



SHORT SKIP

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE
**LAKE COUNTY AMATEUR
RADIO CLUB, INC.**
W9LJ

April 2014, Issue 4, Volume 62

From Your Editor

Benjamin Straw, KC9UNS

Good morning, evening, or night my fellow hams, this issue of Short Skip is brought to you by the letter "T" the number "6" and by JnJ's tasty frog donuts... Don't ask why or you will mess up some Wibbly Wobbly Timey Wimey...Stuff.

We have a correction to make from last month's issue. We forgot a birthday! Larry WB9LRK, turned 16 for the 5th time. Congrats and hope you had a great belated birthday. Also I'd like to welcome a new LCARC member Dan KD9ARD.

Last month we had a SK Harry Hanson Sr. KA9WPB, who passed on March 10th in Kansas City, MO. Mr. Hanson was born on July 15, 1921 in Chicago, IL. On January 24, 1942, he married his wife Beatrice, who survives. He is also survived by children: Harry(Patricia) Hanson Jr., Joyce Anne (significant other, Michael) Maywald, James E. (Ann)Hanson, Gordon B. (Sherrill) Hanson, David A. (Connie) Hanson, and Debra L. (Michael) Tribble; 22 grandchildren and 25 great grandchildren. Mr. Hanson was a member of St. Mary Church, retired from Wisconsin Steel with over 35 years of service, and also worked for the Indiana State Highway Department. He was a WWII veteran of the U.S. Army Air Corps, lifetime member of VFW Post 9982 of Griffith, member of American Legion Post 66 of Griffith, and a member of the Moose Lodge. Mr.Hanson was a ham radio operator, loved to camp with Bea and his family, loved hunting, fishing, traveling, and riding his motorcycle. He also played the guitar and concertina.

I want to admit, this world we live in is built to take much out of me, reason is I am so distracted by everything that goes on around me, to the point of not having enough time to other things. I know its AADD something I have been fighting with for the last 30+ years. My ADD and OCD is so bad that the only thing that can not distract me and keep me working is listening to Dubstep/Electronica music(whatever works huh?) Dont even get my started on my dyslexia/dyslexia you don't want to know how many times writing this that I wanted to toss my keyboard out the window(I also want to pry my F12 key off).

Working on SK should only be about 24 hours of work, but in reality for me its more like a full month, when it comes time to publish I rush to get things done, and that is stressful. But that isn't enough, so I'm looking for help "PLEASE I NEED HELP", I can't do it alone. Email me @ KC9UNS@gmail.com

I know some of you get the printed version of the newsletter so I want to apologise by saying you're missing out on most of the content I talk about, Some content from news sources can not be reprinted without permission from the writer and or publisher, so i have to do my best and give you links to the content.

My first article linked up is how digital radio could break North Korea's information blockade using Software-defined radio that might prove be valuable for increasing information flows into and out of N. Korea (<http://tinyurl.com/lsn92tc>)

I know you guys like videos, I found this one over on reddit and its from Professor Roger Bowley of The University of Nottingham, he recorded a video on unlocking his car from various distances, using his key, brain, and a big bottle of water. Cool huh? (<http://tinyurl.com/pqyd8h2>)

Continued on page two.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Meeting

April 11, 2013

Lake County EMA Building
2900 W 93rd Ave. Crown Point, In.
General Meeting 7:30pm
Board: 6:30pm

Hamfest

Sat April 5, 2014

AES Superfest 2014
Amateur Electronic Supply
5710 West Good Hope RD. Milwaukee, WI

Sat Apr. 12, 2014

North Central Indiana Hamfest
Miami County 4H Fairgrounds
US31 turn E onto Miami County Rd 200N in IN.

Sun May 4, 2014

KEKALB Hamfest
Sandwich Fairgrounds
Sandwich, IL

Net

LCARC Weekly Information Net

Clubs VHF & UHF Repeaters
Every Thursday @ 8pm

In this Issue of Short Skip

- 2. Meeting Minutes
- 3 - 4. Ham News
- 5. Windows XP EOL, D-Star Sub \$200
- 6. Use of 146.52 MHz
- 7. Pay for LOTW, New Hobbies

ARTICLES NEEDED!!!

If you have anything pertaining to amateur radio that you would like to contribute to, and share with others in Short Skip, we would be happy to include your offering in any future edition. Anything you would like. Hints and kinks, antennas, technical talk, operating tips, public service, classic radio, club activities, etc., would be heartily welcomed!!! All articles must be in by the 23rd of every month. Copyright rules and permission apply to all submissions. Please send your submission to:

KC9UNS / Short Skip Editor
kc9uns@gmail.com

I hope you enjoy this month's Short Skip as much as I did putting it together!

Doug KD4CXG
Malcolm W9MAL
Russ KB9HO

If we missed your birthday or get it wrong, please let us know

Meeting Minutes

Benjamin Straw, KC9UNS

Meeting called to order at 7:35 PM

Reading of Minutes:
The minutes of the previous board meeting read by Ben KC9UNS was approved as read.

Treasure Report:
Treasurer Report read by Jim KF9EX.
Audit is done and everything is good and didn't take long

Old Business:
Ben KC9UNS reported on the net and have had a total of 68 hams who have checked in since we started logging.
No reports on the Red Cross
Marv WV9O reported repeater site is having some work done on feedline and fence as soon as the weather breaks.
Ben KC9UNS asked for articles for Short Skip

New Business
Ben KC9UNS reported we had 2 SK since the last meeting, Harry Hanson KA9WPB who was a member of the club and Dennis Doffner W9FBM who was a regular on the clubs info net.

Program:
Pre meeting program Jim and Kenny played with Facetime troubleshooting.
Q&A session.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM local.

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Continued from page one.

I'm a cheap ham, and if I can make something that is just as good as its pre-built counterpart, I will build it and use it. Some things you just can't build cheaper like a foot switch, and hey did you know one can use a tattoo foot switch on your ham equipment? Yep its true. Radio Active Ham Podcast has an article on it (radioactiveham.com/ptt-switch/). BTW you can also use a sewing machine pedal.

Last month I talked about some audio podcasts that I listen to while on the road. This month, how about some video podcast?
One of my favorites is Hak5 (hak5.org) they talk about a bunch of cool things including this months feature Software Defined Radios.
I'm addicted to the Mythbusters, Adam Savage, Jamie Hyneman have a podcast on iTunes and on youtube called "Tested" you can find some really cool stuff to see and learn. (Tested.com/videos)
Next up on the block is The Ben Heck Show part of the Revision3/Discovery block of shows, its all about building things. Master hacker, engineer, and conjurer of cool stuff Ben Heck tackles new projects such as transforming an Atari into a handheld system, remaking an Xbox case into a Macbook, and hey why not a pinball machine.(Revision3.com/tbhs/)

Our member carter KC9YGU wanted me to let you know about a new group NWI Spotters is a Skywarn group for the for NWI, As most of you know we don't really have anything in the area for weather, before I get flamed yes I know we have ARES, but its not active. Head on over to nwispotters.weebly.com and see what they have going on.

Last but not least if you're in the market for a cheap radio, the guys over at Baofeng Tech have created a Baofeng Comparison Chart on the differences between models(baofengtech.com/compare).



2014 Officers

President: KB9HO
Russ McComb

Vice President: WD9EZB
Bob Wiberg

Secretary: KC9UNS
Benjamin Straw

Treasurer: KF9EX
Jim Harney

Trustee: WV9O
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Directors

Bill Young N9QLS
Ken Brown KE9TC
Bob Nelms WD9FNY
Mark Skowronski K9MQ
John Gianotti W9WY
Carter Garcia KC9YGU

Editorial Staff

Editor-in-Chief KC9UNS
Benjamin Straw
(kc9uns@gmail.com)

Club Resources

W9LJ/R 147.000 + PL 131.8
W9LJ/R (St. John) 147.240 + PL 131.8
W9LJ/R 442.075 + PL 131.8

Repeater Nets
Thursday Night @ 8 pm:
LCARC Weekly Infomation Net

Meetings

April 11, 2014
BOARD MEETING
LCEMA OFFICE,
2900 93rd Ave
Crown Point (41.449555,-87.36893)
(Across from Gov. Ctr.)
6:30 p.m.

April 11, 2014
CLUB MEETING
2900 93rd Ave
Crown Point (41.449555,-87.36893)
(Across from Gov. Ctr.)
7:30 p.m.

LCARC is an IRS-certified 501(c)3 charitable organization and donations are deductible pursuant to the IRS rules. If you have working radio equipment and ancillary equipment that you can and wish to donate to the club, please contact one of the board members and we will be happy to talk to you about the process. Many companies will either grant or match employee's gifts to nonprofit organizations like LCARC. Please determine if your company is among these and contact a board member so we may help fund and grow LCARC. We cannot accept certain donations, and have to place some restrictions around them (no hazardous materials, nothing we could not sell, etc.). If you are interested, look me, or any other board member up at one of the meetings, or contact us via email (our addresses at the end of this newsletter)

AMATEUR RADIO NEWS

\$30K Worth of Multimeters Must Be Destroyed Because They're Yellow

An anonymous reader points out a post at the blog of Sparkfun, a hobbyist electronics retailer. They recently received a letter from U.S. Customs saying a shipment of 2,000 multimeters was being barred from entry into the country. The reason? Trademark law. A company named Fluke holds a trademark on multimeters that have a 'contrasting yellow border.' Sparkfun's multimeters are a yellowish orange, but it was enough for Customs to stop the shipment. Returning the shipment is not an option because of import taxes in China, so the multimeters must now be destroyed. At \$15 per item, it'll cost Sparkfun \$30,000, plus the \$150/hr fee for destroying them. Sparkfun had no idea about the trademark, and doesn't mind changing the color, but they say restrictions like these are a flaw in the trademark system. "Small business does not have the resources to stay abreast of all trademarks for all the products they don't carry. If you're going to put the onus on the little guy to avoid infringing IP then you shouldn't need an army of consultants or attorneys to find this information."

Source: Slashdot.org -
<http://tinyurl.com/oufgcde>
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ARRL to FCC: 'Grow Light' Ballast Causes HF Interference, Violates Rules:

The ARRL has formally complained to the FCC that a "grow light" ballast being widely marketed and sold is responsible for severe interference to the MF and HF bands. The League urged Commission action to halt sales of the Lumatek LK-1000 electronic ballast and to recall devices already on store shelves or in the hands of consumers. In a March 12 letter, ARRL General Counsel Chris Imlay, W3KD, told the FCC Enforcement Bureau and its Office of Engineering and Technology (OET) that, during ARRL Laboratory testing, the Lumatek device exhibited conducted emissions that exceeded FCC rules.

"ARRL has received numerous complaints from Amateur Radio operators of significant noise in the medium and high frequency bands between 1.8 MHz and 30 MHz from 'grow lights' and other RF lighting devices generally," Imlay said in the complaint. "The level of conducted emissions from this device is so high that, as a practical matter, one RF ballast operated in a residential environment would create preclusive interference to Amateur Radio HF communications throughout entire neighborhoods." An extensive Conducted Emissions Test Report detailing the ARRL Lab's test results was attached to the League's correspondence.

"[T]he Report concludes from the conducted emissions tests that the six highest emissions from the device in the HF band vastly exceed the quasi-peak limit specified in Section 18.307(c) of the Rules," Imlay told the FCC. The ARRL further pointed out that, while an FCC sticker had been affixed to the

device, it lacked FCC compliance information. FCC Part 18 rules require RF lighting devices to provide an advisory statement with such a device, notifying users that it could interfere with radio equipment operating between 0.45 MHz and 30 MHz.

The League noted that the device is imported into the US and marketed and sold by Sears, where ARRL purchased its test sample, as well as by Amazon.com and other retail outlets. The ARRL also called on the FCC to consider enforcement proceedings against the importer, Hydrofarm Horticultural Products of Petaluma, California.

Source: The ARRL Letter
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FCC Invites Public Comment on Petition Affecting 10-10.5 GHz Band:

The FCC has invited public comment on a Petition for Rule Making (RM-11715) that would make a significant portion of the 10.0 to 10.5 GHz band available for wireless broadband services. The Petition by Mimosa Networks Inc proposed a band plan for 10.0 to 10.5 GHz that, it said, would protect frequencies most often used by radio amateurs. The petition hinges on FCC adoption of rule changes that would put the 10 GHz band under Subpart Z of the Commission's Part 90 rules. Subpart Z currently sets out regulations governing wireless licensing, technical standards, and operational standards in the 3650 to 3700 MHz band.

"[T]he application of the coordination procedures and requirements provided in Subpart Z will ensure that Amateur Radio operations in the band will not be disrupted," Mimosa told the FCC. "In addition, as a further safeguard, Mimosa proposed a band plan for the 10.0-10.5 GHz band that would protect frequencies in the band that are most often used by Amateur Radio operators." The proposed band plan would specify 10.350 to 10.370 GHz as an "Amateur Calling Band," and 10.450 to 10.500 GHz for Amateur-Satellite operations in the midst of 21 wireless broadband channels and a small guard band.

Mimosa has proposed to include in the rules a requirement for wireless broadband service operation in the band "to avoid harmful interference with Amateur service and Amateur-Satellite service operations in the band."

Mimosa contended that its proposal would "promote the Commission's goal of providing broadband access to all Americans, would benefit wireless Internet service providers, mobile wireless carriers, and telecommunications equipment providers, and would benefit the national economy." Mimosa cited the band's "long-reach, high-capacity characteristics" and called 10 GHz "a promising candidate for wireless broadband."

ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ, said that while the League

appreciates Mimosa's efforts to acknowledge existing and growing 10 GHz Amateur Radio activity, several aspects of the petition are of concern.

"Use of the band for fixed or mobile wireless broadband would be contrary to the international Table of Frequency Allocations and would inject a new sharing consideration that is not contemplated in the preparatory work being done for World Radiocommunication Conference 2015 (WRC-15)," he said. "Mimosa's proposed power limit of 55 dBW EIRP is very high, particularly for point-to-multipoint operations, and no mechanism has been proposed for ensuring that harmful interference to amateur operations does not occur."

Sumner said that while the ARRL has not yet adopted a position with respect to the petition, "some aspects of the petition require careful study."

Interested parties may comment on RM-11715 using the FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) <http://tinyurl.com/6rd82qq> .

Source: The ARRL Letter
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FCC Cites New Jersey CB Shop for Marketing Unauthorized RF Devices:

The FCC has issued a Citation to a New Jersey Citizens Band radio shop for marketing unauthorized RF devices to consumers in violation of the Communications Act of 1934 and FCC Part 2 rules. The Citation to Thomas Wilson, doing business as Redman CB Stop <http://redmancb.com/>, in Absecon, New Jersey, was issued March 5.

"Redman CB Stop should take immediate steps to discontinue the marketing of unauthorized radio frequency devices, and to avoid any recurrence of the misconduct described herein," the FCC Citation directed.

Last October an agent from the FCC Enforcement Bureau's Philadelphia office browsed the website of the online retailer of CB and Amateur Radio gear. The agent "observed for sale 16 makes and models of non-certified RF power amplifiers" capable of operation on both the 11 meter Citizens Band and the 10 meter ham band. The FCC said such devices may not be offered for sale prior to FCC certification. In addition, FCC rules prohibit marketing or selling external RF amplifiers capable of amplification between 26 MHz and 28 MHz.

The FCC gave Redman CB Stop 30 days to respond to the Citation. The Commission said it will use "all relevant material information before it," including information the retailer may disclose, to determine what, if any, enforcement action may be necessary "to ensure your compliance with the Communications Act and the Commission's rules."

Source: The ARRL Letter

RadioShack Announces 1100 Store Closings:

Once a staple of electronics retailing and a ready source of small parts for ham radio homebrewers and electronics enthusiasts, RadioShack <http://www.radioshack.com/> has fallen on tough times. In the wake of a substantial drop in holiday sales and a big fourth-quarter loss, the Fort Worth, Texas-based retailer has announced that it is closing 1100 of its outlets, leaving it with some 4000 stores, including more than 900 dealer franchises. RadioShack's stock has fallen by nearly 28 percent on the news.

Reported weak customer traffic at electronics retailers in general over the holiday season was reflected in a 19 percent drop in sales at RadioShack. Now market analysts have begun sounding the death knell for RadioShack, with some comparing the retailer's numbers to those of Circuit City before it went under in 2008.

RadioShack once offered entry-level short-wave receivers, Citizens Band gear, and a wide array of discrete components -- including transistors, resistors, and capacitors. For a time, RadioShack marketed a fairly popular 2 meter hand-held transceiver, as well as two different models of 10 meter single-band transceivers. It failed, however, in its effort to market a dualband VHF/UHF hand-held radio. Over the years, RadioShack has offered fewer discrete components in its brick-and-mortar stores, moving that stock and other products to its online outlet, as it shifted its marketing focus to cell phones, consumer electronics, and various battery-operated gadgets. -- Thanks to Reuters, Yahoo! Finance

Source: The ARRL Letter
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New Website Offers Treasure Trove Of Vintage Ham Radio Photos, QSL Cards:

The grandson of Thomas "Tom" Russell Gentry, W5RG (SK), has developed a website <http://w5rg.donretzlaff.com/> that is certain to be of interest to vintage radio enthusiasts. Don Retzlaff, who is not a ham, said his grandfather was among the earliest Amateur Radio operators, getting his license in the early 1920s -- at one point identifying as NU5RG -- and remaining active until he died in 1979. The W5RG call sign has since been reissued.

"He collected QSL cards from other amateur operators all through his life," Retzlaff said of his grandfather. "In recent years I became interested in those cards and my grandfather's hobby."

With the help of his father Donald Retzlaff, W5MIY, Retzlaff located all of the QSLs -- some 5700 in all -- as well as other memorabilia documenting his grandfather's ham radio activities and his time in the Army Air Corps shortly after World War I. He painstakingly scanned both sides of each card along with dozens of photos of now-vintage stations -- many with operators -- that his

grandfather had collected and posted them all on a website dedicated to his grandfather and his life as an Amateur Radio operator.

Among other features, the site offers an opportunity to leave comments. "This has definitely been a labor of love," said Retzlaff, who retired this year as a Principal Lecturer in the Computer Science Department at the University of North Texas.

Source: The ARRL Letter
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FCC TO REINSTATE MORSE CODE TEST

"It was a big mistake eliminating the Morse Code test," admits FCC official

Today, the Federal Communications Commission (Commission or FCC) approved Report and Order 14-987af which reinstates the Morse Code test for General Class and Amateur Extra Class licensees. "It was a big mistake eliminating the Morse Code test," admits Dotty Dasher, the FCC's director of examinations. "We now realize that being able to send and receive Morse Code is an essential skill for radio amateurs. As they say, it really does get through when other modes can't."

Not only will new applicants have to take the test, but General Class licensees who have never passed a code test will have one year to pass a 5-wpm code test. Similarly, Amateur Extra class licensees that never passed a code test will have one year to pass a 13-wpm test. Those amateurs that fail to pass the test will face revocation of their operating privileges. Materials for administering the examinations will be distributed to Volunteer Examiner Coordinators by the end of April, so that they can begin the testing on May 1, 2014.

"This isn't going to be one of those silly multiple-choice type tests," noted Dasher. "We're going to be sending five-character random code groups, just like we did in the old days. And, applicants will have to prove that they can send, too, using a poorly adjusted straight key."

Technician Class licensees will not be required to take a Morse Code test, nor will a test be required for new applicants. "We discussed it," said Dasher, "but decided that since most Techs can't even figure out how to program their HTs, requiring them to learn Morse Code seemed like cruel and unusual punishment."

When asked what other actions we might see from the FCC, Dasher hinted that in the future applicants taking the written exam may be required to draw circuit diagrams, such as Colpitts oscillators and diode ring mixers, once again. "We're beginning to think that if an applicant passes an amateur radio license exam it should mean that he or she actually knows something," she said.

For further information, contact James X. Shorts, Assistant Liaison to the Deputy Chief of Public Relations for the FCC at (202) 555-1212 or jim.shorts@fcc.gov. For more news

and information about the FCC, please visit www.fcc.gov.

Source: Dan, KB6NU, is the author of the "No-Nonsense" amateur radio study guides and a leading amateur radio blogger. You can find his study guides by going to his blog at www.kb6nu.com. You can contact Dan by e-mail at cwgeek@kb6nu.com, or, after you pass the test, by CW. Look for him at the bottom of just about any HF band.

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WebDX Technology:

RemoteHamRadio.com is pleased to announce our new revolutionary technology. We call this new technology WebDX and we have also created a completely new service around it.

What makes WebDX different from other remote services? The EXPERIENCE. When you connect to a site its yours and yours only. No one can touch your control or even see you operate. The RHR console is completely private and anonymous. We have a wonderful "opt in" feature for a chat window if you choose to chat with other operators who also choose to opt in.

What are some of the highlights of WebDX?

1. No Software to download.

Our technology is "web based" meaning everything is done in the browser. This makes the operators experience trouble free with no worrying about operating system or keeping software up to date.

2. No Hardware Required.

The need for a K3 or other "remote head" is no longer a requirement. Today with WebDX a Google Chrome web browser installed on your computer and you will be operating both SSB and CW ALL within the browser!

3. Very affordable.

The WebDX service only requires a one time setup fee of \$99 and you simply "Pay As You Go" per minute on the sites. Billing is monthly and you receive nightly usage reports and also a link to your usage webpage which gives you up to 15 minute usage statistics. There is no yearly membership fee. Per minute rates vary between \$0.15/min (small stations) to \$0.49/min (large stations).

4. Portable.

Since a Chrome web browser is the only requirement you can operate from anywhere with a decent internet connection. Condo's, apartments, HOA's, the beach, vacation, business travel there is no end.

5. You can be on the air today!

Video of how the revolutionary WebDX service works: <http://tinyurl.com/mwv745n>

Source: eHam Ray Higgins (W2RE)

Keep Windows XP Secure After April 8 Support Deadline

April 8 marks the end of Microsoft's support for Windows XP; an operating system that's still very popular and widely used. After that deadline, Windows XP will no longer be patched, but that doesn't mean it can't be used safely. Here are some things you can do to keep Windows XP secure:

Install Windows XP's final update.

Use Windows XP as a "limited user."

By default, user accounts in Windows are "administrator," meaning the user can install programs and make system changes. Downgrading the account will prevent programs that may be malicious from getting access to the system.

Use the Google Chrome browser instead of Internet Explorer.

Chrome is free, and far more secure since it's being kept up to date by Google. Mozilla's Firefox is another alternative.

Make sure all programs are patched and up to date.

If you're using an older version of Microsoft Office, make sure the security settings are set high.

Only download software from original vendors.

Don't download programs from a third party download site; make sure it's from the actual source.

Don't click on links in email.

These links may be deceiving, and malicious links could appear to be coming from someone you know.

Keep antivirus software up to date.

Connect to the internet through a router.

This will act as a hardware firewall, which will protect against attacks.

Disconnect Windows XP from the internet.

If you don't need to be online with your Windows XP computer, then cutting it off from the outside world is highly recommended.

For a complete list of security precautions for using Windows XP, consult page 13 of this document from F-Secure (<http://tinyurl.com/ol82an4>) recommended by Steve Gibson from grc.com.

Sub \$200 D-Star radio in the making?

[Spotted on a D-Star Yahoo group](#)

Hi Everyone,

In case you do not know me, I am President of Connect Systems Inc. and I am responsible for getting to HAM market a commercial grade DMR radio for \$180. This is about 1/4 the price you would pay for a New Motorola 6550 MotoTRBO radio. Beside running the company I am also a design Engineer.

A few days ago I had a long conversation with Mark Thompson (WB9QZB) and he convinced me I should seriously look into developing a DSTAR radio in competition with ICOM that has a selling price to HAMS for less than \$200. He supplied me with three Documents named "D-STAR Uncovered", "D-STAR System", and "D-STAR radio packet structure for the Digital Voice (DV) mode. I studied the documents and at first glance I came to the conclusion that the development of this type of Radio is much simpler than either NXDN or DMR. So now I am seriously looking to develop the radio.

I have four questions I would like to ask. Put on the subject matter the word D-STAR someplace if you would like to e-mail me at jerry@connectsystems.com

Question 1

What features would you like me to add to this radio that is not already in the ICOM radio?

Question 2

Given a choice for a commercial grade D-Star radio for about \$200 (Such as Motorola or Kenwood quality) or an amateur grade D-STAR radio for about \$30 less (Such as Wouxun) quality, which would you pick?

Question 3

Is there any software (Source Code) available that I could look at that would show how to design the radio part of a DSTAR System. Even better if someone made a working breadboard of a D-STAR radio.

Question 4

Is there anyone who completely understands the protocol of D-STAR down to the bit level?

Thanks in advance for answering these questions.

Jerry Wanger
President, Connect Systems Inc
www.connectsystems.com

The Use of 146.52 MHz

Bob Witte, KØNR

One of the local clubs recently had a heated discussion about the use of the National Simplex Calling Frequency, which is 146.52 MHz in the US (per the ARRL band plan). You have probably heard the argument before.....is the calling frequency reserved to just calling or is it OK to ragchew on that frequency?

In the Summer 2006 issue of CQ VHF, I wrote about mountaintop operating and included these thoughts on the use of 146.52:

Calling Frequency

What frequency are you going to use to call CQ from your favorite high spot? Well, the calling frequency, of course.... most likely 146.52 MHz. This usually works pretty well as many simplex-oriented operators make it a point to listen on .52. While we don't normally make long CQ calls on VHF FM, making a call such as "CQ Five Two, this is K O N R on Pikes Peak" is a good way to go.

One problem I've run into is when the calling frequency is tied up with lengthy contacts by other hams. If the frequency is in use, I generally just stand by and wait for them to finish. If it seems appropriate, I might break in and chat with them.

Disclaimer: It is difficult to write authoritatively in a national ham magazine about VHF issues that often tend to be regional in nature. What works in rural areas with lower population density may not apply in New York City. Ignoring that, I'll jump in with both feet (maybe with one in my mouth, who knows?)

What is the purpose of a calling frequency? Back in the old days of crystal controlled rigs it was important that we had common channels crystallized so we could talk to each other. We typically only had a dozen or so channels, so having a common calling or simplex frequency (or two) was an obvious thing to do. These days, we have synthesized 2M FM rigs that cover the entire 4 MHz band in 5 kHz steps. Now the purpose of a calling frequency is, well, for calling. You use 146.52 MHz when you want to establish contact on the band, lacking any other information. For example, if I know my buddy Steve KØSRW is going to be listening on the 146.94 MHz repeater, I'll call him there. If I know the local DX crew hangs on out 146.46 MHz, I'll make a call there. But when I don't have any other information, and I am making a call or listening for a call, I go to the calling frequency. Why? Because that's what it's for! If I am out of repeater range and I just want to talk to someone on simplex, I try the calling frequency.

The Three Minute Rule

There are two ways to make a calling frequency useless:

1. No one ever uses the calling frequency (nobody there, nobody home)
2. The calling frequency is always tied up due to lengthy contacts

So we need to encourage hams to monitor and use the calling frequency, but not monopolize it. We don't have to be extreme about it. Perhaps a "three minute" rule of thumb: if I am in a contact with another station on the calling frequency for more than 3 minutes, it is time to change to a different frequency. This opens up the frequency for other hams to use. Just as important it keeps the long ragchew sessions away from the calling frequency. These long sessions have a tendency to discourage monitoring of 146.52 MHz. One ham recently told me that he tries to keep a receiver tuned to .52 for anyone just passing through the area that might need some help. But when some of the locals get on the frequency and chat for an hour, the radio gets turned off.

There, I said it: the calling frequency is for calling, not for ragchewing. Now you have heard my opinion, what do you think?

Have a look at Bob's wonderful blog where he Amateur (ham) radio, VHF/UHF, QRP, mountaintop operating and technical stuff, www.K0NR.com



STAY UP TO DATE WITH THE CURRENT HAPPENINGS OF
THE LAKE COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB ON FACEBOOK.
TO FIND US TYPE LCARC IN THE FACEBOOK
SEARCH BOX OR [HTTP://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/LCARC](http://www.FACEBOOK.COM/LCARC)

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9J2T, Recouping expenses via LoTW is okay!

John Harper AE5X

9J2T is taking some heat right now on various blogs.

They've done something that, frankly, I'm wondering what took DXpeditions so long to implement in the first place – charging for LoTW confirmations.

According to their detractors, since uploads to LoTW are free, LoTW confirmations should be freely available to all who worked them.

Historically – that is, before LoTW – QSL requests sent to DXpeditioners were the mechanism by which donations were made. Considerate and thankful DXers stuffed a few extra greenbacks into the envelope to assist the team with their financial costs.

When LoTW came along, this went away. Many DXers are now happy to have LoTW confirmations and don't give a whit about a paper card. Simply by uploading their own logs, DXers will eventually have a free confirmation and the DXpedition will go uncompensated for it.

I made six contacts with 9J2T and don't have a problem meeting their price of \$1.50 for those six LoTW confirmations. In fact, I just sent \$5 for LoTW and paper QSLs.

On another blog (<http://dx-world.net/2014/why/>), someone commented on their distaste at having to finance 9J2T's "vacation". That will tell you where he stands on donating to DXpeditions. Multiply him by many others and, as I mentioned, it should come as no surprise that this method wasn't put into place within months of LoTW's implementation.

More writings from John Harper can be found on his great website www.ae5x.com/blog

Ham Looks For New Hobbies

By WBØRUR HamHijinks.com

PORT ARTHUR, OKLA. — Checotah County ham radio operator Bobby Willis says he's working exclusively "digital" modes from this day forward.

"I really like the way that you can set up the macros, allow the software to automatically log QSOs, and the ability to work stations with low signal to noise ratios," says Willis.

Willis says he's been a ham for at least a dozen years, but it was only after four years of "fiddling around" that he actually got his digital mode configurations set the correct way for making contacts.

digital_mode_error

After you get those digital mode settings correct, don't touch that dial!

"Yeah, it took awhile," says the retired electrician. "I just didn't seem to be able to get all the software, knobs, switches, co-ax connections and options set the correct way at the right time."

Now, he says, he's afraid to change to another mode – or it might take another 4 years to get it all put back for digital again.

By the way, Willis says he's considering taking up additional hobbies to fill the time while his PSK31 macros transmit: hobbies like "long-exposure photography" and "tracking the constellations across the sky."

You can work Willis on the PSK31 digital mode, Monday – Friday on 14.070MHz on the "Don't Touch This Net."

hamhijinks.com

QSO Selected:	<input type="text" value="6"/>
Type of QSL:	ONLY LOTW NEW LoTW request
Select Currency:	USD
Electronic confirm:	LoTW (No card)
Sending costs USD:	<input type="text" value="1.50"/>
Your Donation USD:	<input type="text"/>





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Lake County Amateur Radio Club Membership Application

Please complete this form and return mail (address below) with your dues. Make all checks payable to the *Lake County Amateur Radio Club*. You may also return this application at one of our club meetings, held the 2nd Friday of each month at the Lake County Department of Homeland Security Office, 2900 W 93rd Ave, Crown Point, Indiana

If you want a receipt and ID card mailed to you, send a SASE. You may also pickup your card at a regular club meeting.

Lake County Amateur Radio Club — PO BOX 90 — Crown Point, IN 46308-0090

Name	Call	License Class	Birth Month

Address	City	State Zip	Phone

E-Mail Address _____

DUES ENCLOSED (please check one — also indicate if you are an ARRL Member) ARRL Member

Full (\$25) Family (\$30) Associate—Non Ham(\$10) I wish to make an **ADDITIONAL** donation of \$ _____

Name	Call	License Class	E Mail	Birth Month

First time members AFTER June 30, membership fees for the remainder of the year are 1/2 the fees listed above.