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SIGNALS

Rockwell Collins

Monthly Newsletter of the

Amateur Radio Club

Volume 34 Issue 09 **Web Site** http://www.w5rok.us **June 2013**

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RCARC
Membership Meeting

Tuesday 25 June 2013
1700 Social 1730 Meeting
1800 Program

Methodist Richardson Medical Center
At Bush/Renner/Shiloh Intersection
Second Floor Conference Room 200

Subject:
Program in Process—Come and See

Local Club News

Meeting Notice

The June program is still being finalized as Signals is approaching publication. Whatever the program, it's always worth the trip. By the way, we still need an Activities Chair.

W5ROK worked the June ARRL VHF Contest

W5ROK operated in the June ARRL VHF Contest. W5ROK made 26 contacts, 12 on 50 MHz, 9 on 144 MHz and 5 on 432 MHz. W5ROK was spotted on DX SUMMIT on 50.130 MHz @ 0335 UTC June 9, 2013 during the Contest by VY0HL in Grid FP53. W5ROK heard a station calling but it wasn't our frequency.

Field Day is Saturday and Sunday 22-23 June

I would like to remind and invite everyone to join us for this year's Field Day at the W5ROK radio shack. We will be starting at around 9:00 AM Saturday morning to set up operating locations. We will be running the equipment with a gas generator as we have in previous years. So far, seven operators are participating and facilities will be providing the generator.

Some members have expressed an interest of meeting for breakfast on Saturday morning around 7AM at the McDonald's (Jupiter & 190) near the plant. Those interested, please leave a voice mail on the club phone, 972.705.1349.

All interested in helping out and getting on the air please call and leave a voice message at 972.705.1349 (W5ROK Radio Room). Thank you (*Contributed by Paul Veenstra KC0TEG and Bob Kirby K3NT*)

The Amazing Disappearing Antenna

A short story by Don Keith, N4KC ©2012

They were an easy-going group. Most were longtime friends, some went to high school or college together, others became acquaintances when they first took the test for their amateur radio license and joined the exalted fraternity of hamdom. Some were newcomers, teenagers, young adults, even a few husband/wife teams. Some newcomers were gray-haired, too.

All of them shared one common bond. They were deeply involved in the hobby of ham radio and thoroughly enjoyed being with others who were members of the same tribe.

The brotherhood and sisterhood of the spark!

The group met once a month—on a Tuesday night—in a room at the downtown YMCA for their club meeting. They usually began with a warm-up session while everyone gathered and bragged about the DX they had worked or how great their newly-constructed QRP transceiver was working. There was some horse-trading, too. That was followed by a short business discussion, and then a program, delivered by a member or a guest, always on topics that might be of interest to the group, old-timers and newcomers alike.

As with all assemblies of human beings, there were those occasional moments when things got testy, when politics sparked a tiff or whoever was delivering the night's program made claims that were disputed by someone in the audience who had a different opinion. But it always ended amiably with a motion to adjourn for a cup of coffee and a doughnut at Krispy Kreme and more chatter, bragging and horse-trading.

Joe Wynn, WB4CDB, was *(Continued on page 3)*

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VE SESSIONS

Dallas tests are held 4th Sat of each month at 1000 hrs. 13350 Floyd Rd. (Old Credit Union) Contact Bob West, WA8YCD 972.917.6362

Irving tests are held 3rd Sat of each month at 0900. Fifth and Main St. Contact Bill Revis, KF5BL 252-8015

McKinney VE test sessions are held at the Heard Museum the first Sunday of the month. The address is 1 Nature Place, McKinney TX. The time of the testing is 1430, ending no later than 1645. ***Note: no tests given on holiday weekends.***

Garland testing is held on the fourth Thursday of each month, excluding November, and begins at 1930 sharp. Location is Freeman Heights Baptist. Church, 1120 N Garland Ave, Garland (between W Walnut and Buckingham Rd). Enter via the north driveway. A HUGE parking lot is located behind the church. Both the parking lot and the Fellowship Hall are located on the east side of the church building, with big signs by the entrance door. Contact Janet Crenshaw, WB9ZPH at 972.302.9992.

Plano testing is on the third Saturday of each month, 1300 hrs at Williams High School, 1717 17th St. East Plano. Check Repeater 147.180+ for announcements.

Greenville testing is on the Saturday after 3rd Thursday, 1000 hrs at site TBA, contact N5KA, 903.364.5306. Sponsor is Sabine Valley ARA. Repeater 146.780(-) with 118.8 tone.

Richardson The Richardson Wireless Klub (RWK) VE team hold license testing on the third Thursday of each month at St. Barnabas Presbyterian Church, 1220 West Beltline Rd. Testing begins at 1900 hrs in room 12. Enter through the Northern most door on the east side of the church building. For further information contact Dave Russell W2DMR, at 972.690.9894 or E-mail warhog4@tx,rr.com.

President's Message

No President's Message this month. Check this spot next month.

73,
Michael Schmit
WA9WCC
RCARC President

Secretary's Report

28 May 2013

The meeting was called to order by member Bob Kirby K3NT at 1736 in the absence of President Mike Schmit WA9WCC.

The following members were present at the meeting:

Jim Brown	TBA
Loney Duncan	W0GZV
Michael Ketchum	K5MDK
Bob Kirby	K3NT
John McFadden	K5TIP
Steve Phillips	K6JT
Jim Skinner	WB0UNI

Officers and Committee Reports:
President's Report: There was no President's Report.

Vice-President's Report: We currently have no Vice-President.

Secretary's Report: The Secretary's Report is in this newsletter.

Treasurer's Report: There was no Treasurer's Report.

Website Manager's Report: There was no Website Manager's Report.

Station Trustee's Report: There was no Station Trustee's Report.

Database Manager's Report: There was no Database Manager's Report.

Old Business:
Bob Kirby announced that he and Mike Schmit were currently completing the club's annual report and funding request for submittal to Rockwell Collins in Cedar Rapids. The report is due on 31 May 2013 and will be delivered on schedule.

Bob stated that two members had participated in the Richardson Wild Ride on 18 May.

Loney Duncan W0GZV described the continuing work to establish an HF ground station for support of the CFA B-29/B-24 Squadron. Rockwell Collins has granted access to the Scope Command support area in the Richardson facility for this purpose. This will include shared access to all antennas when the club is assigned to a row on the existing antenna matrix. The Cedar Rapids club has similar access to Rockwell Collins antennas at that location. Future plans include establishment of remote control capability to allow antenna selection at both sites from either location. Operation with the aircraft will be verified on a planned 8 July flight. Loney agreed to write a newspaper article on these activities with support from Bob Kirby.

It was suggested and generally agreed that the current limit of $200 for electronic authorization from the RCARC bank account be raised to $250 or $300. No vote was taken.

Jim Skinner WB0UNI once again encouraged all members to report all relevant activity for inclusion in the newsletter and to develop articles for publication.

Bob Kirby stated that he and Dennis Cobb WA8ZBT will support Field Day this year.

New Business:
No new business was identified.

The meeting was adjourned at 1819 for a presentation on the National Traffic System (NTS) by Steve Phillips K6JT. This presentation will also be given at Ham-Com 2013 in June.

The Amazing Disappearing Antenna

(Continued from page 1) delivering the program one night.His subject was some kind of cobbled-together antenna he had conceived and then modeled on his computer, using the latest software. He had then erected and tested the monstrosity. It consisted of an odd amalgam of copper wire, coax cable, snippets of 300-ohm television twin-lead, a strange circuit at its middle with capacitors and coils soldered together, and a bunch of rope to string it up from tree limb to tree limb. Antennas were always hot topics at the club meetings. There was an abundance of opinions about what worked best and what did not.

Most agreed that a hundred watts of power output was basically the same, regardless the kind of radio that was generating it. But it was the antenna and the feed line that led to it that took those watts, converted them into magnetic energy, and threw it off into space to reverberate off the ionosphere. The more efficiently it did this beautiful trick of physics, the better. The more efficiently an antenna worked, the more successful an amateur radio operator would be in communicating with others of a similar ilk around the state, the country or the world. There was no argument there.

But the more Joe talked about this odd, ugly duckling of a radiator, the more complicated and obtuse his drawings on the white board became. And the more he pontificated about how great it worked, the more some members of the club frowned, snorted, and exchanged quick glances with each other.

“Now when I first looked at the computer model and saw the specs on this aerial, I was amazed,” Joe proudly claimed. If he noticed the doubting looks on some faces out there in the group, he ignored them. “SWR below two-to-one across the 40-, 30-, 20-, 17- and 15-meter bands without having to tune it. A very fat lobe that radiates in practically all directions. And a gain over a dipole of 6 dB. And the thing is only 50 feet long in its entirety. I have been using it for a month now and it is by far the best performing antenna I have ever seen. Anybody have any questions?”

John Carlson—a local broadcast engineer and easily one of the more technically competent among the club members—raised his hand.

“Joe, that’s a mighty fine explanation, but that all looks like a mess to me.” John was always cordial but he also tended to cut to the chase when he had an opinion on something. “If it really does as well as you say, you must have just gotten lucky. I don’t see any way that can work.”

“Yeah, I can see the SWR being low,” Roger Schwartz chimed in. He was the acknowledged “antenna guru” among the bunch. “That circuit there in the middle and the two-hundred feet of coax is probably going to mask any reflected power, but I bet you could cook a hamburger on that little circuit board after a few minutes of key-down!”

“Seems to me to be way complicated, too,” Jack Mainerd jumped in. Jack’s antenna farm—which actually grew from the black dirt at his spacious farm south of town—was the stuff of dreams for most of the hams in the bunch. “You could just put up a 65-foot dipole, feed it with ladder line, and hit all those bands just fine without the weight, the parts, and all that precise measuring.”

Joe Wynn took the comments in stride. He simply rocked back on his heels, grinned, and folded his arms across his chest.

“All I know is it works. I’ve got the contacts and the signal reports in the log book to back it up. You’d need a couple of trees in the right place for your dipole antenna, Jack. And figure a way to snake the ladder line around gutters, cables, wire and stuff to get it inside. Then you have to use an antenna tuner—and you all know how I feel about antenna tuners—to get a match on all of those bands. And you would still have a figure-eight pattern with some really

nasty nulls and no gain at all. The same as a dipole because it would be…well…a dipole!"

"Heck, Joe, you can make contacts using a ten-penny nail for an antenna if…" Roger started, but just then, Bob Marx, the club president stood up and interrupted before things went sour.

"Well, Joe, thank you for another interesting program," he said with a smile. "You always bring us a project that will make us think. It's past nine already and some of us have to go to work tomorrow to earn money to support our hobby. Let's give Joe Wynn a round of applause."

Everyone did, including the three men who had challenged Joe's weird antenna experiment. It was true. Those members who were good enough to volunteer to conduct a program were always appreciated. And it was also true that WB4CDB always came up with things that…well…made them think. And shake their heads.

There was the transmitter he built from an old television set that dimmed the lights when he transmitted and emitted a signal that sounded more like an elephant burping. The Morse code "translator" that was supposed to take the characters through a microphone set up next to a speaker and convert them into letters that were displayed on an old Atari game console. Only problem was, it could not tell a dash from a dot, a rather fundamental flaw for such a device. But mixed in were some occasionally usable and practical items, too, and, as Bob Marx noted, it made everyone in attendance think, and thinking inevitably led to learning.

This night, the discussion of what Joe had dubbed his "flotsam and jetsam antenna"—he noted that you could just take the flotsam and jetsam from your junk box and build it—continued over the hot coffee and the sweet pastries at the doughnut shop. John, Roger and Jack all continued to challenge, in a friendly enough way, the theory, complexity, and claimed results of the antenna. And Joe stuck to his guns.

"Best antenna in my arsenal right now, and I've got one of about everything growing out there," he maintained.

As they headed for their cars, the three questioners told Joe and the others goodnight, but they huddled at Jack's car for a few minutes before they all loaded up and headed home.

Nobody noticed the sudden burst of laughter just before they climbed into their vehicles and went their separate ways.

Two nights later, Joe Wynn was goofing around in his shack, working on some project he had discovered in an old ARRL Amateur Radio Handbook from the 1950s. There was a "ding" on the computer indicating someone had "spotted" a DX station. The station was on some tiny island in the South Pacific and when Joe tuned him, his signal on 40 meter CW was marginally readable, though not nearly as strong as the reporter who had spotted him indicated. Rubbing his hands together in anticipation, Joe waited impatiently for the old tubes in his amplifier to warm up. He clicked the rotary antenna switch around to make sure he had selected the spot on the dial where the plastic label indicated that his super-duper "flotsam and jetsam antenna" was hooked up. Then he hit the button on his transceiver to send power to the amp so he could quickly tune it up.

There was a brief hiss and just the slightest hint of a spark from somewhere inside the cage that housed the amplifier's innards.

"That's odd," Joe muttered, but he quickly twisted the dials until the arcing ceased. Still, the loading was not nearly as smooth as it typically was.

There were surprisingly few other stations calling the distant one, but it took Joe a good half hour to finally get a response from him, even though the DX station called "CQ" several times but did not seem to hear WB4CDB when he responded.

Joe simply chalked it up to poor-but-just-good-enough propagation as he proudly logged the new country and placed a pin in the map on the wall to formally mark the accomplishment. If it was easy, every ham out there would have confirmations from every country on the planet.

The next night, Joe had a 40-meter schedule on single-sideband with an old friend halfway across the country. They usually had no trouble carrying on a conversation, but this night, his friend could hardly hear him and finally lost him altogether. And the amplifier had been even balkier in tuning up, too.

Now Joe was curious. He disconnected the amp from the AC power and carefully lifted the lid and looked inside. Everything looked all right. No smoke. No sign of the telltale black carbon streak that would have indicated arcing damage.

He scratched his chin, considered the possibilities, and finally decided to sleep on it. A new DXpedition was set to be on the air starting the next weekend. They would be operating from a tiny coral reef in the middle of the Dangerous Grounds off Malaysia. It would not take long to see if he had some component going on the fritz. In fact, in Joe's estimation, the easiest way to trouble-shoot a problem was to keep using it until "it released smoke" or made enough noise to easily locate it in the midst of whatever might remain.

It had not occurred to Joe Wynn to check his whiz-bang, Rube Goldberg antenna that stretched across the backyard.

The same antenna that John, Roger and Jack—his buddies from the ham club—had been whittling down a few feet or so each evening ever since the night after the meeting!

After they were certain Joe had turned in for the night, the three men crept into Joe's backyard each evening, untied the rope supports from the trees at each end, and lowered the aerial to where they could reach it. Then they took the wire loose from the end insulators, measured precisely with John's pocket tape measure, folded it back on itself, and carefully twisted it so it would be secure. And they did the same thing on the other end. That effectively shortened it each evening by about four feet on each end without really doing any lasting damage to it. They could always let it back out to its original length after putting Joe in his place and showing him the error of his ways.

The men knew Joe's old watchdog, Sparky, was too deaf to hear them and too lazy to alert his master even if he did. They figured the minimal change each night to the antenna would hardly be enough to be noticed. But then, suddenly, Joe would realize that his wonderful concoction of a radiator was not so great after all.

After the fifth night of antenna modification, John Carlson could not resist it any longer. There had been no word whatsoever from Joe Wynn about any issues with the antenna of which he was so proud. Then John heard him on his morning commute, talking to another station on the club's two-meter repeater. John stifled a yawn—the late-night shortening operation was cutting into his sack time—and broke into the QSO at the first opportunity. "Mornin', Joe and Mel. How you fellows doing? Joe, what's the latest on your 'flotsam and jetsam' antenna?" John asked.

"Even better than I thought!" Joe responded enthusiastically. "I worked a QRP station in Slovenia last night on 17 and then got three more good ones on PSK31 on 20."

John frowned as he eased to a stop at a traffic light. Had old Joe not yet realized that his miracle antenna was working even worse than before? Or was he just too stubborn to admit his antenna did not work before and was a total failure now. John had an idea. It was time to press the point. Heck, a few more nights and there would be no "flotsam and jetsam antenna" left to trim!

"Hey, that's great. Do you mind if some of us drop by and see her in action this weekend?"

"Not at all," Joe Wynn responded immediately. "I'll be home Saturday, trying to work that DXpedition out in Malaysia."

John grinned broadly, ignoring the lady in the car next to him as she gave him an odd look.

"Perfect. We'll probably stop in mid-afternoon."

John could not wait to tell the others about his chat with Joe and how the guy was so sure his antenna was something special that he was blocking out completely its worsening performance. Just to be sure, the three of them made one more late-night stopover in Joe's backyard on Friday night, but this time, they took a good ten feet off the antenna's length. That only left a few feet of wire either side of the monstrosity Joe had hacked together at its center. Unless that bunch out in the Indian Ocean was using the world's highest-gain receiving antenna and some kind of spectacular noise-reduction gear, there would be no way Joe could ever work them.

Truth was, Roger, Jack and John were beginning to feel a tad bit guilty about the dirty trick they were playing on their friend. Even if they did all agree that he deserved it for being so haughty about his physics-defying antenna. To atone, they stopped and got a bucket of chicken wings and some cold beers on the way over to Joe's place on Saturday afternoon.

Joe's wife showed them into the shack in a corner of the garage where Joe was already busy at the radio, tuning in the distant station and setting the proper split between his listening and transmitting frequency. The three visitors could hear the bedlam of chirps and cheeps from all the hams around the world who were desperately calling the rare operation way out there on the other side of the planet. It was a mess. What little power Joe's miscreation of an antenna might spit out would be lost amid all that mob of stations trying to get the rare contact on the operation's first weekend.

"How's propagation?" Roger asked Joe.

"Not the best," Wynn replied. "Solar flux is only about 95. I can hear him, though. I think he's coming up some."

The men suppressed grins. Sure he could. With that diminished shrimp of an antenna? Not a chance. Not on 20 meters in the middle of the afternoon, even if they were on CW.

Joe punched a button on the front of his radio.

"Back to his frequency," he announced. "I can see a few holes in the pile-up on the spectrum scope so I'll call him on one of those frequencies."

With the chicken wings spread out on the corner of the operating desk and with each of the hams enjoying the cold beer, they each listened to the frequency where the faraway station was supposed to be transmitting.

There was nothing. Nothing but the hiss of atmospheric noise.

Jack Mainerd dropped a chicken bone in the trash can, turned his head sideways, and said, "Joe, I don't hear him. You sure you are on his frequency. There are lots of stateside guys calling him so I figure we would at least be able to…"

But just then, there was the sound of rapid Morse as the rare station's operator sent, "N4KC, 599," and then, three seconds later, "R, TU, UP." (The DX station has just acknowledged hearing the call from station N4KC and gave him a signal report, then confirmed he heard a report from the calling station, said, "Thank you," and indicated that he was listening for calls up a few kilohertz in frequency.)

All three doubters looked at each other. The station was actually quite strong. Stronger than he had been at any of their houses an hour before. Propagation must have improved since then. He had to be booming in for Joe to hear him that strong on his junk antenna. Roger Schwartz glanced at the labels on Joe's antenna switch. Sure enough, it was on the position that said "Flotsam/jetsam."

Wynn was already busy pounding out his call sign on his ancient J-38 straight key. Joe did not believe in computerized CW keying or using his radio's CW memory to save info that could be transmitted merely by hitting a button or keyboard key. True CW operators did it the old-fashioned way, with an arm-numbing straight key.

The DX operator answered another station, a W6. Then three Japanese stations in a row. Jack, Roger and John settled back in their chairs, sure that Joe could call all day and all night but would never be heard. Not with all his RF power likely eaten up in heat in the mess of an aerial he was using. They had already decided to let him try long enough to make their point about the ineffectiveness of his homebrew antenna and then gently let him off the hook with an explanation of what they had been doing.

"Anybody ready for another beer and some chicken…?" John started.

But just then, out of Joe's radio speaker, the DX station clearly sent, "WB4CBD, 599." Joe raised his hand to quiet John and calmly—as if it was no surprise at all that the operator had managed to pull his signal out of the wall of stations that were calling him—sent back a maddeningly slow, "599, TU."

All three visitors sat there, eyes wide, jaws dropped, as Joe turned and smiled at them.

"And that was without the amplifier," he said, beaming. "I had a grid resistor go bad and I haven't had a chance to fix it yet. I just worked that guy with 100 watts. And on the fifth call, too." Joe did not seem to notice the amazed looks on his visitors' stunned faces. "That antenna has just kept getting better and better. Don't know why it's changed since I first put it up, but it's hotter than blue blazes now."

John Carlson stood and walked to the garage door and on out into the backyard. Sure enough, most of what he saw stretched across the yard was rope, not copper wire. Joe's antenna was only a small pair of wires and the junkbox-in-a-bundle at its center. He looked at the antenna then back through the window at the radio. At Joe and at the other two hams.

"Well, I'll be," was all he could manage.

He stepped back into the shack, settled into his chair, and studied the fine print on the beer can. Maybe they had somehow made the antenna better by making it smaller. Odds were against such a phenomenon. No way that should have happened. But maybe. Still, they were all baffled. It just did not make sense.

"Hey, there's Pitcairn Island on 14 dot 007. Let's give him a try," Joe said and made his call. The VP6 came right back, and he gave Joe the highest possible signal report, 599, as well. "Now he's just showing out," Jack whispered.

They watched as Joe made a few more impressive contacts before they all suddenly stood and told him they had to go.

"We all have to try to work the DXpedition, too," John explained. "And I have to tell you, Joe, I think I'm going to try to put that antenna contraption of yours together, too. Maybe a little shorter than how you drew yours up. But I have to admit, that baby works!"

Roger and Jack nodded. Reluctantly, sincerely.

As they left, Joe Wynn thanked them for the wings and beverages and wished them luck on working the DXpedition. Then he watched them go, a sly grin on his face. Watched them as they paused in the driveway and studied his "flotsam and jetsam" antenna for a long moment, pointing, shaking their heads, even arguing with each other. Watched as they shrugged their shoulders before climbing into Roger's car and pulling away.

Finally, sure the doubters were not going to come back, Joe Wynn leaned over to where his antenna switch was bolted to the back wall. He pulled off two of the labels, one that read "Flotsam/jetsam" and the other one that said "Beam." He switched the labels back to their rightful spots on the switch, where they belonged.

To the place where his abysmal junk box antenna was hooked and the other to the position on the switch where his five-element Yagi beam—the one mounted at the 100-foot level on his tower, and the antenna he had actually just used to make those impressive contacts—was attached.

The smell of the chicken wings had lured Sparky into the shack. Joe leaned down and scratched the dog between the ears. He handed the mutt one of the wings.

"You deserve this, old boy," he told Sparky. "I do appreciate you bringing me my present last night, buddy."

Joe pulled from his pocket a metal tape measure. Etched in its side was the amateur radio call sign that belonged to John Carlson.

"You know what I always say, Sparky," Joe told his watchdog. "The best antenna is always the one you got!"

Don Keith, N4KC Publishes Twenty-Second Book:

Active amateur radio operator and prolific author Don Keith, N4KC will release his twenty-second book, UNDERSEA WARRIOR, in November 2011. The nonfiction work will tell the story of Commander Dudley "Mush"

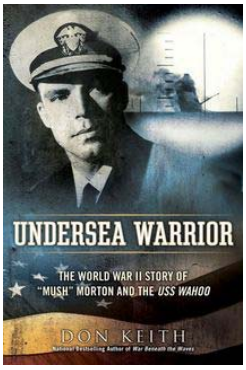
Morton, the legendary World War II submarine skipper who literally changed the way submarine warfare was conducted. The book tells the fascinating story of Morton and his boat, USS Wahoo, and is based on considerable research and interviews.

Keith, an ARRL member and Amateur Extra class licensee, has written extensively about submarines, including four books about the Silent Service in World War II. He also co-wrote THE ICE DIARIES with Captain William Anderson, the story of USS Nautilus and her historic voyage beneath the polar ice pack to the North Pole in 1958. N4KC headed a special event operation to commemorate the 50th anniversary of that achievement in August 2008, using the call sign N9N, and operating from the Submarine Force Museum and Historic Ship Nautilus in Groton, CT.

UNDERSEA WARRIOR will be published in hardback by NAL/Caliber, an imprint of Penguin Group USA. Four of Keith's previous books were featured selections of The Military Book Club.

Keith is also the co-author of a novel, FIRING POINT, which will be published as an audio book in November 2011. The book is the basis for a major motion picture, now in pre-production, to be titled HUNTER KILLER. The hardcover version of the book will be published by Penguin Group in November 2012.

Bona fide reviewers may request a review copy of UNDERSEA WARRIOR or arrange an interview by contacting Kayleigh Clark at Kayleigh.Clark@us.penguingroup.com.



Contact Don Keith N4KC directly at don@donkeith.com or n4kc@arrl.net, or visit his web site at http://www.donkeith.com/. Keith also maintains a web site devoted to his writings on amateur radio at http://www.n4kc.com/ and a blog on rapid technological change and its effect on media, society and amateur radio at http://n4kc.blogspot.com/.

(Reprinted with permission from eHam.net)

What To Do With All Your Junk! A Project

Dennis Kippa (W5DPK) on March 18, 2013

Suddenly I am 65 years old and I am thinking "How the heck did this happen?" I find myself reading the list of SK's in QST and I know some of them! Holy crap, I must be getting old. This leads me to the subject I decided to write to you about.

The average age of the Ham radio population must be well over 50 years of age. A as we die off, we leave our treasure chest of radios and junk for our next of kin - usually our wife - to sort through and get rid of. And if you are a good husband you have given your XYL a detailed list of everything you have and how much it is worth. Yeah, RIGHT!!!

No, what happens is that your family is stuck with a bunch of radio stuff they know nothing about and they have no clue what it is worth. They have a yard sale or put it on Craig's List and get pennies on the dollar for your treasured TS-2000. Now you're rolling over in your grave because some CBer just put your rig on channel 35. Bummer! But what if there was a way for your family to contact someone who could guide them in what the value of your old equipment really is and could help with getting the most from your old gear?

Here is where your local Ham radio club members can perform a service for the deceased Ham's family and help recover the most money possible for the widow and/or family.

I propose that your club form a committee. It should be made up of older and younger members who can be contacted by a widow or the family of a club member (or non- member; your club can decide who to offer this service to). This committee would survey the SK's gear, make a list, and assign suggested values to equipment to help the family understand that all that junk is worth a lot of money. Every one loves a bargain, but I think returning the true value of equipment to the family is the right thing to do for the amateur radio fraternity.

In your club, as in my club, there are folks who know about the value of this gear and take a special interest in following how the price of gear goes up and down as technology changes. Tap into these people and use their expertise to help a SK's family recoup all they can from the estate.

How do you get the word out to the Ham community about this service?. Well. your club members will be easy to reach and share the information, but non members will be a little harder to get to. I suggest a general mailing of post cards, announcements in Ham magazines and nets, papers, internet and at Hamfests. The idea is to make folks aware that the service is there to help. A Ham can pick up a flyer at a Hamfest and give it to his wife and tell her to put it in a safe place because she may need it someday.

"OK, so what is in it for me?" you ask. Well for openers, you are truly helping your fellow Ham community in their time of need. Let's help our own! Next you'll know that your own family will be helped when it is their turn to decide what to do with YOUR stuff. And lastly, you will have a possible first crack at some equipment you may want , or another member of your club may find what they may need.

Remember FAIR MARKET VALUE!!! If your club is a 501C3 you might suggest a donation to the club for your consulting work. Or if the family wants the club to handle the sale of the gear a 10% donation fee may be in order. Run it by your members and see what they are comfortable with.

If we do not take care of our own how can we possibly take care of someone else in their time of need?. So before you go to that GREAT HAMFEST IN THE SKY, form a group and take care of your unfinished business. Make sure your family gets their fair share when you part ways with your equipment. Besides, your XYL and her new boyfriend will need the money for their cruise to the Bahamas. HI HI

73, Dennis W5DPK

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Rockwell-Collins

Amateur Radio Club

Mail Station 461-290

P.O. Box 833807

Richardson, TX 75083-3807

TO:

CLUB STATIONS
(972) 705-1349

W5ROK REPEATER
441.875 MHz +5 MHz Input
131.8 Hz PL - RX and TX

W5ROK-1 PACKET BBS ROK Node
145.05 MHz

W5ROK-N1, W5ROK-N2 & W5ROK-N3 HSMM-MESHNET Nodes 2.4 GHz

Tuesday 25 June 2013

1700 Social 1730 Meeting

Methodist Richardson Medical Ctr
At Bush/Renner/Shiloh Intersection

Second Floor Conference Room 200

NEXT SIGNALS INPUTS DEADLINE:
→→→ 12 July 2013 ←←←