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page 4

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Staff

Editor - Norm Schrein
Writers - Jon Van Allen, Eddie Muro, Chuck Gysi, Mark Meece, Alan Dixon, Jim Sutton, Tom Swisher, Dorothy Rieke, T.J. "Skip" Arey, and Gordon West
Production: The Graphic Image

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President - Norm Schrein

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Winter Shack Projects and Ideas

By Jon Van Allen KF7YN

Here we are once again, another winter season is closing fast upon us and now is the perfect time to clean up the shack, organize, update, identify things that need to be done and otherwise take up where we left off when the weather was warm and we all headed outside for the summer. Let's talk about some ideas you can use to improve things in the shack. Every year, I try to find something that needs to be fixed, rearranged or improved. There is always something that needs attention! Good engineering is essential to a quality monitoring post.

Since winter brings nasty weather for a good portion of the country, hopefully you have some type of emergency power arrangement. Nothing beats a generator for power outages but if power is out for more than a day or you have a limited fuel supply on hand, you might think about plunking down the necessary funds for a solar panel and a deep cycle battery. I have a 75 watt panel which puts out 5 amps charging current to my deep cycle battery.

I also have a 600 watt power inverter and a 2800 watt Yamaha inverter generator which has plenty of power to run everything in my RV or shack including my fridge and blower motor for the furnace. I keep enough fuel on hand to run it for 3 or 4 days continuously. At a bare minimum you need a deep cycle battery to run your most important radio gear and maybe an internet modem and/or cell phone. Car batteries are not a good source of backup power; they are designed to provide high starting current for a short period of time but not for deep cycle applications. Get a good deep cycle battery and make sure it is charged up and ready to go. They are not all that expensive; any RV or Boat deep cycle battery is fine.

Emergency lighting: I suggest investing in a couple of LED flashlights and maybe a strip of 12 volt LED lights bright enough to light your radio area. These can run directly from your deep cycle battery and draw very little current. You can get all sorts of cool LED lighting products from the C. Crane Company www.ccradio.com or The LED Light Store www.theledlight.com/LEDFlashlights.html I like buying from the LED Light Store, especially clearance items. I am slowly converting some of my house lighting to LED lighting as well, the benefits are a lower power bill and long bulb life. I have an emergency light on my radio desk made from an LED array and it runs directly from my 12 Volt emergency battery. It draws only a few milliamps of power. I bought an LED desk lamp that has 20 white LEDs and runs on 3 D-cells. It has a high and low setting; 10 LEDs for low, 20 for high. The low setting is plenty bright for reading and as an emergency light. This cool light is available on eBay for under $10 plus shipping! It will run for days on one set of D cells. This handy lamp sits on my radio desk when I'm not using it for other things.





I also have a few LED lights in my RV for backup lighting, they are awesome! I can't say enough about having reliable lighting that does not draw a lot of power. This technology is light years ahead of regular lighting and the best part is LED lights are "RF friendly" which is to say they do not cause RFI (Radio Frequency Interference) like fluorescent lights do.

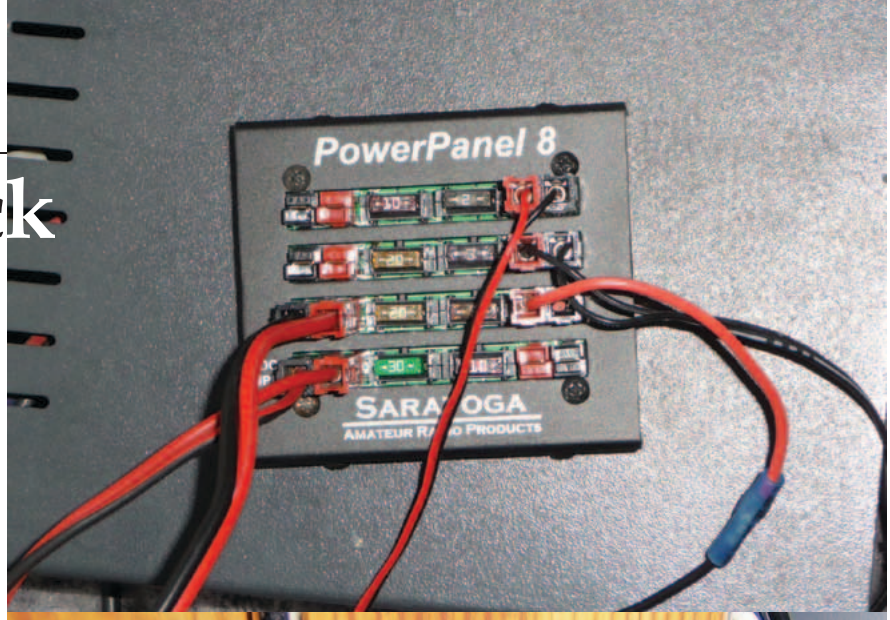
Power line protection and conditioning: I hope you are using some form of surge protection in your radio installation. The main problems we encounter in powering our radios are: power line and local man-made noise from computers, TVs, motors, appliances, etc.; RFI (Radio Frequency Interference); power spikes and voltage fluctuations.

For this I use a product out by one of my favorite radio gadget companies, MFJ Enterprises. The MFJ-1164B AC Line RFI Filter is an awesome power strip. MFJ's website description: "Squash obnoxious power line computer hash/noise 6 S-units! Filters and reduces AC power line RFI, hash, noise, transients, surges generated by computers, motors, RF transmitters, static/lightning by 30 db and up to 60-80 dB with good earth ground.

The 1164B provides super fast, nano-second over voltage protection, inductive isolation, capacitive decoupling, RFI rejection, over voltage protection of both common mode and differential signals. Rejects/shunts undesired signals to ground. Four 3-wire, 15 Amp, 120 VAC outlets spaced for large AC adapters. 25 Amps/3000 Watts maximum. It comes with a fused 5.5 foot cord, wing nut for ground,

Continued on page 6

Winter Shack Projects and Ideas





mounting holes and a rugged aluminum case. Check out the MFJ-1164 online at www.mfjenterprises.com or call them at 1-800-647-1800.

Proper grounding: There is no substitute for proper grounding! My radios are connected to a grounding bus by heavy flexible copper wire mesh. A 2" wide copper grounding strap connects the bus to a grounding rod outside my radio room. The shorter the path to ground, the better.

Solar panels and power converters, once very expensive devices, have come down in price considerably. A complete backup power system consisting of a solar panel, charge controller, power inverter and deep cycle battery with enough capacity to run your radio equipment during emergencies and power outages can be put together for as little as $250-300. Or for the same money you can get a decent generator. While $250 isn't chicken feed, hopefully it is within your budget. Being able to monitor during power outages and emergencies is priceless! None of these need to be permanently mounted, I use my generator, solar panel and inverter at home and on camping trips, ham radio field day and other outings. Outfitting your shack with emergency power and testing the setup are an excellent winter project.

DC Power connectors: Here is an area of many choices and opinions. Like many hams, I prefer to use 30 amp Anderson Power Pole red & black connectors which are the standard for many radio organizations. ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service) is an organization which uses these and in fact some people call them "ARES connectors". As you can see in the photos, you can buy ready-made terminals for these connectors. I use the popular Rig-Runner terminals in my shack and my vehicles and all of my 12 Volt DC radios equipped with these Power Pole connectors. Standardizing your DC power connectors is a great winter project that won't break the budget.

Splitters and multi-couplers: You probably know I'm a fan of Stridsberg multi-couplers, the quality is top notch and they are built to last and Stridsberg will keep it updated to the latest model for free! I reviewed one last year in these pages. If you need to connect two or more scanners to one antenna, multi-couplers are the best choice. A common TV splitter will work okay but just remember my scale of good, better, best: Good = TV splitter. Better = Satellite TV splitter/combiner. Best = Multi-coupler. That is as simple as it gets.

External speakers: If you can't afford a good DSP speaker, stick with comm speakers designed for

Continued on page 8

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Winter Shack Projects and Ideas

300-3000 Hz audio frequency response of the human voice. In my experience, stereo speakers aren't the best choice for scanners because they pass a much wider frequency range than comm speakers. The result is sub-audible CTCSS tones on conventional frequencies and the sub-audible slow speed handshaking data on trunked systems become much more noticeable, as does high frequency hiss. This can be offset using a graphic equalizer if you run the audio through a stereo amp, for example. Most any radio dealer (including our very own Hobby Radio Stop) sells good quality comm speakers, as do MFJ and Radio Shack.

I use two Hear It DSP speakers with my two main base scanners. I have extolled the virtues of DSP speakers in previous articles but suffice it to say they clean up noise so well that I can hear noisy comms better than the dispatchers who do not have this capability! I can't say enough about cleaning up weak and noisy signals with a good DSP speaker. After you have used DSP, you will wonder how you ever got along without it.

Headphones: I like to use full ear cup "around the ear" noise canceling headphones that reduce background noise. For those of us who are hearing impaired this is a tremendous help. If I'm not in a noisy area, I just switch the power off and use them like regular headphones. You can see in the photo the comfy headband and soft ear cups. I picked these up for under $40 which is a bargain for noise canceling headphones (I refuse to spend $299 or more for the famous four letter brand). Spend some time this winter experimenting with different speakers and headphones and let me know what works best for you!

Preventative maintenance: Hopefully you inspected your antennas and coax feed line before the weather turned cold. Now and then I find signs of electrolysis corrosion. Since water is the main culprit, where you live can make a difference. In the desert, electrochemical action will be less than humid areas and near the ocean because of ever-present moisture (and salt).

I clean my antenna connectors with a wire brush and electronics grade contact cleaner. Loose antenna connections and corrosion can result in signal loss and contribute to intermod. Be sure to reseal and weatherproof those connections after you clean them up. Ditto for battery connections, make sure they are clean and tight. I've learned that even the best coax degrades over time when exposed to years of UV rays, brutal heat, cold, rain, snow, ice and wind.



I replace my coax every 5 or 6 years. Some may think that unnecessary, but I believe more in preventive maintenance than letting things go until they become a problem.

Speaking of antennas, my favorite all around scanner antenna is the Antenna Craft Scantenna. This is an affordable and great performing antenna and is easy to put up and maintain. You will be amazed at the signals you'll hear with this antenna.

I found the perfect solution to running antenna feed lines into my shack when I moved it downstairs. MFJ makes a feed through panel that works with most any window (see photos). If you are like me and don't want to drill holes, this is a very nice alternative. This panel accepts up to six antenna connections and has a ground lug connector.

Multi-coupler. When it comes to running multiple scanners from one antenna, I strongly urge you avoid using T or Y connectors because they allow your scanners to negatively interact with each other due to lack





of isolation between outputs. I also don't recommend unamplified TV splitters because they are lossy, each split in an unamplified circuit will cost you 3dB which translates to losing half your signal. This is why I strongly believe in using the right tool for the job, an amplified multi-coupler such as those made by Stridsberg Engineering. The amplification makes up the loss from splitting the signal and offers a very high degree of isolation between ports. Each scanner performs as if it has the antenna all to itself.

Arranging your radios & accessories: having your radio room organized makes all the difference when you can see and reach your radios in comfort. I have my scanners and computer neatly arranged on a desk that gives easy access to both.

Publications & reference materials: If you don't have a dedicated place for your magazines and books, get yourself an inexpensive bookshelf just for radio-related magazines and books. I arrange them by year and month for easy reference. If you are like me, I have a habit of tossing them back on the shelf without putting them in the right order. At some point I get tired of looking through the stack to find the one I want so I put them all back in the right order every winter.

Some people never discard their old magazines; I prefer to clean 'em out after several years. You never know when you might need to revisit a previous article or subject. Books are another matter; I keep them a lot longer, especially project books like constructing antennas. Another way to keep reference material handy is on your computer, many magazines are available electronically and/or on CDs, including Nat Com. Electronic copies takes up relatively little space on your hard drive and are invaluable for easy reference and portability if you store them on your laptop, netbook or tablet PC. Online scanner frequency database and other information is the way to go nowadays. This is a must when you are on vacation or on the road and want to program in new frequencies and talkgroups.

I hope find these ideas helpful and I would love to hear about your own improvements or project plans so we can share them with other Nat Comm readers. If you have questions about anything we've covered here or just want to say Hi, please drop me a line. My email address is kf7yn@yahoo.com. Until next time, happy scanning!

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Winter Is Coming!

Snowstorm Monitoring Helps You Stay Safe...

By Chuck Gysi, N2DUP

Monitor your local road crew so you can avoid travel problems.

Some areas of the country may have experienced their first snow flurries already this season – and more ice and snow surely are on the way over the next few months. My range of scanning targets expands slightly during the winter months so I can learn the condition of roadways if I have travel planned. It's essential that I know the shape of roadways before I head out in the morning, so I listen and discover what may or may not be a good route for where I need to go.

Obviously, I want to know that state, county and local snow plows are out and about, especially after a winter storm, which means snow or ice – or both! Most highways crews will be out sanding roads, spreading chemicals and scraping the effects of snow accumulations shortly after storms begin.

While snow plows are easy to monitor during winter storms, don't forget some additional scanning targets during winter months. My suggestions, in addition to the obvious public safety agencies such as police, include school buses and tow trucks. The big yellow buses are trying to navigate suburban streets and rural roads – if school is in session – and if a school bus can't get up a road, you are going to hear the driver call in to the bus garage to report the condition as well seeking advice on how to handle the situation. Sometimes the driver will have to pick up children at a different, safer location. Sometimes, the pickup just isn't going to happen, especially during dangerous conditions. Buses get stuck in the snow, too, and if that's the case, you'll learn what roads to avoid.

A State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities snow removal crew member plows and sands a roadway in Juneau during a snowstorm. (Photo courtesy of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities)

Tow trucks are an obvious winter monitoring target, too, because they will be the ones pulling cars and vehicles out of ditches after motorists take an icy slide to the side. By monitoring school bus and tow truck channels, you'll have a good idea of what roads to avoid.

However, if you're like me, you'll want to keep up to date with changing weather conditions, and monitoring local snow plows will keep you in the know. State transportation department plows are best to monitor for general highway conditions. Typically, state plows will patrol interstate

Winter Is Coming!

continued



and state highways. County plows will handle county roads, including roads you may not realize are county roadways, and municipal and city plows will handle local streets and roads that aren't covered by state and county plows.

Often on state highway frequencies, you'll hear weather reports given by highway garages to drivers. Often times, these weather reports come from private forecasting firms that contract with states and sometimes can vary from reports you might hear from the National Weather Service or local media. You might be surprised to find a difference in these reports, but it's not a bad idea to hear these additional weather reports if winter travel is essential for you.

If police call road crews with reports of dangerous roadways, you'll often hear these situations given out to plow drivers on their frequencies, sometimes directly by the police dispatchers if they have access to highway channels.

So where do you find snow plow frequencies? That's no easy answer anymore. The best place to start is a website such as RadioReference.com. State highway trucks almost always will have their own frequencies in a given area, and while these frequencies can vary inside a state from one region to another, it will pretty much be uniform. For instance, if the 47-MHz band is being used by state DOT trucks in your area, you'll pretty much hear trucks statewide in the same band.

At one time, state highway channels were pretty much exclusively on their own frequencies. For instance, you'd have found these frequencies in the past in areas such as 47-, 151-, 156-, 159- and maybe the 453-MHz bands. While there remain a lot of legacy radio systems out there, and may remain for years to come, some state highway radio systems have migrated to not only digital systems on frequencies that are available for any public safety entity these days, but perhaps also in the 700- and 800-MHz bands, too.

For instance, the Iowa Department of Transportation moved from its legacy analog VHF frequencies to a newer digital radio system that utilizes a multiplicity of frequencies in the VHF spectrum that are available to any public safety entity nowadays. Likewise, state transportation trucks in Minnesota now are on the statewide 800-MHz system in areas where that system works well. Some city and county highway units have migrated to that same statewide 800-MHz system, too, which offers cross-communication among various highway and public safety agencies during bad winter storms.

Snow removal operations occur on more than just roadways. Runways also need to be cleared during snowstorms. The Salina Airport Authority in Salina, Kan., is seen removing snow during a storm so that airport runways and taxiways are maintained for incoming and departing flights. Airport staff works around the clock on 12-hour shifts to remove tons of snow and ice during winter storms. (Photo courtesy of Salina Airport Authority)

While roadways have to be plowed during the colder months in most areas of the nation, there are other plowing operations that may be taking place during a winter storm. If you live near an airport, runways need to be cleared so planes can land and take off. Some of the much larger airports may have frequencies

Continued on page 12

Winter Is Coming!

continued



A New York State Department of Transportation snow plow clears a roadway during a snowstorm. NYSDOT's Office of Transportation Maintenance's Snow and Ice Program is responsible for managing snow and ice operations during the winter months and in planning for subsequent seasons during the non-winter months. NYSDOT's snow and ice fleet consists of more than 1,400 large plow trucks, 330 loaders and 50 snowblowers. (Photo courtesy of New York State Department of Transportation)

dedicated just for winter plowing operations, while others may use regular maintenance channels for snow removal tasks. Whether you're planning a flight, or just interested in the general scope of snow operations in your area, tuning in to your local airport as it digs out is worthwhile.

Private parking lots need to be cleaned out after snowstorms, and you typically will find these private plows out and about. A lot of seasonal businesses such as landscaping and nursery operations mount snow plows on their trucks during the winter months to keep crews busy. You'll find them using their usual frequencies for private plowing operations. Some states and locales also may use private plows or haulers with plows to help clear off highways and streets during major snow events. You might be surprised to hear the amount of snow operations on your scanner if you just do a simple frequency search during a major snowstorm!

No matter what you do during the winter months, monitoring your local and regional snow plows will pay off if you have to travel just to the corner store or to another corner of the state. Listen to the problem areas and hear the updated road condition reports. You'll be glad you did and you may have helped yourself avert a dangerous situation!

Write in

Why do you listen to snow plows? What are your favorite plowing frequencies during the winter months? 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.



Winter storms in North Dakota can get nasty. Here's a close-up view of a North Dakota Department of Transportation snow plow on Interstate 94 east of Crown Butte Dam. (Photo courtesy of North Dakota Department of Transportation)

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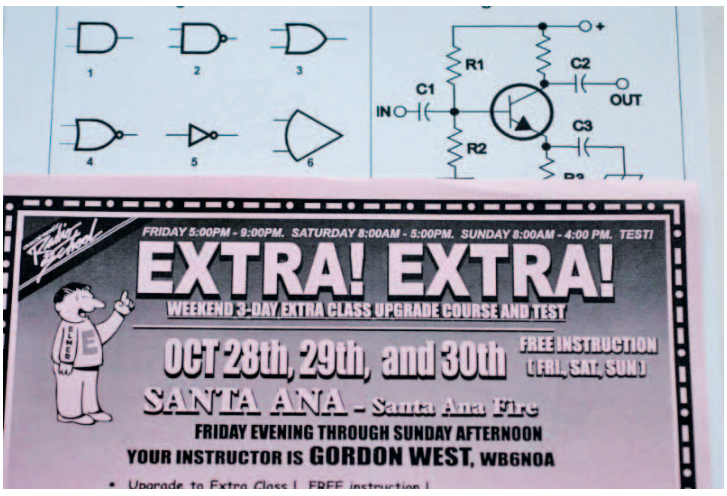
By Gordon West, WB6NOA

It's Time to Upgrade Amateur Extra Class Before the Test Questions Change

The Element 4 Extra Class question pool is currently undergoing some major revisions and updating, and the new exam will take effect July 1, 2012. Next year's Extra Class question pool will have a lot more Q&A on digital techniques and digital math. There's a good chance, that the number of questions in the pool will be increased in July 2012. So take your exam SOON -- pass the present Extra Class test before the new pool goes into effect!

Amateur Extra Class is the top ham radio license. There are currently 125,400 Extra Class operators, making up 18% of our amateur radio hobby and service.

Probably 50% of the currently licensed Extra Class operators originally passed a 20-word-per-minute code test, and probably half of those 20-wpm Extra Class operators passed their CW test at an FCC Field Office. I can still remember that day! Today, there no longer is a Morse code requirement. In February 2007, the Federal Communications Commission ended code test requirements for all amateur radio licenses, concluding that:



"This change eliminates an unnecessary burden that may discourage current amateur radio operators from advancing their skills and participating more fully in the benefits of amateur radio."

If you enjoy chasing DX many rare foreign DX stations operate split, often listening within our Extra Class band segments. That's one of the big reasons to earn that Extra Class prize!

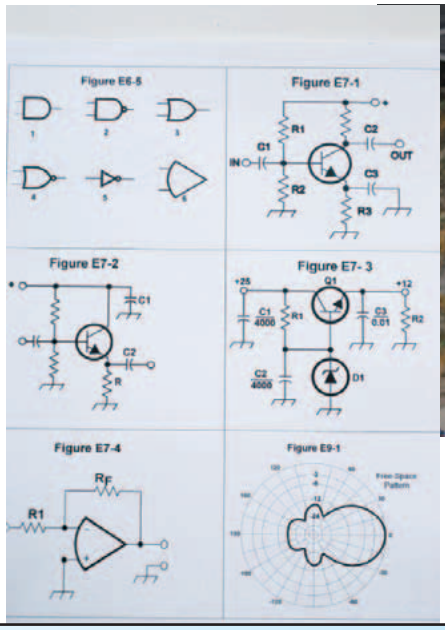
While some hams may wish to upgrade to Extra Class, "just because it's there as the highest license," the more active amateur operators wish to gain privileges on the 25-kHz CW windows exclusively for Extra Class operators at the bottom end of 80, 40, 20 and 15-meters. Extra Class operators also gain 150 kHz of additional, exclusive phone privileges 0n 75-, 20- and 15-meters.

Another perk -- Extra Class operators are the only amateur operators eligible for the AA-AL x 2, or 2x1 short-block call signs!

"Every ham operator has their own electronic specialty or favorite operating technique. To earn Extra Class, you don't necessarily need to be an engineer," comments Tom MacKay, W6WC, an active volunteer examiner and member of Navy/Marine MARS.

"And even if you are an Extra Class licensee, holding an engineering degree, it doesn't necessarily mean that

New diagrams for new extra next year.



you're an expert on every single subject on the Extra Class exam," adds MacKay.

The current Extra Class pool contains a total of 738 multiple choice questions. But don't panic – only 50 questions will be on the exam! You'll pass with the required 74% (37 correct) of those 50 questions. There are a set number of exam questions from each of the ten sub elements:

Subelement	Topic	No. of Exam Questions
E1	Rules and Regulations	6
E2	Operating Practices and Procedures	5
E3	Radio Wave Propagation	3
E4	Amateur Radio Practices	5
E5	Math – Electrical Principles	4
E6	Circuit Components	6
E7	Practical Amateur Radio Circuits	8
E8	Signals and Emissions	4
E9	Antenna and Transmission Lines	8
E0	Safety	1





Kids prepare for the extra class test this year.

OK, your math skills and algebra got left behind when you finished high school or college. No problem! You do NOT need to be a math expert to pass the Extra test. Same thing applies with learning all about circuits and components.

The typical number of actual math questions found on an Extra Class test is around 6! You could (theoretically, please) skip all 6, do well in the other areas, and still pass.! Rusty on trig tables and phase angles? If you get the test out of the way before July 1st, 2012, the correct answer may begin with 14 degrees, and all you need to do is know if the circuit is more inductive or more capacitive. When you read the answer explanations, ELI the ICE man, at 14 degrees, causes the correct answer to jump out at you!

In subelement E6, Circuit Components, maybe TTL and CMOS digital integrated circuits and gates are ultimate mind blocks for you. But you can only get one question out of group E6C!

Within each subelement, there may be as many as 10 to 12 "groups" of similar-topic questions. You will only get ONE question on your test out of any one group! Each question uses the exact same 4 multiple choice answers that you studied. The questions and answers MUST be verbatim from the book. Also, in many cases 2 of the 4 answers can sometimes be ridiculously wrong, so, if you must absolutely guess, you still have a 50-50 chance of getting the answer right.

Speaking of groups of questions, while there are 738 total Extra Class questions in the

Continued on page 16

Extra Class Now!



current pool, many questions are simply reworded and asked several times over. If you just go on line to study Q&A, you likely will not discover many nearly-identical questions because they are scattered throughout the pool.

The Extra Class study manual groups all of these similar questions and those with nearly identical problem solutions together to speed your learning. You'll be surprised to see two pages of nearly identical Q&A grouped together that have are completely out of numerical order according to their question pool numbers.

It's important to understand the significance and relevance of each question to the Extra Class amateur radio service. So after each Q&A we have an upbeat explanation, show you problem solving right after that specific question, and then give you some fun ways to problem-solve, like ELI the ICE man, or Pointing iN or Not Pointing iN to distinguish between transistors (PNP or NPN).

Even MORE good news – if you're already an Extra Class operator and plan to "Elmer" and Extra Class course, I just finished the FREE Extra Class INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE that includes some great hints on teaching the Extra Class material, totally reorganized to match the book, available FREE from www.haminstructor.com. Just register and they will make sure you are up to date on what you need to teach Extra Class!



Many technical types will easily pass old or new extra class tests.

IMPORTANT – When students pass the Extra Class test, all upgrading students need to remember the CURRENT expiration date of their General or Advanced Class license will apply. Upgrading DOES NOT EXTEND the expiration period. This is true for ALL upgrades of any class of license. The date of your most recent license grant is the one to remember. RENEW within 90 days of that date, NOT 10 years from the date you upgrade.

Calling all General and Advanced Class operators – most of my students say the hardest part of getting the Extra Class ticket is just deciding to DO it, and getting started with the current materials. On your own, it's about 60-day test prep. If you do a lot of driving, get the Extra Class 6-CD audio set and play them in the car. And, if you have lots of spare time on the computer, there is a fun W5YI Group software course that tracks your progress and even gives you my explanations for each correct answer to reinforce your preparation for the test. There are additional practice exams at QRZ.com.

One thing for sure, the Extra Class question pool gets a big makeover next July 1, 2012, and you REALLY do want to get the test out of the way before that date.

If you use my study products, you will see my phone number all over the place. I am the only amateur radio author who serves you as a "phone-in Elmer" if you need a little help with some of the math, or if diode direction is a puzzle. I come with the book and audio course, and my number is 714-549-5000 for help during the daytime, Monday through Thursday, to help you get ready for the test, OR to congratulate you after you pass the test, and maybe we can meet on the air with your new Extra Class station.

Hope, the King of Entertainment

By Dorothy Rieke

"Are you sure you'll feel at home on this program?" asked Bob Hope. Judy Garland replied,

"Oh, yes, Mr. Hope...you should have seen all the strange creatures I worked with in the WIZARD OF OZ."



Many radio listeners during the Golden Age of Radio recall Bob Hope and his effortless way of entertaining audiences. Hope, displaying a unique talent, spent sixty years on radio, television, in movies, and entertaining troops. He has been recognized as the "The Most Honored Entertainer" by THE GUINNESS BOOK OF WORLD RECORDS.

This versatile actor was born as Leslie Townes Hope in London, England, on May 29, 1903. He was the fifth of seven sons. His family moved to Cleveland, Ohio, in 1907. Bob once observed, "I left England at the age of four when I found out I couldn't be king."

During his teen years, Bob began working at part-time jobs on the local boardwalk. He was a delivery boy in his brother Fred's meat market, a soda jerk, a shoe salesman, and a pool hustler. He also made extra money by doing dance and comedy routines on the trolley to Luna Park. As Lester Hope, he entered dancing and amateur talent contests and won prizes when he impersonated Charlie Chaplin, a popular movie star.

At the age of fifteen , Hope spent time in the Boys Industrial School in Lancaster, Ohio. Fortunately, this reform school was one that had more innovative, progressive programs for juvenile offenders. Later in life, Hope generously supported this school.

After attending high school, Bob received training in dancing from Johnny Root and King Rastus Brown. With this instruction, eighteen-year-old Bob and his girlfriend, Mildred Rosequist perfected a dance routine that earned them eight dollars for each performance. With this success, they planned to take the act on the road until the girlfriend's mother saw the act.

At one time, Bob, under the name of Packy East, tried to earn his living in the boxing ring. He gave up boxing when he "was not only being carried out of the ring, but into the ring."

Bob and a partner, Lloyd Durbin, were hired by the Bandbox Theater people in Cleveland as an act for the Fatty Arbuckle Show. During this association, Fatty, a silent film comedian, helped Hope get his first break when he recommended Hope for a role in Hurley's "Jolly Follies." Later, Hope formed an act called the Dance medians with George Byrne and the Hilton sisters. This act played major houses including Keith's Flushing in New York City.

While in New York City, Hope and Byrne were hired for the Broadway show, "The Sidewalks of New York" starring Ruby Keeler. This show had a long run, but, unfortunately, Hope and Byrne did not remain a part of it.

Changing their routine, the two traveled west hoping to find work. During a stint in a New Castle, Pennsylvania, theater, Bob did a "single" for several nights and discovered he no longer required a partner.

In 1925, Leslie or Lester Hope changed his name to Bob. There were two reasons given for the name change. One reason was that he admired race car driver, Bob Barman and wanted to share his name. The other reason was that he wanted a name that had a friendly "Hiya, Fellas" sound to it.

Most vaudeville actors and actresses aspired to be in movies. Unlike many contemporaries, Bob jumped into the new medium with gusto. In 1930, Bob and his future wife and partner, Grace Louise Troxell, took a film screen test which they failed.

After Bob won several Charlie Chaplin impersonation contests, he played in vaudeville with "Songs, Patter and Eccentric Dancing. In 1933, he appeared in the Broadway hit, ROBERTA.

Continued on page 18

Hope, the King of Entertainment



In 1934, Bob was employed by Educational Pictures for a short-subject comedy, GOING SPANISH. Later, when Walter Winchell asked him about that film, Hope replied, "When they catch John Dillinger, they're going to make him sit through it twice." That comment may have caused Bob to be fired. Later, he began starring in 20-minute comedies and musicals from 1934 through 1936.

His first film appearance was in 1935 when he was hired for "The Intimate Revue." At about that same time, Paramount Pictures signed Hope for THE BIG BROADCAST OF 1938. W. C. Fields also starred in this film. In that film, Shep Fields and his orchestra, played a song sung by Bob and Shirley Ross. " Thanks for the Memory" became Bob's theme song for his radio show.

Hope made brief radio appearances between 1935 and 1937. At this time, theater owners were interested in using radio to promote box-office attractions. At New York's Capitol Theater, Major Edward J. Bowes hosted the "Capitol Family Hour" which originated from that theater each morning. Bob was on that show with Bing Crosby. This was a first time for the two to appear together.

Hope's first major radio appearance was for the "Fleishmann Hour" starring Rudy Vallee. In 1937, Hope began his first NBC radio series, the "Woodbury Soap Hour," which lasted twenty-six weeks, A year later, he was starring in the Tuesday night Pepsodent show that ran until 1953. His popularity on that show soon made his name a "household word."

Several factors contributed to Hope's radio show success. Perhaps part of his popularity could be attributed to his supporting cast. Vera Vague, the vocal group, Six Hits and a Miss, Skinney Ennis and His Orchestra, and the announcer Bill Goodwin. All were excellent at what they did. Later, the famous Les Brown and his Band of Renown and Wendall Niles joined the show. He also was fortunate in his choice of such singers as Judy Garland, Frances Langford, Doris Day, and Gloria Jean.

Down through the years, his guests also included such "greats" as Al Jolson, Jack Benny, Doris Day, Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, and others. One Christmas show was the story of Bingsy and Bobsy with Bing Crosby. In fact, Hope was known for his stunning array of guest stars.

Hope continued

In the years to come, Hope became one of Paramount's most popular movie stars. It is interesting to note that his co-stars in his movies became guest stars on his radio shows. He made films, appeared on his radio program, and performed in live concerts. He was a good singer and dancer. In fact, some of the songs he introduced in films became immediate hits such as, "Buttons and Bows" (THE PALEFACE) and "Thanks for the Memory" (THE BIG BROADCAST OF 1938) Additional songs included "Two Sleepy People," "Silver Bells," "Put it there Pal," and "Teamwork."

Hope's "road movies" also starring Bing Crosby and Dorothy Lamour, from 1940 to 1962 were extremely popular. It is said that Dorothy Lamour always learned her lines before filming only to have Hope change his lines at the last minute leaving her to figure out how to respond to his comments.

Hope and Crooner Bing Crosby, his fellow star in movies, had an ongoing comic feud which entertained audiences on radio and in films. His radio shows in 1938 featured jokes, songs, and sketches carried along by Hope's considerable charm. Hope had the ability with words, a glibness, and, seemingly, a keen intelligence. Someone observed, "Hope was a machine gun, constantly firing off jokes."

Hope also had "Olympic-style writers" who turned out great material for a 37- minute presentation. Then, he whittled down the jokes so make a surefire performance of "breathless gush with six laughs a minute guaranteed."

No article about Bob Hope would be complete without mention of the service he performed with gusto during the war years when he entertained during World War II and in later wars in Korea, Vietnam, and the Middle East. His first broadcast of this sort took place at the March Army Air Force Field in Riverside, California. He was now performing before a live audience of soldiers and geared his subject matter as a monologue to the troops. Through these appearances, he provided great support to our men in uniform.

Hope, a comedian that surfaced from the latter days of vaudeville, became a triple-treat superstar of radio, film, and television during the 40s and 50s. Even though his "really productive" years ended during the 1960s, he continued to make appearances up into the 90s. On his 100th birthday, he commented, "I'm so old they've cancelled my blood type." He died a few months later in July 2003.

Unbelievable but true, during his early days in entertainment, he entertained people by impersonating Charlie Chaplin in front of the firehouse in Cleveland, and he also played third billing to Siamese twins and trained seals. However as the years passed, he became one of the most recognized profiles and talents in the entertainment business. He became a beloved performer, and was skilled in the entertainment form of spontaneous one -liners. In addition, he had the ability to make audiences laugh at themselves, their contemporary culture and its foibles, as well as their politics and politicians. His mastery of the one-liner, fast wit, and good-natured humor entertained generations of fans. He was known for his quick wit, wise cracking, patriotism, and human compassion. "No person in show business traveled so far and so often to entertain so many."

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Boeing B-47 "Stratojet"

Whiteman Air Force Base in knobby John Mason County, Missouri

By Mark Meece

This issue we head to the knobby part of Missouri. Located in the very heart of America. In particular Johnson County, Missouri just a mere two miles south of Knob Noster (named for the geographical landmark in the town) and twenty miles west of Sedalia is Whiteman Air Force Base.

Whiteman Air Force Base began its existence as the direct result of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. As military force of the United States mobilized following the attack, the base activated on August 6, 1942 as the Sedalia Glider Base. However, life at the base really swung into gear in August of 1951 as part of the Strategic Air Command (SAC). The 4224th Air Base Squadron was activated by SAC and charged with overseeing the construction and refurbishing of the new Sedalia Air Force Base. This continued until October 20, 1952 when the 4224th ABS was deactivated. The new host wing for the base became the 340th Bombardment Wing. SAC ordered the command's newest aircraft scheduled for delivery to the 340th BW. The wing would be receiving the new Boeing B-47 "Stratojet" the country's first swept wing strategic bomber and the KC-97 "Stratotanker" aircraft. Runway repairs and base construction projects finished in November 1953 and the first B-47 arrived in March 1954. By the time production ended over 1,200 Stratojets were in service all over the globe at Strategic Air Command bases. The B-47 was removed from operational service fifteen years later in the late 1960s. Ordinarily the B-47 carried a crew of three - pilot, co-pilot (who operated the tail turret by remote) and an observer who also did duty as navigator, bombardier and radar operator.

Sedalia Air Force Base was officially renamed to Whiteman Air Force base on December 3, 1955 to honor Sedalia native 2nd Lieutenant George A. Whiteman. Lieutenant Whiteman was one of the first airmen to be killed in World War II during the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

As the 1960s arrived and the Cold War gained momentum, Whiteman was chosen by the United States Government to serve as a support base for the 4th Minuteman Strategic Missile Wing. Shortly after the site selection, second thoughts were raised, as the original plan called for

Continued on page 22

Whiteman AFB continued

Minuteman Missile sites to be spread out as far south as to the Lake of The Ozarks region. Those plans were scrubbed because of the high water table and difficult terrain. By the time final approval was reached on January 17, 1962, the launchers were place in close proximity to Whiteman. Thus making Whiteman the smallest Minuteman Base in terms of area.

A construction contract was awarded on March 20, 1962 to the firm of Morrison, Hardeman, Perrini, and Level for the low bid of $60.6 million. While construction commenced days later on April 2nd, the official groundbreaking ceremony did not take place until April 14, 1962, attended by Missouri Governor John Dalton and several area congressmen. Plans for the project included the removal of 867,000 cubic yards of earth and rock. For construction of the hardened underground facilities and fifteen launch centers. Contractors utilized 68,000 yards of concrete, 25,355 tons of reinforcing steel and 15,120 tons of structural steel. The project included installation of 15 launch facilities, 150 missile silos, numerous roads and bridges throughout rural Missouri countryside. The project's lifeline, was a "Hardened Intersite Cable System" totaling around 1,777 miles. This connected all of the facilities and launch sites. This also facilitated the need to procure land rights-of-entry from over 6,000 landowners.

TABLE 1

TENANT UNITS	AIRCRAFT	TAIL
509th Bomb Wing 509th Bomb Operations Group 13th Bomb Squadron 393rd Expeditionary Bomb Squadron 394th Combat Training Squadron 509th Operations Support Squadron	B-2 T-38A	WM WM
442nd Fighter Wing (AFRC) 303rd Fighter Squadron	A-10	KC
131st Bomb Wing (MO ANG)	B-2	WM
1-135th AVN (MO Army NG)	AH-64H	

UNIT CALLSIGNS

509th BW 13th BS	BATT, DEATH, FURY, HAMMER, SPIRIT CONTROL REAPER
394th CTS	FAST, POTSY
442nd FW/303rd FS KC HAWGS	BORG, CHISEL, CUB, DITTO, GONZO, JUG, KAYCEE, PEPPY, SAUCER, SCOUT, SHOGUN, WODAN
1-135 AVN	HAWK



Boeing B-1 Bomber

Whiteman AFB continued

TABLE 2

WHITEMAN AIR FORCE BASE (KSZL)

AERONAUTICAL OPERATIONS:

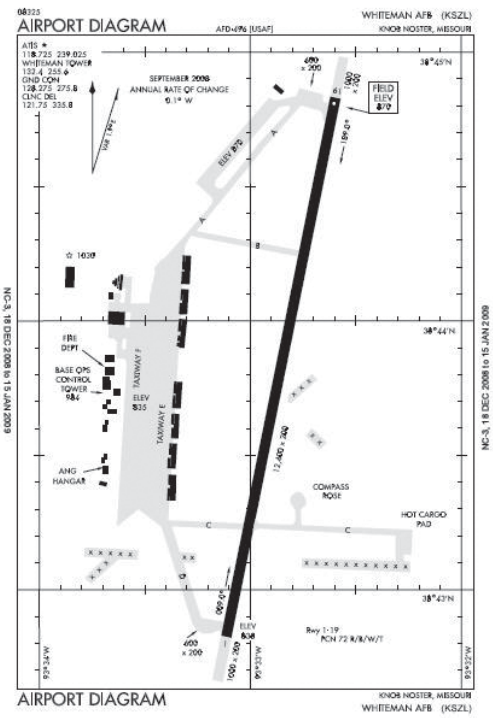
34.600	303rd FS Interflight
36.500	303rd FS
36.600	303rd FS
41.000	HAWK OPS
49.650	HAWK OPS
49.850	303rd FS Interflight
118.725	ATIS
121.750	Clearance Delivery
125.925	Whiteman Departure
127.450	Whiteman Approach
128.275	Whiteman Ground
132.400	Whiteman Tower
138.125	303rd FS GROUND HOG
138.400	303rd FS SOF
139.000	HAWK OPS
149.250	303rd FS Interflight
149.525	303rd FS MOA Discrete
239.025	ATIS
242.400	HAWK OPS
255.600	Whiteman Tower
260.200	509th OSS
260.250	Approach
275.800	Whiteman Ground
277.800	303r TFS "GROUND HOG"
284.000	Whiteman Approach
285.600	KC Center
305.100	303rd FS MOA Discrete
308.500	509th BW Air to Air
311.000	ACC Command Post Primary
318.050	509th Command Post "SPIRIT CONTROL"
321.000	ACC Command Post Secondary
335.800	Whiteman Clearance
343.650	Whiteman Departure
344.600	METRO
358.250	SFA
372.200	Pilot to Dispatcher



Minute Men 3 Display

All of this construction was overseen by the Army Corp of Engineers' Ballistic Missile Construction Office which set up resident offices at Whiteman. Just over a year later the Army Corp of Engineers and the civilian contractors turned the first flight of silos over to the Air Force Site Activation Task Force (SATAF) on June 10, 1963. SATAF was responsible for putting the finishing touches on the silos which took the place over the next five months, before turning over the facilities to control of SAC. The complex officially completed construction in June 1964.

The 351st Strategic Missile Wing was activated by SAC on February 1, 1963, that same year the 340th Bomb Wing phased out its operations at Whiteman, and the unit was transferred to Bergstrom Air Force Base, Texas, on Sept. 1, 1963 after 11 years of service at Whiteman. The Boeing Plant located at Hill Air Force Base in Utah were building the Minuteman I missiles, and the first one was delivered to the new complex on January 14, 1964. Over the course of the next six months the western Missouri landscape sported silos full of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM). The last flight of missiles were activated to alert status on June 29, 1964, it was at that time the 351st became a fully operational strategic missile wing. Oscar-01 would serve as the command center for 10 ICBMs, while it was one of 15 such facilities spread across west central Missouri, it was the only one located on the base itself. Two years later the Force Modernization Program initiated on May 7, 1966 and all Minuteman Is were replaced with the Minuteman IIs, the transition was completed in October 1967. The 351st became the



first wing to complete the program.

Activity at Whiteman through the 70s and 80s remained quiet and stable. On January 3, 1993 President George H.W. Bush and Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed a treaty called the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START II). This was a treaty between the United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for the reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms. The treaty was ratified by the U.S. Senate on January 26, 1996, but the Russian ratification became stalled. The START II treaty was never put into play and was eventually bypassed by the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT). Still these talks led to the elimination of the Minuteman II ICBMs, and the 351st SMW was officially inactivated on July 31, 1995.

With a large fanfare on January 5, 1987, Congressman Ike Skelton from Missouri's 4th Congressional District announced that Whiteman would become the site of the

Continued on page 24

Whiteman AFB continued

first deployment of the new B-2 Advanced Technology Bomber. The next year, 1988 would see a massive wave of new construction to create support facilities for the new B-2 operations. On paper at least, the 509th Bombardment Wing was transferred to Whiteman on September 30, 1990, despite not having any personnel or equipment. On September 1, 1991 it was renamed to the 509th Bomb Wing and came under command of the newly established Air Combat Command (ACC) on June 1, 1992. Finally after three years of non-operational status the 509th became operational once more when personnel from Detachment 509 were assigned on April 1, 1993. The host responsibilities for Whiteman Air Force Base officially transferred from the 351st SMW to the 509th on July 1, 1993. Six months later the first B-2 "Spirit" Stealth Bomber arrived on December 17, 1993.

Today, the 509th Bomb Wing and its associate squadrons operate a fleet of 19 B-2 Spirits. Other tenant units are the 442nd Fighter Wing of the U.S. Air Force Reserves flying the A-10 "Thunderbolt II". A recommendation of the Department of Defense's 2005 BRAC, calls for re-distributing the fleet of F-15's belonging to the 131st Fighter Wing of the Missouri Air National Guard based at St. Louis-Lambert International Airport to the 120th Fighter Wing based at Great Falls, Montana and to Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada. All F-15's should be redeployed by April 2009. At that time the pilots of 131st will be transferred to the 509th Bomb Wing as an associate unit, the 131st Bomb Wing. They will train and fly the B-2. Also according the 2005 BRAC the 442nd FW will be receiving nine A-10s from the 926th Fighter Wing's fleet based at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans.

The 394th Combat Training Squadron flies the T-38A.

Other noted units are the 1-135 Aviation Battalion of the Missouri National Guard flying the AH-64H Apache Attack Helicopter and the U.S. Naval Reserve's Mobile Inshore Undersea Warfare Unit 114 (MIUWU). You can find a list of operation units and call signs in **TABLE 1**.

Whiteman Air Force Base covers 5200 acres, not including the missile fields of course! It operates one 12,400 foot runway (1/19). In addition to aeronautical operations at Whiteman can be found listed in **TABLE 2**.

Base communications utilize a Motorola UHF Type II Smartnet trunked radio system using digital voice. You will need a digital scanner to listen in. Information on the trunked system is listed in **TABLE 3**. If any of our readers can update some of the information. Please drop us note at the ohioscan@gmail.com and put "Nat Com" in the subject line.

If you and your scanners are in the area you can check out the Spirit Tours that are offered to members of the general public. They are held one Friday per month from the March through October tour season. They offer great insight into the history and missions at Whiteman. You can contact the Public Affairs Office at 660-687-6123 for more information and/or reservations.



Left to Right: Boeing B-52 Bomber, B-2 Bomber and B-1 Bomber

Whiteman AFB continued



TABLE 3

WHITEMAN AFB TRS

SYSTEM: Whiteman Air Force Base
TYPE: Motorola Type II Smartnet
SYSID: B310
VOICE: APCO-25 Common Air Interface Exclusive

CUSTOM FREQUENCY TABLE:
BASE: 406.1125
SPACING: 12.5 kHz
OFFSET: 380

SYSTEM FREQUENCIES:
406.11250c 406.15000a 406.50000 407.55000 407.88750
407.95000 408.15000 408.76250 410.70000

Notes:
a - denotes alternate control channel
c - denotes control channel

TALKGROUPS	MODE	USE
16	E	Base Operations
48	D	Spirit Control (509th CP)
80	E	Base Operations
112	E	Base Operations
144	E	Base Operations
176	E	Base Operations
240	D	Base Operations
272	D	Base Operations
304	E	Base Operations
656	D	Base Operations
688	E	Base Operations
720	E	Base Operations
1328	D	Base Operations
1488	D	Base Operations
1520	E	Unknown Use
1584	D	Unknown Use
1616	E	Unknown Use
1680	E	Unknown Use
1936	D	Unknown Use
2064	D	Unknown Use
2096	D	509th Security Forces
2288	E	Base Operations
3280	D	Base Operations
3312	E	Unknown Use
3536	E	Unknown Use
3856	E	Unknown Use
3920	D	Unknown Use
4624	D	Unknown Use
4848	D	Unknown Use
4944	E	Unknown Use

E = Encrypted
D = Digital

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MURS Wasn't The First Proposed VHF CB Radio Service

Back in CB's heydays, a unique VHF-FM radio service was proposed

By Chuck Gysi, N2DUP

While what we know as CB has been around for decades, there are other off-shoots of citizens band that are quieter cousins. You're probably familiar with today's Family Radio Service and its sister General Mobile Radio Service, which use UHF frequencies in the 462- and 467-MHz bands and basically come under the same sets of FCC rules as CB.

GMRS is much older than the newer FRS and actually is older than CB itself, dating back to the 1940s as the original Class A Citizens Band. At the time, it also had a sister, the Class B Citizens Band, which just offered different regulations for essentially the same set of UHF frequencies. Class B died off and Class C was for radio control devices and Class D is what we know today as CB on the 27-MHz band.

The FCC then created in 2000 a VHF CB service called MURS, which took two low-power business frequencies and added three other low-power frequencies between other VHF business channels. Today's MURS at 151- and 154-MHz is underused, except perhaps the original 154.570 and 154.600 business channels that already had been in widespread use by many businesses and restaurant drive-through order board systems previous to MURS. The main reason MURS hasn't really taken off is the lack of equipment that has received FCC type acceptance for use on those frequencies and because the band offers only five channels, as opposed to 14 for FRS and more when you include the eight GMRS channel pairs.

MURS, however, was not the first VHF CB service taken under consideration by the FCC. Way back when CB was having its hey days in the 1970s, the FCC was thinking pretty forward with a plan to create a new CB radio service that would have been FM with a very wide band of frequencies – a full two megahertz.

The thinking

Let's take a look back first at what led the FCC to proposing a new VHF radio service in the 1970s. I recently got my hands on a congressional report from 1975 that reported to Congress the massive number of problems that the FCC was having with CB enforcement. Let's look at the problems.

Above photo: wBack in the 1970s, practically the only way for hams to get on the 220-225 MHz ham band was to buy the Midland 13-509 mobile unit. It offered 10 watts and 12 crystal-controlled channels. It was a great rig and today is used by hams to build 222-MHz repeaters. This would have been a perfect rig for the first Class E CB users had the FCC approved a new 220-222 MHz band in the 1970s.

According to the report, titled "Actions Taken or Needed to Curb Widespread Abuse of the Citizens Band Radio Service," CB enforcement problems were such an issue that it spread outside the FCC's own abilities to curtail operators. In fact, the report, which is 33 pages long and was drafted by the Comptroller General of the United States, detailed numerous issues and possible fixes for the rampant disregard of the FCC's rules for CB.

Continued on page 28

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MURS Wasn't The First Proposed VHF CB Radio Service



Here's a close-up of the simple controls of the Midland 13-509 radio that could have proven versatile for the Class E CB service that never was approved. Volume, squelch, high-low power settings and a meter round out the front of this rig, which is a classic today.



The owners manual of the Midland 13-509 mobile radio would have given enough information for operators to get on the air had the FCC approved the Class E VHF CB service in the 1970s.

CB really took off in the 1970s because of gasoline shortages, lower speed limits to curtail gasoline consumption, and because it also became a cult fad. Anyone who was someone had a CB radio and a "handle" and the radio service was off and running.

The congressional study showed that not only was the FCC dealing with an increase in enforcement action because of complaints about on-air violations, they also were having trouble actually collecting the fines imposed on illegal CBers because the fines were low enough that it didn't make sense for U.S. attorneys to get involved in collection proceedings. As a result, only about half of those fined ever actually paid the FCC for their infractions.

The problems spilled over outside the FCC's purview, too, when agents were physically threatened or beaten while inspecting CBers' stations and local law enforcement would refuse to get involved. As you can see, the problem in keeping CBers on the straight and narrow under the crazy growth the service was experiencing was almost impossible.

While the FCC started to propose changes to the CB radio service to ease enforcement and lift some restrictions to enable better frequency usage of the CB channels, it surprisingly made a bold announcement in 1973 that it wanted to create a new Class E Citizens Band radio service in the 220-222 MHz ham band that would offer crystal-clear FM communications. Of course, the amateur community got up in arms immediately, and unleashed a barrage that eventually won them continued use of the band until it was lost to commercial interests years later.

What would have Class E CB offered? Well, the skip that plagues the HF 27-MHz channels used by CB would not have existed. Also, the 220-MHz band offers unique propagation and would have offered extended clear-voice communications for many operators. Docket 19759 in 1973 was the FCC's attempt to help clean up and clear up the 27-MHz CB channels for those who might migrate to a newer band that offered clearer communications – and most likely easier enforcement. A total of 22 volumes of comments were received by the FCC on a 220-MHz CB band, and it held up its decision on the new band in order to properly study the issues suggested in that correspondence and also to see what would shake out of the changes it was making to the 27-MHz CB band, including adding 17 new channels to offer a total of 40 channels from the original 23 frequencies.

Eventually, in 1977, four years after proposing the VHF Class E CB service, the FCC dropped all plans for its creation. The 27-MHz CB band was getting better because of new rules and channels and actually usage was starting to die off a little bit as the hey days of "Smokey and the Bandit" and C.W. McCall's "Convoy" were beginning to become passé.

Class E CB could have been an incredible radio service for CBers had it been created, regardless of the concerns of hams losing the segment. Who knows what the Class E service could have become in future years, perhaps even with repeaters offering wide-area communications. If you want to draw a comparison, CBers in Australia and New Zealand can use the 477-MHz UHF band with direct and repeater communications. While UHF doesn't offer the same wide-area coverage that VHF extends, it still has proven viable down under.

Perhaps the FCC will find a need to create yet a new CB service down the road that will offer the same advantages that Class E would have given to radio operators. Time will tell, but with the shortage of frequencies for all types of users, finding that spectrum would prove futile. MURS needs more users – and manufacturers need to make radios for this service – so the channels can become more populated.

Write in

What do you think about a VHF CB radio service, or perhaps one that offered FM instead of noisy AM, which is what currently is used at 27 MHz? Do you use the MURS VHF-FM frequencies? Would you have used Class E CB at 220-222 MHz? What types of CB information would you like to see in Nat-Com? 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.

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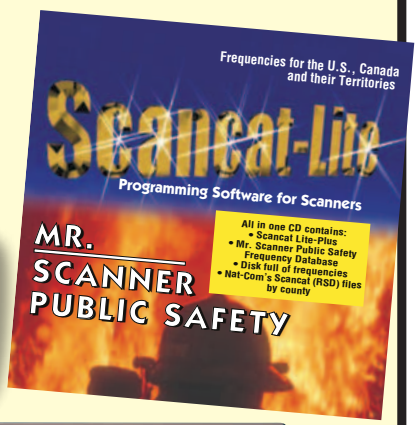
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The Eye of The Storm

By Ed Muro, K2EPM

If you have been reading my articles for any length of time you may notice that many of them are just as much my personal journeys through life with radio by my side as they are technical or "how to" articles. This article is no different!

My story starts near the end of August 2011 in what was a very hectic time for me. I was working on a big project for work that consumed most of my time while still trying to fit in the stuff one needs to get done in order to get through the days and weeks. We also had gotten a new pet about a month earlier that was requiring a lot of attention and we were getting ready for my son to start elementary school.

About eight days before Hurricane Irene pounded Long Island I had heard a weather report mentioning this "Irene." I never really cared for the name Irene; sorry ladies it just reminds me of an annoying person. So, this Irene was brewing and there was concern it would hit the U.S. I didn't pay it much attention as I thought: "Well, maybe it will hit Florida or the Carolina Banks or maybe even turn out to sea." Then I heard one report that one model was showing it hitting New York City or Long Island...that raised my eyebrow but I still thought: "hogwash."

As the new week began the stories about Irene intensified as did the storm. I took notice and began to take mental notes of what preparations I needed to take while still thinking "we have heard these false alarms before, it will probably blow out to sea." Just one thing: I work for the local law enforcement agency and I started to notice that the "players" in the county government were starting to spin their wheels to get ready for the storm. I also noticed a similar pattern was taking place in the City as Mike Bloomberg was making numerous public statements.

By mid-week the talking heads were still preparing residents or New York City and Long Island for a direct hit; in fact Nassau County was supposed to be hit head on by the eye of the storm. Now it was time to take some action in preparation for the storm.

Being located "center island" I knew I would be north of the evacuation zones but that didn't stop me from wondering if the water would come this far north. I came to the conclusion that if the storm surge came this far north then the only one who could save us would be Noah. So, I set aside the flooding issue and focused on the fact I was resigned to the fact that the power would go out at some point. With that in mind I began a process of taking inventory of flashlights and radios and how they would be powered.

First, I stared a systematic approach to charging all things rechargeable.

Continued on page 32

The Eye of The Storm cont.



I started with flashlights as I have three Streamlight Fireboxes in the house. Then I located all of my extra batteries for scanners, ham radios, and cell phones and charged them up. Next up was my Nook e-Reader as I thought if the cable TV went out I might pass the time by reading. Let's not forget the I-pod. Then, I went in to my workshop and pulled out my three car battery jump start packs; they all have a cigarette type of power outlet and I thought these would be good to recharge the cell phones if the power was out for an extended time.

Next up I gave some thought to communications. If things got real bad there is always ham radio to get messages through. I have a portable full power VHF/UHF ham station at my disposal using a Yaesu FT-90 and a gel cell battery from the Power Port Store; The Power Flex PB-12 which consists of a 12 volt / 12 amp hour rechargeable battery: one 10 amp DC cigar plug and one 30amp Power Pole connector, padded carrying bag, and a standard overnight charger. When I purchased mine I opted to spend a few extra bucks and upgraded to a two-stage automatic charger, so you can leave your power supply plugged in indefinitely. The charger will bring your power supply to a full charge, and then reduce the input to a trickle charge to keep it topped off. This is the ideal charger for people who do not use their power supply on a regular basis, but want it ready to go at a moment's notice.



While the Streamlights and Powerflex were charging I also charged up every AA rechargeable battery I had in the house so that I was sure the Pro-96, PSR-500, and PSR-800 would keep running. I also have AA Dry Cell cases for my VX-150 and VX-3 Ham Radio HTs.

Once I was certain I had "charging" under control I turned my attention to battery powered items that were not rechargeable.

First, for basic news and entertainment I was planning on using my CCRadio2 by the C Crane Company; this radio is powered by D-cell batteries. I didn't really have any extra D-batteries in the house and trips to CVS, Walgreens, Lowes and Wal-Mart proved futile as there wasn't a package of "D's" in the house. So, I though..."Well, we will run as long as we can run on what we have"and then we will back things up with the Baygen Freeplay crank up radio. I also have a Red Cross branded small AM/FM Emergency Flashlight-Radio that runs on AA's, crank up, or a built in solar panel.

Then I took stock of non-rechargeable flashlights. I have one Lantern that runs on "D" batteries, which did





The Eye of The Storm cont.

have fully charged batteries in it but again: spares. I also have a small lantern that runs on AAs which I thought would be good for my son to use. I also have about eight very bright LED type of lights that run on AAs. While I struck out looking for D-batteries at Lowes I did find a pack of 100 AA batteries at a reasonable price, so I picked them up.

Once I had all of my power needs squared away I began to systematically line things up in my shack in some semblance of order.

Scanners: Pro-96, PSR-500, PSR 800 all fully charged.

Ham Radio: Portable FT-90 station, VX-3, VX-7, and VX-150 fully charged.

AM/FM Bands: C Crane CCRadio2, Baygen Free Play, and Red Cross Portable.

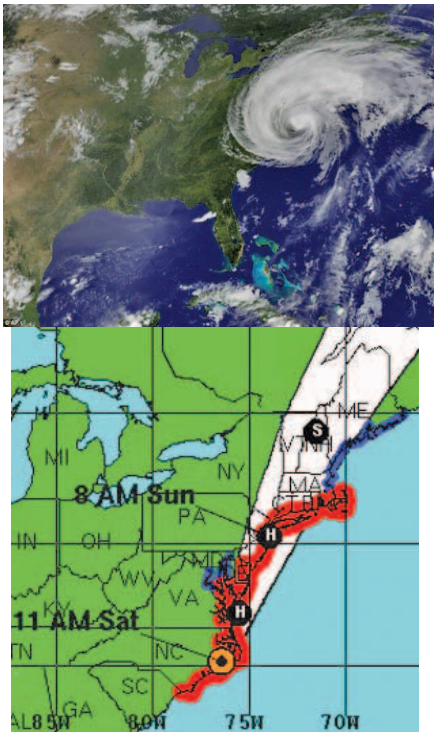
Small Solar Panel with cig lighter connection to charge VX-3 or cell phones.

Power Inverter to turn 12V Car in to a generator if needed.

Thursday (2 & ½ days before landfall) my wife does food shopping and stocks up. At this point, with the possibility of me being called in for work we plan on riding things out at home but in the back of my mind I was certain what to do with my mother who was within the evacuation zone. If things went real bad and I had to go in to work I knew I could probably show up with my wife and kid but I wasn't sure what to do with Mom. At this point Mom was thinking she would go to her aunt's apartment just north of the evacuation zone.

Friday (0600 HRS 1 & ½ days before landfall) - Walked the dog, it was a little hot, a little humid, but the sky was blue and as clear as you could ever imagine. I thought to myself: this must be the calm before the storm. At that point I thought: early bird get the worm so I set upon "battening down the hatches." Anything that was not attached to the house was to be put in the shed or tied down to my son's swing set. Instead of being panic stricken and overwhelmed I went slow and steady and got all of my son's toys, outdoor furniture, and BBQ either in various sheds or as I said strapped down to the swing set. I even took down my flag pole and lowered the telescopic mast for my ham radio station. I finished up around lunch time and then planned on resting a couple of hours before heading to my Mom's to tie up her outdoor furniture.

At this point Mike Bloomberg, the Mayor of New York City, was on the air ordering an evacuation of the Rockaways. That meant that my sister-in-law and her family would have to find somewhere to go. I was hoping they would come by us so that my wife and son wouldn't be alone if



I went in to work. I had gotten an e-mail from the union saying to expect a mandatory work order but at that point my supervisor hadn't called me.

At this point I started to have flashbacks of a DXpedition I went on to the Sandbridge section Virginia Beach. I was in a rental house right on the beach with Dave N8OAY as Hurricane Floyd set his sights on the North Carolina / Virginia coast. With torrential downpours and virtually no visibility Dave and I drove inland towards Richmond to bunk at the QTH of John N4RVR. What should have been a little over an hour's drive was a four-hour ordeal and I said: NEVER AGAIN.

Continued on page 34





The Eye of The Storm cont.



As this was going through my head my wife was starting to crack from the pressure and she said she was scared. So, I thought...well...work hasn't officially called yet and I don't really need to be a hero to strangers; let me move my family out of harm's way.

I called up Mom and told her to pack a bag with three or four days worth of clothes and a week's worth of medication. At the same time my wife started to lay out clothes for her and our son and she started to get things ready for the dog. I then went to the Weather Channel's website and looked at the models of the storm's path and decided that the best way to beat Irene at her game would be to head west and keep going as far as I could go. The thought of central Pennsylvania stuck in my head. We went over to Mom's and tied up her outdoor furniture and told her we would pick her up at 5:30 AM. We then went over to my wife's parent's house and tied their furniture up. Then we went for a light dinner and back home. I packed my clothes in a duffel bag along with my medication and we loaded the car.

I then went on the Internet and again looked at the track of the storm, which hadn't changed...I then started to look for a hotel room that was pet friendly. Finding a vacant room in a pet friendly hotel that wasn't a "dump" proved to be a bit of a challenge but at about 11PM I found a Best Western in Danville, PA that had some rooms left. The manager understood our situation and reserved us two rooms.

With clothes, a gallon of water, numerous snacks, and the dogs travel cage and toys already in the car I began to take stock of my electronics stuff. While my two vehicles had full tanks of gas and various communications gear already installed we opted to take my wife's Ford Edge that was only four months old. If we were moving out of harm's way we were also going to move the newest vehicle out of harm's way. So, I placed the portable FT-90 station in the cargo area "just in case." I then grabbed a medium sized "go bag" and placed my repeater map book in it. Then I grabbed my VX-150 and all of its accessories including the dry cell case and mobile power cord.

Next up was a scanner: well, there wouldn't be a better time to be totally "self contained" so I packed up the Uniden Home Patrol-1. It runs on batteries or AC power and all of the frequencies I would need are self contained in the radio. The only thing I would need to access them would be a nearby zip code....it seemed like a "no-brain er."

I then packed my GPS Unit, wall and mobile power chargers for my cell phone, a few flashlights, the Red Cross Emergency AM/FM/Flashlight, and my I-pod. Knowing the hotel had free Wi-Fi my wife decided to take her laptop and I opted to take my Barnes and Noble Nook e-reader which would not only afford me the ability to read books or magazines but would also allow me to check my e-mail and log in to Twitter and Facebook. It's also worth noting that I have the user's manuals to many of my radios in PDF versions on the Nook. In the end, I had all of the essentials but I kept it simple.

Saturday (0430) The alarm sounds...a quick shave and shower...electronics loaded in car, dog in his soft case at my wife's feet, kid in back seat still asleep.

Saturday (0600) - Evacuations of the waterfront already underway for about 12 hours, we picked up mom and headed out of town. With one pit stop just west of the Poconos we made it to Danville, PA by about 11AM-ish. Checked in to the hotel, went to Perkins for Brunch, and then did a little shopping.

Once back at the room I fired up the Home Patrol-1 , looked at the brochure from the hotel and typed in the zip code in to the Home Patrol and within a minute I was listening to the local public safety agencies.

The next two days were sort of surreal. On the one hand, it felt like we were on vacation. The worst the weather got in Danville was a steady rain. If a "10" were the worst rain storm you were ever in, this was a "5". Yet, watching the TV we knew places back home were taking a beating. My wife had been texting our neighbor and by Sunday morning I knew my power was out. Yet, every few hours I would call my mom's house and her answering machine would answer... thus informing me that she had power and phone service.

As I said, at times it seemed like we were on a family vacation as we relaxed in the indoor pool and enjoyed the local restaurants but at other times nerves were on edge as the TV told us otherwise as did conversations with many of the other guests in the hotel, 70% of whom were also refugees from the storm.

I never had the need to use the Red Cross emergency radio or any of the ham radios but I did keep occupied by listening to the locals on the Home Patrol-1. I was also able to keep tabs on law enforcement back home by monitoring the Nassau County Police Department's communications on my Android based phone using an app called Scanner Radio Pro.

By Sunday afternoon the sun was shining bright in Danville and you would never had know a hurricane named Irene pounded the Atlantic Coast. We headed for home Monday, but the ride proved to be a bit of a challenge as parts of the Poconos and many New Jersey roads were flooded.

When we got home we were in for a real treat: no power for a total of 8-days and a fridge full of spoiled food.

We did learn to adapt. Instead of watching TV at night, my son and I used the CCRadio2 to do some medium wave DXing every night often listening to baseball games. Instead of watching CNN and FOX News as most people do to stay informed it was only natural for me to listen to the scanner. The Car Battery Booster packs became vital in charging up the cell phones and the Streamlights were vital in proving light at night and I was able to charge them at work during the day.

In my case while I didn't have power for eight days and had to adapt to not having power the issue was localized and not wide spread, so I was able to charge various devices at work and the cell phone network remained operational. Had the cell phone network gone out, ham radio would have had a lot more vital role in my life.

If there were two things I learned through this experience (other than it might not be a bad idea to invest in a generator) it was that preparing for all possibilities ahead of time is vital and that with the right "tools" you can remain "lean" yet still have access to vital communications.

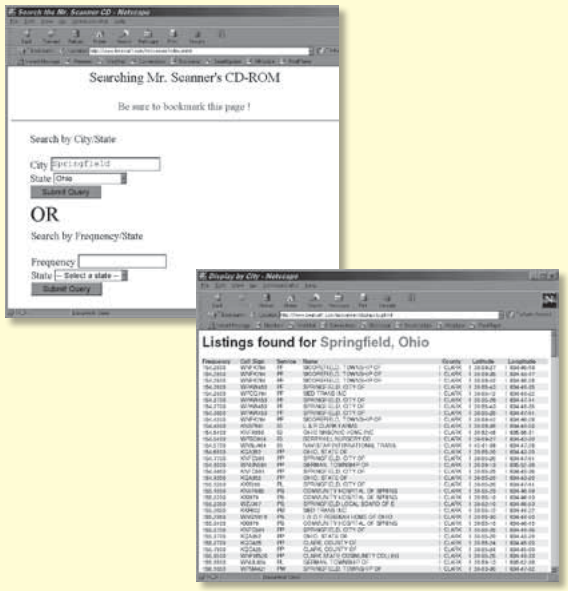
There are many ham radio HTs on the market loaded to the gills with bells and whistles, some so complicated that a cottage industry was born publishing easy to read third party user's guides. Yet, I opted to pack the Yaesu VX-150 which has the reputation of being an easy to use, rock solid radio.

I was never more impressed in a scanner than I was with the Uniden Home Patrol-1; once I knew the local zip code just about everything I needed was at my finger tips. Furthermore, as long as you have the ability to charge your battery, a Smart Phone with a scanner app can not only keep you in touch with local public safety agencies but it will give you the ability to monitor agencies nationwide.

One final note on the CC Radio 2: I purchased this radio in March and used it for about 4 to 6 hours. As I said, I could not find any D-cell batteries. Well, once we got home we listened to the radio every evening and two nights I fell asleep with it on and didn't shut it off until we woke up in the morning. It is still running on the original Duracell alkalizes that I installed in it back in March.

If you have any "Storm Stories" I would like to hear from you. What radio preparations did you make, what worked, what didn't, etc. Feel free to drop me a line at k2epm@arrl.net.

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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.

CLOSING



By: Norm Schrein, KA8PGJ

Last issue, as you may recall, I asked for input on whether we should consider publishing National Communications magazine in an on-line only version. The results were overwhelmingly in favor of keeping the magazine in the printed format. In fact I heard from no one that was in favor of having the magazine in an on-line version only. However, some mentioned that they like the ability of reading the magazine on line, which we currently have. Still all in all, they were in favor in keeping the magazine in print. Here is some of what I received.

- I think you should continue to offer both formats for the near future.
- I enjoy your magazine very much, but I don't have a computer.
- Just a note on a "printed page" to say that's the only way to publish a magazine.
- I like the print form. I like books; pages that you can turn.
- Here's my input. I hope and pray you keep the printed form of the magazine.
- I don't have a computer nor do I know much about how to operate one, yet I am an avid scanner listener and have been for many years.
- I would prefer the print format of the magazine.
- I do not own a computer and would be left out in the dark without the printed version. I am convinced many others share my opinion; however they may be either too busy or lazy to bother sending you a hand written letter.
- I'd rather keep magazine form. I keep magazines forever. I like go back in years to read old information and stories. If by chance computer goes down you may loss all. I'm new to your magazine. And I love it.
- Got the latest issue of you magazine. I always enjoy it as it's got articles not seen in other communications magazines, e.g. CB. Just the right size too, not too lengthy.
- I have several computers, lots of scanners, ham license, cell phone, satellite TV, numerous GPS stuff, APRS transmitters in vehicles, a Barnes&Noble color Nook reader, remote weather system, and other high tech stuff. But I still like to hold a magazine and be able to lay it down for some time and pick it back up. Also some, such as Nat-Com I keep in a folder for reference at a later time. In general I would be willing to pay more to keep getting the magazine in the mail.
- As you have mentioned, especially the retired age group that I am part, I believe our age group prefers print media in most cases.
- This is my first issue of Nat-Com. I read it from cover to cover and enjoyed very much. I'm like you give me a magazine or paper I can hold in my hand and read.
- Personally, I prefer to read a printed copy I can hold in my hand instead of an on-line copy. However, one must face the reality that the printed media seems to be going away.
- Hello Norm. I enjoy the magazine and prefer the printed version. It is easy to read and file. If online, I would have to print it. I vote for the printed version. I would prefer to hold a piece of paper in my hand verses staring at a computer screen.
- I own six active computers and use and maintain them constantly for business and hobby and news brief purposes. However, I subscribe to certain publications including yours in paper ONLY because I find that I read things on paper with more appreciation and much more thoroughly than on a computer screen.
- I always read your "closing comments" column first before anything else, which I enjoy reading. I also prefer reading from a paper versus the computer, but I also like the idea of having an online copy on my computer as a backup in case I misplace the printed copy.
- I have taken your magazine for a few years and I do like the magazine that I can hold in my hand and to be blunt it is hard to hold a computer in the bathroom or lying on the couch. There is something about having a paper or magazine that you can take with you wherever you go.

COMMENTS

Then finally I heard from Michael Kudelka who said:

Norm,

I received today the replacement copy of National Communications you sent. I always read your "closing comments" column first before anything else, which I enjoy reading. I also prefer reading from a paper versus the computer, but I also like the idea of having an online copy on my computer as a backup in case I misplace the printed copy.

My interest in radio goes back to my boyhood days in the 1940s. My oldest brother, now deceased, was 11 years older than me. He was interested in electronics and taught himself how to repair radios. In those days the police radios used a frequency just above 1700 kilocycles. My brother showed me how to adjust the upper band tuning coil in an AM radio, using a fiber blade screwdriver, to pick up the police frequency. Later when the police switched to the VHF band and I bought a Heathkit Model GR-88 VHF radio (152-174 Megacycles) and listened to police and fire.

In the early 1970s the police switched to the UHF band at 460 MHz and I bought my first scanner, the Regency Monitoradio/Executive Scanner with VHF/UHF tuning (crystal control). In 1979 I bought my first programmable scanner a Regency Model ACT-T-16K (The Touch). In 1987 I bought my first hand held scanner, a BC70XLT, which two years ago I gave away to a friend. In 1988 I bought a Bearcat BC800XLT, which last year I gave away to a friend. In 1989 the police switched to the 800 MHz band using a Motorola Hybrid trunk system. At that time I did not know what a trunk system was and wondered why the conversation did not always finish on the same frequency.

The following scanners were purchased from Hobby Radio Stop: (1997) BC235XLT, (2004) BC246T, (Jan. 2008) GRE PSR-500, (Nov. 2008) GRE PSR-600.

I still have all of the scanners mentioned above accept the two that I gave away. By the way, I will be 75 years old on October 16.

Best Wishes,

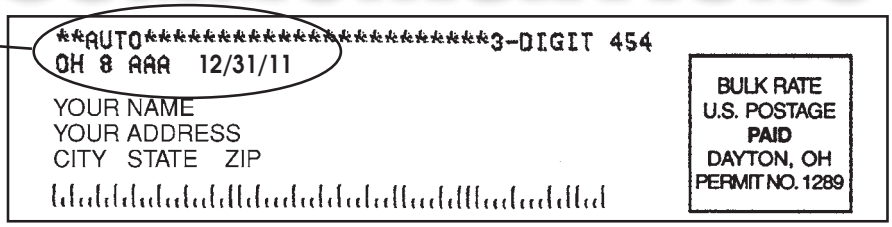
Michael, best wishes to you too and all the others that took the time to answer. So, Nat-Com will remain in print as well as on-line. However, at some point in the near future, we may have to look at raising the annual subscription price by a few dollars. Again, I would like to hear from you to get your feelings on that one as well.

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Bryan County Firefighter Jake Murray

Photo by Norm Schrein

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