



THE



SIGNAL



*Newsletter of the
Bella Vista Radio Club*

April 2022

Monthly Meetings: 1st Thursdays @ 7 p.m.
Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy (ALET), Springdale

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 BVRC Weekly Net - Wednesdays @ 8 pm
- Wide Area Net - Wednesdays @ 9 pm on the
NWA Skywarn Link System
 - Bentonville – 146.865, -offset, pl 103.5
 - Fayetteville – 147.315, +offset, pl 97.4
 - Huntsville – 443.625, +offset, pl 97.4
 - Green Forest – 146.310, -offset, pl 103.5

NEXT BVRC MONTHLY MEETING

THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 2022 @ 7PM
ARKANSAS LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING ACADEMY
3424 S. DOWNUM ROAD
SPRINGDALE, AR

APRIL MEETING INFORMATION

A very interesting program is on the horizon for BVRC's April meeting as Murray Harris – W5XH joins us to present "*An Introduction to Amateur Radio Satellite Operation*". Murray has an extensive background in this area of our hobby which will not only be intriguing, but may open-up the desire in many of our members to explore for themselves this fascinating mode of radio communication.

Murray was 16 years of age when he was first licensed as a Novice in 1969 with the callsign KN5WLY. After finishing college, medical school, internship, and two years in the U. S. Army (101st Airborne Division and 27th MASH in Viet Nam and AFEES, Amarillo). He upgraded to Extra Class in 1972 while a resident in Diagnostic Radiology. When the FCC implemented the vanity callsign program in 1977 he applied for, and received, W5XH.

Although he still ventures into the HF bands with SSB, CW, and digital, his current activity is on the amateur satellite bands with his recent acquisition of an Icom IC-9700 and M2 Leo-Pack antenna system.

As well as being a BVRC member, Murray is also a member of ARCUA, the Amateur Radio Club of the University of Arkansas. He and his XYL, Judith, have lived in Fayetteville since 1975, and have enjoyed 59 years of marriage together.

COMPETITIVE OPERATING MAIN TOPIC FOR MARCH MEETING, COUPLED WITH GREAT ATTENDANCE

The inaugural meeting of the Bella Vista Radio Club in its new home at the Northwest Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy is now in the books, and has been deemed a huge success! An even 50 persons attended the meeting, more than have attended even most of BVRC's recent pre-Covid meetings. It was undeniably exciting to see the large meeting room of ALETA's facility packed and extra seating had to be brought-in. With this type of enthusiasm, we're already planning on incorporating ALETA's second classroom as an overflow to accommodate large numbers when/if the need arises in future.

Old acquaintances and new friendships were renewed on the person-to-person level, some current members who had not yet renewed their BVRC memberships did so, and several newcomers to the meeting joined BVRC. Some nifty door prizes were awarded the lucky winners and an overall great time was enjoyed by everyone.

(Photos courtesy of K5XK and WB5L)





Packed house!



**BVRC President Tom-W5XNA
calls the inaugural meeting at
ALETA to order**

Don Banta – K5DB then shared this month's program with the Club on "Competitive Operating". Don related to the group that the term 'competitive operating' and competitive operating techniques, apply not only to contesting but to portable operations, special event stations, and radio awards pursuance. But the main point he made to the grand turnout of attendees, was that competitive operating skills can hone a ham operator's ability to copy and relay information correctly, efficiently, and accurately, as well as learning how to operate in adverse and/or poor propagation band conditions, and especially emergencies, when these conditions are present.

Don shared several photos of the places he has travelled during his portable and mobile operations in several state QSO parties (mobile) and National Park units all over the state of Arkansas in 2016 during the National Parks On The Air event (mobile and portable). He explained the joy and fun associated with not only operating, but the setting-up of portable stations, seeing many beautiful places within our state, and the fine operators he had the privilege to associate with. Don ended the program stating that he considered it a great honor to present the first program in BVRC's new meeting facility, experience the excitement in the meeting room, and is looking forward to many great things on the horizon for BVRC.



**Don – K5DB with the March
meeting program on "Competitive
and Competitive-Type Operating"**

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FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

It's finally April – yea!

I want to thank all of you who have recently joined BVRC or renewed your membership for 2022. Your membership and participation are vital to sustaining and growing our club. We also need volunteers for the various roles within the Club. Contact me or anyone on the leadership team and we will get you connected.

The March meeting was a HUGE success. There were 50 in attendance. I want to express my deep gratitude to Gregg Harrison – KF5WAP and the NW Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy for providing a great permanent facility for our monthly meetings. This new QTH checks all of the boxes and many more. Don – K5DB (club up and newsletter editor) gave a stellar presentation on *Competitive Operating 101*.

I want to convey my heartfelt thanks to everyone who gave presentations during the Covid-19 era of YouTube virtual meetings. Without you, there would not have been meetings for well over a year. A BIG THANKS to Wayne – K5UNX for doing the heavy lifting in getting these virtual meetings posted on YouTube each month. VY FB!

Grab a Red Plate – If you are a guest, new member, or have recently obtained your license or upgrade, grab a red plate when getting refreshments at the meetings. This will signal that we need to welcome you or celebrate your success.

One of the many fun things about going to hamfests is the opportunity to ride to the event with other hams. I have just recently sent-out a sign-up for car pooling to the Green Country Hamfest in Claremore, OK. If you are planning to go to the hamfest, please consider being a car pool driver or passenger. Catch up with old friends and/or meet new ones! Also, a special thanks to Alan – KE0QFO for reserving 2 tables at the hamfest for BVRC members. VY FB!

As always, I welcome and encourage your comments and suggestions. They make our club better and stronger. Please contact me at w5xna@arrl.net or any other Club officer.

73! – Tom, W5XNA



BVRC VE REPORT

From Don Cooper – KC7DC, BVRC VE Chair
March 12, 2022



Congratulations!!!

Dana Widboom – KI5TGY – New General!

*Test sessions are conducted each 2nd Saturday of the month, 2 pm, at
Bella Vista Fire Station #1 in Bella Vista & Shiloh Museum in Springdale*

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



If you have just acquired your General and/or Amateur Extra radio license, welcome to the world of HF! You possibly have a thousand questions on what to do and where to go from here. Of course, hands-on learning is the best way to acquire knowledge, and any of our veteran BVRC ops will be happy to help you in your endeavor to get on the air and comfortably operate with your new HF privileges.

In the meantime, the ARRL has an excellent book by Steve Ford – WB8IMY that you will invariably find useful: *YOUR FIRST AMATEUR RADIO HF STATION*.

In this publication, you will find many excellent starting points for such areas as:

- ◆ What kind of antenna should I use?
- ◆ What radio should I buy?
- ◆ Do I need an amplifier?
- ◆ What about a computer?
- ◆ What types of accessories do I need?
- ◆ Electricity – good and bad.

You can order your copy direct from ARRL. Use Order #0079. The price is \$22.95, but if you're an ARRL member, your price is \$19.95.



NEW BVRC MEMBERS!!!

GREGG HARRISON – KF5WAP – SPRINGDALE
BRIAN HARRIS – WA5UEK – FAYETTEVILLE
TYLER CHILDRESS – KI5TTR – PRAIRIE GROVE
JOE RHINE – K5JWR – BENTONVILLE
MIKE SCHROEDER – NØALJ – ROGERS
ADNAN ADEMOVIC – KDØKCY – HUNTSVILLE

SLIP-ON COAX CONNECTORS

From Mark Whatley – K5XH



This is something I have found to be very useful.

Pictured is a UHF female to slip on UHF male RF adapter along with a UHF bulkhead connector.

The adapter allows antenna feedlines to be quickly disconnected from the rest of your station. The adapter slips over the threads of any female UHF connector.

I have been using these for several years to connect my antennas through an aluminum bulkhead panel in the shack wall. They work well at the kilowatt level.

I also highly recommend a source for these and any other connector requirements: Dave Fant, W5SWL, has an impressive web store at www.W5SWL.com. He is in Mulberry, Arkansas.



**BVRC
Wants
You!...
For
Field
Day
2022!**



TECH TIPS

By Steve Werner – K5SAW

WHY ARE SCREWS OFTEN DAMAGED ON REPAIRED RADIO EQUIPMENT?



Figure 1 – A stripped screw as often found on repaired radio equipment

You may have noticed at hamfests and tailgates that repaired radio equipment often has damaged “Phillips” screw heads from screwdriver cam-out (see Figure 1).

It is possible the screw was damaged by over torquing the screw, but it is more likely the wrong screwdriver was used to remove or install the screw. All Japanese radios like Kenwood, Yaesu, and ICOM use JIS screws rather than Phillips screws in their electronic products, and I think most Chinese radios also use JIS screws. In addition, all the “Phillips” screws in Japanese cars, trucks and motorcycles are really JIS screws.

JIS stands for Japanese Industrial Standard, and the JIS screwhead and screwdriver look very similar to the Phillips screwhead and screwdriver. However, the Phillips screwhead is designed to cam-out once the screw is tight while the JIS screw head is designed to lock-in, so the torque setting is up to the user.

If you use a Phillips screwdriver on a JIS screwhead, you will most likely damage or strip the screwhead. The JIS screwdriver will work OK on a Phillips screwhead, but it may not fit quite as well as a Phillips screwdriver.

(Cont. next page)

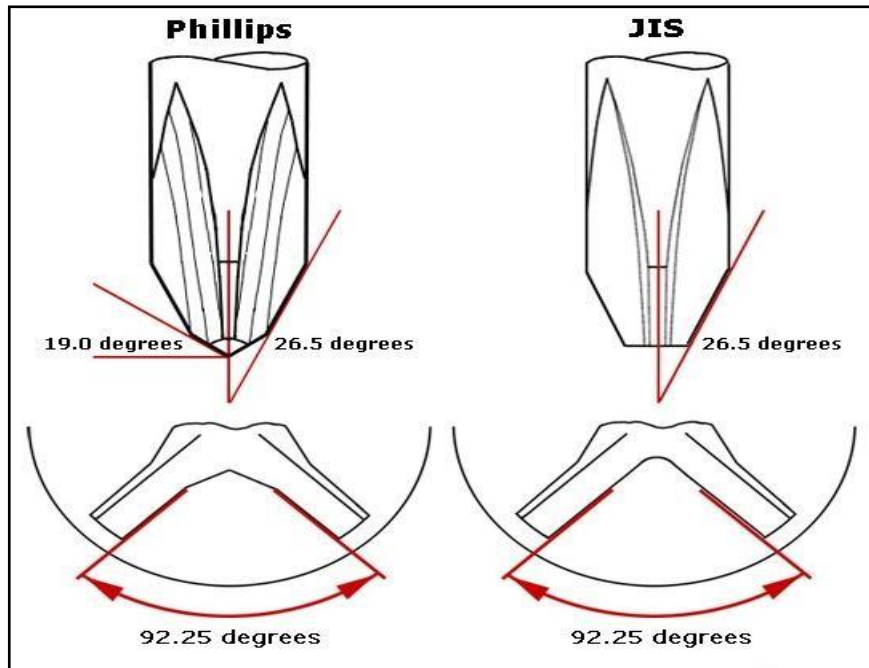


Figure 2. The Phillips and the JIS screwdrivers. The Phillips has a more pointed tip and the JIS has a deeper recess at the cross of the driver head. You might also notice the Phillips has a little taper at the tips of the cross, while the JIS is nearly straight up and down.

It is difficult to tell the difference between a JIS and Phillips screwdriver by eye, but there are subtle differences as seen in figure 2. The JIS screwhead is usually marked with a dot as shown in figure 3 or with a small “X” seen at the 10 o’clock position on the stripped screw in figure 1.



Figure 3. The dot on a screw head indicates a JIS screw, and some JIS screws are marked with a small “X” as seen in figure 1. Just to make life more interesting, not all JIS screws have the dot or the “X”.

It is certainly worth the cost of getting some JIS screwdrivers if you work on radio equipment, electronic equipment or any of the Japanese made engines, motorcycles, or automobiles. Perhaps you will not strip any more screwheads by using the wrong screwdriver.

Curious QSLs

Curious QSLs is a monthly feature column of The Signal. Each month, a BVRC member shares a couple of their QSL cards that are memorable or denote a special memory to them.

If you would like to share a couple of your QSLs and accompanying stories with the rest of the BVRC members, send a .jpg file of your cards along with their stories, to Don-K5DB at: arsk5db@gmail.com

For this month, Ron Evans – K5XK, and one of the long-time 'backbones' of BVRC, has submitted two excellent QSL cards to share with us, with accompanying stories we could call "Behind the QSL".



RADIO K5XK Ron

DATE	GMT	MHz	2WAY	RS (T)
JUNE 18, 90	04.17	21	CW	589

TS-440S
△ ANT

B. A. PLATONOV - UB5KAF
P. O. BOX 241, ROVNO, UKRAINE
U.S.S.R.

Also:
Bob, WJ3F, PO Box 56585, Wash. DC 20011
PSE QSL, TNX ☐ 73!

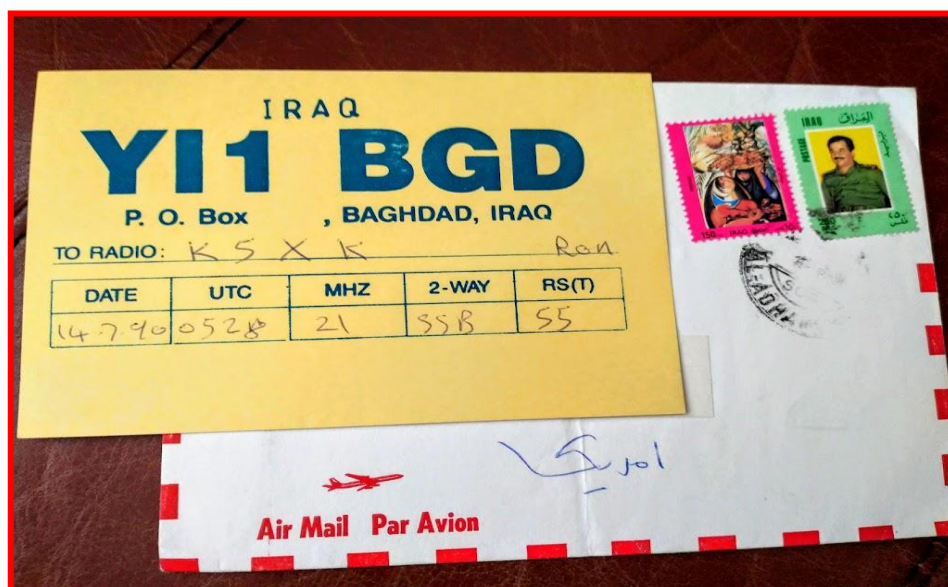
UB5KAF / UKRAINE – Ron had my first QSO with Boris – UB5KAF, in 1990 when Ukraine was still part of the USSR. (Ukraine's call prefixes now begin with UR-UZ.) During a random CW ragchew two years later, Ron discovered that during a QSO with a guy named 'Bob' was actually Boris, who was now using his new U.S. call sign, WF3J. He learned that Bob had managed to immigrate to the U.S., after being sponsored by an uncle in Washington, D.C.

More details of Boris' back story began to unravel as they supplemented on-air QSOs with old fashioned 'snail mail' correspondence. Throughout much of his life, Boris struggled with the Soviet system to become licensed. In the early days, membership in the KGB had been a requirement for licensure and on-air access. Declining to become a Communist, Bob "bootlegged" various calls and names for many years, and was never discovered.

Here in the U.S., Bob struggled to find professional success, even with a Ukrainian engineering degree and exceptional technical skills. He eventually made a good living as a self-employed electronics and appliance repairman, and purchased a home in nearby West Virginia.

A few years later in the mid-90s, Ron heard WF3J calling CQ on 20-mtr CW, and answered the CQ. But, disappointingly, he discovered that Boris' call had been reassigned. Boris had become a Silent Key as a result of a vehicle accident. Ron's amateur radio friendship with UB5KAF / WF3J is the result of scores of enriching friendships resulting from seemingly countless on-air worldwide contacts and QSLs exchanged over the years.

YI / IRAQ – On a late summer night in 1990, Ron and Charles Tillotson W5NX, were visiting Bruce Vaughan NR5Q's well-appointed radio shack in Springdale. During the visit, they decided to have a spin around 15 Meters SSB on Bruce's Kenwood TS-930S connected to his big Mosley PRO-57 yagi. To their amazement, they were excited to find "Ali", an operator at the very rare Baghdad radio club station YI1BGD, working a huge pile-up.



They broke the pile-up, then all took a turn at quickly working Ali and putting their own callsigns in the log for a rare, much needed "ATNO" (All Time New One). When Ron took his turn and exchanged reports, he asked Ali if he would switch-over to CW (they also needed a Morse QSO with Iraq for their CW endorsement for their DXCC Award). Ali said he had to leave for work, but that he would be back on the air "tomorrow," and would accommodate their request. But less than 24 hours later, the bombardment of Baghdad was underway with the beginning of Operation Desert Storm. Ali was never heard from again, but left the three of them with remarkable memories. Sadly, our beloved NWA ham buddies NR5Q and W5NX became Silent Keys in the years following.

Editor's note: Thanks Ron for two remarkable stories! The first of warm memories of friendship, and the second to illustrate to our members the fascination of amateur radio – you NEVER know when or who will be on the air for some real excitement!



ANNOUNCING THE 2ND ANNUAL BVRC CW ROUNDUP



Date: Saturday, July 16, 2022

Time Period: 0000 – 0100 UTC (7pm – 8pm local time)

Frequency: 3.540 – 3.560 kHz

Operating classes: **CLASS A** – BVRC member – Experienced CW operator
CLASS B – Newcomer or newer CW operator (BVRC member or non-member)
CLASS C – Non-BVRC member – Experienced CW operator
CLASS D – Listeners who copy and log only, with the use of FL Digi, code readers, etc.

CQing: Send "CQ CWR CQ CWR"

Exchange: Signal report (including operating class) / QTH (your location) / name

Example: If you are a newer CW operator and you are in QSO with K5XYZ whose signal is readable, their signal strength is registering a '7' on your S-meter and their signal tone is good, your callsign is W5ABC, you live in Bentonville, and your name is Albert, you would send something along the lines of:

K5XYZ DE W5ABC (K5XYZ this is W5ABC) \overline{BT} (break)

RST IS 579 B 579 B \overline{BT}

QTH IS BENTONVILLE, AR BENTONVILLE, AR \overline{BT}

NAME IS ALBERT ALBERT \overline{BT}

HW CPY? (How did you copy my transmission?)

K5XYZ DE W5ABC K (Over)

The other station would then reply with their information using the same format. After the exchanges are completed, short informal remarks can be made during the QSO if desired, after which the contact would end with something along the lines of:

TNX FER QSO (thanks for the QSO)

GL ES 73 (Good luck and best wishes)

K5XYZ DE W5ABC \overline{SK} (end of contact)

Description of event: ***This 1-hour event is not a contest.*** Rather, it is a celebration of our area newcomers, returners to the mode of CW, and listeners. It is also intended to enable our veteran CW operators to enjoy helping the newcomers in making CW contacts. There are no points scored, and no results or standings posted. **You do NOT have to be a member of BVRC to participate.**

A handsome certificate will be issued to each participant submitting a log entry from the event.

Send logs no later than Saturday, July 23, to Don Banta – K5DB:

Regular mail log: Don Banta
 3407 Diana St.
 Springdale, AR 72764

Electronic log: arsk5db@gmail.com
 Attach file: [call].log

ARKANSAS QSO PARTY RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER - MAY 21 !!!!



The singular event that showcases our great State of Arkansas in the amateur radio world each year is on the horizon.

The 2022 Arkansas QSO Party (ARQP) will take place on Saturday, May 21 from 9am-9pm Central time (this is 1400Z, May 21 – 0200Z, May 22).

Amateur operators from all over the U.S., Canada, and the world will be tuning up and down the HF bands listening for, and trying to contact, any station in Arkansas that they hear.

They will be hoping to work an Arkansas station, for example, on a particular band or mode for their Worked-All-States or 5-Band-Worked-All-States award(s). They might be badly needing a particular Arkansas county. Or they may be operating in the ARQP just for the fun of it.

We hope that anyone reading this article that operates HF modes SSB, PSK (no FT8), and/or CW, from ANY county in Arkansas will join us and participate in this annual event.

Yes – technically – the Arkansas QSO Party is a contest. And whenever the word “contest” is mentioned, it turns many hams *off*. Usually they are more interested in DXing, traffic handling, rag chewing, etc.

However, the Arkansas QSO Party, like most of the other state QSO parties, is a *very informal* atmosphere when considering that even though it is a contest of sorts, you can make it whatever you want. You can exert an extra amount of sweat and effort in working other stations as fast as you can, or you can take the casual approach and operate at your own pace and leisure. Either way, you can meet a lot of great folks the world over and have fun doing it. Many amateurs do not participate in contests, but they do participate in their state QSO parties. Perhaps you might consider doing the same?

To be honest and frank, Arkansas is generally *not* a ham radio contesting state. Most of the hams in our state are not that interested in contests – which is fine. As with

any other hobby, individuality always plays a part in the particular aspects of the hobby that one enjoys and devotes their time to. Don’t misunderstand, Arkansas is home to many contest enthusiasts...and good ones. But the fact that Arkansas isn’t as avid about contesting as some other states, causes Arkansas to be a RARE find on the ham bands. As you operate in the ARQP, you could very well here someone say to you (possibly several times), “You’re my first Arkansas! Could I swap QSL cards with you, please?” “Thanks for Arkansas!” “Could you upload this QSO to LotW?”

In 2000, after a 25-year absence from the air, the ARQP was resurrected and for the past 22 years it has seen a steady increase in participation and excitement from our Arkansas amateurs, as well as excellent mobile, portable, and rover station activity.

This year the bonus station for the ARQP will be WR5P, the club call of the Noise Blankers Radio Group, who sponsor the event. There will be mobile stations that will be traveling to many counties, along with portable and rover stations, **but it is the fixed home stations that are critical to the success of the Arkansas QSO party.** And, it doesn’t matter about the number of stations operating from any given county – the more the merrier!

When Saturday, May 21 arrives, many hams the world over will be tuning the SSB, PSK, and CW bands for Arkansas stations. *We need our Arkansas hams to be on the air and CQ-ing to give those operators outside of our state someone to contact.*

If you are interested in having some fun and participating in this year’s Arkansas QSO Party, all the information you need for viewing, downloading, and/or printing – Operating Tips, Rules, and many other aids – are available on the ARQP website: www.arkqp.com.

Hope to C U on the bands!

IF YOU’VE NEVER OPERATED IN THIS EVENT, OR PLAN TO OPERATE AGAIN, JOIN US! GIVE IT A TRY!



Green Country Hamfest 2022

Claremore, OK
April 8 & 9, 2022

The Biggest and Best in Oklahoma!

GRAND PRIZE Yaesu FTdx 101D



1st Place Prize Yaesu FT-991A



2nd Place Prize Yaesu FTM-400XDR



3rd Place Prize Yaesu FTM-100DR



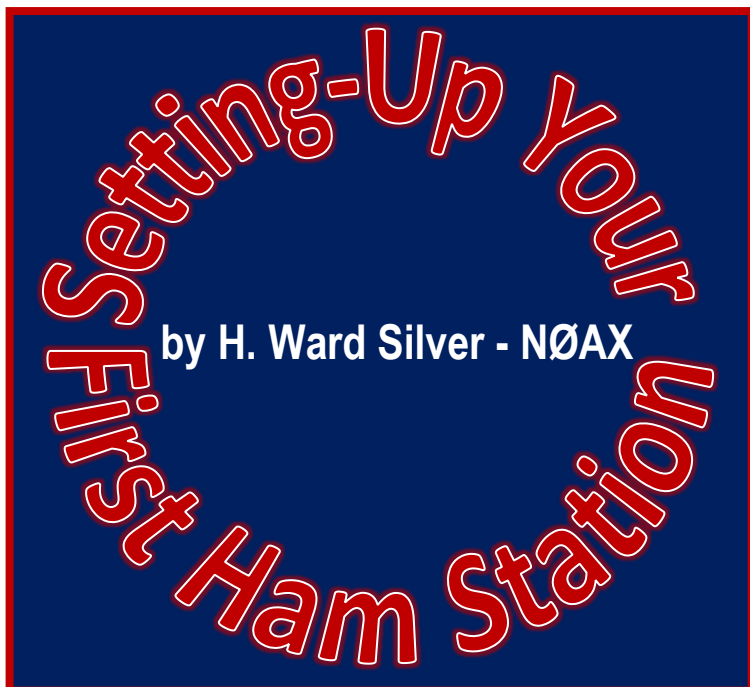
Two Enhanced Hourly Prizes Yaesu FT-3DR



Hourly Prizes Yaesu FT-70DR



Many BVRC members attend this hamfest, and many are looking forward to it convening again as Covid restrictions have been relaxed. **ALSO! – BVRC will have 2 tables reserved so that our members can fellowship and bring something to sell if you wish. Hope to C U there!**



Putting together your first ham radio station can be exciting, confusing, and challenging all at the same time! Here, you will find tips and tricks to help you build and use a station that grows with your needs and helps you operate effectively and confidently. The tips might save you some expense, too!

BE FLEXIBLE

Don't assume that you'll be doing the same activities on the air forever. Here are a few tips on flexibility:

- Avoid using specialized gear except where it's required for a specific type of operating or function.
- Use a computer and software for things that are likely to change, like operating on the digital modes.
- Don't neglect grounding and bonding — build this in as the first step. It's harder to do later and having it in place makes it easy to change the equipment layout.
- Try a different layout to see if something works better — you're allowed to change your mind! You might find a new arrangement to be more comfortable or convenient.

- Leave some budget for “surprises,” like a special cable or a power distribution box. You never know what a new interest or operating style will bring.

STUDY OTHER STATIONS

Browse the web for articles and videos that show how other stations are put together and operated. Make note of any particularly good ideas. Don't be intimidated by big stations because they started out as small stations!



LEARN ABOUT THOSE EXTRA FUNCTIONS

You paid for all those nifty features and controls — learn how they work and put them to work for you. Here are some common examples:

MON: Short for Monitor, this button is usually close to a handheld transceiver's PTT switch. It opens the squelch so you can listen for a weak station without changing the usual squelch level.

Memory Write: You should practice transferring your VFO settings to a memory channel. On VHF/UHF this is good practice for public service operating. On HF, you can use this when chasing a DXpedition or making a schedule. Learn how to do this without referring to the manual.



Noise blankers and noise reduction: Turning these on and off is easy but did you know they are adjustable? Controlling the sensitivity and level of these functions customizes them for the noise at your location. You should also be skilled at adjusting the radio's RF gain and AGC for HF operation. Know where the preamp and attenuator controls are, too.

Adjustable filters: Since most new radios use DSP, filters are smoothly adjustable, can be offset above and below your operating frequency, and different settings stored for later use. After you become skilled at using these functions, you'll wonder how you lived without them!

- **Voice and Morse messages:** Many radios can store messages and play them back. If you are operating in a contest or special event, this ability is very handy. Some radios can record audio off the air, too. While you're at it, learn how to use your radio's internal Morse keyer.
- **Custom setups:** Your radio may be able to save its operating configuration on a memory card or internally. This allows you to create

SHOP FOR USED EQUIPMENT BARGAINS

If you have a knowledgeable friend who can help you avoid worn-out and inadequate gear, buying used equipment is a great way to get started. Purchasing used gear from a dealer who offers a warranty is also a good option. Saving money now leaves you more cash for exploring new modes and bands later.



BUILD SOMETHING YOURSELF

Using equipment that you build yourself is a thrill. Start small by building accessory projects such as audio switches, filters, and keyers. Building things yourself can save you some money, too. Don't be afraid to get out the drill and soldering iron. You can find lots of kits, web articles, magazines, and books of projects to get you started.

OPTIMIZE YOUR SIGNAL

Make sure you are using your microphone, keyer, and sound card properly. Get together with a friend and configure your audio so that it's clear, clean, and "sounds like you." Note how the ALC and power output meters act when you have things set properly. For FM voice, find out what microphone orientation and voice level sound best. Have your friend listen to adjacent channels and frequencies — splattering or over-deviation waste power and aggravate others.

On the digital modes, check your audio settings, both receive and transmit. On receive, your audio level should be well above the minimum noise level but not so high that a strong signal exceeds the maximum input range of decoder. On transmit, have that helpful friend be sure you don't overdrive the audio circuits and create spurious signals.



SAVE CASH BY BUILDING YOUR OWN CABLES

You need lots of cables and connectors in your station. At a cost of roughly \$5 or more for each premade cable, you can quickly spend as much on connecting your equipment as you can on purchasing a major accessory. Learn how to install your own connectors on cables, and you'll save many, many dollars over the course of your ham career. Plus, you'll be better able to troubleshoot and make repairs.



BUILD STEP BY STEP

After you have the basics of your station in place, upgrade your equipment in steps so that you can always hear a little farther than you can transmit. Don't be an alligator (all mouth, no ears). Plan with a goal in mind so that your ham radio dollars and hours all work to further that goal. Remember that the biggest bang for your ham radio buck is often improving the antenna!

FIND THE WEAKEST LINK

Every station has a weak link. Always be on the lookout for a probable point of failure or of loss of quality. On the airwaves, you'll encounter stations with a multi-bucks radio but a cheap, garage-sale microphone that results in muffled or distorted audio. Use quality gear, and keep heavily used equipment well maintained.

MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE

You're going to spend a lot of hours in front of your radio, so take care of yourself, too. Start with a comfortable chair. Excellent chairs are often available in used-office-furniture stores at substantial discounts. Also make sure that you have adequate lighting and that the operating desk is at a comfortable height. The dollars you spend will pay dividends every time you go on the air.



LEARN CW IN 2022?

By Don – K5DB



(Editor's note: This is a reprint from a Signal issue of several years ago, but I would like to include it in this issue for our new hams that have joined BVRC since that time and possibly missed it.

So, for those of you who have previously seen it, please indulge me as I offer-up this reprise about learning CW for our new ham members.

With FT-8 now being one of the hottest modes, I am thoroughly enjoying it. But don't forget the mainstay modes of SSB, CW, and RTTY are still alive and well! Of course, CW testing is no longer required to obtain any of the amateur licenses in today's world, but there are many new hams who have still learned the code because of the sheer fun and enjoyment in using it. I learned it 53 years ago when I was 13 years old, and I have loved it to this day. Perhaps you're one of the new hams who would like to do what I did, and take the plunge?

We're coming into April, and you still have $\frac{3}{4}$ of the year to make learning CW as one of your goals for 2022! I am teaching an in-person CW class in July, and if it goes well, we'll schedule another one before year's end. If you think you would be interested, just shoot me an e-mail.

73! – Don, K5DB.....)

As most everyone knows, "back in the day" all hams had to learn Morse code to obtain an amateur license. That all ended in February 2007, when the FCC discontinued the Morse requirement for all classes of amateur licensing. This resulted in an influx of new folks – with CW more or less unknown to them – into the ranks of amateur radio.

CW was dying.....at least that's what many thought!!!!

That was 15 years ago folks and I have news for you: CW on the HF bands is FAR from dead. It has experienced ongoing use on the bands not only by old-timers but in fact, by many who, free of the *required* element of learning the code, have discovered on their own how much fun and how useful it can be to implement on the air.

So, how has this come to pass? Why is this "archaic" mode of communication, a mode that has been a deterrent and/or stumbling block to so many, still around? But most noticeable of all, how is this mode now seeing such a continued and even surging popularity on the ham bands?

Well first, learning the code gives you a sense of personal accomplishment in knowing that compared to the population of this planet we live on, persons who know and use the code are an *infinitesimally small* percentage. But second, how about the mode of CW itself? An article in the

December 2013 issue of QST entitled, "How Much 'PUNCH' Can You Get from Different Modes" denotes some very interesting statistics.



The article illustrates how the digital modes (of which CW is the oldest and most primitive) are much more effective than the voice modes, especially when the bands become very busy, or propagation deteriorates.

For example, compared to SSB voice transmission, CW has nearly a **17 dB advantage** on the air. That's due largely to a more efficient duty cycle on transmission. How much is a 17 dB advantage? Simply put, the average 100-watt transceiver and depending upon band conditions, it will account for roughly somewhere between a **30- and 60-fold increase in signal strength!**

You say, "Ok, but how will this really help **me**?... and will it be worth the trouble of learning the code?" More than likely.....yes. As with anything else in life, you reap what you sow: Anything you get out of something depends on how much time and effort you want to put into it, and the amount of impetus you have.

If all you choose to do is talk thru FM repeaters (which is fine, of course!), there's no reason to pursue learning CW. On the other hand, if you're aroused at the prospect of making contact with other hams all over the world, having loads of fun in making lots of QSOs in a contest, desiring to pursue the DXCC, WAS, WAC, etc. awards, or having a good ol' code ragchew, then CW will offer you great advantages and fun times over

those who don't – or won't – use it.

So, let's say that up to now in this article, I have possibly "whetted your appetite" a little. How do you start learning CW? It's easy! All you have to do is devote a few minutes a day for the approximate span of a month or two to learn the basics of the code, then apply it by practicing it on the air. **It's really that simple.**

To begin the process of learning CW, you can attend an in-person class in your area. Some people enjoy these type classes as it happens live, it offers camaraderie and working together in the classroom, and it offers immediate help from the instructor if you run into trouble when learning. That's one method.....

Or, you can acquire one of the computer-based code teaching programs such as the Koch or Farnsworth method. These programs will teach you the alphabet, numbers, and a few punctuation marks and operational signals (ex: period, comma, slash, BT, AR, etc.). For more information, consult these websites:

www.ac6v.com/morseprograms.htm,
www.lcwo.net, and www.arrrl.org/learning-morse-code.



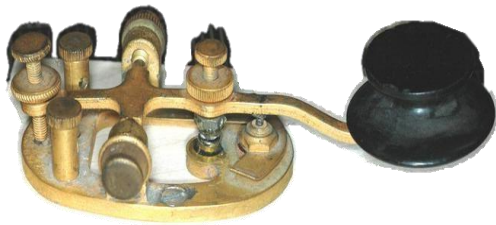
Or better yet.....

Two *really excellent* sources in which you can enroll in *code classes* can be found at these links:

<https://longislandcwclub.org/>

<https://cwops.org/cw-academy/>

Either of these organizations are **excellent** choices to begin learning the code.

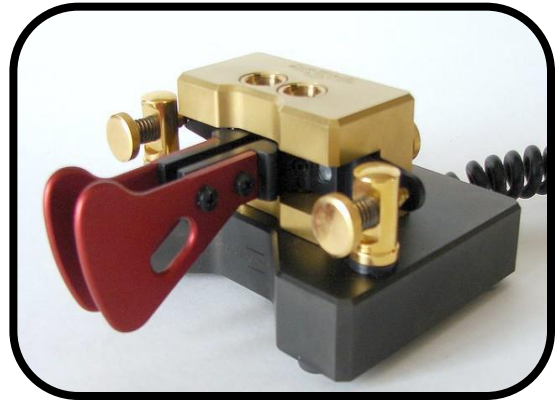


So, jumping into the future, let's say you have now learned the code, made a practice contact with a club member (which is an excellent way to start), and now you are ready to make an actual contact on the air with someone you do not know. With CW, it's either all or none. There is no such thing as 'partial CW'. The best way is to jump-in with both feet!



Personally, I would suggest first listening and tuning the FISTS frequencies which are + or -, 50 MHz up from the bottom of the U.S. CW band (ex: 3.550, 7.050, 14.050, 21.050, 28.050. See www.fists.org). Tune until you hear someone sending at a speed of which you can copy them with 70-80% accuracy. They may be calling "CQ"

at which time you can answer them as soon as soon as they stop transmitting and begin listening for an answer (Ex: CQ CQ CQ DE K5DB K5DB.....CQ CQ CQ DE K5DB K5DB K). Or, they may already be in QSO with another station, in which case you can practice copying them until they finish with the other station, then you can give them a call (Ex: W5ABC DE K5DB K).



Ok, they answer you...now you're hooked-up with them in the beginning of a QSO. What are you going to say, and how are you going to say it?

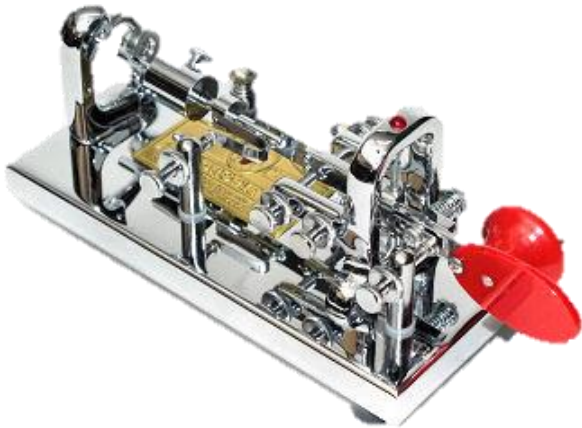
The following CW dialog is an example of what might be said during a routine QSO with another station: (Explanations of the CW abbreviations used in this simulated CW QSO appear in **bracketed bold print**. Also, the operational symbol BT (BREAK) is used a lot in CW. It is sent as one character with no pause in between characters (dah-di-di-di-dah, not dah-di-di-dit....dah). BT in CW denotes a break (or pause) between thoughts, topics, or information categories that you are sending to the other station. BT is not necessary, but usually very helpful for the receiving station)

W5ABC DE **[FROM]** K5DB. TNX FER **[THANKS FOR]** CALL**[CALLING ME]** BT **[BREAK]** UR **[YOUR]** RST **[SIGNAL STRENGTH]** IS 579 579 BT **[BREAK]** NAME IS DON DON BT **[BREAK]** QTH **[MY LOCATION]** IS SPRINGDALE, AR SPRINGDALE, AR BT **[BREAK]** HW CPY? **[HOW DO YOU COPY?]** W5ABC DE K5DB K **[OVER – YOUR TURN TO TRANSMIT]**

The other station would then send you back this same type of information. With this introductory phase of the QSO complete, the conversation from that point can go anywhere with any subject – your current weather conditions/temperature, what county you're in, what kind of rig and antenna you're using, your hobbies, etc.

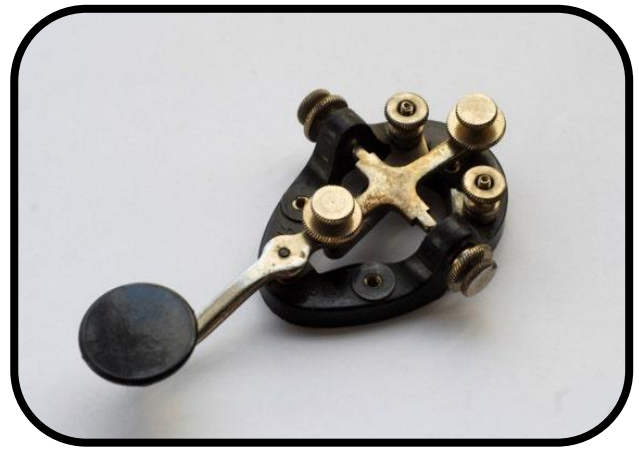
Something important to consider during a CW QSO (or any mode for that matter):

Remember that whatever you say on SSB or send on CW is going out over the air for the entire world to hear. So, don't say anything that you wouldn't want to see on a billboard along I-49 or plastered on Facebook.



*In the preceding dialog, notice there is a **Q-signal** included – “**QTH**”. Q-signals are used more or less for all modes, but especially CW, RTTY, and PSK. Q-signals are a kind of “ham shorthand”. Instead of sending a lengthy word, thought, or phrase, all you do is send a particular combination of 3 letters beginning with “Q”, which stands for that phrase, thus saving extra time and effort. In this case, QTH means “my location”. There are many Q-signals. I don't even know all of them, but I know the most used ones. Here's link you can use to view them all:*

<https://www.qsl.net/w5www/qcode.html>



Getting back to our topic, if you become interested in working DX, you'll discover as you become more proficient in CW that it is much easier to work DX stations during pileups than on SSB, with FT8, RTTY, and PSK falling somewhere in-between.

By the way, if you ever make a humorous statement that you want to accentuate with a chuckle, at the end of the statement (such as LOL in texting lingo), send: HI HI [**HA HA in CW**].

So, what do you think? ----- Are you going to give it a try?



If it is something that grabs your fancy and that feeds a passion in you for working DX, contests or casual rag chews; if it is important enough to you to justify exerting some time and effort in learning it; and especially to develop a unique

on-air conversational skill, the world of CW can be really fun and gratifying.

To be cordial but frank, over the years I've heard hams come-up with endless excuses for not learning CW. They say they "...have tried and just can't learn it", when actually their inability simply lies in using the wrong method and/or not approaching learning the code with a positive mindset.

So, allow me to exhort you to consider learning and using CW as a goal for the remainder of 2022. It's up to you, of course. But the pleasure and pride you'll gain will certainly be worth the effort. *You'll see.....if you'll just give it a try.*

After you learn the code and start using it on-air, to keep your code speed up or to improve on it, there's no better way to do so than with W1AW on-air code practice broadcasts or on-line code practice files that can be found on the ARRL website. Here are the links for the on-air schedule and the files:

<http://www.arrl.org/code-practice-qst-source>

<http://www.arrl.org/code-transmissions>

<http://www.arrl.org/code-practice-files>



I hope you'll learn and enjoy the code. It's provided me with thousands of hours of enjoyment for over 5 decades.

You Tube

BVRC PROGRAMS ON YOU TUBE

In case you would like to see some of the great past programs that BVRC has hosted, they are available on the BVRC YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellaVistaRadioClub/videos>

A huge word of appreciation to Wayne – K5UNX, BVRC Secretary, for his labors on this project in uploading the videos to the website!!! Thanks Wayne!

BVRC PROGRAMS NEEDED!

If you would like to share an element of our hobby that you could present at a future Bella Vista Radio Club meeting, we would love to see it! – VHF/UHF, Emergency Communications, Public Service Experience(s), Repeater Operation, Hints and Kinks you have discovered, Antennas, Equipment, HF...

We occasionally enjoy having guest speakers to conduct presentations, but BVRC programs given by our members are even better!

Contact Tom-W5XNA at: w5xna@arrl.net or Don-K5DB at: arsk5db@gmail.com



THE SPECIAL WORLD OF CW

- It is a unique, intimate, concise, and effective communications skill, still used by thousands throughout the world.
- It is still one of the most efficient modes in terms of power required for long distance communication, least susceptible to interference, and conserves the radio frequency spectrum.
- It involves no accent or pronunciation problems, therefore providing a widely understood international language.
- It employs simpler, more reliable and easily maintained equipment than other communication modes.
- It is an equalizer, negating age, speech impediments, and dialectical differences; it provides for ready acceptance of youngsters in an adult environment.
- It is the only radio communications mode that is understood readily by both man and machine.



ELMER

9-1-1



Vinson Carter – WV5C, is BVRC's new ELMER 9-1-1 Coordinator and has been doing a stellar job in his new leadership position with our Club. THANKS VINSON!

BVRC has over 30 experienced operators enrolled in ELMER 9-1-1 to assist new (and veteran) hams with questions and issues they might have.

These volunteer Elmers (mentors) span years of experience in ham radio from antennas to technical issues to emergency communications, and more. Many of them are at the weekly BVRC Saturday breakfasts in Bella Vista and the monthly BVRC meetings in Springdale where you can discuss with them any topic that you are needing help with, in person.

However, if something crops-up and you need help fairly quickly, you can obtain assistance via the BVRC website ELMER 9-1-1 tab:

<https://bellavistaradioclub.org/elmer-911/>

Here, you can complete and submit an online form, and shortly thereafter, someone will respond to you via e-mail with help and advice.

Be sure and avail yourself to this valuable service when/if you need it. The Elmers are here for you. They know what it's like to be in a quandry and unsure of what to do when you're new to the hobby. They are here to help you... just as their Elmer helped them.

Elmer 9-1-1 is a unique feature and service of BVRC to its members.

If you're unsure about something, get some help! ELMER 9-1-1 !

APRS DEVELOPER BOB BRUNINGA – WB4APR, SK

The creator of the Automatic Packet Reporting System (APRS), Bob Bruninga – WB4APR of Glen Burnie, MD, passed away on February 7. He was 73. According to his daughter, Bruninga succumbed to cancer and the effects of COVID-19.

While best known for APRS, he was also a retired U.S. Naval Academy senior research engineer who had an abiding interest in alternative power sources, such as solar power.

APRS originated in 1982, when Bruninga wrote his first data map program that plotted the positions of US Navy ships for the Apple II platform. A couple of years later, he developed what he called the Connectionless Emergency Traffic System (CETS) on the VIC-20 and C64 platforms for digital packet communications to support an endurance race. The program was ported to the IBM PC platform in 1988, and was renamed APRS in 1992. The recognized North American APRS frequency is 144.39 MHz, and APRS is globally lined via the Internet.



Bob Bruninga, WB4APR

ARRL Contributing Editor Ward Silver – NØAX, remembered Bruninga in this way: “Bob kept pushing APRS beyond its origins as a position reporting system. He developed and helped implement numerous other uses of APRS in support of what has become the ‘Ham Radio of Things’, with great potential for future amateur radio applications. Bob’s far-reaching vision and imagination were as good as it gets.”



The largest and fastest growing amateur radio club in Northwest Arkansas.....

We're glad you're a part of it !

Thank You !!!



JAMES BOND 007 AND HAM RADIO???

When Sean Connery first hit the big screen as James Bond in the 1962 motion picture "Dr. No", isn't it ironic that in the VERY first scene of the VERY first picture of a series of Bond movies that would make motion picture history and span decades.....you see a ham radio! In the scene, a British Secret Service secretary unveils a hidden ham station to make a check-in call to the home office in London from Jamaica.



It's difficult to identify the receiver, but the transmitter is a British built K.W. Electronics Vanguard. It ran a pair of 6146's for the finals and had an RF output of 50 watts. It was manufactured from the late 1950s through the 1960s in Kent, England.

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