE HOTEL ALPHER RODNEY LINDA ECHO. First personal is ROMEO OSCAR BRAVO ECHO RODNEY TOTO, but you can call me BRAVO OSCAR BRAVO or Bob. What am I pushing on your meters?

WD9598: Charlie, I'm pulling into the driveway, so I'm going to sign. I'll give you a call tonight about picking up your programmer. 73. K9A1A from WD9598.

K9A1A: (other signal heard faintly in the background) Okay Bud, thanks for the chat. I'll be home all night, so if you want, you can just come by my house anytime before nine. 73. WD9598 from K9A1A.

KB9ABCD: Roger that Charlie, I'll look you up on Q-R-Z dot C-O-M and be over before niner. I'll bring a six-pack and a bag of pork rinds. Bye!

REFINING YOUR TECHNIQUE

Now that you have a QSO and a couple weeks of kerchunking under your belt, you are ready to further refine your operating skills. All *good* radio operators develop unique catch phrases and voice inflections. It will take time to hone your on-air personality, but you will get it!

CATCH PHRASES

20 - Location

73's - Best Regardses

Seven Threes - Best Regardses

Seventy Thirds – Best Regardses

First Personal – First Name

Handle – See First Personal

Roger That - Yes

Talk at Ya Later - I (we) will talk to you later, but I (we) will not listen to what you are saying. (I glommed this one from years of operating Citizen's Band (CB) radio as a professional driver.)

INFLECTIONS

When saying your callsign, start at a normal pitch and then speak deeper with each successive character. Speak at a faster than normal conversational speed and accent odd syllables. Anyone can speak normally, but you are a radio amateur. It is also important that you refer to yourself as “we” at every opportunity.



*Jack's Wilson HT
(with ultra-rare case)*

PART DEUX

“73's”

If you practice these techniques, you will sound like a 2-meter pro in no time. In Part II, we'll cover the repeater guide to alternate phonetics, sound effects and the proper use of Q-signals on VHF. A special bonus section on how to speak like Norm Crosby — King of Malaprop — will be included. You won't need to drink decapitated coffee to stay awake for Part II.

Talk at ya later!

73's

Jack

Jack Squat was raised on Chicago's northside. After a brief stint with Uncle Sam, he took up permanent residence in St. Paul, Minnestota. A Technician Class Ham since 1987, Jack travels the globe on one-man DXpeditions, operating 2-meters with his prized Wilson HT and rubber duck. His crowning ham achievement was operating as P5/KABØOM in North Korea.

Now you would think that that was the end of a pretty bad day. But it wasn't. My luck continued for another few hours that day. Feeling like a broken man, hot, sticky, hungry, \$250 poorer from the tow and car repair, no Icom radio, and with no fun hamfest to go to, I decided it was time to kick back, get a few cold Cokes, and eat for the first time in eight hours. My little sister insisted on actually paying the clerk for our order, so when she came back with no change from a \$50 bill, I was ready to admonish the clerk. Before I reached him, I noticed a few \$20 bills in one of those "Save the Animals" sealed donation containers on the counter near the register. Yes, my little dog loving sister had decided to make a charitable donation on my behalf. I think the dogs ate better than we did that day.

Now, don't get me wrong, despite what happened

that day, I still love hamfests! Big ones, little ones and even crummy ones. I just like hanging out with hams I guess. And there's always that chance that an old piece of gear you always wanted will show up and be almost free. Now sometimes things don't work out perfect — I was at a hamfest once where I bought a Shure mic that the owner said worked great, only to get it home and find out the head of the mic was hollow and empty. It did work great though — as a paperweight! Then there was the antenna tuner that had the variable caps removed and replaced with 10k pots. It also made a nice project enclosure years later for a power supply. Oh, well...

Still, I'd say most hams are honest and are there to sell their wares and find new treasures themselves. That being said, if you are planning on buying a more expensive piece of radio equipment I would recommend bringing along a selection of screwdrivers, an inexpensive DC to AC power inverter and a DC lighter socket connector for your car, a long wire antenna, some coax and a dummy load with a selection of connectors. Right there in the parking lot you can make sure everything is in working condition.

Well, the hamfest season is kicking off here in the Midwest soon. So, get out there and meet new hams, learn new things, recall things you have forgotten, make new friends and get some heartburn at the snack shop just like the rest of us! ■

So, why the decline in applications for the formerly popular RCC and FA?

1. Most new Hams lack HF privileges.
2. Although nothing in the RCC or FA rules prevent operators from earning their certificates on VHF/UHF, these bands, especially for new Hams working mostly, or exclusively, through repeaters, do not lend themselves to wallpaper collecting.
3. Since the removal of the FCC's logging requirement, fewer Hams maintain station logs, so the contacts necessary to earn these and many other operating awards never get recorded.
4. Three less programs promoted and administered by a financially besieged ARRL that is currently more focused on, as they see them, the other, bigger, concerns now plaguing Ham Radio and propelling the League's latest lamentable move.

BE YOUR OWN AWARDS MANAGER

But since the League has discontinued its two beginners' awards what can we do to fill the "certificate gap?" As individuals we can follow the excellent example set by Dick Sylvan, W9CBT, who issues personalized certificates to operators commemorating their first CW QSO. But no need to stop there, there is no reason you can't issue awards for working your community, members of your local radio club or whatever you wish to commemorate — I've received an award for working a QRP op traversing the Appalachian Trail. Many word processor applications offer certificate templates, so customizing your own is a piece of cake.

At your local radio club, a RCC awards program makes a great follow-on benefit for licensing class graduates. Certificate presentation ceremonies at club meetings are the much needed positive reinforcement we all need when initiating a new endeavor, and goes a long way in maintaining newbies' enthusiasm.

ANOTHER FLAVOR OF RCC

There remains at least one organization that offers an RCC, although gaining this one takes some perseverance. The FISTS CW Club, with thousands of members worldwide, offers a "Rag Chewers' Award" to members upon submitting proof of 100 FISTS contacts, of a minimum of 30 minutes duration, to the FISTS awards manager. ■

<http://www.fists.org>

We Need Your Articles and Ideas!

Do you have a ham radio story that needs to be told? An idea for a story? [Comments?](#)

Please contact us at k9ya@qsl.net.



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