

K9YA Telegraph

Robert F. Heytow Memorial Radio Club

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Ham Radio to the Rescue

A Tale of Youthful Ham Radio Misadventure

Philip Cala-Lazar, K9PL

Legions of Ham Radio operators have been rightfully honored for serving their community and the nation in times of disaster with great courage, and, often, at

profound personal risk. But there are those small predicaments where Ham Radio has also saved the day.

I once lived in a neighborhood where, in a two block area, seven Hams amiably resided and operated. We all belonged to the same local radio club and met twice weekly at nearby restaurants for eyeball QSOs. It was Ham Radio nirvana for sure.

Two of the locals were teenagers just entering high school. One of those teenagers was already, when I first met him, an ace CW operator, contesteer and DXer. Sometimes a few of us would work contests and hunt DX from this young man's shack which was located on the second floor of his parent's home. He had a whole room dedicated solely to Ham Radio! Like I said, Ham Radio nirvana in those halcyon days.

The solar cycle was getting hot and 15-meters enjoying worldwide reach. That joyous conjunction, and low prices for Gotham brand antennas (remember those?) conspired to create aluminum lust in aforementioned young op. He dreamt of busting pileups and amassing big contest scores as tapered elements glinted overhead. Dream became reality

when the three-element, 15-meter monobander was dropped off by the nattily attired driver of a brown truck.

Now, the youngest of our cohort — for the purposes of this article we'll call him Bob — had the biggest and best antenna; in a box. Our offers of assistance were duly pledged and acknowledged: the beam was to be installed on a roof-mounted tripod. Some time

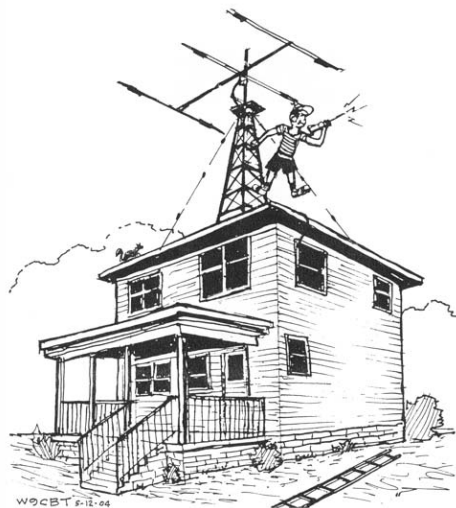
passed awaiting the clement weather necessary to raise the hook. Yet more time passed, but we knew even as we awaited the call to serve, that we would get that antenna installed.

Saturday morning on a brisk and sunny spring day. A few of the neighborhood crew sat savoring coffee and chat in the

kitchen of a house but 1-1/2 blocks from the future site of the monobander. The telephone rang. It was a Ham in a nearby suburb, did we know a 'Bob?' Of course. Well, he's installing an antenna on the roof and the ladder fell. Seems Bob had the foresight to bring his Wilson HT topside where he was able secure help on 146.52. There he relayed the phone number of the place he was sure we'd be on a Saturday morning.

Five minutes later we were raising the long ladder that had fallen following a wind gust. An unshaken and smiling Bob came down from his high perch and said he had called for help from passerby, but they either ignored him or couldn't hear him. So, once again, HamRadio came through in an emergency. ■

"... Ham Radio nirvana for sure."



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Our Man in Dayton

The 2004 Hamvention Report

Steve Wolfcale, N9WAT



Inside Hara Arena

outside flea market. There were only a couple of times Friday when a light mist came down, in contrast to Saturday when a light steady rain started in the morning and continued all day with some heavier rainfall periods.

Friday, during our tour of the flea market area, we noticed fewer vendors and fewer attendees than in previous years. We finished the outside market by 3:00, a record time, and were also able to visit all areas inside before day's end.

Dayton was much the same this year as previous years in that it rained much of the time. I have attended Dayton every year since 2001 and 2001 was the only year it did not rain. This year rain was predicted for the whole weekend, however, Friday turned out to be the best day to tour the

We noticed fewer vendors in the convention center Friday, however, a few more showed up Saturday. There was a partition about 60 feet out from the ball room area closing off an open space that, in past years, the vendors occupied fully. Light attendance on Friday made it very easy and enjoyable to move around in the normally crowded exhibit halls.

Overall, I am sure attendance will be down from last year, and it will be interesting to see the official statistics.

I always like to stop by the QRP tables to see what they are building. This year I found a very interesting item. It was a software-defined direct conversion receiver capable of recording and replaying 80 KHz of spectrum. A small daughter board determines the band and frequency and a VFO board is available for multiband operation. The unit consists of a 4 by 4 inch PCB with two BNC jacks and two RCA phono plugs. In receive mode you connect your antenna to one BNC and the RCA phono plugs go to the audio in and out jacks of

a VHS VCR. This allows you to capture up to six hours of activity in all 80 KHz. When finished you connect your radio's antenna input

*"...2001 was
the only year it
did not rain."*



Renewing Friendships



Nancy Kott, WZ8C - FISTS North America

to the other BNC jack and replay the VCR allowing you to tune up and down the 80 KHz and listen to what occurred those 6 hours. I asked what this was used for and they replied that it is in use by Official Observers and by testers. It would allow you to record a complete contest in some cases and then go back and analyze what exactly happened. A very interesting device, I have not seen anything like it before.

Saturday, Hara Convention Center was fairly crowded because the rain drove everyone indoors. One curious thing I noticed this year was more people drinking beer, some acquired from beer vendors and, in the flea market area, those who brought their own supply.

The usual numbers of Hoverounds were moving about, and in the inevitable confluence of these two facts I witnessed a man with no apparent disability driving a Hoveround at full speed with one hand on the throttle and a beer in the other.

I visited the FISTS booth several times over the weekend and there was always people stopping by and chatting. There seems to be a strong interest in CW among all hams, old and new. The FISTS booth always has some freebies to give away and this year they had fireball candies, "Code Copying" pens and suckers. The suckers were my favorite; each was labeled "No Code Suc's." Saturday afternoon, Nancy Kott, WZ8C, gave a talk on CW as part

*"Overall,
Hamvention
was a blast."*

of one of the forums. Unfortunately, I wasn't aware of it or I would have attended.

Last year, there was a small disaster when the bus company providing shuttle service went out of business two weeks before Hamvention. Small, courtesy type, buses were obtained as replacements, but there was an hour's wait for them and they were very crowded. This year, the Hamvention organization contracted with the city to provide buses from the parking lot at Salem Mall to the Hara Convention Center. There was no waiting and the big buses provide plenty of room for hauling boat anchors back to your car.

Overall, Hamvention was a blast. I picked up a vintage HP signal generator for \$10 in the flea market that works great and, as always, I passed up a few items that I wish I had taken. If you are looking for any type of used equipment Dayton is the place to find deals. I checked prices on ebay when I got home and found everything selling substantially higher than Dayton flea market prices. Hope to see you there next year! ■



FISTS CW Club Booth



Indoor Exhibits (Grandstand View)



Step Right Up

Amateur Radio Military Appreciation Day

Emery McLendon, KB9IBW



State Senator, Dennis Kruse (L) & Emery McLendon, KB9IBW

On May 29, 2004 Amateur Radio Operators from various Fort Wayne, Indiana Clubs assembled at the Fort Wayne Wizards Memorial Stadium for a unique special event. The Amateurs were there to conduct the first Amateur Radio Military Appreciation Day (ARMAD). This event was held to honor and show appreciation to

those serving and those who have served in the military and related auxiliary groups.

Planning started for this event on March 31, 2004 after Emery McLendon, KB9IBW, the event's organizer, had conversations with military Ham operators at various locations in the United States and overseas. The conversations centered on what Amateur Radio could do to deliver messages of support to our armed forces worldwide.

What resulted was the formation of an Amateur Radio Military Appreciation Day with the purpose of enabling the public to express their messages of appreciation to active duty personnel, veterans and associated groups, live, via Ham Radio. Unlike letter writing, this event would permit us to interact with deployed troops and those serving at home, allowing them to speak with people in our community, across the country and the world.

As event planning went forward, we soon learned other Amateur Radio clubs also wanted to take part in ARMAD, and operate from their communities. So, we decided to contact clubs around the world

and ask them to participate in ARMAD. Alas, we also learned not all Amateurs are united in working together to help our hobby grow and obtain recognition. We received much negative feedback and discovered many Hams refused to help with an event we felt would benefit and revive interest in Amateur Radio.

We continued planning and decided to find a location for the event. I contacted the Fort Wayne Wizards baseball team and asked if we could work with them on the selected date as the Wizards were having a game that day. The staff liked our idea and allowed us to operate from the stadium. We implemented plans for our operation from the stadium after Ron Kaufman, N9KNJ, Richard Andrews, N9HRA, and myself went there to map out our location and scout potential problems.

*“...to honor
and show
appreciation...”*

A week later, we requested volunteers for the special event and held a meeting to assign workers to each station. We received help from the Fort Wayne Radio club, the Allen County Amateur Radio Technical Society and the Northeast Indiana DX Association.

We decided to run three Echolink, one IRLP, two HF and a PSK 31 station under the direction of Tom Baker, N9TB, and Steve Nardin, WB9ZIY.

Support from the local community grew as people spread the message by word of mouth and e-mail. Local media picked up on the event and an article was printed on the front page of the Fort Wayne *News-Sentinel* on April 25, 2004. The article can be viewed at www.nmam.org under “Events 2004 Fort Wayne, Indiana” and click on “More.”

As the event neared we distributed more than 2,000 fliers during the Dayton Hamvention and to nearby communities.

Your Shack

Josh Logan, N7XM

I got started in radio when I was about 12 years old. My first callsign was KN2MMS, near New York City. I originally had a Hammarlund HQ100, a Globe Scout 680A by World Radio Labs and a vertical antenna.

I upgraded to General Class quickly and began chasing DX with a Viking Valiant transmitter, a National NC 300 receiver and a Mosley tribander on the roof! I worked about 200 countries by my 16th birthday! Some time in my late 20s I went inactive and my license later expired!

In the mid-1980s I again became “radioactive,” took the exam for Extra Class and was finally back on the air! I held the calls AA6IT, and, later, WX7K for many years.

I am a social DXer and love CW. Most years I used simple wire antennas, verticals and loops.

I have done some serious contesting from Big Gun contest stations, and it really opened my eyes as to what yagi stacks can do! At one station we used a 3 over 3 stack on 40-meters, that is, two stacked 3-element, monobander, 40-meter beams, each weighing about 320 pounds and each using 48-foot booms! What a joy to use!

At present I have my best home station: one tower at 100 feet with a 10 foot mast extending above the top in a very windy location in the northern Nevada high desert.

At the top of the tower I use a 2-element yagi on 40-meters and a 6-element yagi on 20-meters. At 70 feet I have a 2-element yagi for 30-meters fixed on Europe; at 40-feet, a 2-element yagi dual-driven yagi for 20-meters fixed on Europe; a long, sloping dipole off the tower for 160-, 80- and 40-meters; and a 3-element delta loop rotary at 30 feet for 10-meters.

During the February ARRL DX contest, I worked WAC on 160-meters in two nights using the sloping dipole for transmit and receive. Not the best for receiving by any means! In Europe, I worked super contest station CS6V in Portugal and super contest station D4B in Cape Verde, Africa, who was going 40-wpm!

Frankly, I could use less house and more land. I am on two acres and really would like to install beverages and



Josh Logan, N7XM

more towers; hopefully at another location in the near future.

I find 160-meters is the Great Frontier for DXers. I feel like a tenderfoot camper in Alaska for the first time. In May, I got a 599 from VK3ZL on 1.822 MHz before my sunrise: we talked for 20 minutes! The band was empty. He answered my CQ — he was 589 — I thought he was stateside — he was so loud. The VK op is a 160-meter lover! His antenna was a 40-foot vertical with many ground radials.

Then I was on 20-meters aiming due west with my yagi flying at 110 feet and ZS2OE called me on long path; he was camping on a mountain top using 3 watts from his Elecraft K1 and battery! He was peaking 579 on long path; again, the band was close to empty! Do not be too quick to make assumptions about propagation, especially on 160-meters — Top Band!

Last year, a friend and myself bought and fixed up an old Ten Tec Triton 544 transceiver and shipped it to India as a gift; the new owner is very active and tells us that the Ten Tec is the best gift he's ever received. I like the idea of self-driven charity — more radios will go to India!

This “radio gifting” made me feel very good, we are, after all, ambassadors of goodwill in Amateur Radio!

See you on the air pounding the Holy Brass! ■

Your First QSO

Be Your Own Amateur Radio Biographer

The *K9YA Telegraph* invites you to submit your Ham Radio story. What events led you to our service? What path did you follow to earn your license; was it bumpy or smooth? Tell us about your first QSO, whether a half century ago, or last week; was it an exercise in blood, sweat and tears or a romp in the ether. Are you a retread? If so, what brought you back into the fold?



ARMAD 2004

Share your experience and photographs with the *K9YA Telegraph* community. ■

Your Shack

Your Photo is Worth a Thousand Words

Remember *Popular Electronics* and *Electronics Illustrated* magazines? Remember the photographs of shacks that were a part of every issue? How about those SWL and Novice shacks that included a few small household appliances to bloat the viewing experience?

The *K9YA Telegraph* requests descriptions and photographs of you and your shack: today's shack or yesteryear's shack — toasters, Osterizers and steam irons optional. ■

A Special Invitation to DX Ops

To our DX subscribers (including VE and XE), tell us about Amateur Radio in your country: licensing requirements; operating conditions; limitations on operating; public's view; government's view; future of the service; national and local radio clubs; tips and cautions for Hams visiting your country; photographs of you, your shack and your Amateur Radio activities. ■

MILITARY - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

We were interviewed by three local radio stations and we requested local TV coverage.

Finally, the day arrived as operators manned their positions at Memorial Stadium at 09:00 on May 29, 2004 for ARMAD 2004. At 10:00 we were on the air with State Senator Dennis Kruse making the first contact with Cherry Point Marine Air Station in North Carolina.

Allen County Commissioner Marla Irving presented us with a proclamation declaring the day Amateur Radio Military Appreciation Day. We also received two proclamations from the governor of the state of Indiana, and a surprise letter of endorsement from U.S. Senator Richard Lugar. In a ceremony before the baseball game the proclamations and letter were read as the 6,500 fans present were asked to stand and salute our troops in honor of Amateur Radio.

Attendance for ARMAD was the largest in the history of the stadium, and the event went off very well with many contacts made in the U.S. and DX. Included were locations in Kuwait, England, Greece and Sweden. We had QSOs with Cherry Point Marine Station, Fort Bragg, Fort Carson, Fort Sill, Silversides Submarine Group and many other military and auxiliary groups.

After many requests to repeat ARMAD, we decided to make it an annual event, and ask that Amateur Radio clubs and operators join us in this event to heighten public awareness of our service and to help recruit new Hams. We have created an official T-shirt which can be seen and ordered at www.geocities.com/kb9ibw by clicking on the ARMAD link.

Thanks to all the clubs, near and far, that helped make ARMAD a great event in 2004. Let us strive together in the future to grow Amateur Radio and showcase what we can do for our communities and our military.

We have joined the National Military Appreciation Month organization and will continue to work to show support for those who serve our country and protect our freedoms.

For information and photos of the event: www.geocities.com/kb9ibw. ■



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