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Different Summer Listening Targets

page 4

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Table of Contents

Features & Columns

COVER STORY
Different Summer Listening Targets 4

Summertime is Tropo Time 8

Looking Back at The Most Unusual Radios 11

NATCOM REVIEWS
The CC Radio EP 17

Northern California's Beale Air Force Base 21

Our Unsung Heroes, Amateur Radio Operators 24

NEW BOOK RELEASE
New General Book and CDs Include An Elmer! 26

Ten Must Have Gadgets For Your Radio Shack 27

FCC Sends 32,000 Letters Reminding an Narrowbanding 34

Letters 35

Murrow Was As Good As His Myth 36

Closing Comments 37

Last Page Out 38

Advertisers

Cobra 2
Communication Electronics 13
GRE America 20
Hobby Radio Stop 15, 28
National Communications Frequencies 10
National Communications Subscription Form 35
Radio Shack 40
REACT 33
Scancat 15, 25
Scanner Master 31
St. Jude Children's Hospital 33
Uniden 39
Universal Radio 7

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Different Summer Listening Targets

Focus on some new things on your scanner this summer

By Chuck Gysi, N2DUP

I truly believe that the change of seasons in most areas of the country offer different scanning possibilities for radio hobbyists. For instance, during the cold winter months in the northern climes, many tune into snow plow crews to ensure their paths to work are open in the morning.

The summer is not any different in serving up interesting scanning possibilities, especially if you take a handheld scanner out and about with you over the warmer months. In this issue, let's take a look at some interesting summer scanner activity that you can tune into if you know where to look. The search feature on your scanner will generate all kinds of new frequencies for you.

VHF marine

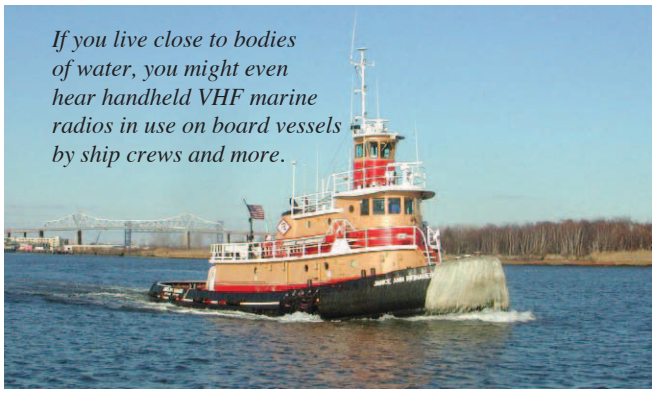
If you live near any body of water with boats on it, you should monitor the VHF marine band, especially during the boating season of warmer months. While you probably don't need to monitor every VHF marine channel, using the service search feature on many scanners for marine will net you the most popular frequencies on your nearby lake, river or ocean.



Summer time means lots of activity on rivers, lakes and oceans and that means VHF marine radio activity. This VHF whip antenna on this U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary craft is used for marine radio use.



Some marine frequencies are worth keeping an eye on, especially VHF Channel 16, 156.800, which is the calling and emergency channel. If broadcasts don't bother you too much, especially when your scanner locks up on the channel for the lengthy broadcast, Channel 22A, or 157.100 MHz, is used by the Coast Guard to give information to mariners in regularly scheduled broadcasts. I usually keep this frequency in my scanners, but often find myself locking it out when the broadcasts are routine in nature.



If you live close to bodies of water, you might even hear handheld VHF marine radios in use on board vessels by ship crews and more.



Tune in VHF marine channels by searching from 156.300 to 157.425 MHz.

Road construction

When the weather gets warmer, road construction crews take to the highways and get to work. As you are driving along, there are radios in use at almost every road construction site, from the state inspectors on the scene to the private company doing the work to the flaggers getting vehicles safely through the construction zone.

State transportation inspectors who show up on the scene of road construction projects will be on local state DOT channels typically, but you probably won't hear much traffic from them if a private contractor is doing the work. If state crews are involved with the project, such as pothole patching, you'll hear the state crews talking to each other as they move trucks in an out of the construction site. Depending on where you live, state DOT crews can be found on VHF low or high band, UHF or even 800 MHz.



A road construction flagger has a two-way radio handy on her vest to radio other nearby flaggers to warn them of traffic through a construction zone or possible urgent messages. Typically UHF business or FRS/GMRS radios are used for short-range communications of a mile or less through highway construction zones. Don't be surprised to hear flaggers chitchatting with each other while directing traffic.

Private contractors can show up on a variety of frequencies, too, while they are on a construction site. If trucks are bringing in asphalt or other materials, you'll hear them coordinate as they line up in and out of the construction site. Some private contractors still use VHF low business frequencies, while others might be on VHF high band or UHF frequencies. Some might even be using itinerant frequencies when they are outside their usual area of business, such as 151.505, 158.400 or 451.800 MHz, all popular with road contractors.

Lastly, be sure to monitor the flaggers as they move you in and out of the construction zone. Most flagging crews use FRS/GMRS handheld radios, typically 462.5875 because it's Channel 1. When the UHF radios won't stretch longer distances, I've seen CB radios used where a mobile rig is mounted to a mast with an antenna and a car battery supplying the power. The additional distance on a CB channel helps the flaggers get added distance. That's not to say the contractor might even use their own frequencies for flaggers, too, but that's not usual.

Continued on page 6



COVER STORY continued

Different Summer Listening Targets

Minor League Baseball

Do you have a Minor League Baseball team that plays near where you live? There are many Minor League clubs across the country, especially in rural areas. While it's fun to see tomorrow's stars of Major League Baseball today, it's also fun to take your handheld scanner to the ballpark.

Most Minor League teams use radios for one purpose or another. Even in small single A ballparks, you'll find radios used by the home team for a multiplicity of duties such as team front-office staff, security and gate staff. Most teams have entertainment or activities between innings and you'll find radios coordinating these events and perhaps even wireless mics used to feed on-field audio through the stadium's loud speakers.

Where should you search for Minor League team communications? First make sure there are radios in use. Not all teams use them, but more and more use them these days. If you see handheld radios in the stands, at the gate or on the field, search when you see the radios being used. You won't need an antenna on your scanner, because you're up close. Many teams use simply FRS/GMRS handheld radios, but there are just as many that use UHF business handhelds, with a few using VHF business HTs. Search the 451-453 and 461-465 MHz bands for any possible Minor League ballpark activity. Search 169-172 MHz for wireless microphones.

Golf courses

Another popular summer scanning target are golf courses. As I travel around, I have heard communications at many golf courses, mainly for behind-the-scenes activities that golfers would be oblivious to.

Some golf courses use two-way radios to get golfers onto the course at their assigned tee times, while others may use radios for shuttle or groundskeepers. Still others might use radios for seating in clubhouses.

Where should you look for golf course radios? Most use business frequencies in the following bands: 451-453, 461-465 and 466-470 MHz. You'll find simplex and repeater communications, but typically repeaters are deployed on larger golf courses.

Write in

What interesting frequencies have you stumbled across this summer? What do you listen to during the summer that you don't monitor the rest of the year? You can write to me at nat-com@scanning1.com (be sure to put "Nat-Com" in the subject line or your e-mail may wind up in my spam bin). This e-mail address is only for the author of this column.

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Summertime is Tropo Time

By Gordon West, WB6NOA

. . .your scanner locks up on a weather channel 700 miles away! It holds that weather channel for 16 continuous hours. Thank Mother Nature for this atmospheric phenomenon. . .

Summertime atmospheric conditions regularly spawn enhanced VHF and UHF radio range above 50 MHz.

Here in the Los Angeles basin, we have 4 weather channels at 162 MHz, which come in loud and clear. "Occasionally, during summer months, I will pick up as many as 7 weather channels," relates Walter Godoy, KI6ZVL, showing off his new Bearcat Home Patrol scanner.

"You're not going to believe this – last night I was loading some distant digital police channels in my scanner, and P-25 stations from over 200 miles away were pouring in!" adds Godoy, who reports the next morning only spotty reception of distant ham repeaters and that far away public safety agency.

"Must have been sunspots." Nope, summertime extended VHF and UHF have nothing to do with the Ionosphere.

Sure, low band 47 MHz and ham band 6 meter skywaves are indeed summertime sporadic E ionospheric bounces, but high band scanning and VHF/UHF extended range reception, which may LAST UP TO A DAY, is indeed an atmospheric phenomenon.

Fall, Winter and Spring lead to MIXING within our atmosphere, where VHF/UHF radio signals travel line-of–sight to the horizon.

D=√17h

Where:

D=distance to radio horizon in kilometers

H= height of antenna above the ground

You can do the math, calculating the height of each station's antenna, or work it out in your head via the "Gordo method:"

Square root of antenna height (in feet) = range in miles (Station sending)

Square root of antenna height (in feet) = range in miles (Station receiving)

Now add the miles together, and this is your NORMAL radio horizon at VHF and UHF.

So, you are in Dallas, and you can easily pick up Ft. Worth stations. But you say you are in Dallas, and hearing ham radio repeaters from TAMPA?

Welcome to summertime Tropospheric Ducting of VHF, UHF and microwaves.

The common summertime condition of a stalled high pressure system overlying the Gulf is characterized by hot weather, no wind, and a horizon of smog well defined as a distinct layer. This canopy of high pressure may geographically remain steady over a 1000 mile path, with stratified air within the high slowly falling. After all, high pressure means heavier air aloft.



When your scanner hears stations more than 100 miles away , it is likely tropo conditions!

This condition of falling air is called subsidence, and stratifies (layers) within the smog belt about 1,000 feet in altitude. All this air gets squeezed by denser air below, and continuing falling air above. When you squeeze air, it gets warmer. If the



Gordo working Hawaii on 2 meter FM (!) in July .



Paul Lieb , KH6HME , the Hawaii contact , record holder
No 10 GHz yet from West Coast to Hawaii via tropo .

stratified trapped warm air exhibits a marked increase in air pressure, a decrease in water content, and a 10 degree increase in temperature, it may exhibit enough refractive index to literally trap radio waves within this narrow warm air duct.

Your local weather forecaster can give you a "high pressure" summertime heads up on when tropospheric ducting conditions may override a large area. On the internet, the Hepburn tropospheric ducting site will clearly show you possible long range VHF/UHF paths.

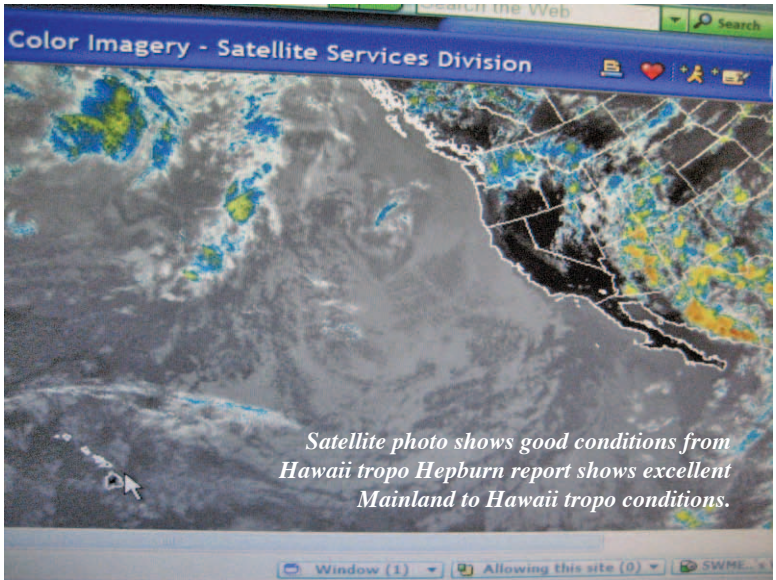
www.dxinfocentre.com (note the spelling)

They predict out to a week, and if you look for the red and orange indices on the Hepburn chart, you can spot some long range scanning and ham radio conditions coming!

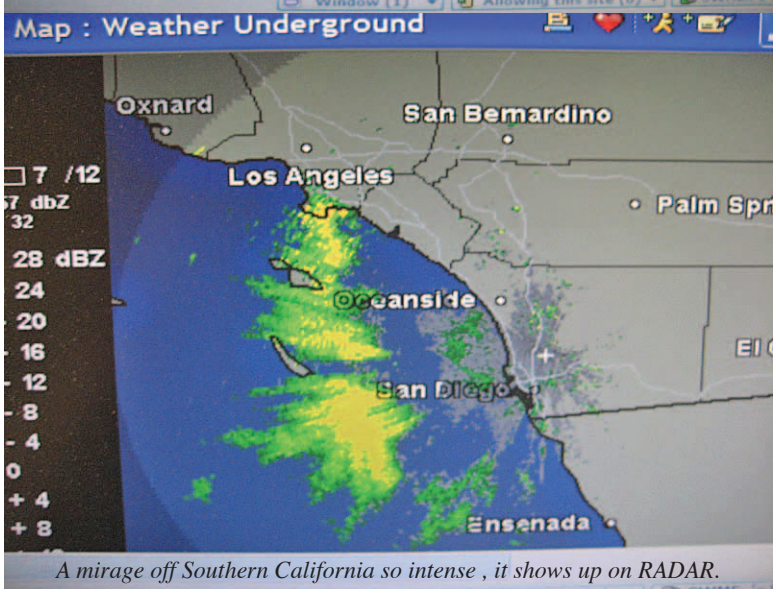
Every July and August, you can count on stalled high pressure cells to open up long range VHF/UHF paths:

Great Lakes to East coast
Northeast to Florida
Florida to Cuba
Hawaii to West coast
Texas to Florida
Chicago to Texas

These predictable tropo ducts usually open up the first week of July. Check the Hepburn Report as well as local weather maps. Look for that high pressure cell between you and a faraway station. Use the VHF 162 MHz weather channels to check reception. When you are in Chicago, and you hear the weather channel indicating a temperature in Dallas at 110 degrees, you know the band is open.

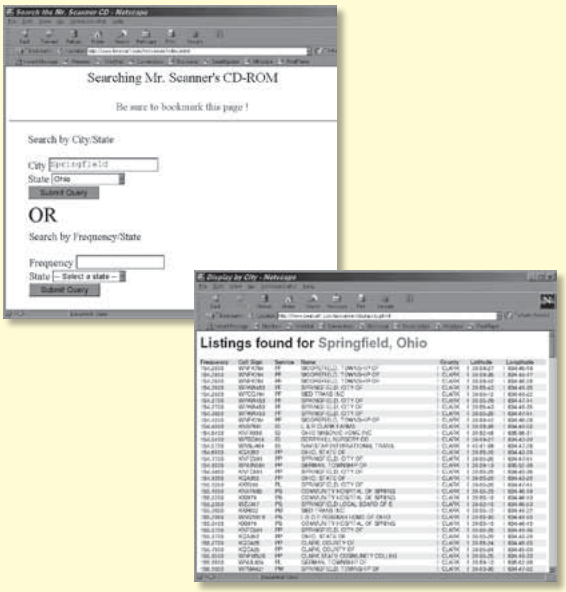


Satellite photo shows good conditions from Hawaii tropo Hepburn report shows excellent Mainland to Hawaii tropo conditions.



A mirage off Southern California so intense , it shows up on RADAR.

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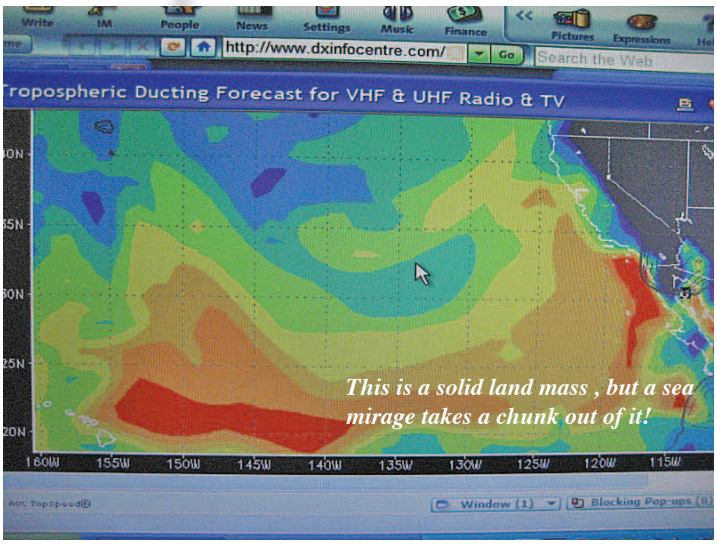
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Generally within the next 24 hours your user name and password will be e-mailed back to you and you will be ready to search for frequencies.

Summertime is Tropo Time

continued



Unlike Sporadic E found on 10 and 6 meters, scanning low band and high band, the reception of a distant station via tropo WON'T take deep fades or immense increases of signal strength. The tropo duct condition will lead to relatively constant signal strengths for hours on end. Early evening, and early mornings, before local breezes stir up the atmospheric layers, should lead to enhanced conditions.

Same polarization is important. Almost all land mobile transmissions are vertically polarized. Almost all ham radio repeaters are also vertically polarized, so stick with that vertically polarized collinear antenna.

Weak signal ham radio operators use HORIZONTAL polarization for their CW beacons, as well as point-to-point tropo DXing.

"I can't hear them if they aren't horizontal," comments Paul Lieb, KH6HME, who operates VHF/UHF tropo DX between the Mauna Loa volcano to the mainland, 2500 miles away.

"But if they are horizontal, and if the temperature inversion is greater than 10 degrees change, we can easily work all the way down to 10 watts," adds Lieb, the holder of multiple records for tropospheric ducting between Hawaii and the West coast.

Tropo time is now – when it really heats up, and the high pressure cell begins to settle in, and stratified air hangs a smog belt for as far as you can see, START WORKING some VHF DX through distant repeaters, 500 – 700 miles away. Dial that new scanner into a cruise through unused weather channels in your area, and with an outside gain antenna, expect to hear distant weather stations popping through the squelch, giving you the beach report from 800 miles away!

Tropo time is right now!

Looking Back at The Most Unusual Radios

They looked like mobile phones, were orange and more.

By Chuck Gysi, N2DUP

CB as we know it today has been with us for more than a half-century. The first radios were bulky, heavy and glowed from the warmth of tubes inside their metal boxes. When those tube radios started to become radios made with transistors in the early 1970s, rigs started taking on all types of designs and shapes, some innovative for their time.

The funny thing is that CB really took off in the 1970s and that gave citizens band radios a new look that forced manufacturers to be creative to capture a share of the market. There were so many players selling CB radios that beyond the basic, inexpensive CB radio, the sellers had to have something unique to capture enough buyers to make their entry into the market successful.

Some of the sellers of CB radios back in the 1970s had brands you'd recognize such as Sears and RCA – and names you wouldn't know such as Royce and Fanon Courier. Let's take a look back over time and look at some of the most unusual CB radios ever made. Perhaps you remember some of these gems – and maybe you even owned one if you've been in the hobby long enough like me.

The mobile phone look-alikes

Before cellular phones, there were mobile phones. These early radiophones typically operated on VHF high band in the 152-MHz band and on UHF in the 454-MHz band. These bulky phones had transceiver equipment mounted in the trunk of the vehicle with a console mounted typically on the transmission hump of the vehicle. Full-sized handsets allowed users to pick up the phone and either place calls through operators or via direct dialing (yes, a rotary dial with pulses over the air). It was somewhat of a status symbol to have a telephone handset and console mounted in your vehicle, let alone be seen holding a handset to your head while driving down the street.



The E.F. Johnson Messenger 130 mobile rig looked too much like a mobile telephone of the time.



E.F. Johnson's Messenger 132 base station looked like a mobile telephone, but actually was a base station. In an office environment, conversations over CB could be held more privately with the handset.

I recall one popular radio manufacturer that made a CB radio look like a mobile telephone handset. E.F. Johnson made not only a mobile version of this slick-looking CB rig so you, too, could drive down the road with a telephone handset to your ear, but also made a base station version of the radio so you could have one in your home, too, and enjoy private CB conversations without others in the room having to listen to your conversations.

As I was doing research for this article, I realized that I had forgotten that there were a number of other CB radio manufacturers that also made mobile-phone-looking CB rigs, too. These included names like Lafayette, Midland, Teaberry, RadioShack (Realistic) and Unimetrics.

Here's a list of some of the most unusual CB radios ever made and a little bit of information about them, too. The photos will let you take a look back down memory lane as you recall a time when CB rigs were fun and functional.

The mobile-phone look-alikes

The mobile phone look-alike CB rigs were bulky, yet fun looking. I never owned one, but always wanted one. To have that headset to my head driving down the road would have looked impressive, for sure.

Continued on page 12

Looking Back at The Most Unusual Radios continued

Here is a list of some of the more popular mobile telephone handset CB rigs that were manufactured once upon a time: E.F. Johnson Messenger 130 (and the equivalent base station version E.F. Johnson Messenger 132), the Lafayette Com Phone 23 (and the similar Com Phone 23A), the base station version Lafayette Com Phone Mark II, the Midland 13-884 and 13-963 mobiles, the RadioShack Realistic 56 and 456 mobiles and Realistic 454 base station, the Sears Roadtalker 3813, the Teaberry Tele T and the Unimetrics Dolphone, made by a marine radio manufacturer.

Take a look at the photos of some of those radios and imagine the excitement their owners had when they were mounted in their vehicles. The E.F. Johnson radios looked so much like mobile telephones, most people probably wouldn't have known any different that the radio was a CB rig.

The all-in-one rigs

There was another category of CB radio that moved all or most of the electronics for the CB radio into a microphone-looking unit or a box that you held in your hand. These



Yes, even Sears had a line of CB radios at one time and this mobile was their mobile phone look-alike CB rig.



The RadioShack Realistic 56 mobile was another mobile phone look-alike CB rig.



RadioShack's Realistic 454 base station offered that mobile phone look for home use.

Teaberry was a popular CB radio manufacturer at one time and this was their entry into the mobile phone look-alike market.





Lafayette Radio Electronics got in the mobile-phone look-alike market for CB radios with this Com Phone 23 rig.



Like the E.F. Johnson mobile phone look-alike base station radio, Lafayette Radio Electronics also got into the same market with this CB base rig called the Com Phone Mark II.

Continued on page 14

Uniden

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Looking Back at The Most Unusual Radios cont.

unusual devices either were large microphones that had all the controls in the mic itself or had a small box that mounted on the dash with a microphone hanging off of it.

Some automotive manufacturers also got into the CB game at one time, including the option of a CB radio in your new vehicle. Check the photo of the rig that Ford offered in its line that had all the controls in the microphone that hooked onto the dashboard – factory installed!

The Midland 13-711 was a similar all-in-one microphone CB rig that was like others made at the time. The Midland 13-955 was a small box that mounted on your dashboard with the mic plugged into its bottom for mobile use.

The Kraco 4009 CB radio was a handheld unit that looked much like some of the first handheld cellular phones in the 1980s – a brick! It offered another all-in-one option for mobile CB.

In the dash

There also were a series of CB radios made at one time that actually were built into in-dash car stereo systems. The Cobra 46XLR is one example that allowed dash mounting and included AM and FM reception, as well as CB operation. What a nice tidy unit these stereo-CB combos offered.

The orange effect

Several of the CB radio magazines of the 1970s often carried advertising from a Swedish CB manufacturer called Handic. The unusual aspect of these radios is that they all had orange color on them. Needless to say, these orange CB radios stood out, not only because of their bright color, but their unique European design. This was another radio I wished I had owned at the time. Handic made both mobile and handheld CB radios and scanners that they sold here in the United States.

Continued on page 16



This Kraco CB radio, an inexpensive brand at the time, offered everything in a handheld brick, model 4009, for mobile use.



This oversized handheld CB radio, the Midland 13-711, for mobile use had the controls in the microphone.



Don't you just love the bright orange color of the Swedish-made Handic CB radios? This is the Handic 235.



This tidy box mounted on the dash of your vehicle and offered CB radio in a new way from Midland as the 13-955 mobile.



The Midland 13-884 mobile radio looked like a mobile telephone, too.



Midland's 13-862 mobile allowed mobile users to see the channels and meter mounted on top of the radio.

The HomePatrol-1 is a great scanner, but...



The HomePatrol-1 Receiving CB Channels

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Looking Back at The Most Unusual Radios cont.

Check out the photos of the unique Handic rigs. Pretty impressive, don't you think?

Motorola

Yes, Motorola got involved with making CB radios back in the hey-day because they wanted their good name on a popular radio, much like they entered the cellular phone market. They had a variety of CB rigs on the market and if you knew the good Motorola name, you might have aspired to own one of these rigs, such as the Motorola 4009 or the Motorola Mocat 40-4022.

A few more

Without putting them into their own category, remember the Cobra 93 base station? It was a nice compact base station that easily sat on any desk or table top for home or office communications.

The Midland 13-862 is a rig I owned when I went mobile on CB the first time in the 1970s. The long rig had its channel selector window and meter mounted on top of the unit with the controls on the front, supposedly to make it easier to look down at while driving. What a novel idea!

Write in

Did you own one of these unusual CB rigs mentioned in this article? Do you have a favorite CB radio from the past? You can write to me at cb-natcom@scanning1.com (be sure to put "Nat-Com" in the subject line or your e-mail may wind up in my spam bin). This e-mail address is only for the author of this column.



The Dolphone by Unimetrics was made by a marine radio manufacturer and offered the mobile phone look-alike look. Several of these probably were mounted in boats at the time.



The Cobra 46XLR offered a CB rig included in a dash-mounted car stereo.



The Motorola 4009 mobile CB radio was basic and allowed a user to own a trusted brand for CB.



The Motorola Mocat 40-4022 mobile radio looked sturdy like a Motorola two-way radio, but it's still CB.



This handheld CB radio was factory installed in Ford vehicles.



The Cobra 93 base station offered a compact radio for the desktop.

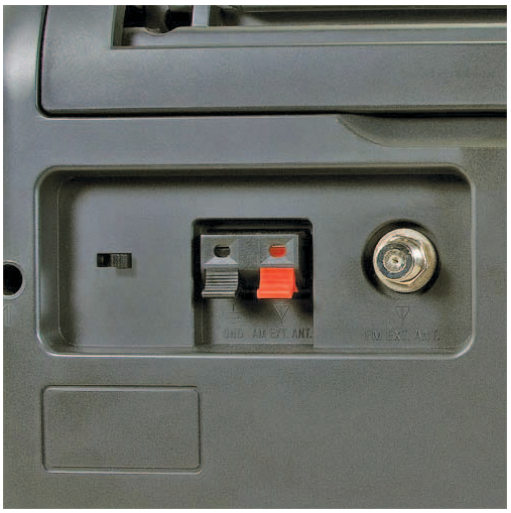
Nat-Com Reviews the CC Radio EP

By Jon Van Allen, KF7YN

Back in the day, serious MW (AM Band) DX'ers had a couple of really good preferred portable radios. One was the GE Super Radio and it's variants Super Radio I, II and III. The GE division that produced the GE Superadio III was acquired by RCA who re-branded this radio as the RCA Superadio. Both radios are the same other than the logo on the speaker grill. Radio Shack had a decent performing radio they called the TRF which is short for Tuned Radio Frequency. There are others worth mention but now we have a new entry into the super AM radio field, the CCRadio EP. EP stands for Enhanced Performance. This radio is an AM/FM analog radio like it's predecessor cousins. Tuning is done by turning a knob and slide rule indicator.



Originally introduced as the "CCRadio-3" at the 2010 CES show in Las Vegas, C Crane Company has incorporated their patented built-in Twin Coil FerriteÆ Antenna into the EP. Weak AM reception can be fine tuned with a manual antenna adjustment knob, a nice touch not seen on radios for many years. C Crane calls this "Twin Coil Ferrite (TCF) AM Fine Tuning". Quoting CC Radio EP website: "The AM fine tuning consists of extra circuitry and 2 extra coils around the ferrite antenna. It should be called the Quad Coilô. It is a new experimental design. You do not have to adjust the TCF knob from the default position to receive excellent AM performance. The TCF knob does have some effect for fine tuning and it will have various and perhaps curious results depending on the strength of the AM signal and the time of day. You should find the EP is one of the best radios you have used on AM."



To say I concur with C Crane's statement that the EP is one of the best radios on AM would be an understatement. I've had almost every GE Super Radio variant and two Radio Shack TRFs and even two other CC Radios. All of these are hard pressed to perform as well as the EP. C Crane says the AM performance is "Almost as good as our CCRadio-2" but having the original CCRadio I think the performance is better than the original. Performance is at least as good as my CCRadio SW which has the same Twin Coil Ferrite antenna.

The LED lighted dial is just plain cool. You can leave it on and not worry about running the batteries dead because the LED light uses only a few milliamps. It is plenty bright and much more visible than any old style incandescent lamp I've ever used. Finally a back-light that is both useful and won't kill the batteries!

Audio is very good from the internal 4 inch speaker. Audio power is 1 watt RMS but the speaker is rated for

Continued on page 18

Nat-Com Reviews the CC Radio EP

continued

5 watts so there is not much chance of blowing out the speaker. Even at high volume, there is little or no distortion.

There are external antenna terminals on the rear panel, wire antenna for AM, coaxial for FM. I was a little worried about the EP being able to handle an external AM antenna. I would say the best use for an external antenna is away from populated areas. The radio could overload in urban areas with too much wire attached, but otherwise I am pleasantly surprised at the lack of images with the EP.

Real world results: In a side-by-side comparison with my trusty Eton E1XM using the built-in antenna, there really is no comparison for weak signal reception, the EP wins hands down. There is a low power T.I.S. station about 10 miles away from my house at the entrance of one of the canyons leading to the ski resorts. I can barely hear the T.I.S. station on my E1 with the antenna extended all the way. The EP hears it somewhat better but by rotating the radio just a little, the signal increased in strength enough to clearly understand the audio. I found the ability to rotate the radio to utilize the directional properties of the antenna very useful for both weak signal work and nulling out stronger stations on the same frequency and on adjacent channels. There are quite a few AM band stations transmitting HD which produces digital "hash" either side of the carrier frequency. This makes listening to weaker stations on or near that frequency difficult without a razor sharp antenna



Features

- Bass and Treble knobs
- Voice and Music knob to help define the audio
- Internal/External antenna Switch
- Spring loaded wire terminal for external AM antenna
- "F" Connector for external FM antenna
- Line In for MP3 players or other source of external audio via an optional 1/8" stereo patch cord
- Headphone jack
- Built-in, flip up carry handle
- 6V AC adapter (included) or runs on four optional "D" batteries
- Super long life LED lighted dial

Specifications

- General Specifications Input Power: AC Adapter: 6VDC 500mA tip negative
- Batteries: (4) D size (not included)
- Speaker: 4", 8 ohm, 5W
- Frequency Coverage: AM 520 - 1710 kHz
- FM 88 - 108 MHz
- AM Antenna: Internal Ferrite Bar - 12mm x 200mm (7.9") long with Twin Coil FeriteÆ technology
- FM Antenna: Telescopic whip antenna
- Earphone Jack: 1/8" (3.5mm) Stereo
- Aux In Jack: 1/8" (3.5mm) Stereo
- Dimensions: 11.4" W x 7.3" H x 2.75" D
- Weight: 4.5 lbs.

Warranty: 1 Year Limited Warranty

Included Accessories: AC Adapter, Manual

Accessories: C Crane offers two accessories for the EP, a turntable and an acrylic radio stand.

Nat-Com Reviews the CC Radio EP

such as the EP has. The AM fine tuning helps even more in some cases.

I can clearly hear 1070 KNX in Los Angeles at night on the EP by rotating the radio to null out a strong local station on 1060. The E1 struggles to hear KNX unless I select USB synch and passband tuning. In this comparison, the $70 EP deals with weak signal reception in the presence of strong local stations as well as, but in a different way than, a $450 radio. Amazing!

The EP is simple to operate. People who want simplicity or a return to simplicity will love this radio. DX'ers, newbies, grandma and grandpa will all find this radio simple yet extremely useful. Build quality is excellent, there is nothing cheap about this radio. Notice the chrome rings around the knobs, a nice touch not common on radios in this price range. I highly recommend this radio for newbies and old timers alike.

As always, I welcome your comments and questions. My email is kf7yn@yahoo.com. Until next time, happy DX'ing!

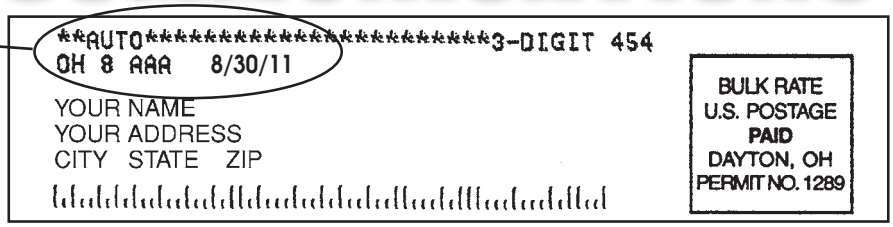


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Northern California's Beale Air Force Base

By: Mark Meece



As evidenced by the recent news of the daring raid that finally eliminated the threat of Osama Bin Laden when U.S. Navy Seal Team Six raided his hideout in Abbottabad, Pakistan, A lot intelligence assets were needed to observe his compound over a long period of time. Many times when we think of monitoring military we think of the excitement of fighter jets performing their missions. One of the less thought of aspects are reconnaissance. In many cases reconnaissance plays an extremely important part in observing and collecting intelligence for national and global security.

With that in mind, this issue we travel to Northern California and look at the role Beale Air Force Base and what role its units play in intelligence gathering.

Beale Air Force Base is located 9 miles east of Marysville, California in Yuba County, and some 45 miles northeast of the capital of Sacramento.



First established as Camp Beale in October 1942, it is named for Edward Fitzgerald Beale (1822--1893). Beale was a Lieutenant in the U.S. Navy and held the rank of General in the California Militia. More importantly he was also a frontiersmen and explorer of California in the early days of western expansion.

When the base opened in 1942 it served as a training site for the 13th Armored Division and the 81st and 96th Infantry Divisions, taking full advantage of its sprawling 86,000 acres. During the height of World War II, Camp Beale was called home by over 60,000 soldiers. It also hosted a 1000 bed hospital and a German prisoner-of-war encampment. Control of the base transferred from the Army to the United States Air Force in 1948. On April 1, 1951 it became Beale Air Force Base. That same year the Beale Bombing and Gunnery Range for aviation engineer training reactivated. The base has fallen under many different commands over the years, since 1992 it is overseen by the Air Combat Command (ACC).

Continued on page 22

Beale continued

Over the years Beale has been home to some of the most exciting aircraft to fly in the United States Air Force. In 1956, the Lockheed built U-2 "Dragon Lady" began flying service as a high altitude reconnaissance aircraft. However, it was not until June of 1976 that U-2s from the 100th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing (SRW) were transferred to Beale Air Force Base's 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing for combined operations with another famous Lockheed aircraft, the SR-71 "Blackbird". The 9th SRW operated under the Strategic Air Command (SAC) until 1992. When SAC was de-established and re-organized into the Air Combat Command. Today the 9th Reconnaissance Wing (RW), operates the U-2S, TU-2S, T-38A, and the RQ-4A "Global Hawk". In January of 1965 the 4200th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing (4200 SRW) was activated at Beale and received its first aircraft, a T-38 "Talon" in July 1965.

The new supersonic strategic reconnaissance aircraft the Lockheed SR-71 did not arrive at Beale until January 7, 1966. Six months later on June 25, 1966, the 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing was moved from Mountain Home AFB, Idaho and reassigned to Beale. Since that time the 9th RW has remained at the host unit at Beale. The SR-71 was retired the first in November of 1989 and was officially decommissioned on January 26, 1990 at Beale. It was briefly brought out retirement in the mid 1990s. On October 9, 1999 the last flight of a SR-71 Blackbird Serial #61-7980/NASA 844 took place, after which the SR-71 program was retired permanently from service in 1998 after an outstanding operational record. All throughout its operational history, the SR-71 Blackbird was the world's fastest and highest-flying operational manned aircraft. A SR-71 with serial number 61-7958 set an absolute speed record of 1,905.81 knots (2,193.2 mph; 3,529.6 km/h) on July 28, 1976.

In 2009, the 940th Air Refueling Wing of the United States Air Force Reserves were redesignated as the 940th Wing. Their fleet of KC-135R Supertankers were dispersed to the 927th ARW at Selfridge ANGB in Michigan and the 134th ARW at McGee-Tyson Air Guard Station in Tennessee. The new mission of 940th is command and control, intelligence and reconnaissance forces in support of Air Combat Command, Pacific Air Forces and the Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Agency using the RQ-4 Global Hawk drone.

In TABLE 1 we list the current fleet of aircraft and their units stationed at Beale Air Force Base.

TABLE 1

9th Reconnaissance Wing

1st RS (Training)	U-2ST RQ-4
5th RS (Osan AB, South Korea)	U-2S BLACKCATS
99th RS	T-38A U-2S
940th W (AFRS)	RQ-4

All manned aircraft sport the tail code BB.

Today Beale encompasses nearly 23,000 acres and contains a population of 4,000 military personnel. It operates one 12,000 foot runway (15/33). Five gates provide access to all sides of the base. Beale's historical heritage also includes a still standing block of barred prison cells where German prisoners of war were held captive on the base during World War II. 38 Native American sites, 45 homestead sites, and 41 World War II sites are maintained within the

TABLE 2

AERONAUTICAL OPERATIONS
Beale Air Force Base (KBAB)

119.400	Tower VHF
120.450	NORCAL Approach/Departure
121.600	Ground VHF
125.400	NORCAL Approach/Departure
139.600	Supervisor of Flight VHF
139.900	Air Boss
140.875	Pilot to Dispatcher
240.225	Supervisor of Flight UHF
256.025	940th Command Post "TAHOE CONTROL"
257.750	Ground UHF
259.100	NORCAL Approach/Departure
273.500	ATIS
276.150	Tower UHF
311.000	Command Post Primary
321.000	Command Post Secondary
353.700	NORCAL Approach/Departure
372.200	Pilot to Dispatcher

SUPPORT OPERATIONS

138.325	127.3	Giant Voice System
148.050	107.2	Commanders Net
148.450		9th RW AC Maintenance B
148.475		940th AC Maintenance
149.150		9th RW AC Maintenance A
149.250	127.3	Ground (System A837 TG 352)
163.4625	192.8	EOD







Beale continued

base itself. The Beale Military Liaison Committee, a conglomeration of local merchants and individuals donated $100,000 to construct the main gate where visitors enter the base.

In TABLE 2, you will find a list of aeronautical and support frequencies used at Beale.

Beale Air Force Base operates a Motorola Type II Smartnet trunked radio system that uses digital voice encoding. You will need a digital scanner in order to monitor it. We list the particulars for this system In TABLE 3.



TABLE 3

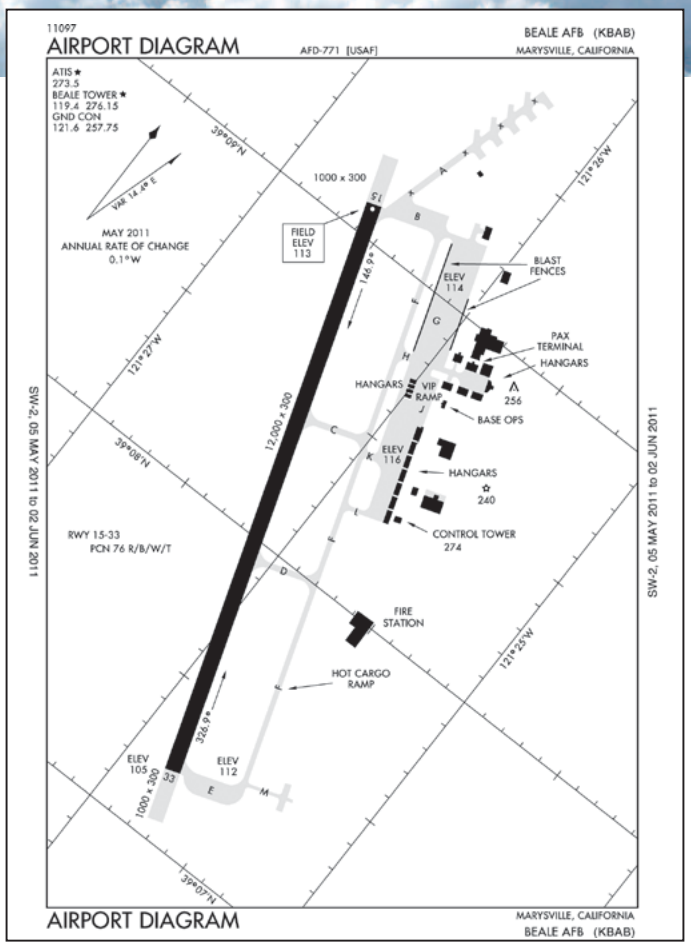
SYSTEM: Beale Air Force Base
TYPE: Motorola Type II Smartnet
VOICE: APCO-25 Common Air Interface Exclusive
SYSID: A837
CONNECT TONE: 105.88

CUSTOM TABLES:
BASE: 406.5625
SPACING: 12.5 kHz
OFFSET: 380

FREQUENCIES:
406.76250c 406.96250c 407.16250c
407.96250c 408.16250 408.76250
410.36250

TALKGROUPS:

48	D	Fire Dispatch
64	D	Security
80	D	Tango Control
96	D	Civil Engineering (HVAC, Utilities)
128	D	Security
144	D	Civil Engineering (UDM)
176	D	Security Control
240	D	Air Boss
272	D	Dragon Control; U-2 Maintenance Control
288	D	Combat Control
320	D	T-38 Control
352	D	Ground Control (Rebroadcast of 149.250 MHZ)
368	D	Shuttle Dispatch
432	D	Tiger Control (Mad Dog)
528	D	Global Hawk Command
592	D	Off Base Fire patch to an outside FD
672	D	Hawk Control; RQ-4A Maintenance Control
816	D	Ammunition Control
832	D	Material Control "Breakout"
1024	D	All Call



Nearby Marysville, the county seat of Yuba County sports the nickname "Gateway To The Goldfields" as the area was populated by gold prospectors in the mid 1800s. If you plan on visiting the area, other points of interests include Ellis Lake in Marysville, and Bok Kai Temple, a Chinese worship center built in 1854. The Bok Kai Festival and Parade, held annually for the past 125 years during the Chinese New Year is the oldest continuing parade in California. So grab your scanner, plug in the frequencies we have provided, search for new ones and let us know what you hear!

Our Unsung Heroes, Amateur Radio Operators

By: Dorothy Rieke

Imagine sitting in your home visiting with people of all races and creeds from every phase of life--politicians, storekeepers, farmers and factory workers. Imagine hearing the news from places with strange sounding names in faraway lands. Imagine hearing someone from miles and miles away speaking especially to you. This is amateur radio!

After Guglielmo Marconi first transmitted radio signals from England to Newfoundland, others were encouraged to set up their own radio stations and began communicating over the airwaves. This was the beginnings of amateur radio. Today, over three million amateur radio operators worldwide use a variety of radio communications.

Every amateur radio operator has something in common with others because they all like to greet people all over the world. The amateur radio operator may spend time visiting with missionaries in Africa, doctors in Sweden, politicians in Washington, or movie stars in Hollywood. All amateur radio operators have the desire to learn about others through communication whether it be by Morse Code, voice communication or computerized messages. In order



to participate in this exciting activity, a radio operator must be licensed to insure a level of technical competence. The license insures that operators will be able to use VHF and UHF equipment and repeaters comparable to those utilized by public agencies. This capability allows the operator to participate in local roundtables and contact those friends, relatives, and others who are also licensed. As part of the license, operators are given call signs used to identify themselves during communications.

Amateur radio operators use approved equipment beginning with simple antennas with limited power, so that these antennas do not interfere with transmissions from other radio users. In fact, a rule of radio is no interference with anotherís signals. If interference occurs, moving to another frequency is necessary.

Most amateur radio operators, who excel in engineering knowledge, utilize their skills especially when they serve during wartime or as backup personnel during tornadoes, floods, fires, and hurricanes. This knowledge allows operators to be active as well as effective volunteers.

Building a radio and realizing the dream of achievement is part of the amateur radio operatorís existence. First, equipment must be constructed. Most build and modify their own personal equipment and antennas. The simple act of building a low power Morse Code transmitter and seeing it communicate with others thousands of miles away represents one mark of achievement.

Our Unsung Heroes, Amateur Radio Operators

Even constructing simple receivers becomes enjoyable as they are used.

A more difficult challenge is building voice communication radios using more power or constructing a home-based radio solution. Those, having high levels of technology, operate on different frequencies assembling their own stations with antennas, transmitters, and receivers.

Some amateur radio operators relish the technology involved in radio communication. Others, who regard this past time as a hobby, discover that BFRs or business radio will meet their particular needs. Business radio differs in that amateur radio can not be used for commercial communications such as messages related to a business activity.

Amateur radio is unlike CB radio in that communications are clear and reliable with no interference. Also, amateur radio communications are generally polite and friendly.

Amateur radio operators are capable of employing various communication modes. Some equipment, operated by American radio operators, is utilized to send messages by Morse Code, which takes less power for the same number of miles. Employing Morse Code means practicing sending and receiving messages and attaining higher speeds in sending. In addition, amateur radio operators are allowed to connect computers to radio and use digital modes. This radio technology allows talk and exchange of pictures. In fact, experimenting with radio to improve and discover new technology appeals and challenges radio operators.

Radio amateurs enjoy competing in contests to collect operating awards or certificates, These achievements involve contacting individuals in one hundred countries and making the greatest number of contacts in certain locations during a set time. It is also about going after a fellow operator, discovering different locations, and contacting that individual. It is somewhat like a ìtreasure huntî with the wonderful prize of friendship at the end of the game.

It is interesting to note that the majority of amateur radio operators are men. However, about 15% of amateur radio operators in the United States are women. In fact, the Young Ladies Radio League is an international group of women amateur radio operators. YL is a term that refers to a female amateur radio operator.

Promoting and advancing the art, science, and enjoyment of Amateur Radio is the aim of the ARRL, the American Radio Relay League. This group not only reflects the commitment and enthusiasm of amateur radio operators, but it provides leadership and promotes unity for its members.

Paul Harvey in March of 2003 commented, ìAmericaís quiet warriors are the legion of ham radio operators, 700,000 of them, who are always at ready for backup duty in emergencies--amateur, unpaid, uncelebrated, civilian radio operators, during and after floods and fires and tornadoes. After the 9/11 attacks, hams were indispensable in reuniting friends and families. Most recently it was they who expedited the search for debris after the Columbia Explosion, and right now, at this moment, they are involved in homeland security to a greater degree than you would want me to make public.î Indeed, amateur radio operators are truly some of our unsung heroes!

Be sure to check for the latest frequencies on the Nat-Com web page www.nat-com.org

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NEW BOOK NEWS RELEASE

New General Book and CDs Include An Elmer!

From Gordon West

A ham radio ELMER is a fellow ham volunteer to coach you through license preparation materials, and help you get on the air. The ELMER is just a phone call away for free advice and license prep help.

The General Class Element 3 question pool went into effect last July 1, and remains valid through June of 2015. The new General Class test question pool covers over 400 Q & As with over 100 upgraded over the old pool. Still about the same number of questions in the entire pool – 35 on the exam – the new pool keeps everything fresh for the applicant.

The new Gordon West General book has been available since mid-May, and, like all of his other amateur radio and commercial radio licensing manuals, the book and his fun audio CDs include Gordo as a personal ELMER!

"I receive about 5 to 10 phone alls a day from students preparing for exams and from recent graduates who have passed the tests," comments Gordo, whose phone number 714-549-5000 is peppered throughout the book and mentioned multiple times on his audio course CDs.

"My free consultation service can lead students through tricky math formulas for Extra Class and Commercial exams as well as one-on-one discussions about simple antenna projects," comments Gordo.

"A recent test applicant – a retired engineer – called in to happily announce his test-passing score of 100%, but suggested a little more detail on the straight forward formula 468 wording divided by the



frequency in MHz, to calculate the end-to-end length in feet, of a half wave dipole antenna. His question was …where did the numbers 468 come from?" adds West, who, in the next printing update, will expand on these numbers calculating feet instead of meters, velocity factor of radio waves in the wire dipole and the capacitive end-effect of this dipole suspended between 2 pine trees. "It is always a two-way benefit– this daily contact with my students all over the country always gives ME added input for describing test question explanations!" adds West.

West also offers to ham radio class instructors and Elmers a free 35 page INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE, which also includes multiple pages of student homework.

"The homework gets students working the book long before the first class session – we give them the page numbers to look up the correct answer, as well as the CD track to listen to some of the sounds of modes like PSK and Olivia," adds West. (www.haminstructor.com)

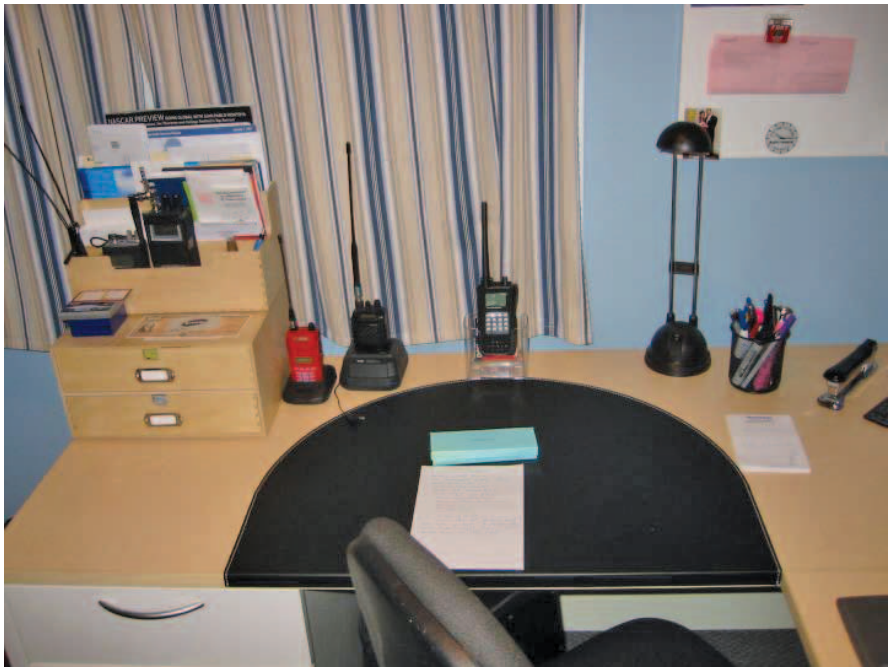
The future of ham radio depends on more kids getting into the hobby, and West's TECHNICIAN CLASS Instructor Guide includes Radio Merit Badge cross references to further encourage Scouts to train for both their ham radio Technician Class license as well as satisfy a big portion of radio merit badge requirements.

"We encourage ham instructors to take advantage of our teacher's discount on all of our W5YI products and my Monday through Friday 10 AM to 4 PM California time is, of course, complimentary.

No other ham radio and commercial training materials can offer what Gordo has for both students and instructors, and that is direct contact with the author.

Ten Must Have Gadgets For Your Radio Shack

By Ed Muro, K2EPM



I am a gadget guy, what can I say it goes hand in hand with being a radio geek. Over the years I have come across many gadgets, some truly enhance your efforts in the radio hobby and others, well sometimes prove to be a big disappointment. Today we are going to take a look at my top-ten gadgets that every radio hobbyist should have in his arsenal of equipment. If you come across something that you feel might be useful and I haven't covered it, please share it with us; you can contact me at: k2epm@k2epm.com.

10: The Digital Multi-meter: A multimeter is an electronic measuring instrument that combines several functions in one unit, hence the term "multi." The most basic instruments include an ammeter, voltmeter, and ohmmeter. Analog multimeters are sometimes referred to as "volt-ohm-meters", abbreviated VOM, I must confess that I am old enough that my first VOM was analog. It was an inexpensive model from Radio Shack that was bought in the early 80's and has been used for all sorts of projects from checking the batteries in my scanner to checking the continuity of a run of COAX to checking the voltage in the battery in my car. While I have upgraded to a digital model, my original meter still resides at my parent's house as my dad some how acquired it.

One of the more popular and well respected names in the industry is the Fluke brand. Some people even have come to refer to multimeters as Flukemeters. The Fluke line is not cheap but you do get a quality piece of test equipment. For most of us, it is probably over kill and a mid range product will suffice.

9: The Cable Turtle: Do you ever have a situation where you have a six-foot cord on a walwart when all you need is a one-foot cord? In the past I used to just bunch up the excess cord and then go steal (did I say steal?) a twist tie out of the breadbox in my mother's kitchen. The Cable Turtle takes your excess cable and hides it in its own shell, which resembles the shell of a turtle. Believe it or not, the Cable Turtle is designed to handle 1000W load. This funny looking solution to organizing the back of your radio console has actually won design awards and is part of the Museum of Modern Art 's design collection!

8: The SO-239 to BNC male coax adapter. For scannists, this three dollar connector will probably be the most used COAX adapter in the shack. It will allow you to hook up an antenna with a PL-259 connector up to your scanner (or any device using a BNC connector.) Also winning honorable mention in this category is the Right-Angle BNC adapter and the BNC to SMA adapter for some of the newer scanners and ham HTs.

Back in the 80's the Motorola to BNC was a big seller, but these days there aren't many antennas that come with a coax outfitted with a Motorola connector.

#7: The Twin Lead, Dual band, J-pole antenna: Designed for use in the 2M and 70CM amateur radio bands this portable roll up antenna is the perfect solution for hams and scannists

Continued on page 29

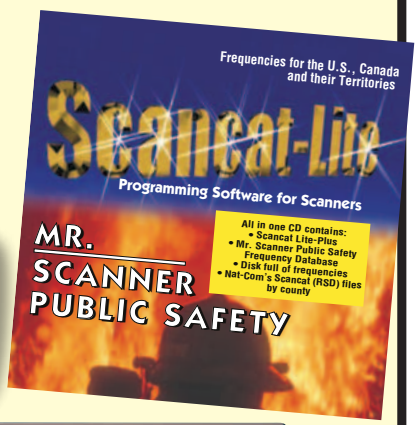
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Ten Must Have Gadgets For Your Radio Shack continued



who need an easy to hang, easy to transport, and good performing antenna. It can be used by high-rise apartment dwellers, strung from a curtain rod in a hotel, or hung from a tree limb at a park. Because they are made out of twin-lead coax they easily roll up and can be packed in a go-bag or suitcase. The 2M-70CM dual band design not only fit the bill for the most active VHF/UHF bands that hams use but also are close enough to the VHF and UHF public safety action bands.

There are commercial versions available for the lazy folk, but J-poles are easy to make and my buddy Frank-N2VRA has made dozens over the years. If you want to give it a try, Craig WB3GCK has posted directions at: http://www.qsl.net/wb3gck/jpole.htm

#6: The fishing tackle box: No, we are not going on a deep sea fishing expedition nor are we going ice fishing on the Ottawa River. I happen to be one of those who enjoys taking products designed for one purpose and using or modifying them for use in the radio hobby. What a better item to use for organizing your assortment of COAX Connectors, rubber duck antennas, and assorted do-dads than a compartmentalized tackle box.

My first foray in to this arena was the purchase of an inexpensive power drill box at the Home Depot. I used that for several years until I experimented further in to the tackle box area. The boxes come in various sizes and configurations and over the course of your career in the hobby you may wind up purchasing several until you find one that suits your needs.

By far, they are the easiest way to keep your collection of "stuff" organized in a fashion that makes things easy to find and easy to transport and is a much better way of doing business than just throwing connectors in your junk drawer.

If you take a look at the photo of the Plano 7771 you will notice the long compartments on the top of the box. This would be the perfect place to store your collection of antennas. I found I had one or two antennas that were a bit longer than the longest tray in the box, the Diamond RH-77CA comes to mind. So what I did was drill a hole in the side of my box to accommodate the longer antenna. It protrudes out of the box about 3 or 4 inches, so what!

#5: The Go-Bag: The tackle box is a great storage solution for your various connectors and accessories but I don't necessarily need to bring all of that with me every time I leave the house. Hence, I use a soft go-bag. My first go bag was purchased in the fishing department at K-Mart for about 14-bucks and was designed as a soft tackle box. This proved to be a good idea because it was water proof, which is a good feature when transporting electronic equipment. Again, go-bags or gear bags come in all sizes and variations and you may wind up having more than one.

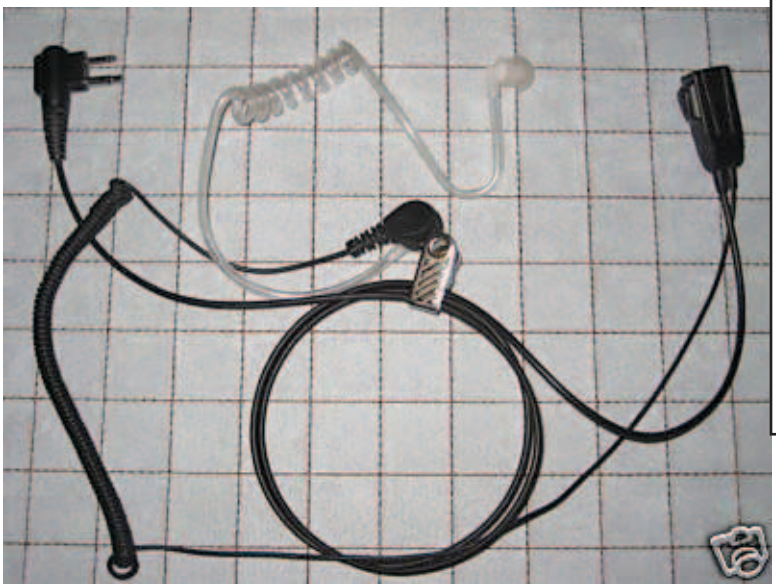
I have a small go-bag that I purchased at Eddie Bauer for day trips, or trips where the radio hobby is secondary to the purpose of the trip. The bag has a shoulder strap and has room for 1 scanner, 1 small to medium sized ham HT, an extra battery pack, an ear bud, a pad/pen, my sun glasses, and my travel documents.

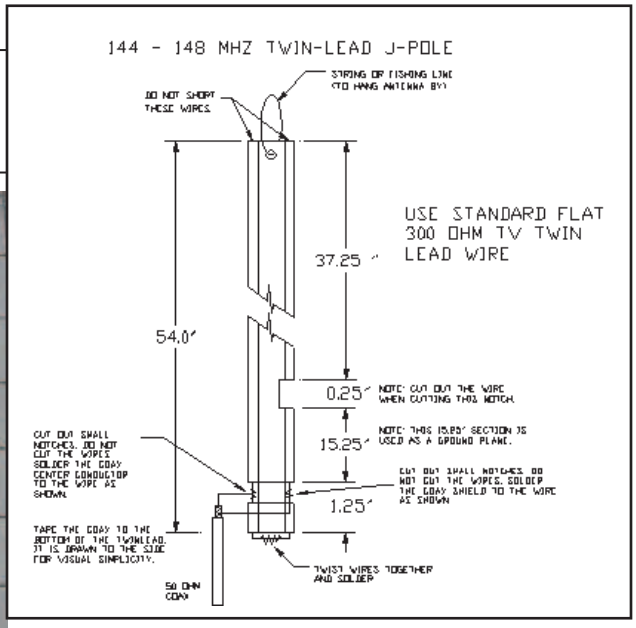
Then I have two larger medium sized go-bags. One is my ARES Go-Bag and is equipped with everything I might need in an ARES or Red Cross shelter deployment.

The other is "sort of" empty and I fill it as the need arises for various trips. It has room for three scanners or ham HT's, assorted chargers, my cell phone charger, radio owner's manuals, a screw diver and Leatherman Multi-tool, and small extension cord, extra batteries, a flashlight, and assorted speaker mics / ear buds.

Continued on page 30

Ten Must Have Gadgets For Your Radio Shack continued





I'll be honest, I have been carrying a flashlight in my go-bag for years, but I wasn't really thinking "power outage" when I started carrying it...I was thinking more like night time trips to the bathroom when sleeping in unfamiliar places and/or laying in bed listening to the scanner and needing to read a frequency directory or looking at the keys of a scanner (if it didn't have a back light.)

It appears that after 9-11 and Katrina that many OEM types have started using the term go-bag for things one might need in a natural disaster which differ a little from what a radio enthusiast might need.

After the above mentioned disasters our ARES group has been advising members to stock two go bags to take with them on deployments. One is the radio go-bag with everything a "communicator" might need and the other is a "personal" go bag that would contain a change of clothes, several days worth of medication, modest toiletries, an extra pair of eye glasses, a couple of bottles of water and a couple of energy bars, a contact list of friends, relatives, and other important phone numbers, and a map.

New York City OEM advises that every household should pack a Go Bag. A collection of items you may need in the event of an evacuation. A Go Bag should be packed in a sturdy, easy-to-carry container such as a backpack or suitcase on wheels. A Go Bag should be easily accessible if you have to leave your home in a hurry. Make sure it is ready to go at all times of the year.

Copies of your important documents in a waterproof and portable container (insurance cards, photo IDs, proof of address, etc.)

Extra set of car and house keys

Credit and ATM cards and cash, especially in small denominations. We recommend you keep at least $50-$100 on hand.

Bottled water and non-perishable food such as energy or granola bars

Flashlight

Battery-operated AM/FM radio and extra batteries

Keep a list of the medications each member of your household takes, why they take them, and their dosages. Medication information and other essential personal items. If you store extra medication in your Go Bag, be sure to refill it before it expires.

First-aid kit

Contact and meeting place information for your household, and a small regional map

Child care supplies or other special care items

#4: The Laptop computer: The Lap Top computer serves a multitude of purposes in the radio shack which include: communication with other hobbyists via e-mail or user groups, researching various data via Internet web pages, looking up ham radio contacts via QRZ for QSL data, researching radio frequencies and system data, programming ham radios, programming and or controlling scanners or general coverage receivers, visiting the Nat-Com website, purchasing radio supplies, listening to streaming audio of scanners and shortwave radios located at remote locations and even esoteric functions like writing this article.

Continued on page 32

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Ten Must Have Gadgets For Your Radio Shack continued

While knowing how to program a scanner or ham radio by hand is a good thing, I just don't do it anymore. Even with the mobile radios, I will do all my research in the house and set up my data how I would like it with the programming software and then I will take the laptop out to the car and within a minute the radio is programmed. Usually hooking up the cables takes longer than actually transferring the data.

I still do have a few radio hobbyist friends who have resisted entering the computer age, but to me that is like showing up at the Daytona 500 driving a Model-T Ford.

#3: The SMART Phones & E-Readers- Be it an I-phone or a Android based product there are a number of uses where smart phones come in handy in the radio hobby. Just as with laptops, they offer you instant access to the Internet for any number of functions such as frequency research. Also, there are a number of apps related to the radio hobby such as Echolink, various logging apps, and of course numerous apps that monitor streaming scanner audio that are set up to simulate a scanner...such as Scanner Buddy Pro.

E-readers also add another dimension to the radio hobby. Their true designed use is to read something...so I archive not only my radio club newsletters on my Nook Color but I also download pdf versions of as many radio user manuals as I can find. I don't always have the users manual to my GRE PSR-500 in my brief case, but I usually always have my Nook Color with me! Also, most e-readers are now offering access to e-mail and the Internet, so again when all else fails you can surf the web looking for frequency data.

#2: The HT/Scanner Desk Stand: Nothing is worse than having your $500 scanner go flying off your desk or kitchen table when the cat goes running after some imaginary mouse. Desk stand fit many purposes such as setting them up on a desk at work or at a motel. Some people may never buy a base scanner and with the use of a desk stand one radio can suite all their monitoring needs.

The desk stand is another one of those items that comes in many variations. There are many commercially marketed desk stands, there are home made items, and again we have seen numerous products that were designed for other purposes being used as a scanner desk stand.

My friend Dave employs the use of steel book ends as scanner stands. Take a medium sized book end, use the belt clip of the scanner to attach it to the book end and you have a scanner desk stand. I also have a friend who turned my on to plastic or Lucite literature / brochure holders. I have found that the most common sized brochure holder, costing a little over $3, will fit the Uniden BC396 to a tee!

I own several commercially built products, I have built a few of my own, and as I said... I have used the Lucite literature holder. Which ever way you go, having a few of these on hand is indispensable.

At one time I was able to find these clam shell mounting brackets that were originally designed for use with mobile phones. They were being sold at hamfests for a buck and I picked up a bunch. I then bought a long piece of wood and made bases for the stands by cutting up the wood with a saw, sanding them down, and painting them. I then attached the clam shell device to the base and had myself a desk stand.

One of the nice things about some of the commercially markets products is that some of them often



make accommodations for COAX connections and others may even have battery charging capability. I have seen a couple of nice ones marketed out of England and on our side of the pond one of the nicer one's out there is marketed by the folks at Nifty Ham Accessories: http://www.niftyaccessories.com/.

Whether you go the commercial route, make your own, or head to the office supply store there is something out there to fit every budget.

#1: ...and the #1 must have gadget for the radio hobby is: The ear bud or headset.

This one item may save your marriage. If your wife is like mine, try sitting in the easy chair with the scanner on while she is trying to watch Dancing With The Stars or a re-run of General Hospital and you will hear: "Can you turn that bleeping thing off!"

Have you ever tried to chase DX on a shortwave receiver with someone else in the room? The sweet sounds coming out of your shortwave rig might just be annoying static to someone else. So, unless you want a slipper to come flying at your Drake SW8.

Ten Must Have Gadgets For Your Radio Shack continued

Or, maybe you can't sleep at night and have a hankering to hear what's going on around town the last thing you want to do is disturb your sweety-pie at three in the morning.

Aside from maintaining healthy family relations there are several other reasons to consider the use of an ear bud or headset.

For example, at a NASCAR race you might enjoy listening to the various race teams communicating with their pit crews. I can guarantee the roar of the engine will drown out what ever sound is coming out of the 2-inch speaker on your scanner. For scanning at auto races you will need a set of noise cancelling headsets which are widely available through a number of firms which cater to the race fan. An air show is another venue where a noise cancelling headset would come in handy.

Another argument for the use of an ear bud is for anonymity while scanning. I take my scanner with me for secondary entertainment to a lot of different places, much as the music aficionado would tote around his IPod. In some of these places being low key is just the better route to take so you don't alarm anyone in to labeling you as one of those techno stalkers. Some of the places I bring my scanner are for walks around the neighborhood or on the track, the beach, picnics, baseball games, and while riding on a bus or train.

As with many of the other products we have discussed, ear buds and head phones come in various configurations and with varying price tags. For 90% of my basic "under cover" scanning be it on the outside or in the house I use a simple mono ear bud I picked up for around 3-bucks at Radio Shack. I also have a couple of pair of over the ear speakers that run between $8 and $12 each. While not as unobtrusive as an ear bud, these may be a bit more comfortable if you don't like the feel of something inside your ear.

I have a set of high end Bose Quiet Comfort 2 stereo headphones that I will use in conjunction with the computer when I am listening to online scanner streams and sometimes I will use them when I am listening to the Pro-96 in the living room.

A good racing scanner headset will cost you between $75 and $100. There are less expensive ones on the market but you know the old adage, you get what you pay for. If you are at a race, keep in mind you will have these things on your head for 3 or 4 hours....so get something that is comfortable and functional.

So there you have it, my top-10 scanning gadgets. I hope you will add some of these to your bag of tricks and as I said before, if you come up with a nifty gadget please let us know. Until next time, happy scanning.

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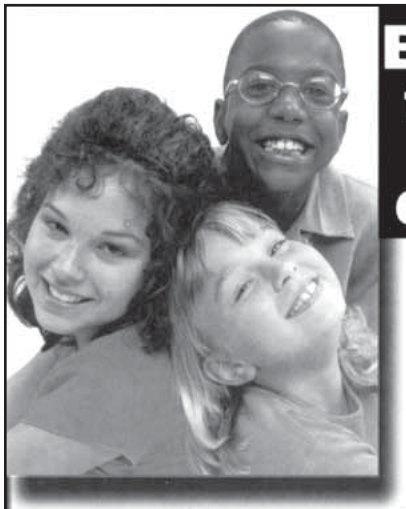
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FCC Sends 32,000 Letters Reminding on Narrowbanding

Editor's Note: The following article is e courtesy MissionCritical Communications magazine. Visit www.mccmag.com. We wish to thank them for permission to re-print the article.

By Sandra Wendelken

The FCC sent letters to 32,000 VHF and UHF public-safety licensees whose records contain wideband emission designators in the FCC database, reminding them of the upcoming narrowbanding deadline. An FCC official said more than one-third of public-safety licenses have been updated to narrowband operation.

"While such wideband operation is currently permissible, this is a reminder that the deadline for converting to 'narrowband' operation is quickly approaching," said the letter signed by James Barnett Jr., chief of the FCC's Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (PSHSB). "You must bring these facilities into compliance with the commission's narrowbanding rules by Jan. 1, 2013, either by migration to 12.5-kilohertz (or narrower) channel bandwidth or by utilization of technology that achieves equivalent efficiency."

The letter reminds licensees that the FCC began implementing the narrowbanding rules more than 10 years ago. The letter warns that unauthorized wideband operation after this date is in violation of the commission's rules and may subject licensees to enforcement action, including monetary forfeitures or license revocation.

"If newly authorized facilities receive harmful interference from unauthorized wideband operations, the commission may require the noncompliant wideband operator to promptly remedy the interference, which may include cessation of operations, if necessary," the letter said.

A letter recipient may have narrowband-capable equipment but a license that still designates wideband operation. To be in compliance, the licensee must update its license to reflect narrowband operations.

The letters were sent based on FCC registration numbers (FRNs), not call signs, so a licensee would receive one letter for all its call signs. When licensees update to narrowband operations, it's a good opportunity to update contact and other information associated with their license, said an FCC official.

The letter cites information resources the FCC and other federal agencies have available, including its website at www.fcc.gov/narrowbanding.

The Department of Homeland Security's Office of Emergency Communications released a guidance document entitled "A Practical Guide to Narrowbanding," which is available at www.dhs.gov/files/publications/gc_1285865538920.shtm.

"If you have not done so already, we urge you to take the necessary steps as soon as possible to ensure timely compliance with the Jan. 1, 2013, deadline," the letter said. "Timely completion of narrowbanding is important because it will ensure more efficient use of the spectrum, relieve congestion and result in increased channel availability for LMR systems. In addition, after the Jan. 1, 2013, deadline, the commission's rules will no longer protect unauthorized wideband operations from harmful interference, availability of wideband equipment will diminish or cease, and the commission may license new narrowband facilities that overlap pre-2013 wideband channels."

VHF and UHF licensees in the business/industrial pool fall under the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB), and that bureau would be responsible for similar letters to those licensees.



LETTERS

Norm:

In the May/June 2011 edition of Nat-Com, I read your comments regarding the switch from analog to "Hi-Def" television.

I make claim that mine may be the last household in my community not to have cable, but with good reasons. First off, when the switch to HDTV came around, we would have willingly gotten the TV service from Verizon, but they didn't get our neighborhood "wired" until months after the switch. Second, as all we seem to watch is one "soap opera", both of the NCIS and FBI Behavioral Analysis Unit shows, all of the Law and Order franchises, and news, the cost of even basic cable seemed exorbitant.

So, my household stayed on analog TVs, with "Rabbit Ears", and with the converter boxes. This didn't work all that well, as back of the set antennas didn't seem to be compatible with the converter boxes. Then I went to my first HDTV antenna.

Years ago, friends showed me their mobile 2, 6, and 40 meter Ham Band transceiver antennas, in a design called a "squailo" (spelling?) due to it appearing to be a box. The new HDTV antennas seemed to be reminiscent of them.

I immediately found I was able to get some of the new stations, but at the expense of losing others. If I stand on my sidewalk, looking north, in my "outer borough" area of New York City, I am able to see the Empire State Building. Therefore, I know I am in "Line Of Sight" with the transmit antenna on top, and reasonably in the line of sight with the transmit towers at the Meadowlands Sports Complex in New Jersey.

However, some of the analog stations I used to listen to, and know have HDTV capabilities, are more to my East, on Long Island.

These "omni directional" antennas are not. I lost at least 3 stations due to them being in a different direction than my antenna picks up. Then, there was the matter of the VCR/DVR. If I wanted to record a show, I had to preset the converter box to that station. However, if the 8 to 9 PM show would be on one station, and my 9 to 10 show on another, someone would have to be there to manually switch the converter box between the 2 stations. Obviously, that kind of defeated the purpose of having a VCR/DVR to record when I wasn't home. Also, we couldn't watch one channel while taping another.

Eventually, I ended up with 2 converter boxes and VCR/DVR units on as many TV sets. I also gave up the Long Island stations.

After a time, one of the converter boxes died, so I broke down and got my first HDTV and HD capable VCR/DVR, but due to drop-outs, ended up going through a series of antenna boxes.

I still cannot get all the channels without turning the antenna boxes around, if only a bit. Again, due to recording shows when I am not home, while at work or classes, a "beam" type antenna is not a viable option, as someone else in the house might want to watch a show from a station in a different direction than the one I'm taping.

Also as a mention, we have not had a rooftop antenna, steerable or fixed, from when Hurricane Donna blew down our last one in 1960.

Richard Berger, Registered Monitoring/SWL Station KNY2SC. Belle Harbor

---

Richard:

Thanks for your letter explaining your TV watching habits and situation. I would still recommend an outdoor antenna with a rotor, because you may be able to watch the closer stations off the side of the antenna and still pick up the stations that are in a different direction. You may even be able to get the stations in Long Island again.

Norm

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Murrow Was As Good As His Myth

By Dorothy Rieke

Who in the radio broadcasting business was born to Quaker parents in a North Carolina log cabin without electricity or indoor plumbing? No, this was not Abraham Lincoln; this man was Egbert (Egburt) Roscoe Murrow better known as Edward R. Murrow.

Egbert R. Murrow at the age of five or six, moved with his family to Blanchard, Washington, thirty miles from the Canadian border where his parents planned to homestead. Later, his father worked for the railroad and the timber industry.

Murrow's parents relayed to their children their democratic principles and religious heritage. After all, they had shown determination and the courage of their convictions when they lived as abolitionists in slave country, as Republicans in Democrat country and as corn farmers in tobacco country. They taught their three sons the value of hard work and certain skills for excelling in work. Murrow's brother, Dewey, reported that they "branded us with their own consciences." Murrow undoubtedly integrated his parents' ethical guidelines with his own ideals. He had a deep sense of right and wrong and was very bright. He once confided, "Everyone is a prisoner of his own experiences. No one can eliminate prejudices--just recognize them."

Murrow became active in high school events becoming president of the student body, taking part in the debate team, and playing baseball and basketball. He majored in speech. Through his research for speaking and debating, Murrow became aware of how international and national affairs influenced American lives. After attending the National Student Federation of America meetings, he urged his youthful companions to become more interested their country and show less interest in "fraternities, football, and fun."

While in college years, Murrow changed his name Egbert to Edward, as down through the years, his nickname had become Ed. During his early years, his friends called him "Eber Blowhard" or "Blow"; his parents called him "Egg."

After he worked his way through high school and attended three different colleges, Murrow became the assistant director of the Institute of International Education from 1932 to 1935, serving as the Assistant Secretary of the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars. This group assisted German scholars who lost their teaching positions. He married Janet Huntington Brewster. To this union, one child, Charles Casey was born.

In 1935, Murrow joined CBS Columbia Broadcasting System as director of Talks and Education but later was transferred as chief of the European Bureau in London. At this time, CBS did not have newscasters. Instead Bob Trout chose news makers to appear on the network to discuss daily issues.

In his association with Trout, Murrow gained knowledge of how to communicate effectively on the radio with his rich, expressive voice which drew the attention of America's radio listeners. He possessed a clipped, slow, but deliberate style of speaking.

As the threat of war increased, Murrow abandoned his cultural program projects and made a special trip to Vienna in '38 to report on the Nazi invasion of Vienna, Austria.

As an employee of CBS, Murrow began relating war events, according to his view, by way of radio into American homes. In fact, reasoning that eyewitness reports would be even better, he set up a network of correspondents to keep the public informed of the gathering "storm clouds" in Europe. For that work, he chose distinguished war correspondents including William Shirer, Charles Collingwood, Bill Shael, Howard K. Smith, and others who became known as "Murrow's Boys."

"Murrow's Boys" reported World War II from the front lines. Because of Murrow's own fearlessness, these newscasters displayed courage and loyalty. Their eyewitness reports set a new trend for radio broadcasting. Murrow, in order to bring the latest news to the public, flew at least twenty bombing missions over Berlin. Along with Bill Shael, Murrow was the first Allied correspondent to report on the horrors of the Nazi death camps America listened to his voice from his "rooftop" radio broadcasts during the Battle of Britain in 1939.

Murrow became known for his point-of-view as well as his deliberate speaking style. In fact, because of his unique style, most listeners thought that he was directly speaking to them not just reading a script. He also inserted visual images that brought his listeners closer to the scenes being depicted.

"I have been walking tonight-there is a full moon, and the dirty gray buildings appear white. The stars, the empty windows, are hidden. It's a beautiful and lonesome city where men and women and children are trying to snatch a few hours sleep underground."

Because of his intense patriotism, Murrow used his programs to discuss democratic ideals such as freedom of speech, citizen participation in the government, the pursuit of truth, and individual liberties and rights. His words were appropriate during a war where individual rights were taken away through totalitarianism evidenced by Nazi bombs and the London Blitz.

Murrow's broadcasts represented the conscience of Americans as Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini moved over more and more territory. Murrow's pictures of the suffering, the strife, and the Europeans' fear brought a new understanding of conditions in Europe.

Murrow even visited the camps at Buchenwald (1945) and reported on the Holocaust.

"As I walked down to the end of the barracks, there was applause from the men too weak to get out of bed. It sounded by hand clapping of babies, they were so weak. We went to the hospital; it was full. The doctor told me that two hundred had died the day before. I asked the cause of death; he shrugged and said,

Tuberculosis, starvation fatigue, and there are many who have no desire to live."

Even though he kept his descriptions toned down, Americans were horrified.

After the World War II, Murrow traveled to Korea to report on what was occurring. . Fred Friendly and Murrow produced a radio show, HEAR IT NOW. Later, the pair hosted a television called SEE IT NOW. In the most talked about show of SEE IT NOW, Murrow attacked Joseph R. McCarthy for his investigations of those in the government with supposed Communist tendencies. What was presented caused a national controversy.

Even though, radio seemed to be Murrow's first love, he later produced the PERSON TO PERSON television program in 1953, as well as moderating and producing SMALL WORLD. However, he continued with his radio programs. During his career, Murrow received nine Emmy awards.

In 1961, he was appointed by President John F. Kennedy to lead the United States Information Agency. He left that post in 1964 because of ill health. He died in New York on April 27, 1965, of a lung ailment.

In a way, the growth and power of the radio is illustrated by Edward R. Murrow, who had become a broadcasting symbol and the most distinguished, renowned person in the history of American broadcast journalism. He presented stories in such a way that they become commentaries on political or social issues. He was known for his courage, integrity, social responsibility, and journalistic excellence. As a newscaster, he displayed the highest ideals of both broadcast news and the television industry. He was a man of truth which he conveyed to audiences.

In addition, Edward R. Murrow was a true patriot. He cared about his country and the people within it. He once reflected, "Our history will be what we make it." David Halberstam in THE POWERS THAT BE described Murrow as "One of those rare legendary figures who was as good as his myth."

CLOSING COMMENTS

A Good Life



By: Norm Schrein, KA8PGJ

I have been thinking about life goals and accomplishments recently. I have come up with my personal top ten things to do. I have decided to share them here and hopefully Nat-Com readers will find some of them to be useful.

1. Have a hobby or two. If you are a scanner enthusiast, then you may have accomplished this one already.
2. Don't let your hobby be your life. If you become totally involved in a hobby you will lose contact with family, friends and reality.
3. Volunteer. This might be something to put off until retirement, but don't miss being a volunteer. There are all sorts of volunteer opportunities available, including your local volunteer fire department, hospital and many others.
4. Travel. Mark Twain had two famous quotes about travel, "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness." and "I travel for travel's sake."
5. Write something sometime. Take a minute or years and write down your thoughts. It is easy to record something electronically, but it takes a bit of time and some editing to compose your thoughts on a specific topic. You will always come across better when you have written your thoughts down and edited them than you would if you simply recorded your thoughts electronically.
6. When you write something down, do your research first and make sure that you get your facts straight. Getting your facts straight is something you will want to do whether you are writing something or simply having a conversation.
7. Try not to be opinionated. It is ok to have an opinion on a subject, but your opinion may not the only one and it also may not be the correct one.
8. Remember that when you are sick your job will not take care of you, but your family will, so keep in touch.
9. Value your friendships whether they are long term or brand new. Treat your friends and those who are not your friends with kindness and respect. After all that is how you would want them to treat you.
10. Enjoy life as it is usually shorter than what we would want. Be kind and respectful, open minded, and helpful. Pay it forward.

If we all could try these 10 suggestions and others, our days will be much brighter. Make your own list. That part will be easy. Trying to live your list might be a bit more difficult. We observe disrespect and closed mindedness in our daily activities. This transfers to our radio hobby as well. Listen to our collective conversations in person or on CB and the amateur radio bands as well. Sometimes we need to bite our lips, take a deep breath and think before we speak.

LAST PAGE OUT



A Crumbling Berlin Wall.

Photo by Norm Schrein

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