



THE SIGNAL

Newsletter of the Bella Vista Radio Club

VOL. 3, NO. 5 AUGUST 2020

Monthly Meetings: 1st Thursdays @ 7 p.m., Highland Christian Church, 1500 Forest Hills Blvd, Bella Vista
Club Call: N5BVA • Repeater: 147.255 +offset, pl 162.2 • Website: www.bellavistaradioclub.org

WEEKLY NETS:

3.830 kHz Roundtable - Sundays @ 4 pm

147.255 Repeater Net - Wednesdays @ 8 pm

Wide Area Net - Wednesdays @ 9 pm on the N5UFO NWA Linked Repeater System

Features in This Issue:

- * Gangbuster July Meeting
- * Repeater Etiquette & Protocol
- * BVRC's New Social Media Coordinator!
- * DXE Hamfest & DX Academy
- * QSL Card Storage, Organizing, & Displaying
- * CW History: Abraham Lincoln and the Telegraph
- * The Importance of Amateur Radio & Amateur Radio Clubs

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NEXT BVRC MONTHLY MEETING

VIRTUAL MEETING

THURSDAY - AUGUST 6, 2020 - 7 PM

BVRC YOU TUBE CHANNEL

AUGUST MEETING

As Covid-19 restrictions continue, BVRC will also continue with another cavalcade of our members "showin' off the shack" for the August virtual meeting.

It's hard to keep a good ham radio club down! Attendance for the past 3 virtual meetings we've conducted has overall been great, and we appreciate all of our splendid members tuning in!

This month's virtual meeting will be featuring offerings from Stan Ross - K5VR, Murray Harris - W5XH, Steve Norris - W5KI, Alan & Sheila Katz - KEØQFO and KØETA, and capped off with a technical video from Mark - K5XH that our newer members may find helpful and interesting, as Mark demonstrates how to install a solderless coax connector.

Once again, this will be another entertaining and informative virtual BVRC meeting for August, and we encourage all members to tune-in to the BVRC YouTube channel to enjoy the telegenic festivities.

If you've never tuned-in just go to: <https://bellavistaradioclub.org/>, and click the YouTube icon on the upper right side of your screen, which will take you to the BVRC YouTube Channel, then click the Aug. meeting video.

See you then!



From the Desk of the President

I hope that you and your loved ones are healthy and maintaining a positive spirit during these uncertain times.

I also want to thank you for your membership and commitment to the Bella Vista Radio Club. Not being able to have our regular meetings and activities could have negatively impacted the membership numbers, but you have hung in there and maintained your support. You ARE greatly appreciated.

I have asked the BVRC leadership team to read or reread a document from the ARRL titled *Active Club Online Primer* (<https://tinyurl.com/y76nq855>) while considering the following questions:

- What components listed in the document is BVRC doing well?
- Which areas are in need of improvement? What can we do to improve? What are our priorities?
- Where are the gaps? What do we need to do to fill them?

I invite every member to look over this ARRL publication and help us answer these questions. There are a lot of great ideas in this document.

OK – I'll start! (Hi, hi)

- *BVRC needs an EMCOMM component and coordinator* – When new members fill out the membership application the emergency communication box is routinely checked. We have many members willing and able to participate in this area of amateur radio and EMCOMM is one of the important reasons why we can enjoy our operating privileges. BVRC is the largest amateur radio club in this area with 120 members. This is a current gap and priority. Who has a passion for EMCOMM and would be willing to get this going?
- *We also need a public information officer* – This is also a very important role. We need to inform the public who we are and what we do as amateur operators. I have heard members of the public ask, “Do people still do that?” We need to change that mindset. Ron K5XK has graciously filled the gap after he “retired” from this position. He has served as the BVRC PIO with distinction, but it's time to give him a *real* break. This is a great opportunity for someone to share their enthusiasm for our hobby with the public – to be a ham radio and BVRC Ambassador. Help BVRC fill this important gap.

Please contact any of the BVRC officers if you would be interested in either of these positions.

NWA LINK SYSTEM EXTRAVAGANZA & TWO SHACK TOURS HIGHLIGHT JULY VIRTUAL MEETING

A splendid presentation and tour of the Dodd Mountain repeater site – one of many in the Northwest Arkansas Link System – followed by excellent expositions of two BVRC members' shacks were center stage for the virtual July meeting of Bella Vista Radio Club. If you missed the meeting, you can replay it [here](#).

Another excellent turnout was displayed from our valued members with many comments lauding the great presentations by Tem – N5KWL, Jon – K5DVT, Scott – W5AAJ, and Glenn – WB5L.

BVRC's President, Tom Northfell – W5XNA, ushered-in the program with opening comments and introductions, followed by the meeting's first installment from Glenn – WB5L.



WB5L shack

Glenn is President Emeritus of BVRC, and the 2018 Delta Division Ham of the Year. Glenn gave us a trek through his extensive shack complete with APRS, HF, VHF, and UHF stations, and workbenches. Presently, he has an 80- and 40-meter dipole in operation with a dual band vertical atop his 56-foot tower but has a Mosley TA-33 ready to go up, along with extending his tower height. We look forward to seeing all of Glenn's new installations in the near future.

Scott Branyan – W5AAJ then treated us with a tour of his station, which he had set-up outdoors in preparation of Field Day. Scott is one of several new hams and BVRC members, who has really taken-off with the hobby and his excitement definitely shows. Scott has already acquired DXCC, Worked-All-States, and just recently upgraded to Amateur Extra class! He is presently pursuing the Triple Play Award. Scott runs a Kenwood TS-480SAT feeding a G5RV and is having a ball.

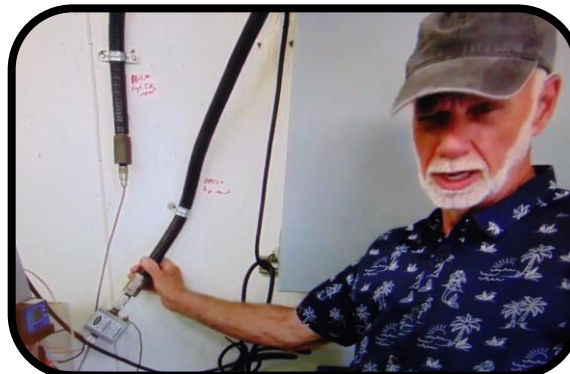
**Scott – W5AAJ****W5AAJ antenna**

Tem -N5KWL and Jon – K5DVT then capped-off the meeting with a splendid presentation and tour of the Dodd Mountain repeater installation, Tem serving as the main tour guide with Jon as the camera man and color commentator. These two gentlemen are truly the epitome of UHF/VHF repeater operation and maintenance in the NW Arkansas area.....

Tem is the owner of the massive NWA Link System (which hosts the BVRC Wide-Area-Net each Wednesday evening at 9pm local time), Technical Officer of BVRC, and President of the Arkansas Repeater Council. Jon, along with assisting Tem with the Link System, has also installed his own 2- and 6-meter repeaters in the area, and currently attending the University of Arkansas with a major in Electronic Engineering.

They gave us excellent information on D-Star, feedlines, frequency calibration, cavity performance and how to achieve optimum performance, and an excellent exhibit of one of the repeater antennas (which cost \$1400 alone).

From watching these two repeater aficionados, it is sobering to realize the amount of time, work, effort, and money that goes into these repeaters, which Tem says are free for any licensed ham to use. And for that, we are all immensely grateful to him.

**Tem-N5KWL explains operation of repeater antenna****Tem explaining repeater feedlines****Jon –
K5DVT**



Repeater Etiquette & Protocol

A General Guide

for NW Arkansas Repeaters

As a general rule, use the same common courtesy when in conversation with someone face to face and if children were present. It's much the same on a repeater, with a few caveats.

When accessing the repeater (after ensuring you have set the proper frequencies and PL {or CTCSS} tone), LISTEN for a few seconds, and then LISTEN again to ensure the repeater is not already in use. "Kerchunking" or dead keying the repeater is not necessary and just adds to the wear of repeater components.

When keying up a repeater, pause one second before speaking. For instance, if the repeater is not in use and you want to announce your availability for a conversation, depress your mic button, wait a second, then say "(Your call sign), listening (or monitoring)." If others are listening and want to engage you in a contact, they will respond with their call sign and a possible greeting.

If you would like to call a specific station, key the repeater waiting a second, say his or her call sign followed by your call sign, e.g., "WB5L from K5QBX." Wait a reasonable amount of time and if no response, repeat the call you just made. If there is no response and you want to let others know you're available, then say "(Your call) listening (or monitoring)." If you don't want to remain on the repeater, then say (Your call), clear," which clears you from the repeater. *Do not call "CQ" on repeaters. This protocol is used on the HF bands and is neither necessary nor acceptable on repeaters.*

When in conversation, be mindful of the timer which stops the repeater transmitter after 2-3 minutes. During a contact and after completion of your thought, release the mic and the repeater will send a 'courtesy tone.' This is an indicator for the other party to wait 2-3 seconds before continuing their side of the conversation. This pause allows anyone with emergency traffic or others wanting to make a quick call to another station to interrupt briefly. When the repeater is busy, you and your party should move to a simplex frequency, if possible. This frees the repeater for others to use. It is also a good idea to give your callsign using phonetics when you first come on the repeater for the first time.

As indicated, the 2-3 second pause also allows anyone needing to report an emergency to break-in and say "Emergency," or "Emergency Traffic", and wait for a response. The use of the word "Break" is not recommended, as not all would understand why you are trying to get a response from someone on the repeater. Emergency traffic (or communications) on the repeater should normally be handled by the first to respond, and supported by any others that may be on frequency to assist by making phone calls, etc.

If you have any questions concerning repeater protocol, feel free to contact the trustee, or consult with the ARRL website for answers.

BVRC VE REPORT

July 11, 2020



CONGRATULATIONS !!!

Passed Technician and General!

Ronald Neve – Siloam Springs

Passed Technician!

Joshua Fitzgibbon – Fayetteville

Jeff Slocum – Prairie Grove

Test sessions are conducted each 2nd Saturday of the month, 2 pm, at the Highland Christian Church in Bella Vista.

Help promote the availability of the Club's monthly test sessions. Tell your friends and acquaintances!

Welcome
NEW BVRC MEMBERS !!!

Brigan Mayer – KI5JRA – Bentonville

Clarence “Buster” Morrow – AD5AM – Rogers

Jeff Slocum – Prairie Grove

Note: A HUGE word of thanks to Buster Morrow-AD5AM of Rogers, for his \$100.00 contribution to the club on behalf of Steve Werner-K5SAW who helped Buster get his HF transceiver back on the air. Buster has joined BVRC as a Life Member, and we heartily welcome him to the club!



**New B V R C
Social Media
Coordinator
CLARA ORVIN – KI5HTX**



After an approval vote from the BVRC Board, Clara Orvin – KI5HTX has accepted the position of Bella Vista Radio Club Social Media Coordinator.

Clara has entered the hobby with lots of vim, vigor, and excitement. We are very pleased to see her accept this position. She has already participated in several radio contests, has achieved a 15+ word-per-minute copying speed with Morse code from her enrollment with the Long Island CW Club, and advises that she plans on upgrading to General class in the near future.

Clara will be monitoring and maintaining BVRC's social media platforms Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. If you need to communicate with Clara concerning social media information, please feel free to contact her at: xxxxxx@gmail.com

CONGRATULATIONS AND THANKS CLARA!!!

Announcing the First Monthly NW Arkansas Inter-Club Lunchon & Raffle



Saturday – July 25 – 11am to 2pm
Golden Corral – Rogers
I-49, Exit 81 (Pleasant Grove Rd. Exit)

[You must follow state health guidelines: Face Masks, etc.]

>>>>>Free Drinks with Paid Meals for Attendees<<<<<

Here's Your Chance to Meet Other Hams in the Area!

Searching For a Club to Join?

Check Out Members of the Clubs Who Will Attend!

Got Radio-Related Questions?

Hundreds of Years of Experience Will Be Present!

This Event Will Be the Last Saturday of Every Month!

This First Event Will Raffle Off a Free Meal

With Every 10 Attendees!

Future Events Will Raffle Off Radio-Related Gear!

All Proceeds Will Benefit the Radio Club of Your Choice!

Please RSVP to Rick J. Pope KG5MWG

(479) 530-7333 Cell rjpope1@yahoo.com (479) 306-4066 Office

Clubs Expected to be Present:

Amateur Radio Klub of the Arkansas NW	Hogville Hams	NWA EmComm
Amateur Radio Club of the UofA	Benton County Radio Operators	
Arkansas DX Association	Bella Vista Radio Club	Ozark Wireless Society

A big thanks to Mark – K5XH for this special information to all BVRC members! –



ANNOUNCING THE 1ST DXE VIRTUAL HAMFEST AND DX ACADEMY !!!



Join the Elmers at DX Engineering and a host of Ham Radio luminaries on **Saturday, July 25, 2020**, for the first DXE Virtual Hamfest and DX Academy—two online events combined into a full day of fun, learning, and drawings for DX Engineering gift cards (must be registered and present on Zoom during the drawings to qualify).

Both events are free and open to all – click [here](#) to register. Once signed up, you will receive a link to access the events in real-time on the Zoom webinar platform, or you can watch live on the DX Engineering YouTube channel.

DXE Virtual Hamfest

The day kicks off with the DXE Virtual Hamfest, featuring presentations from top contributors to [OnAllBands](#) (DX Engineering's blog site), and the latest news and answers to your questions about recent and upcoming products, including the [RF-KIT RF2K-S Linear Amplifier](#) (sold exclusively in North America by DX Engineering), the [RT-4500HD Heavy-Duty Rotator](#), and the [Ladder Line Surge Protector](#).

Schedule (All Times Eastern)

- 9 am: Introduction by Tim Duffy, K3LR, CEO of DX Engineering
- 9:15 am: DXE Product Discussion with Scott Jones, N3RA
- 9:30 am: Ward Silver, N0AX, Radiosport: Training for Public Service
- 10 am: DXE Product Discussion with Steve Hannah, KC8YSU
- 10:15 am: Sean Kutzko, WX9X, Working Amateur Radio Satellites
- 10:45 am: DXE Product Discussion with Tim Duffy, K3LR
- 11 am: Anthony Luscre, K8ZT, Youth in Amateur Radio
- 11:30 am: DXE Q&A, Wrap-up, and Drawing for a \$1,000 DX Engineering Gift Card

DX Academy

The afternoon will be all about improving your skills at making long-distance contacts. Sponsored by Icom America and DX Engineering, the first-ever online DX Academy brings together experts to share advice from their years of on-air experience.

Schedule (All Times Eastern)

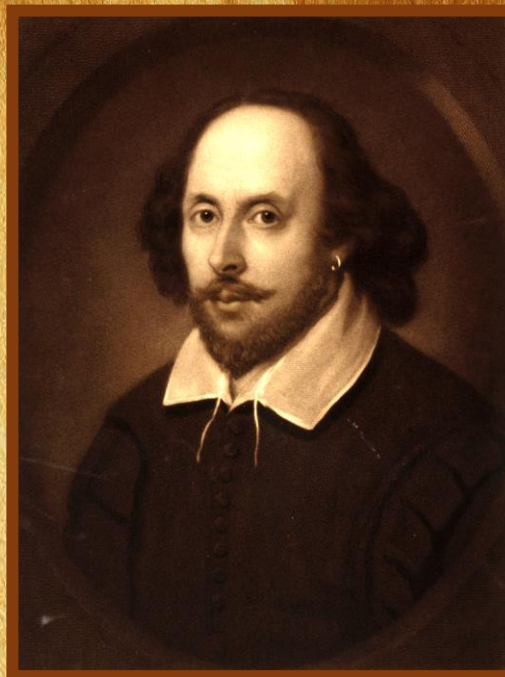
- 1:00 pm: Introduction by Tim Duffy, K3LR
- 1:15 pm: Jerry Rosalius, WB9Z, Low Band Antennas for DXing
- 2:15 pm: Ray Novak, N9JA, Icom Product Showcase, IC-705
- 2:45 pm: Glenn Johnson, W0GJ, VP6R DXpedition to Pitcairn Island
- 3:45 pm: Valerie Hotzfeld, NV9L, Operating Tools and Ideas for Becoming a Better DXer
- 4:45 pm: Wrap-up and Drawing for a \$1,000 DX Engineering Gift Card

Look for more information on [DX Engineering's Facebook page](#) and [OnAllBands](#) in the coming days.

You don't have to write like William "Bill" Shakespeare in order to write an article for The Signal. --- In fact, we prefer articles without the words "thy", "whilst", "'tis", and "oft".

Working on a new kit or homebrew project?? Have you recently received a rare or interesting QSL card to share?

Received a new radio award? Or, do you have a cool photo (ham radio related) or some comments to share with other club members? Maybe you have acquired a new piece of equipment, or constructed a new antenna?? Taken a trip that included an amateur radio related experience?? Why not write an article for The Signal?? The article can be short or long, simple or elaborate. Please include pictures! We're always looking for material for the BVRC newsletter, and feedback from our readers goes a long way toward keeping the newsletter interesting! So why not give it try?? Write an article and send it to The Signal editor, and we'll get it in there! It's fun, and at the same time your contribution helps support BVRC and our hobby! Articles can be submitted electronically or on paper, whichever way you feel most comfortable with. As The Signal editor, I *particularly* look forward to putting a new issue together when I have material submitted by our club members! Hope to hear from you soon & 73! (Send it in!)



Submit your material to:

Via e-mail: arsk5db@gmail.com

Via regular mail:

**Don Banta, K5DB
3407 Diana St.
Springdale, AR 72764**



BVRC WEEKLY NET REPORTS



BVRC Wednesday Night Net – N5BVA Repeater

June 17, 2020

NCS: KG5SZQ - Chris

Check-ins (13)

AB5UN John
AD5AM Buster
K5ANW Darrell
K5DB Don
K5SAW Steve
K5UNX Wayne
KC0DX Ed
KE0QFO Alan
KE0VQL Dennis
K1SEQL Faith
K1SHOL Patty
WB5L Glenn

June 24, 2020

Incomplete

July 1, 2020

NCS: KG5SZQ - Chris

Check-ins (10)

AB5UN John
AD5AM Buster
K5DB Don
KC0DX Ed
KE0VQL Dennis
K1SDUV Bonner
K1SEQL Faith
N5LML Randy
WB5L Glenn

July 8, 2020

NCS: K1SDUV - Bonner

Check-ins: (11)

K5ANW Darrell
K5DB Don
K5UNX Wayne
K5VCA Vinson
KC5JVJ Jeff
KC0DX Ed
KE0VQL Dennis
K1SEQL Faith
K1SHOL Patty
N5LML Randy

BVRC Wide-Area-Net – NW Arkansas Link System

June 17, 2020

NCS: K5DB – Don

Check-ins: (9)

K5DVT Jon
K5UNX Wayne
K1SDUV Bonner
K1SEQL Faith
N5SQY Rob
W5HB John
W5XNA Tom
WB5L Glenn

June 24, 2020

NCS: W5HB – John

Check-ins: (13)

K5DB Don
K5DVT Jon
K5VCA Vinson
K1SDUV Dallas
K1SEQL Molly
K1SHOL Patty
N5ALH Al
N5SQY Rob
W5CMD Clyde
W5XNA Tom
W5ZQI Shane
WB5L Glenn

July 1, 2020

NCS: W5XNA - Tom

Check-ins: (14)

K5DB Don
K5DVT Jon
K5VCA Vinson
K5UWK Jerry
K1SCXH Susan
K1SDUV Dallas
K1SEQL Faith
K0SRM Scott
N5LML Randy
N5SQY Rob
W5KI Steve
W5ZQI Shane
WB5L Glenn

July 8, 2020

NCS: K5VCA - Vinson

Check-ins (13):

K5DVT Jon
K5UNX Wayne
K5XDR Ryan
KE0MAD Sean
K1SDUV Bonner
K1SEQL Faith
K1JQK Dave
KJ4QIS Roger
N5SQY Rob
W5HB John
W5XNA Tom
W5ZQI Shane

QSL CARDS: Printing, Storing, Organizing, and Displaying

By Don – K5DB

If you work a lot of HF and are involved with pursuing an award (WAS, DXCC, etc.) or just good ol' rag chewing, and even if you opt to use LotW (Logbook of the World) or e-QSL for some of your electronic contact confirmations, it is inevitable that – sooner or later – you will have to deal with hard copy QSL cards.

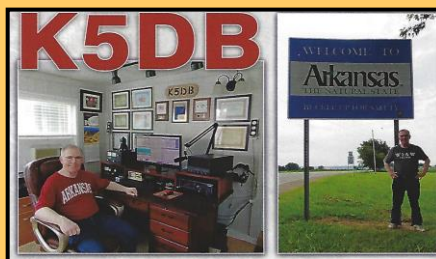
As far as your own card is concerned, there are many QSL printing software programs out there that you can purchase and print your own. The only drawback to this is that unless you choose a design that is very simple and does not include color pictures or elaborate graphics, you're probably going to spend more than your comfortable with on printer ink. In that case, you may want to opt for a commercial QSL printer.

There are many of these around the country. Just query "ham radio QSL printing" into your browser and you should see many choices.

Personally, I use 2 types of cards – a budget card and a picture card – to use with whatever "QSL situation" I am dealing with. Ex: If a county hunter wants my card (they have thousands), he/she probably isn't that interested in how elaborate or decorative my card is – they just want a written confirmation. So, they get a budget card.



Budget-type QSL

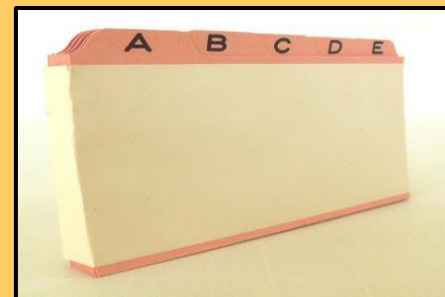


Picture QSL – I use these mainly for Dxing

After you begin exchanging QSLs, you eventually will begin amassing your own collection of them. What do you do when that time comes? There are many ways to store and/or organize your cards, and those ways are just like getting cards printed – it depends on how you want to do it and what you want to spend.

THE GOOD OL' SHOE BOX – I used these for many, many years. They work, and most times, they're free. You probably have some empty shoeboxes laying around. Go to a discount or an office supply store, and pick-up a packet of numerical card dividers, or alphabetical card dividers,

or both (depending on how you want to catalog your cards, usually numerical for stateside cards and alphabetical for DX).



Make sure the dimensions of the dividers are a little less narrow and a little less tall than your shoe box dimensions, and you're in business.

FILE BOX OR CABINET – You may want to opt for a custom cardboard file box, plastic file box, or a wooden or metal office card file cabinet with the # of drawers of your choosing:



You can store all your cards or if you wish. Or.....you can also spiffy-up the shack a bit and show-off some of them to potential visitors with QSL displays. There are many QSL display options just as there are storage options. You can purchase 20-card plastic displays or 3-ring binder displays, which are available through several sources you can find on the Internet. Or, you can build your own custom QSL wall display.

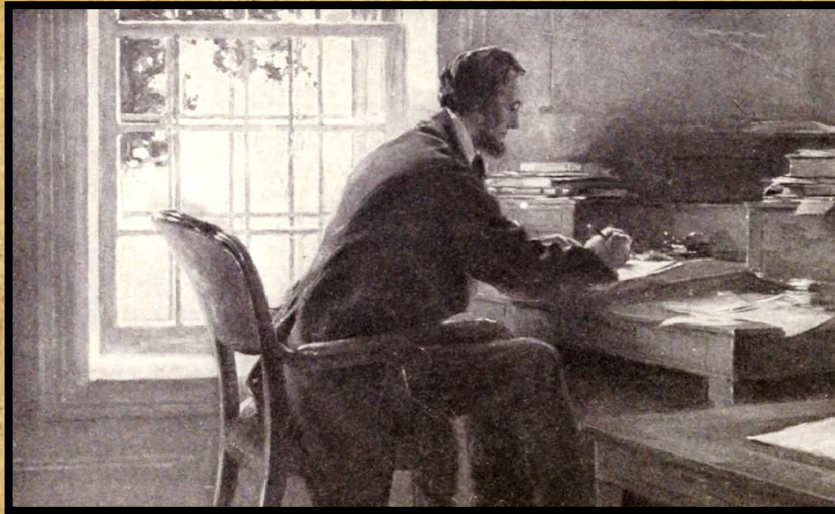


Hard copy QSLs have been, and will always be, a legacy in amateur radio. Even with the present onset of the electronic QSL (e-QSL) and Logbook of the World (no QSL used at all) which is a fast and easy method to confirm a contact, hard copy QSLs are great conversation pieces to share with hams and non-hams alike.

They are also lasting keepsakes. I still have the QSL from my very first contact (Jeanne-WAØVIT in Hastings, NE), my first DX contact (Gerry-ZE6JL in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe), my 6 QSLs that got me my Worked-All-Continents award in 1970, and many, many others. About once every couple of years, I go back through my QSL card files and enjoy a "walk down memory lane". It is always enjoyable.

If you desire to have a good filing approach and the tools to do it with, you do need a good method and system to keep your QSL cards in order. Whichever one you settle on in the quest for organizing, storing, and/or displaying your QSL cards, I hope this little article has been helpful to you.

CW HISTORY



ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND THE TELEGRAPH

From Don – K5DB: I've always enjoyed researching combined history and radio related topics. Allow me to share with you some information that I recently came across, regarding President Abraham Lincoln and his use of the telegraph during the Civil War.

The two main factors that Lincoln knew would enable him to win the war were: 1) Efficient transportation and 2) Communication.

One of the sayings of professional soldiers is "Amateurs talk tactics; professionals talk logistics." President Lincoln self-taught himself on these two main principles, and augmented these important concepts during his presidency and the war. Lincoln looked at the road network and the rail network, and the ability to organize and utilize infrastructure.

He realized that by enlarging the U.S.'s rail system, it would help him win the war. Railroads were quick, reliable, and all-weather. They enabled forces,



Union infantrymen guarding the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, west of Alexandria, VA

ammunition, and supplies to be transported or translocated very efficiently. For example, transporting 12,000 troops, weapons, and supplies over hundreds of miles would take 2 months by road, but only 6 days by rail. When the Civil War commenced, the United States' rail system consisted of 22,000 miles of track. During the war, 4,000 miles were added. Advantage: Lincoln.

The second paramount element that Lincoln utilized was *communication*. He wanted fast, direct information during battles. So, he innovated with new technology – he used the telegraph to keep him informed.



Civil War telegraph key

With the telegraph, he could get up-to-the-minute reports from the battlefield. The telegraph “brought the battlefield” closer to Washington, D.C. It decreased the time and space between the Commander-in-Chief and the battlefield commanders.

Abraham Lincoln embraced technology. If speed and tempo could be a weapon, if speed in making decisions could be a weapon, a huge element in accomplishing these goals was the telegraph. This enabled him to formulate the best strategy from the best intelligence.

In essence, the White House telegraph office became the first Presidential Situation Room! Lincoln had a cot set-up in the telegraph office, so he could take naps in-between reading reports from the battlefield.

Over the course of the war, Lincoln issued over 1,000 commands using the telegraph network.

To conclude this article, I would like to share some additional information with you from Robert McNamara. Mr. McNamara is a history expert and former magazine journalist. He was Amazon.com's first-ever history editor and has bylines in New York, the Chicago Tribune, and other national outlets:

President Abraham Lincoln used the telegraph extensively during the Civil War and was known to spend many hours in a small telegraph office set up in the War Department building near the White House.

Lincoln's telegrams to generals in the field were a turning point in military history, as they marked the first time a commander-in-chief could communicate, practically in real time, with his commanders.

And, as Lincoln was always a skillful politician, he recognized the great value of the telegraph in spreading information from the army in the field to the public in the North. In at least one instance, Lincoln personally interceded to make sure a newspaperman had access to telegraph lines so a dispatch about action in Virginia could appear in the New York Tribune.



Besides having an immediate influence on the actions of the Union Army, the telegrams sent by Lincoln also provide a fascinating record of his wartime leadership. The texts of his telegrams, some of which he wrote out for the transmitting clerks, still exist in the National Archives and have been used by researchers and historians.

Lincoln's Interest in Techology

Lincoln was self-educated and always highly inquisitive. And, like many people of his era, he had a keen interest in emerging technology. He followed the news of new inventions. And, he was the only American president to obtain a patent, for a device *he designed* to assist riverboats to cross sandbars.

When the telegraph changed communication in America in the 1840s, Lincoln would certainly have read about those advances. It's likely he knew about the wonders of the telegraph from newspaper articles he read in Illinois before any telegraph wires had reached that far west.

When the telegraph started to become common through the settled parts of the nation, including his native Illinois, Lincoln would have had some contact with the technology. As a lawyer working for railroad companies, Lincoln would have been a sender and receiver of telegraph messages.

One of the men who would serve as a government telegraph operator during the Civil War, Charles Tinker, had done the same job in civilian life at a hotel in Pekin, Illinois. He later recalled that in the spring of 1857, he chanced to meet Lincoln who was in town on business related to his legal practice.

Tinker recalled that Lincoln had watched him sending messages by tapping the telegraph key and writing down incoming messages he converted from Morse code. Lincoln asked him to explain how the apparatus worked. Tinker recalled going into considerable detail, describing even the batteries and electrical coils as Lincoln listened intently.

During the campaign of 1860, Lincoln learned he had won the Republican nomination and later the presidency via telegraph messages which arrived in his hometown of Springfield, Illinois. So, by the time he moved to Washington to take up residence in the White House he was not only aware of how the telegraph worked, but he recognized its great usefulness as a communication tool.



Charles Tinker

The Military Telegraph System

Four telegraph operators were recruited for government service in late April 1861, soon after the attack on Fort Sumter. The men had been employees of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and were enlisted because Andrew Carnegie, the future industrialist, was an executive of the railroad who had been pressed into government service and ordered to create a military telegraph network.



David Homer Bates

One of the young telegraph operators, David Homer Bates, wrote a fascinating memoir, [*Lincoln In the Telegraph Office*](#), decades later.

Lincoln In the Telegraph Office

For the first year of the Civil War, Lincoln was barely involved with the military's telegraph office. But in the late spring of 1862 he began to use the telegraph to give orders to his officers. The Army of the Potomac was becoming bogged down during General George McClellan's Peninsula Campaign in Virginia, Lincoln's frustration with his commander may have moved him to establish faster communication with the front.

During the summer of 1862 Lincoln took up the habit he followed for the rest of the war: he would often visit the War Department telegraph office, spending long hours sending dispatches and waiting for responses.

Lincoln developed a warm rapport with the young telegraph operators. And, he found the telegraph office a useful retreat from the much busier White House. One of his constant complaints about the White House was that job seekers and various political figures wanting favors would descend upon him. In the telegraph office he could hide away and concentrate on the serious business of conducting the war.

According to David Homer Bates, Lincoln wrote the original draft of the Emancipation Proclamation at a desk in the telegraph office in 1862. The relatively secluded space gave him solitude to gather his thoughts. He would spend entire afternoons drafting one of the most historic documents of his presidency.

The Telegraph Influenced Lincoln's Style of Command

While Lincoln was able to communicate fairly quickly with his generals, his use of communication was not always a happy experience. He began to feel that General George McClellan was not always being open and honest with him. And the nature of McClellan's telegrams may have led to the crisis of confidence that led Lincoln to relieve him of command following the Battle of Antietam.

By contrast, Lincoln seemed to have a good rapport via telegram with General Ulysses S. Grant. Once Grant was in command of the army, Lincoln communicated with him extensively via telegraph. Lincoln trusted Grant's messages, and he found that orders sent to Grant were followed.

The Civil War had to be won, of course, on the battlefield. But the telegraph – especially the way it was used by President Lincoln – did have an effect on the outcome.



McClellan



Grant

Curious QSLs

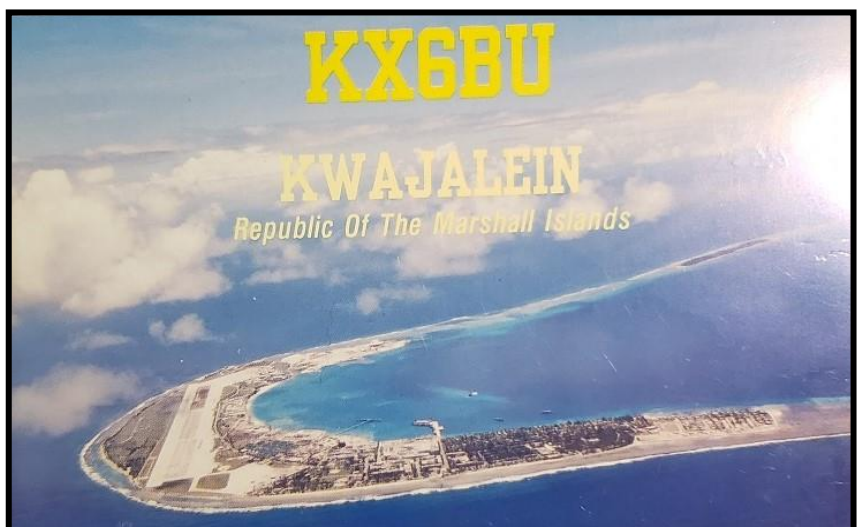
From Glenn Kilpatrick – WB5L

Glenn Kilpatrick, our current President Emeritus of BVRC and a very beloved member as well, began his ham radio experience in Georgia with the callsign N4UJS. After he moved to NW Arkansas, he obtained the Extra Class formatted callsign WB5L. In his many years in the hobby, he has accumulated an extensive collection of QSL cards, and was kind enough to include us on a few of them for this month's Curious QSLs column. Glenn is also the BVRC website webmaster and to say he does an excellent job in maintaining it is an understatement. Enjoy Glenn's offering of some of his more memorable QSLs and the great short stories that go with them!

2016 was a good year. I snagged some real good DX in the ARRL DX SSB contest. These guys were famous. Working a famous group of Hams called "Radio Arcala" from the Azores. Back then, I was not too good at CW (hi, hi). This card shows the true spirit of amateur radio, with the drive to advance the state of the art in communications technology. Hams have always found a way to innovate and provide communications where "no man has gone before".



Here's one from way back in 1989. Ah, the good ole days! I wasn't even WB5L, I was N4UJS, my original call. This little Island in the Pacific, Kwajalein, was a real treat to make contact with. I was running my Drake TR4/RC4 set, and having a ball, just learning about radio. I love the card! So, you see ham radio is not just a technical hobby; it's a worldwide social network. You not only meet people from everywhere, but you get to peek a little into their part of the world and learn about their lives. It really is a small world!



This card is one of my favorites, from the Geratol Worked-All-States Net. I have received lots of good cards from the Geratol guys, but this one is special to me, because my son, Dallas, is a police officer.

In your walk with amateur radio, you will get to meet people from all walks of life. That's been one of the special treats of the hobby for me.

Chief Dan even sent me a Somerset County New Jersey Chief of Police Association membership card! WOW!

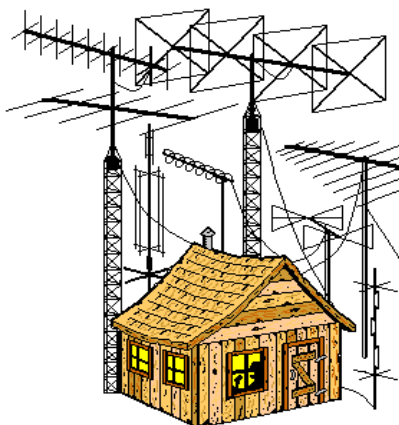
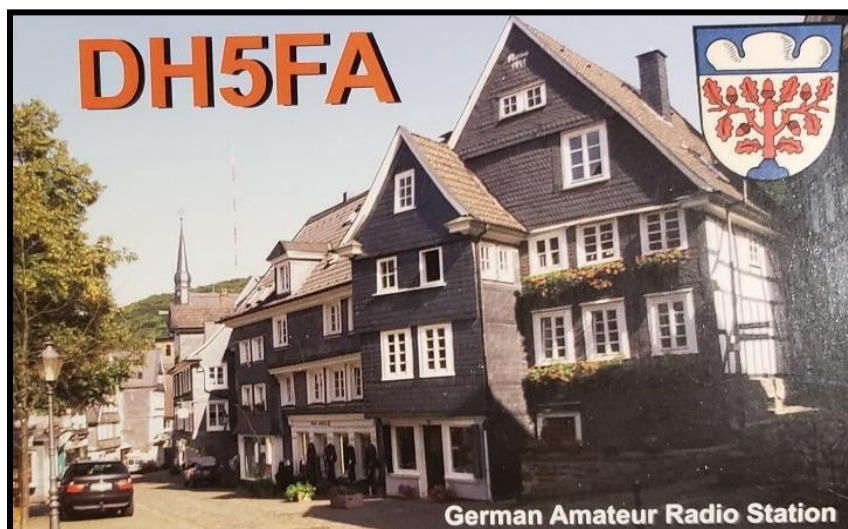


Sometimes, a surprise is in store!

Dr. Frank was probably in this downtown office, being a doctor as well as an amateur radio op, I figure he had his radio on.

I was talking to W5ANR down in Ft. Smith, and he *called me*! Goes to show, you should be always on your best behavior because you never know who's listening!

Dr. Frank decided to send me a card, and guess what, he needed Arkansas! We are kind of rare you know! LOL.



The Importance of Amateur Radio and Amateur Radio Clubs

From Don – K5DB

Sometimes when I tell people that I'm a ham operator, they'll reply with something along the lines: "I didn't know it still existed" or "Why do we need amateur radio when we now have the Internet?"

The best answer that I give them to that question, in my opinion, is: Amateur radio is the only method that one person can speak directly with another person without having to use the services of a third party – a telephone company, Internet Service Provider, etc.

Have you ever thought about your possessing a ham license in this light? By passing an amateur radio exam, you've convinced the government of the United States of America that you have the basic skills to operate a radio station and have legal access to this ability. *This is an awesome achievement.* You are entrusted with an incredible natural resource – radio spectrum. Why would the government allow this? It hasn't always, and many governments in the world still do not.

Let's look at FCC Regulation 97.1 that defines the amateur radio service:

§ 97.1 Basis and purpose.

The rules and regulations in this part are designed to provide an amateur radio service having a fundamental purpose as expressed in the following principles:

- (a) Recognition and enhancement of the value of the amateur service to the public as a voluntary non-commercial communication service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications.
- (b) Continuation and extension of the amateur's proven ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art.
- (c) Encouragement and improvement of the amateur service through rules which provide for advancing skills in both the communication and technical phases of the art.
- (d) Expansion of the existing reservoir within the amateur radio service of trained operators, technicians, and electronics experts.
- (e) Continuation and extension of the amateur's unique ability to enhance international goodwill.

These are the reasons that the entire amateur radio service exists. We provide value to the government and to our communities, both by our participation in emergency communications, community events, and by helping train more people who might develop technical and radio skills.

Why would the government be interested in this? Obviously, there is the immediate need for amateur radio in an emergency, but even more important are the skills to deploy, maintain, and use radios. Some people reading this would call themselves "preppers." They prepare for an event where society as we know it collapses. In the event of such an occurrence, amateur radio will be the *only* means of communication that doesn't rely on third parties. So, *amateur radio is critical for communication.*

We welcome these people, as well as newcomers who have just attained their license, veteran operators, or anyone who is interested in becoming an amateur operator with questions they need answered. Join BVRC and come to our meetings, whether they're virtual or when we resume live meetings. We welcome you to attend and hopefully learn something new from our monthly programs!

That's why all the NW Arkansas amateur radio clubs exist! We provide a meeting place and time. We provide activities so that you can exercise your skills and learn. We are willing and able to help you with your questions or even your projects. Just ask! But we need your input. If you'd like to see a program or have guidance about an activity, please contact a club officer, or use the ELMER 9-1-1 tab on the BVRC website. Please participate! Please volunteer! Thanks, and 73!

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