

K9YA Telegraph

Robert F. Heytow Memorial Radio Club

Volume 8, Issue 3, March 2011



QSX: I Am Listening for You

Amateur Radio Columns by Frank L. Hughes, W9KJ

Philip Cala-Lazar, K9PL

With thanks to the *Three Princes of Serendip*.

For "...making discoveries, by accidents and sagacity, of things they were not in quest of."

Horace Walpole, (1717-1792)

The spark for this article was struck while researching another topic. Among the titles the search engine found was "QSX: I Am Listening for You," by Frank L. Hughes, W9KJ, in the Chicago Tribune. Hughes, a longtime Tribune reporter and editorial writer had, in early 1966, extensively covered a Tribune-sponsored MARS project. The project, Voice to Viet Nam, relayed short (15-word) personal messages to U.S. military personnel stationed in that country.

The Voice to Viet Nam articles apparently generated sufficient public interest to spawn several (mostly) Sunday *Hobbies* columns that discussed a range of amateur radio topics. And, from these articles arose the "QSX: I Am Listening for You" column that ran from November 1966 to June 1967.

Finding this trove of mid-century amateur radio lore I thought it remarkable that a major newspaper, in what was then America's second largest city, chose to offer their readers a series of articles on a subject that was, to the great majority, arcane. And, that three of those articles hearkened back to newspaper radio columns of the 1920s in offering construction plans and schematic diagrams. Further, considering today's litigious society, that potentially lethal voltages were present (no warnings or cautions noted in the construction plans) on the chassis of one of the construction projects is even more astounding.

**Chicago Tribune HOBBIES
September 18, 1966**

'Hams' Operate from Attics to Basements

Hughes offered readers a brief outline of amateur radio starting in 1894 with the young Marconi and cited the many contributions to communications technology made by hams. Suggested purchasing a CW capable shortwave receiver for aspiring amateurs; listening to W1AW code practice; urged reading ham periodicals, texts and license manuals; and noted the \$4 fee and notarized application required to take the

FCC exam. W9KJ then named some celebrity hams: "Barry Goldwater, Arthur Godfrey, Herbert Hoover, Jr., and Anton Hapsburg, the former crown prince of Austria."

Pictured in the column was the "Bantam-one watt transmitter," a war surplus device that sold for 25 cents in the 1950s. Hughes states, "one like it, with minor revisions, has been used successfully on

the air by this writer."

October 9, 1966

Distance Is No Barrier to Hams

Below a photograph of three DX QSL cards: UA1KBB, G6WX and FO8AA, Hughes described

"...the young
Marconi..."

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Four State QRP Group

Terry Fletcher, WAØITP



Rick, KCØPET and his Winning, Whacky, Veggie Key

The Four State QRP Group is devoted to low power amateur radio building and operation. We fund and organize an annual conference, OzarkCon, which fosters radio related education, disseminates information and provides a forum for information exchange. Continuing OzarkCon is a major ongoing goal. We also provide weekly nets to encourage low power communication skills and camaraderie. We intend to be a significant entity promoting

QRP activities within the ranks of amateur radio. The header on our email reflector says it all; we are a friendly and welcoming group. Don Jackson, AE5K, administers the email list. Shared by hundreds of hams worldwide, it connects far-flung members into a community of radio builders and low-power operators.

One can't talk about Four States without discussing OzarkCon, as the conference is a major reason for the group's existence. OzarkCon was the outgrowth of ArkieCon. Jay Bromley, W5JAY, and the Fort Smith QRP Group were instrumental in promoting ArkieCon. After several years a break was needed. In 2003 Joe Porter, WØMQY; Dave Bixler, WØCH; Gene Sailsbury, NØMQ; and Bart Lawson, WØIIT, picked up the mantle, renamed the conference OzarkCon, and moved it to Joplin, Mo. The early kit offerings to get the ball rolling were the Tenna Dipper and the Power/SWR meter, both KD1JV designs. Bart Kitted the PWR/SWR meter and Gene kitted the Tenna Dipper. The kits were well received and the first OzarkCon was held at the Joplin Ramada Inn on April 9 and 10, 2004.

Although Four State originally started out as a regional club encompassing the four states of Arkansas, Kansas, Oklahoma and Missouri, it quickly outgrew those four states with members worldwide participating in our activities.

After the Joplin Ramada Inn was sold to La Quinta, it became increasing difficult to schedule OzarkCon near the same time period, and it was decided that a change of venue was needed. Branson, Mo. was chosen and after another search for a suitable location, the Stonecastle Inn and Conference Center was selected. Branson has an ideal mix of family activities for the attendees and the community welcomed us with open arms. While we hams are at the conference, the rest of the family can be entertained at shows, shopping, or sight seeing.

During the Joplin years Joe Porter, WØMQY, organized, and coordinated with the Ramada staff, and OzarkCon became well known and developed a reputation as a first class QRP gathering. The first Branson conference was held on May 1-2, 2009. The Branson location was a hit from the start, the attendees encountering smiling faces and pleasant voices everywhere they turned, both at the hotel and in the community. The 2010 conference went very smoothly as lessons learned from 2009 were applied. The 2011 conference planning is well along and truly will be the best yet. That is a tall order considering the quality of past presentations, vendors, number of door prizes, whacky keys and, most importantly, the friendship QRP'ers enjoy. To lock in dates and costs, a five-year contract was signed with the Stonecastle Hotel and Conference Center, and future dates are posted on the OzarkCon Web page.



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Kit Building at OzarkCon



Bart Lawson, WØIIT, with "Big Brutus" in Background

As mentioned, a major goal of the Four State fund is to organize, fund, and conduct OzarkCon annually. Sales of QRP-related kits is the way that is accomplished. A cadre of dedicated kitter/shippers handles hundreds of kits each year. A full listing of available kits, documentation and order pages can be found at the kit link below. Our dedicated kitters are Paul Smith, NØNBD; Dave Bixler, WØCH; Johnny Matlock, ACØBQ; and Bob Ball, KL7AH, and Eileen Hall (we call them the B&E team). Several others have volunteered and will be doing new kits as they come along.

Along with the designers' excellent and continuing projects the kitters' considerable efforts are what keep OzarkCon an annual event. There are several new

*"world-class
designers"*

designs in the works, which we hope to introduce in January 2011. As usual, you can expect them to be of high quality, innovative in design, with good performance, and cost effectiveness—all good ham radio characteristics.

Four States is fortunate to have world-class designers who are, and have been, willing to help support the Group, among whom are Jim Kortge, K8IQY; Dave Cripe, NMØS; Steve Weber, KD1JV; Craig Johnson, AAØZZ; and Wayne McFee, NB6M. Their knowledge and engineering talents have made OzarkCon possible.

Our weekly nets are conducted to encourage improvement in low power communication skills and fellowship. There are three nets, all meeting on Wednesday evenings.



Mert Nellis, WØUFO,
Operating KØN, Special
Event Station

8:00 CST, 0200Z: Comfortable CW net meets on 3.563. Terry, WAØITP, NCS
8:30 CST, 0230Z: New 160-meter net meets on 1.810. Nate, NØNB, NCS
9:00 CST, 0300Z: PSK net meets on 3.580.5. Chuck, K6QKL, NCS

Please feel free to check in anytime, we'd like to hear from you. We are a friendly group, the nets are low key and, for want of a better word, are "comfortable" ones in which to participate.

The group is widely distributed with approximately 200 members across the U.S. and some DX. Those near southeast Missouri meet monthly in Seneca, Mo., and several kitting parties have developed after this meeting. The future looks bright with new kits coming along soon and a great venue in which to hold OzarkCon. Many of the details of the conference plans are already completed and on automatic for next year. An example of one of those will be evident when the new pre-registration page is unveiled early in 2011. Webmaster, Dave Martin, K5DCM, has devised an online registration form that is very quick and easy to use and provides a Paypal option.

The Four State QRP Group will continue to promote QRP building, operating, and radio education, please join us. ■



2010 OzarkCon Banquet



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Eyes and Ears on Top Band

Chuck Guenther, NIØC



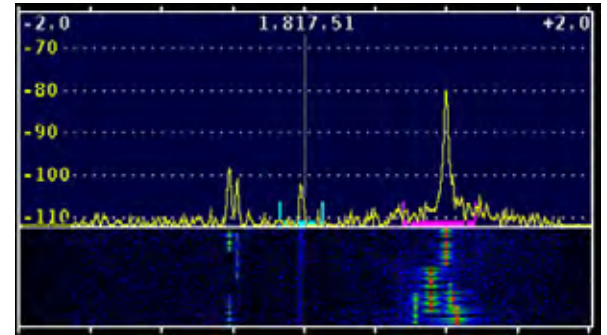
Chuck Guenther, NIØC

During November 2010, I added an Elecraft P3 Panadapter to my station. The P3 is a software-defined receiver in its own right that processes the IF output of the Elecraft K3 or other transceiver to produce real-time and time history (waterfall) spectrum displays spanning 2 to 200 KHz of bandwidth. The displayed amplitude indicates the signal strength (in dBm units) at the receiver antenna terminals to an

accuracy of 3 dBm. Cursors in the display indicate the positions and bandwidth of the A and B VFO selections. Vertical markers can be positioned in the display to facilitate a QSY of either VFO, controlled by a button push on the P3 front panel.

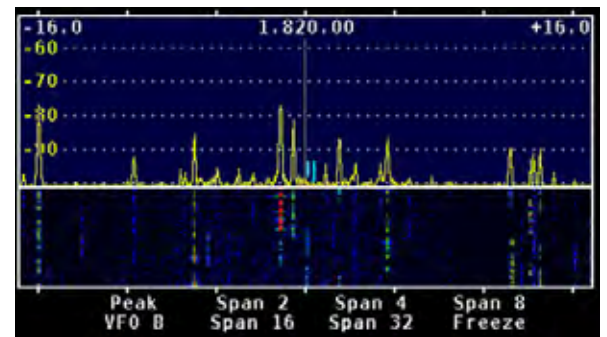
The K3 and P3 are connected to the PC through an RS232 port. The panadapter display can be frozen by the push of a button, thus providing a snapshot of the spectrum that can be uploaded to the PC for storage. I used this new capability to record some of my favorite moments on 160-meters so far this season. All the images shown here were recorded from my transmit antenna, a Cushcraft MA160V top-loaded vertical for 160 meters only. Some of the images have been shared with the respective stations via e-mail. The images are described in chronological order.

The first image is of ZL8X recorded Thanksgiving morning, November 25 at 1135 UTC. ZL8X is the small peak centered in the A VFO passband, and two or three stations are calling up about 3 KHz. The ZL8X expedition made over 4,000 QSO's on Top Band!

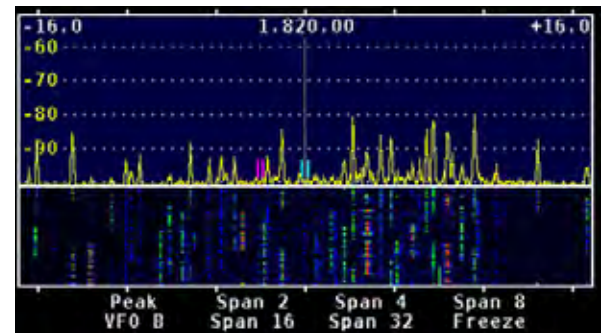


4Z1UF, 3 December 2010, 0342 UTC

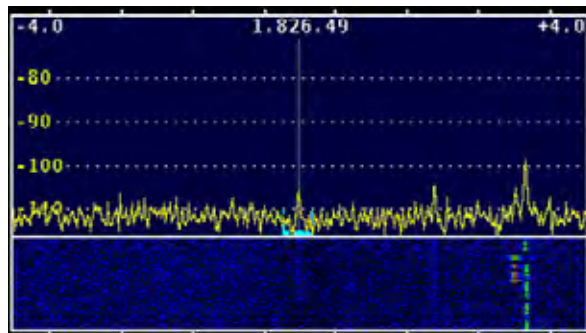
The next image is of Israel station, 4Z1UF, taken at 0342 UTC December 3, 18 minutes after my QSO with him. Ilya's signal is in the center of the display, and some strong callers are indicated up about 1 KHz in the waterfall display. Note that one station is calling while Ilya is transmitting!



Pre-Contest Activity, 3 DEC 2010, 2157 UTC



ARRL Contest, 3 DEC 2010, 2202 UTC



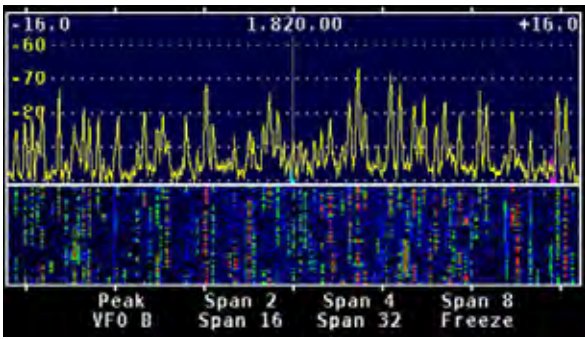
ZL8X, 25 November 2010, 1135 UTC



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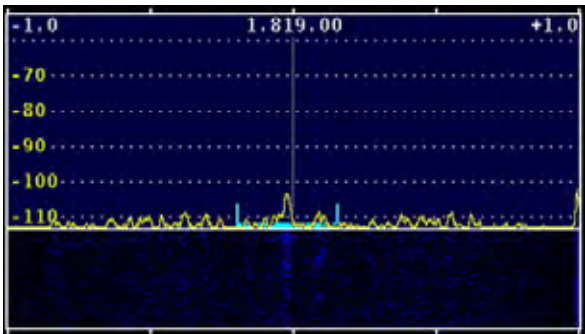
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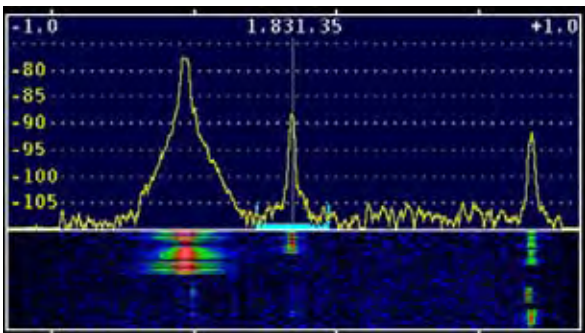
ARRL Contest, 4 DEC 2010, 0430 UTC

The next several images are indicative of the band activity during the 2010 ARRL 160 Meter Contest. The contest began at 2200 UTC Friday evening, December 3, nearly an hour before sunset here in St. Louis. The first image was taken at 2157 UTC, and shows several stations warming up and establishing their run frequencies before the contest began. The next image was taken five minutes later. Several hours later (0430 UTC, December 4), the band was teeming with activity.



JA8ISU, 11 DEC 2010, 1128 UTC

My first Asian contact on 160-meters was JA8ISU worked during February 2006. It is always a thrill to hear JA's on Top Band. Conditions this season haven't been very favorable so far; however, I heard Kaz on December 11, with Q5 copy for a brief period. The P3 image shown here was taken at 1128 UTC.



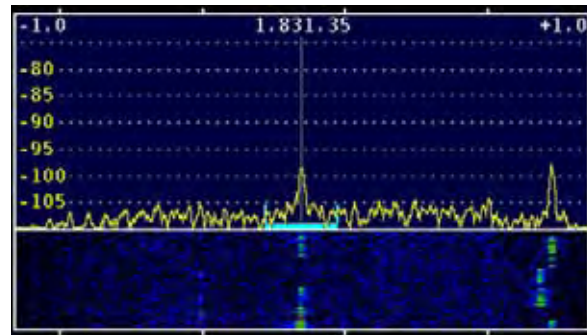
WØMRZ, 19 DEC 2010, 1237 UTC

This season on Top Band, Mike, WØMRZ, in Cedar Rapids finished working the stations he needed for QRP Top Band WAS. I was privileged to hear him work Alaska and Maine for his last two states. He worked KL7RA on December 19 at approximately 1238 UTC. Here is an image of KL7RA's signal as he was calling "QRZ" at 1234, and an image of WØMRZ's signal as he was making his call at 1237 UTC.

During the morning of December 23, Mike called "CQ Maine", and was answered by K1UO. I captured an image at 1217 UTC that shows both sides of the QSO. The real time spectrum shows Mike's signal as he was transmitting, while K1UO's signal shows up in the bottom half of the waterfall portion of the display. I was pleased to be the official photographer for these QSO's!

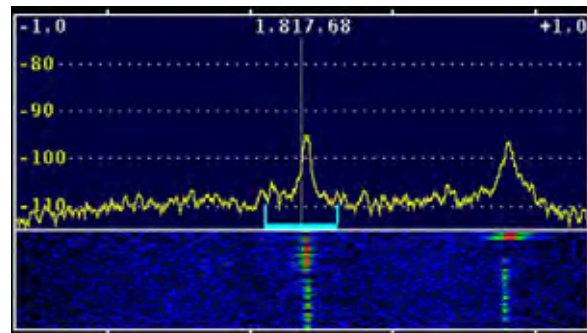


NIØC's Elecraft Station including P3 Panadapter on Top Shelf



KL7RA, 19 DEC 2010, 1238 UTC

The P3 is very easy to learn to use, and I found it to be an indispensable DX'ing tool within hours of unpacking it from its shipping box. ■



WØMRZ/K1UO, 23 DEC 2010, 1217 UTC



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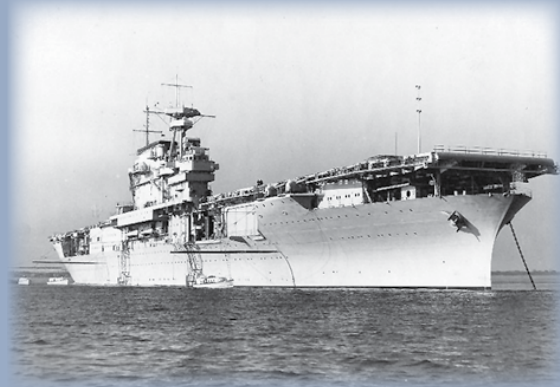
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USS Yorktown (CV-10)

"...a simple Hallicrafters receiver..."



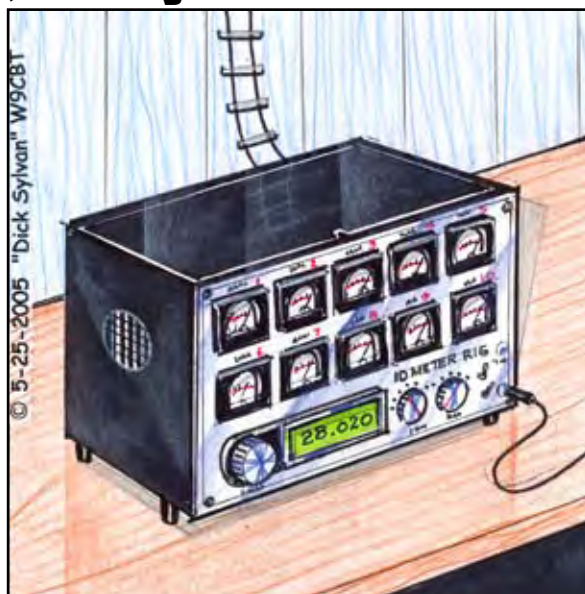
When air battle traffic in the Pacific Theater clogged the usual VHF ship-to-plane channels Lt. Cmdr. Edgar E. Stebbins skipper of *Yorktown's* Air Group Five switched to HF "enabling the *Yorktown* to get news of the battle before any other ship." Stebbins and Lt. Cmdr. Cooper Bright, who headed the carrier's Air Plot (where positions of friendly and enemy planes were plotted), purchased a "simple Hallicrafters receiver" in Norfolk, Virginia, where the carrier was stationed before her shakedown cruise in May 1943, for such a contingency.

Air Plot came to expect the familiar call-sign from Stebbins: "Skinhead, this is 99 Cairo. First report follows."

From: *The Fighting Lady: The New Yorktown in the Pacific War*, Clark G. Reynolds, Pictorial Histories Publishing Co., Missoula, Mont., 1993, ISBN 0-933126-78-6 ■

Ham Lingo

DICK SYLVAN, W9CBT



IMAGINE WHAT AN 80-METER
RIG WOULD LOOK LIKE

The French Radio Amateur Who Made My Day

By David J. Ring, Jr., N1EA

I will always remember the French fellow, he had an OLD call sign and no one was answering him, he'd call for hours. I had to copy him for maybe 15 minutes to even get his call sign.

He was an old Sparks who had had a stroke and he "just wanted to have a QSO because he was growing old." It was obvious to me, at least, that it was near his end and he just wanted to be able to send one more QSO.

I made his day, I came back and from the little I could copy, I thanked him and tried to make it sound like I copied him. I never did say R or "ALL OK," I just talked to him from the one or two half-dozen words I could copy.

He was ecstatic; I did copy the part where he said: "I have been calling and calling just to speak to someone one more time."

That's all I needed to hear; I'm glad I did it. ■

Memorable QSO?

Have a memorable QSO to share? Write it up and send it off to the *K9YA Telegraph*. Hams worldwide will thank you, and so will we.

Here's the place to start:

http://www.k9ya.org/write_for_us.htm

Edward Zeranski, KG6UTS

Thanks for the Premax antenna article in the January 2011 *K9YA Telegraph*. As a fan and user of TCS (the LST 325 installation is my donation) sets I've looked for a monel whip as used on PT boats for quite a while but did not have specifics. Your base section picture really set off alarm bells! Out at our antenna range one of the antennas is still in use as a test antenna and is still in perfect shape. I was close to a TCS antenna all along but did not know it. The next time I set up a TCS for MRCG field ops I'll borrow the antenna and use it as an alternate with the inverted L I've been using with the TCS. Pictures of the West Coast Military Radio Collector's Group events here:

<http://www.mrcgwest.org/>

Marconi's Atlantic-spanning signal and amateur radio's successful 1BCG trans-Atlantic tests. Mentioned Maj. Edwin Armstrong as second only to Marconi in the history of radio with his pioneering developments including the "...regenerative circuit, super-heterodyne circuit and frequency modulation...."

Clinton DeSoto's, W1CBD, evergreen book, *Two Hundred Meters and Down*, is a "fascinating history of early ham radio."

W9KJ described his latest foray into chasing DX where, on 20-meters CW, he heard and nabbed ZC4TX (Cyprus). Rod, operator of ZC4TX, a British military club station, stated there were only 26 amateur stations on the Mediterranean island.

Then followed the assurance that hams worldwide speak a common language using Q-signals and technical abbreviations.

October 16, 1966

An Old Ham Does It Himself

Part one of plans to build a Lew McCoy, W1ICP, designed 40- and 80-meter converter using a 6U8A vacuum tube is detailed with theory of operation, schematic diagram and parts list. The original McCoy article, "Using a Broadcast Set for Amateur-Band Reception" appeared in the April 1960 issue of *QST*. When completed the converter provided coverage from 2,500 to 10,000 kilocycles. Connected to a AC-DC 5-tube radio the author copied W1AW code practice, marine traffic, WWV and CHU and foreign broadcasters. Projected parts cost: \$18.74.

October 23, 1966

Appliance Operator is No Role for Ham

Part two: construction and hooking up to a BC radio. This week's column opened pithily, "The amateur radio operator who hasn't built at least part of his own equipment is regarded by most other hams as a mere 'appliance operator.'" Then followed more in the same vein and wrapped up with detailed construction notes and a "Floor Plan" diagram depicting chassis parts layout. As noted above: no cautionary notes and warnings concerning mains voltage on the chassis and working with that AC-DC receiver.

October 30, 1966

Now You Can Build Transistorized BFO

Plans for a transistorized BFO adapted from a Lew McCoy design (*QST*, Sept. 1965 - "An 80- and 40-Meter Transistorized Converter"). The BFO made possible SSB and improved CW reception for the converter-equipped receiver described in earlier columns. The W9KJ version was modified to permit

the BFO to oscillate in the BC range, 969-1,000 Kc. A variable capacitor was added to shift the BFO frequency to lower or upper sideband. Projected parts cost: \$3.99.

QSX: I Am Listening for You **November 27, 1966**

Where to buy *QST*, *CQ* and *73* magazines for a SWL father in the U.K.?

Try Newark Electronics, Allied Radio or Post Office News [vendor with a seemingly endless number of domestic and imported periodicals—a downtown Chicago landmark for many years].

The first of several nearly identical requests for "more information about hams."

Suggested reading: "How to Become a Radio Amateur" [\$1], "Understanding Amateur Radio" [\$2], "A Course in Radio Fundamentals" [\$1], "The License Manual" [50 cents] and "The Radio Amateur's Handbook" [\$4]: All available from the ARRL. Hughes notes the Handbook at nearly 700 pages is the "most comprehensive manual of amateur radio" and "is in most public libraries."

Where to buy the one-watt bantam transmitter in the September 18 article?

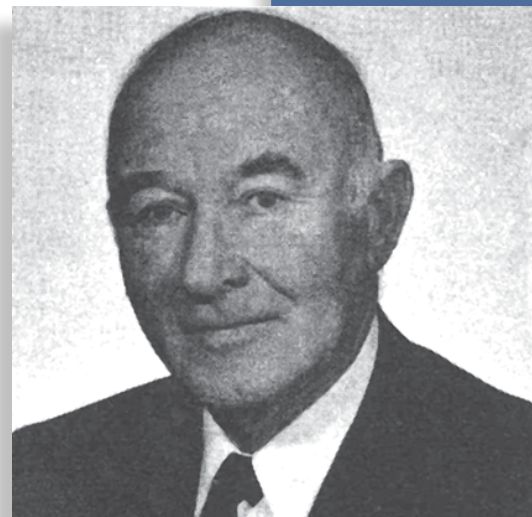
The now out of stock 25-cent [!] transmitter kit was available from T.A.B. Sales, 111 TA Liberty St., NY, NY. It was a "foundation kit" and required a tube, crystal and power supply to complete. W9KJ suggests the military surplus ARC-5 available from salvage stores or a home-brew rig as better choices.



Tuning Unit, ARC-5 Radio Set

Empty nester wants to know if learning the code is doable for those getting on in years.

Absolutely, yes. Recent studies indicate older students learn faster than younger students because "they have



J. McWilliams (Mac) Stone, W9LH (SK), Chicago's First Licensed Ham



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a better disciplined brain and apply themselves.” Get a receiver or build a converter as described in the October 16 and 23 articles.

John Huntoon, W1LVQ, *QST* editor and ARRL general manager, wrote to humorously note, “Excellent job—hope it doesn’t create too much Chicago QRM [interference] from newcomers!”

W9KJ described ARRL and suggested joining; \$5 a year dues included a subscription to QST.

Good way to learn code?

Records, tapes and Instructograph for starters. Also, W1AW code practice transmissions starting at 5 wpm.

February 12, 1967

Wilmette, Illinois doctor sought local ham to help his 10-year-old son earn a license. Reflecting more innocent days, the good doctor includes his name, home address and telephone number.

W9KJ is confident Wilmette hams will lend a hand. If not, “call the writer tomorrow, at the Tribune.”

WN9REX advised those failing their amateur exam to try and try again. Thirty day wait in those years between testing opportunities.

Hughes agreed and noted that more than 40 years ago he twice failed the code portion of the exam. Today, he can copy up to 35 wpm.

Please suggest appropriate gift for a new ham.

How about the book Vacuum Tubes at Work published by MacMillan. Then there’s kits: Heathkit grid dip meter for less than \$25 or Heath’s VTVM for about the same price.

Invitation to visit the twice-monthly meetings of the Tri-Town Radio Club tendered by Everett H. Yost, WA9QWZ.

Bob Seals, K9AHK, Tribune’s assistant night editor, received permission to operate 6-meter mobile (6 watts) aboard the Pennsylvania RR’s Southwind Domeliner to Florida. Permission rescinded when railroad officials fear K9AHK’s RF might “detonate dynamite near the tracks.” Bob plans to operate portable while visiting Miami, Florida.

April 9, 1967

Notice of ARRL Central Division convention to be held in Milwaukee, Wis.

Twelve-year-old boy desired information on electronics guides and how to collect QSL cards.

For the young seeker of knowledge these inexpensive guides suggested: Getting Started in Electronics [50 cents],

Basic Electronics Handbook [25 cents], Electronics Data Handbook [75 cents], and How to Build Electronic Kits [50 cents]. Breaking the bank at \$12.95 is Editors and Engineers Handbook.

Send SWL cards and SASEs to collect hams’ cards. W9KJ will send the inquirer his card.

Where to purchase a VHF-UHF converter for a military surplus BC348-P receiver?

Try Vanguard Labs at 196-23 Jamaica Ave., Hollis, NY 11423. Price: \$19.95. ARRL Handbook has plans to build your own.

How to get a newly built Heathkit Q multiplier to work with a Hallicrafters S-120 receiver.

Hughes suggested a “husband-wife team of hams” who can lend a hand, but why not do it yourself? Closely follow the Heathkit manual’s instructions. Peaking I.F. stages can be performed, by ear, without a meter. The S-120 has a “455 kilocycle I.F. system, which should match the Q multiplier perfectly.”

May 14, 1967

Chatted with Chicago’s first (1912) licensed ham, J. McWilliams (Mac) Stone, W9LH. Mac, then CEO of DuKane Corporation, originally used the call sign DQ. At his St. Charles, Ill. estate, “Stonewood,” he operated both CW (with W9KJ) and 15- and 20-meter SSB.

Looking for low-cost Novice transceiver.

No such animal; suggested gear: Knight Kit T-60, \$54.95 and R55A, \$59.95 or Heathkit DX-60, \$84.95 and HR-10, \$80.

June 11, 1967 (Tuesday)

‘Twas the season for a brief discussion of hamfests and Field Day: The most recent hamfest, held at Starved Rock near Ottawa, Ill., enjoyed more than 3,000 attendees. Field Day rules, in those pre-Internet days, were available in *QST*.

For those traveling to Expo ‘67 in Montreal, there was the national ARRL convention, June 30 to July 2.

Frank L. Hughes, W9KJ, became a silent key in January 1972; he was 63 years old and had been with the Tribune for nearly 30 years, retiring only in January 1971.

To come in the *K9YA Telegraph*, more about the Tribune-sponsored MARS Voice to Viet Nam project. ■