Monthly Meetings: 1st Thursdays @ 7 p.m.
Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy (ALETA)
3424 S. Downum Road, Springdale AR
(HAM 101 Workshop for Newcomers @ 6pm preceding meeting)

Club Calls: N5BVA / W5NX
Website: www.bellavistaradioclub.org
Repeaters: 147.255 +offset, pl 162.2
444.100 +offset, pl 162.2

WEEKLY NETS:

BVRC Legacy Net
Wednesdays @ 7 pm on the
BVRC Dual Linked Repeaters
N5BVA/Bella Vista: 147.255, +offset, pl 162.2
N5BVA/Springdale: 444.100, +5 MHz, pl 162.2

BVRC 3830 Roundtable
Sunday Afternoons
4 pm during CST
4:30 pm during CDT
3.830 MHz

BVRC HAM 101 Net
Tuesdays @ 7 pm on the
WX5NAS Skywarn Link System:

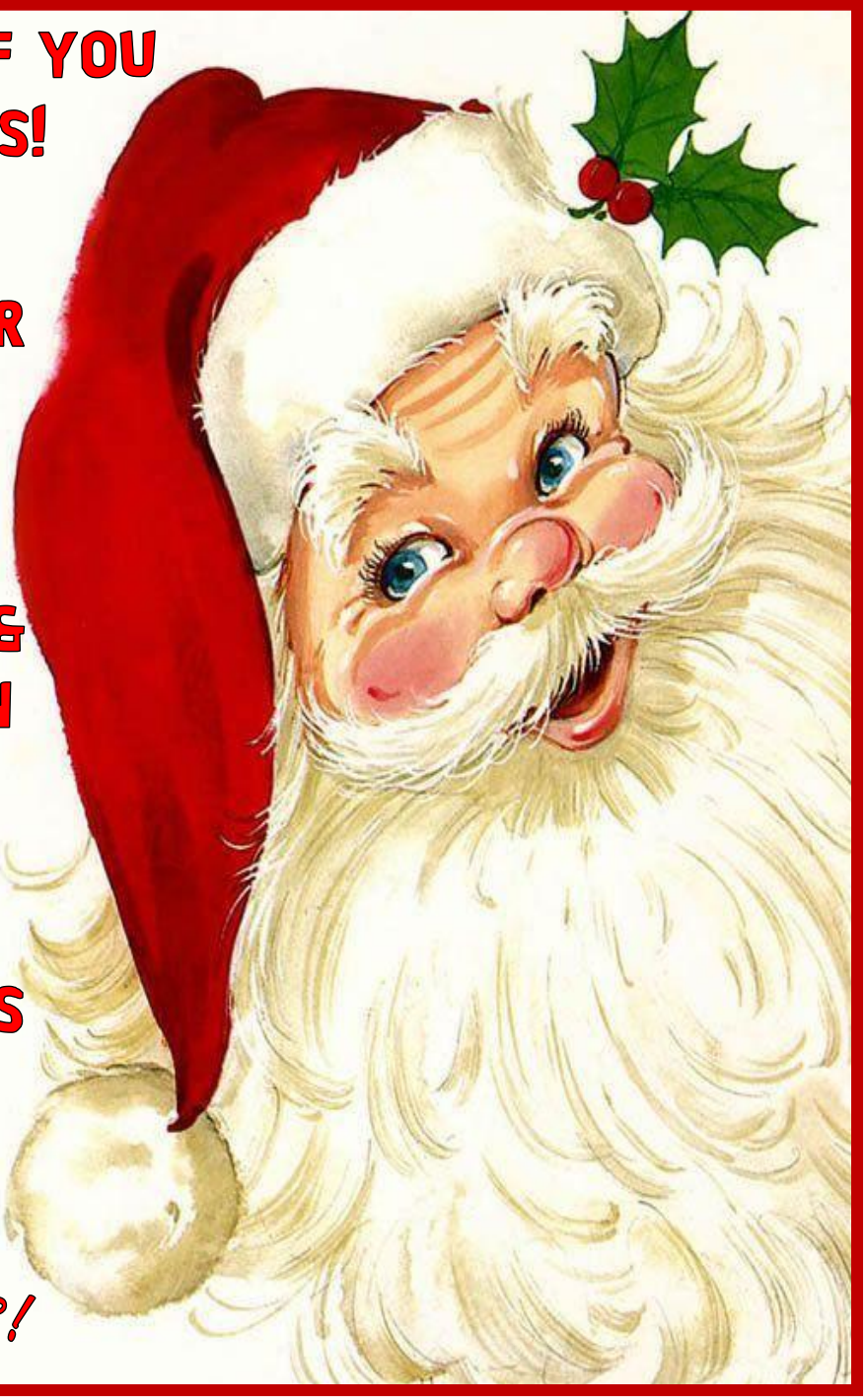
Bentonville – 146.865, -offset, pl 103.5
Fayetteville – 147.315, +offset, pl 97.4
Winslow – 147.315, +offset, pl 110.9
Huntsville – 443.625, +5 MHz, pl 97.4
Green Forest – 145.310, -offset, pl 103.5

NEXT BVRC MONTHLY MEETING

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2023 @ 7PM
ARKANSAS LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING ACADEMY
3424 S. DOWNUM ROAD
SPRINGDALE, AR

HO, HO, HO, TO ALL OF YOU MERRY BVRC MEMBERS!

IF YOU SIGNED-UP, BE SURE AND MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE 2023 BELLA VISTA AREA RADIO CLUB'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS & AWARDS BANQUET ON THURSDAY EVENING, DEC. 7, AT 7PM. LOTS OF FOOD, FUN, & HAM RADIO FELLOWSHIP, AS WELL AS *GREAT* DOOR PRIZES!



See you there and 73!

"A Little Bit of Everything" Highlights November Meeting

It was another packed house for the Bella Vista area Radio Club November meeting, and a great program it was as BVRC's most energetic and prolific newcomer, Dennis Tune – W9DCT, gave attendees a splendid program, indeed.

Since becoming a ham 18 months ago, Dennis' interest, knowledge, and operating skills have grown by leaps and bounds. He has obtained his Amateur Extra license, and he has already acquired awards that many veteran hams have taken years to attain. He has also won many contests in which the competition is at a very high level, which is a remarkable accomplishment considering his short time in the hobby. Dennis' objective for his program was to share some of his experiences as well as software programs that have greatly aided him in his ham radio pursuits which would hopefully provide operating tips to experienced operators and especially show newcomers to BVRC and amateur radio what can be accomplished, and the fun that goes along with it. In 18 months, Dennis has amassed over 20,000 contacts.

Dennis explains the 'greylining' operating principle

Dennis – W9DCT

Here are some of the high points of the software operating programs that Dennis presented, and has used to get him to where he is today:

GRID TRACKER – Grid Tracker basically works with WSJT-X and displays it on a map, Dennis said. Grid Tracker maps real-time and historical contacts on an interactive map. It also has a comprehensive callsign lookup, recognizing all DXCC countries and prefixes, as well as a plethora of other features. And…it's freeware! Dennis also said that there are YouTube videos available that are radio specific to help you integrate the program into whichever make radio you have.

PSK REPORTER – Dennis said this software program basically turns your radio into a beacon.

LOGBOOK OF THE WORLD (LotW) – Dennis shared how LotW works, how it keeps your contacts record, how it tracks your progress on the different DXCC entities (countries), bands, and modes. He then explained how to apply for the DXCC award and endorsements through LotW, and how the coveted DXCC Challenge award works and how to attain it. LotW can track not only your DXCC contacts, but also can track for the Worked-All-States, Worked-All-Zones, Worked-All-Prefixes, and VUCC (VHF/UHF Century Club) awards.

CLUB LOG – Dennis explained that one of the main uses of this website for him is cluster work, meaning that using this feature will show him the countries he needs that he has never contacted as yet. He said you can filter the cluster to meet your particular needs: countries, states, grid squares, etc.

QRZ.com – Dennis then showed the many options he uses that are available on this website of which the main advantage in using it is *researching contacts.* He showed how to work toward getting a confirmation from a given country, state, etc.

NG3K DXPEDITION WEBSITE – Dennis showed how this website is invaluable in knowing when future DXpeditions are upcoming. It contains a lot of valuable information on each separate future DXpedition.

Thanks for the GREAT program, Dennis! We are very pleased to have you in the BVRC family!

Dennis explains Grid Tracker

A HUGE word of thanks goes out to Tem Moore-N5KWL and his great Elmer team that conducted the HAM 101 Workshop preceding the November meeting! They did an outstanding job in helping newcomers understand how to program their handi-talkie radios.

BOARD MEMBERS

President
Jan Hagan – WB5JAN
janhagan51@gmail.com

Vice President
Joe Hott – W5AEN
joe.hott@gmail.com

Secretary
Dana Hill – W5DGH
dana.hill1979@gmail.com

Treasurer
Mark Whittlesey - WØKYZ
almarc11@yahoo.com

Technical Officer
Tem Moore – N5KWL
temmoore@gmail.com

Trustee
Glenn Kilpatrick – WB5L
wb5l@arrl.net

Board Member At Large and Public Information Officer
Tom Northfell – W5XNA
w5xna@arrl.net

APPOINTED OFFICERS

VE Testing Committee
Chair: Don Cooper – KC7DC
don_c@hotmail.com

Elmer 911 Committee
Chair: Vinson Carter – WV5C
vinsoncarter@gmail.com

Nets Committee
Chair: Dana Widboom – KI5TGY
dcwidboom@gmail.com

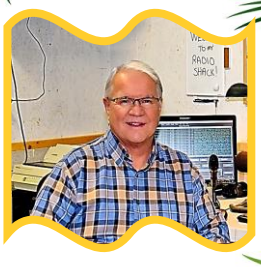
Membership Committee
Chair: Tom Northfell – W5XNA
w5xna@arrl.net

Social Media Committee
Chair: Rebecca Garrett – N5REB
rebdgarrett@gmail.com

Webmaster
Glenn Kilpatrick – WB5L
wb5l@arrl.net

Newsletter Editor
Don Banta – K5DB
arsk5db@gmail.com

From the Desk of the President



In 1996 amateur Gary Pearce, KN4AQ, decided to adapt that old chestnut poem, "A Visit from St. Nicholas" into a version based on amateur radio. His clever rendition has been adapted and used, with his permission, by amateur radio groups and clubs each Christmas season. Below are Gary's thoughts about his rendition and after this is our own version with a couple of BVRC tweaks!

Enjoy……. 73 – Jan, WB5JAN

"I wrote… er, stole this poem in 1996. The original was titled "A Visit from St. Nicholas", by the way, not "T'was the Night Before Christmas". Yes, it's a Christmas poem. But I offer it in the spirit of the holiday season to all, whatever you believe or celebrate. In a troubled world, this is a time when we remind ourselves that peace is the goal. I hope we find it soon."

73, ho ho ho, Gary K4AAQ

(Poem follows on the upcoming pages.)

A Ham Radio Operator's Night Before Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas,
And all through two-meters,
Not a signal was keying up
Any repeaters.

The antennas reached up
From the tower, quite high,
To catch the weak signals
That bounced from the sky.

The children, Technicians,
Took their HTs to bed,
And dreamed of the day
They'd be Extras, instead.

Mom put on her headphones,
I plugged in the key,
And we tuned 40 meters
For that rare ZK3.

When the meter was pegged
by a signal with power.
It smoked a small diode,
and, I swear, shook the tower.

Mom yanked off her phones,
And with all she could muster
Logged a spot of the signal
On the DX Packet Cluster,

While I ran to the window
And peered up at the sky,
To see what could generate
RF that high.

It was way in the distance,
But the moon made it gleam -
A flying sleigh, with an
Eight element beam,

And a little old driver
who looked slightly like Santa.
So I thought for a moment,
That it might be Don Banta.

But no, it was Santa
The Santa of Hams.
On a mission, this Christmas
To clean up the bands.

He circled the tower,
Then stopped in his track,
And he slid down the coax
Right into the shack.

While Mom and I hid
Behind stacks of CQ,
This Santa of hamming
Knew just what to do.

He cleared off the shack desk
Of paper and parts,
And filled out all my late QSLs
For a start.

He ran copper braid,
Took a steel rod and pounded
It into the earth, till
The station was grounded.

Rick Pope would be astounded.

He tightened loose fittings,
Re-soldered connections,
Cranked down modulation,
Installed lightning protection.

He neutralized tubes
In my linear amp...
(Never worked right before --
Now it works like a champ).

A new, low-pass filter
Cleaned up the TV,
He corrected the settings
In my TNC.

He repaired the computer
That would not compute,
And he backed up the hard drive
And got it to boot.

Then, he reached really deep
In the bag that he brought,
And he pulled out a big box,
"A new rig?" I thought!

"A new Kenwood? An Icom?
A Yaesu, for me?!"
(If he thought I'd been bad
it might be QRP!)

Yes! The Ultimate Station!
How could I deserve this?
Could it be all those hours
that I worked Public Service?

He hooked it all up
And in record time, quickly
Worked 100 countries,
All down on 160.

I should have been happy,
It was my call he sent,
But the cards and the postage
Will cost two month's rent!

He made final adjustments,
And left a card by the key:
"To N5BVA, from Santa Claus.
Seventy-Three."

Then he grabbed his HT,
Looked me straight in the eye,
Punched a code on the pad,
And was gone - no good bye.

I ran back to the station,
And the pile-up was big,
But a card from St. Nick
Would be worth my new rig.

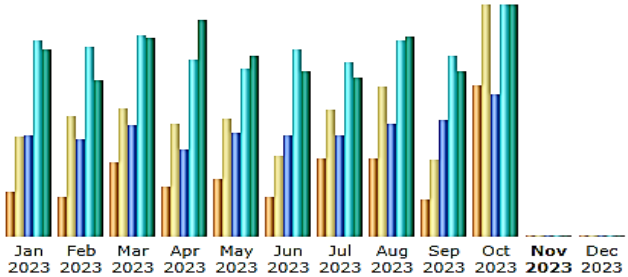
Oh, too late, for his final
came over the air.
It was copied all over.
It was heard everywhere.

The Ham's Santa exclaimed
What a ham might expect,
"Merry Christmas to all,
And to all, good DX."

(1996 Gary Pearce, KN4AQ
Permission granted for any print or electronic reproduction.)

BVRC WEBSITE REACHES ALL-TIME RECORD OF 100,000 HITS

BVRC Webmaster Glenn Kilpatrick – WB5L has advised that for the first time in Club history, the www.bellavistaradioclub.org website has received 100,000 hits for the month of October, a remarkable landmark. This is attributable – as all BVRC members know – to the outstanding job Glenn does with the website. Perhaps you have "cruised through" the website looking for particular items or information, but have you ever taken the full tour and clicked each option in each department? If you haven't try it sometime! You will be amazed at the HUGE plethora of information available there. Hats off to you Glenn for this magnificent accomplishment!!!

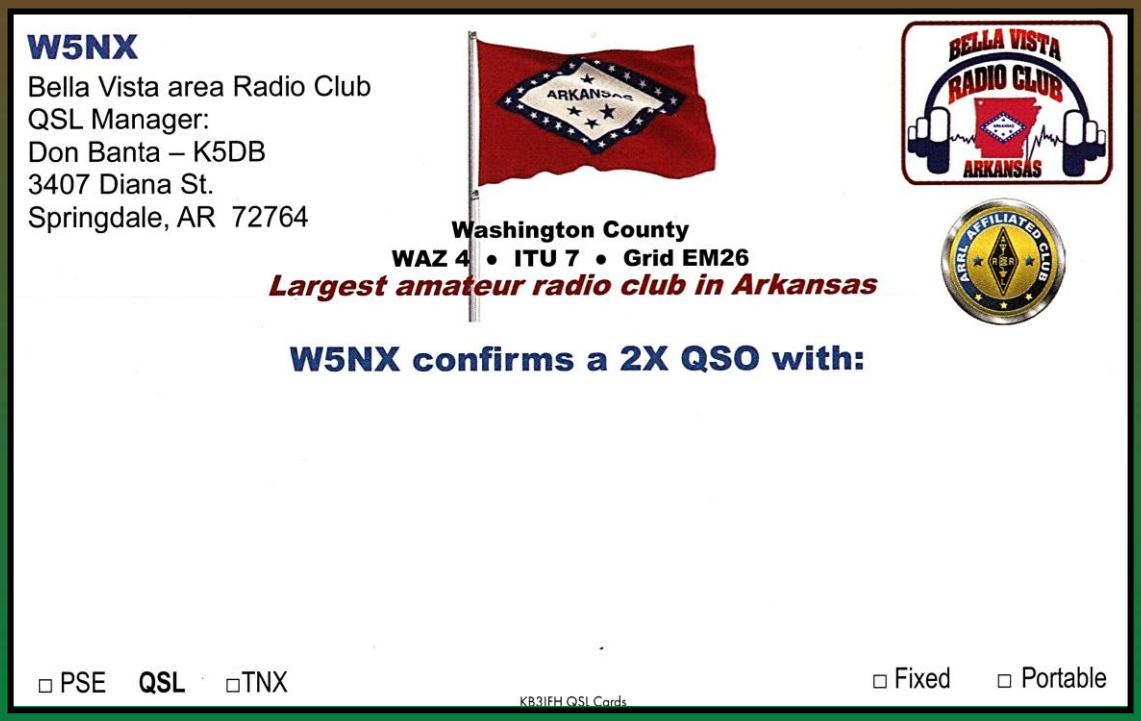


Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Jan 2023	2,040	4,561	45,413	88,315	3.62 GB
Feb 2023	1,759	5,468	43,819	85,555	3.03 GB
Mar 2023	3,359	5,837	50,054	91,081	3.86 GB
Apr 2023	2,235	5,126	39,315	79,870	4.20 GB
May 2023	2,610	5,365	46,540	75,964	3.52 GB
Jun 2023	1,764	3,675	45,748	84,186	3.21 GB
Jul 2023	3,567	5,746	45,778	78,905	3.08 GB
Aug 2023	3,531	6,840	51,078	88,302	3.89 GB
Sep 2023	1,644	3,466	52,528	81,503	3.20 GB
Oct 2023	6,888	10,530	64,083	104,499	4.49 GB
Nov 2023	33	38	518	577	6.32 MB
Dec 2023	0	0	0	0	0
Total	29,430	56,652	484,874	858,757	36.11 GB

New BVRC Club Call W5NX Now Has New QSL Card

Bella Vista area Radio Club just received the new shipment of QSL cards for our 2nd club call, W5NX. The QSL will be used to confirm contacts made with W5NX for all contest contacts and any other on-air activities BVRC utilizes it for. The card front highlights our wonderful area of Northwest Arkansas. The card back salutes the great state of Arkansas with the Arkansas flag, along with the BVRC logo and ARRL Affiliated Club seal. A big THANKS to Randy – KB3IFH for the great job he did on the printing of the cards.

Card front



Card back

BVRC VE REPORT

From Don Cooper – KC7DC
BVRC VE Coordinator
November, 2023

Congratulations!

Ricky Frazier – KJ5DGN – Centerton
Passed both Technician and General!

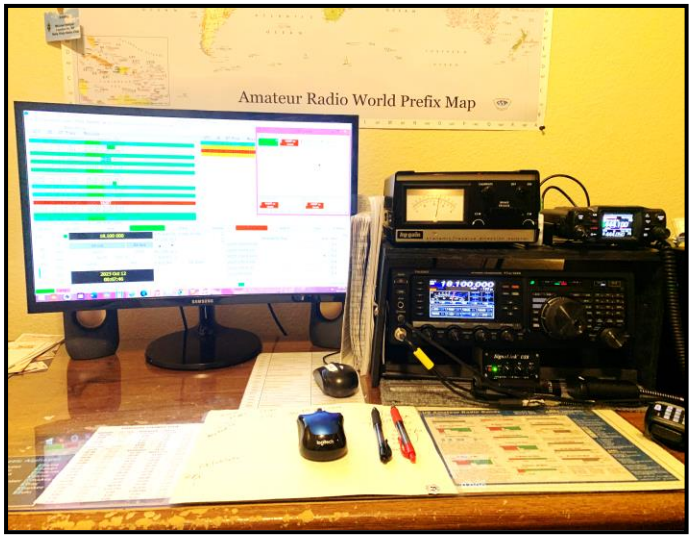
Rustin Treat – KD5OWD – Springdale
New General!

Jason Korzendorfer – N5JMK – Prairie Grove
New Amateur Extra!

Next month's test sessions:

- ***Dec. 9, 10 am – Shiloh Museum, 118 W. Johnson Ave, Springdale***
- ***Dec. 16, 2 pm – Bella Vista Public Library, 11 Dickens Place, Bella Vista***

Michael Kemper is one of BVRC's many great members. He passed his Technician and General class exams, then acquired his Amateur Extra exam, all with BVRC. His original callsign was KI5WRC before acquiring vanity callsign W5KMK, the call suffix representing his initials. Since coming into the hobby and joining BVRC, Michael has progressed by leaps and bounds. He's always there to lend a helping hand when needed, is a great guy, and a very good operator. Please enjoy Michael's offering for this issue of The Signal:

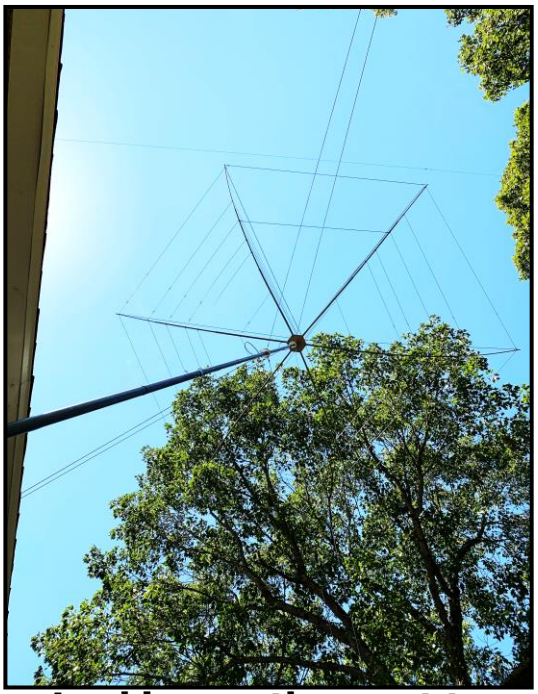


W5KMK station

It just seemed to be the right thing to do. It was wintertime, December 2022, and I needed a project that I could do indoors. That seems to be what us retired folks do – projects. After reading several copies of my new favorite magazine, QST, I knew that before long I would need a beam antenna to get those harder to reach QSO's. I had only been in the hobby for three months when I decided to do this, but I figured, "I'm mechanically minded and I enjoy a good challenge", so after reading about all those people in the QST articles who made their own antenna and having previously put together a fully functioning ten element Yagi for my two meter radio successfully, I decided to save a good chunk of my retirement funds and build my own Hex Beam antenna.

So, why did I decide on a hex beam? Well, once while I was over at our (at that time) BVRC president's (Tom – W5XNA) QTH, he mentioned that he guessed that he would have to be the club's guinea pig and put a hex beam on top of his new tower that he would be putting up over the coming summer. So, I thought to myself if, with his experience, he's willing to try one then it must be a pretty good antenna. It didn't take much research to confirm Tom's wisdom in his decision. After a little more research I found a company, KIO, (http://www.hex-beam.com) that not only provided the blueprints and instructions to build a six-band (6,10,12,15,17 & 20 mtr) hex beam, but they also sold the various parts needed for assembly. Further, you had the option to buy or build from scratch any or all of the necessary parts.

The W5KMK antenna mast in rotator with the thrust bearing above – ground mounted (nifty!)



Looking up the mast to the KIO hex beam

I opted to purchase the fiberglass spreader arms and since they need to be painted, I tried my hand at doing a camo so as to be as unnoticeable as possible. I also purchased an aluminum center post for a much neater assembly and less chance of water contamination failure. All other parts I purchased from Giga Parts, DX Engineering, the local Ace Hardware and Lowe's. It pays to shop around so do your due diligence on price comparisons. All in all, I ended up with a really great working beam antenna for $417.00, roughly half of what one sells for. (And you still have to assemble it when you buy one outright.)

I had a blast building the different band antenna assemblies and it was also a great learning experience not to mention an opportunity to brush up on my soldering. The end result of building this hex beam was huge savings, a great learning experience, a great performing antenna, and an awesome excuse to spend more time in the hobby using an antenna rated for 2,000 watts that to date has proven to have less than 2.0 SWR. In fact, the highest SWR reading I've had as of yet is 1.5 so I consider that a win. At only 25 feet above the ground and surrounded by trees I have used this "home brew hex" to work stations in Africa, Indonesia, the Pacific, Iceland, Canada, and all over EU and SA. It also proved to be a great little project to keep me occupied through the winter though the total "build time" was in the neighborhood of only about 12-15 hours. If I wasn't so OCD about double and triple checking my measurements it could have been done in under five hours. 73 – Michael, W5KMK

Editor's note: Michael began with a Windom off-center fed dipole which he still uses for the lower bands. He has acquired DXCC as well as several other awards in his short time so far in the hobby and adds to his country count each week. Way to go and thanks for a great article, Michael!

The completed W5KMK KIO hex beam

Welcome New BVRC Members!!!

Jeanne Harlan – KI5VJY - Springdale
Matthew Harker – KC5DBH – Rose, OK
Ricky Frazier – KJ5DGN - Centerton

New BVRC Technician License Class Announcement

BVRC Membership Coordinator & Public Information Officer Tom Northfell – W5XNA has announced that a new Technician license class has been scheduled! Tom will be the instructor for the class. If you are planning on acquiring your first ham license or have a friend/relative interested in obtaining their first license, here's your chance! Here's the main class information:

CLASS DATES: Saturday, February 3 and Saturday, Feb. 10, 2024

CLASS LOCATION: Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy (ALETA)
3424 S. Downum Road
Springdale, AR 72762

CLASS DURATION: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Tom will announce in the near future when the sign-up period for the class begins.

For more information, contact Tom at: w5xna@arrl.net

Over 70 attendees from all over the state of Arkansas were on hand Saturday, Nov. 11, to experience and enjoy the Arkansas DX Association's 2023 Annual Conference. The stellar event was held at the Holiday Inn Express and Suites in Russellville, AR.

Presentations on tower foundation (base), concrete, receiving antennas, and of course, DXing were featured at the conference, culminating in the outstanding presentations from guest speaker Adrian Ciuperca – KO8SCA from New York City.

ADXA members begin to arrive for the pre-conference meet-and-greet with coffee and breakfast pastries to enjoy.

Quite a few BVRC members are also members of ADXA, ***and a FINE showing they made with 24 members*** making the trek from NW Arkansas to Russellville to proudly represent our club. Kudos to all you BVRC'ers who were present!!!

The trip to the river valley was well worth the trip as all our club members thoroughly enjoyed the all-day conference. Everyone had a super time, along with great traveling fellowship going to and returning from the meeting as many of the NW Arkansas BVRC contingent utilized carpools.

The 9-hour conference included guest speaker Adrian's presentation in the morning session on the 3YØJ Bouvet Island DXpedition from February, and the just concluded W8S Swains Island DXpedition of which he was a member of both teams.

Adrian then concluded the conference in the afternoon session with a presentation on the 31 DXpeditions he has participated in, in just the past 9 years. Remarkable.

Although Adrian was the highlight of the conference – and a SUPER program he provided – several other ADXA members also conducted stellar presentations: In the morning session, ADXA President (and past ARRL President and current IARU Secretary) Joel Harrison – W5ZN spoke on simple and effective low band receiving antennas (*very* interesting and informative), Roger Gray – N5QS (past ARRL Arkansas Section Manager) spoke on correct procedures in forming/building a quality tower base, with BVRC's Dennis Tune – W9DCT (owner of Tune Concrete) complementing Roger's presentation with his program on the correct type concrete to use.

The afternoon session was also stellar as, along with Adrian's great presentations, current ARRL President Rick Roderick – K5UR (also a long time ADXA member and Arkansas born and raised!) gave a whopping and fabulous program on the world of DXing and the excitement, joy, and sheer fun it brings to the hobby. Rick presented several interesting statistics on DXCC and Logbook of the World. The ARRL DXCC Award is the most prestigious award in amateur radio and after listening to him, one can understand why DXing has been Rick's lifelong passion as well as many other veteran ADXA members present. Rick's presentation definitely was a "shot in the arm" for the veteran DXers to continue their DX quests, and a huge encouragement and challenge to newcomers to the hobby to, as ADXA President Joel says, "Get out there and work 'em!" Bill Kennamer – K5FUV from Fayetteville and past ARRL staff member then presented the current Top 30 Most Wanted Countries List. Bill's presentation was extra informative, as he illustrated why some countries are the most difficult to work and why some haven't been on the air in decades, most of the reasons being political issues.

Two highlights for BVRC during this conference included the BIG one in which our own Dennis Tune – W9DCT received the annual "ADXA DX HOG AWARD" which is awarded each year to a different person for that person's dedication, progression, perseverance and tenacity in working DX countries. Dennis certainly has been exemplary of those traits in 2023 and his winning the award was undoubtedly well deserved. The other highlight was BVRC's own Jay Bromley – W5JAY being elected to the ADXA Board of Directors, adding a talented personage to the ADXA structure as well as being a NW Arkansas representative and making us proud!

There were also super door prizes including ARRL publications, an antenna launcher, power supplies, a Signalink sound card, Heil t-shirts, and Yaesu hats. The grand door prize was a brand new Icom IC-7300. Several BVRC members walked away with some of these goodies. Debbie McKenzie – KI5QQG from Evening Shade, AR was the proud winner of the Grand Prize Icom transceiver.

Special Note: BVRC is also very excited in having ADXA President Joel Harrison – W5ZN as our guest speaker for the February 2024 meeting. Don't miss his fantastic program! (More info on that will be in the February 2024 issue of The Signal.)

The Arkansas DX Association meets quarterly in the winter, spring, and summer, with the extravaganza annual conference in the fall, of which this year's was one of the best ever. If you are interested in adding DXing to your amateur radio activities and pursuits, go to the ADXA website to see all the info on the club: https://www.adxa.org/, as well as joining if you so desire: https://www.adxa.org/join-or-renew/.

To conclude this article, please enjoy the following photos from the 2023 ADXA Conference:

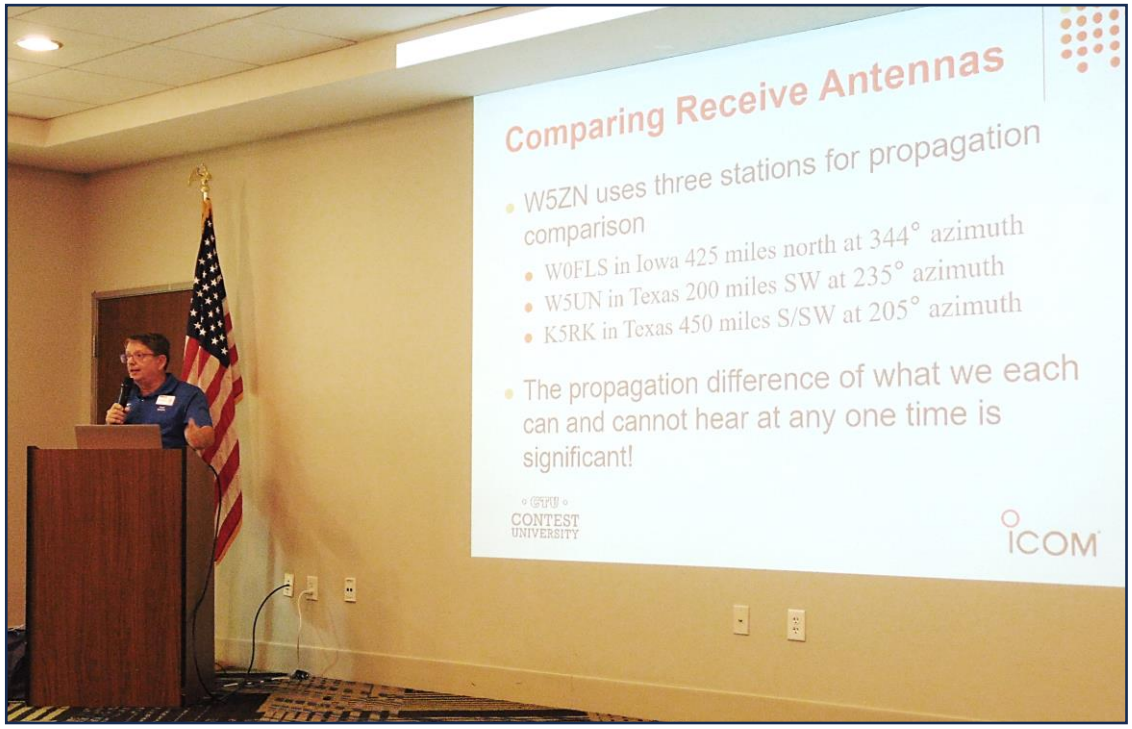
ADXA President Joel Harrison – W5ZN calls the conference to order

Featured speaker Adrian Ciuperka – KO8SCA discusses last spring's Bouvet Island DXpedition

A portion of the 2023 ADXA conference attendees

Roger – N5QS discusses tower bases

Dennis – W9DCT on proper concrete use for tower bases



Joel Harrison – W5ZN presents his great PowerPoint on receiving antennas

◄ **ADXA President Joel – W5ZN presents featured guest speaker Adrian Ciuperka – KO8SCA with the coveted Arkansas Traveler Award**

► **The torch is passed as ADXA President Joel – W5ZN presents the 2023 DX Hog Award to Dennis Tune – W9DCT, with 2022 DX Hog Lanny – K1LEC**

Newly elected ADXA Board Member Jay Bromley – W5JAY with XYL and 2021 ADXA DX Hog Award recipient Kathy – WQ5T

Jay is also an official ARRL Card Checker for the NW Arkansas region. If you need cards verified for the ARRL DXCC, WAS, WAC, or VUCC awards, Jay will be happy to help you.

We are pleased and grateful to have Jay and Kathy in the BVRC family.

THE GREAT BVRC CONTINGENT ATTENDING THE 2023 ADXA ANNUAL CONFERENCE, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Dave Mersky-K5TRT, Stan Ross-K5VR, San Hutson-K5YY, Mark Sutherland-K5DXR, ADXA President Joel Harrison-W5ZN, Tom Northfell-W5XNA, Chuck Korzendorfer-KM5G, Don Banta – K5DB, Jay Bromley-W5JAY, Kathy Bromley-WQ5T, Kenny Mills-N5EE, Dennis Tune-W9DCT, Steve Norris-W5KI, BVRC President Jan Hagan-WB5JAN, Mark Whatley-K5XH, James Wood-N5ZMX, Featured Guest Speaker Adrian Ciuperka-KO8SCA, Don Cooper-KC7DC, Glenn Kilpatrick-WB5L, Brad Ponder-KJ5CWR, and Stephen Ponder-KJ5BWG. (A few other members who slipped away early and weren't present for this picture were: Nick Kennedy-WA5BDU, Bill Durham-KG5ZCI, Michael Kemper-W5KMK, Joe Hott-W5AEN, and Adnan Ademovic-KDØKCY…..but they were with us in spirit!)

2023 BVRC 30th ANNIVERSARY WORKED ALL STATES AWARD RECIPIENTS THUS FAR

#1 Michael Kemper – W5KMK

#2 Jan Hagan – WB5JAN

#3 James Wood – N5ZMX

#4 Mark Whatley – K5XH

#5 Mike Calvi – KF5RUO

#6 Tom Thibeault – KN4SLP

#7 Don Cooper – KC7DC

#8 Dennis Tune – W9DCT

#9 Mark Sutherland – K5DXR

#10 Bill Durham – KG5ZCI

#11 Luke Williams – AE5AU

#12 Glenn Kilpatrick – WB5L

#13 Robert Hill – K5NZV

If you have HF privileges and an HF rig, join these club members on the BVRC 30th Anniversary Award Worked All States list and acquire your WAS! The deadline for working all 50 states is Dec. 31, 2023. Award rules and guidelines are available from Don – K5DB: arsk5db@gmail.com (Go work 'em!)

BVRC Members:

Celebrate Bella Vista Area Radio Club's 30th Birthday with a Commemorative Club Mug!

NEW

Embroidered Memories, official supplier of BVRC accessories (owned and operated by club members John and Kim – W5HB & KD5TVX), now has available the Bella Vista area Radio Club commemorative mug. This handsome mug includes the club's N5BVA commemorative QSL card on both sides, with your callsign opposite the handle.

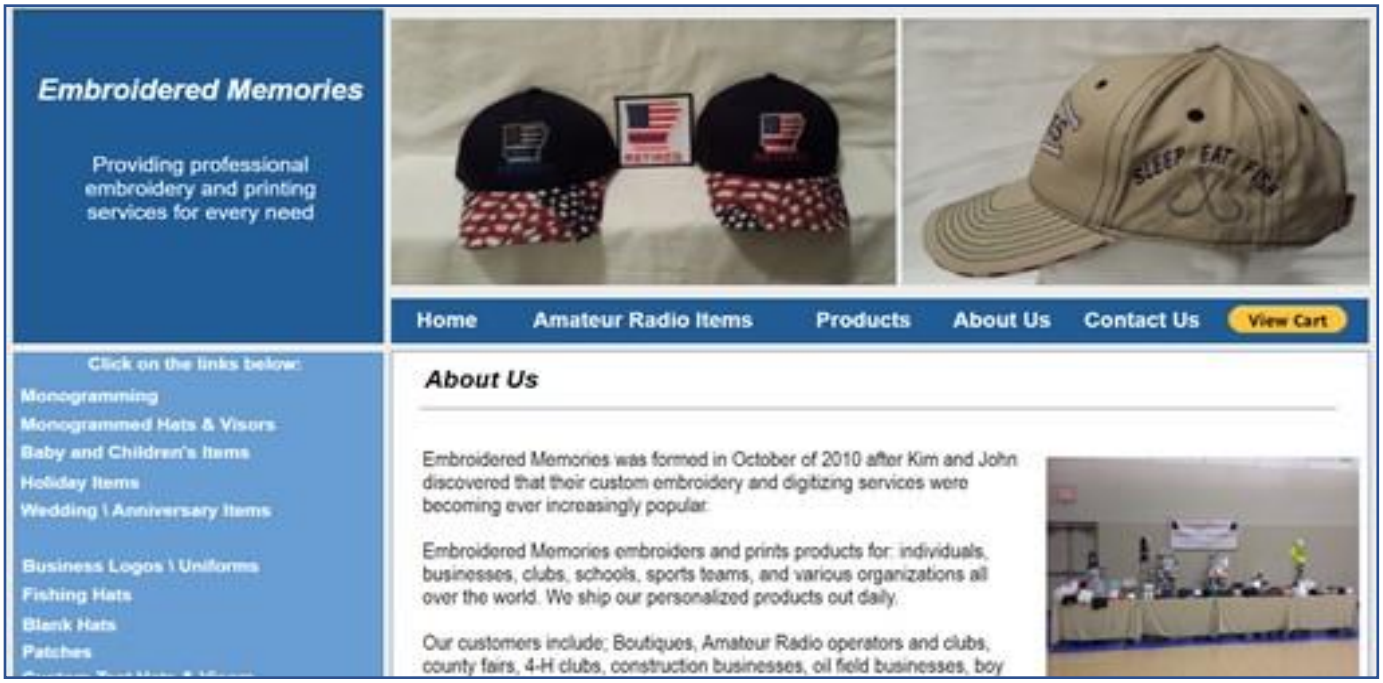
The mug price is $15.00, not including s&h.
(Can be delivered to club meetings free of charge.)
A great piece of memorabilia for years to come!

To order your mug, click here .

EMBROIDERED MEMORIES IS THE OFFICIAL SUPPLIER FOR ALL YOUR CHRISTMAS BVRC GEAR !

John Robinson – W5HB, is not only one of BVRC's valued members, he's not only a great net controller on the Wednesday evening Wide Area Net, but he is also our supplier of BVRC merchandise. John and his XYL, Kim – KD5TVX, own and operate Embroidered Memories© which embroiders and prints products for individuals, businesses, clubs, schools, sports teams, and various organizations all over the world. They also have personalized products that ship every day.

And they really excel in amateur radio accoutrements: Callsign hats and visors, EmComm and Skywarn hats and visors, shirts, callsign etched glass blocks, metal tumblers, coffee mugs, amateur radio patches, name badges (be sure and order your own BVRC name badge!), license plates, and many other items.



To order your BVRC Christmas accessories:

http://www.embroideredmemories.net/em_008.htm

LEARN CW IN 2024?

By Don – K5DB

The third BVRC CW Academy class will begin April 1. (More about that in next month's issue of The Signal.) We have lots of great fellowship and fun learning CW in these classes. If you would like to go to the next level in your amateur radio experience and learn the great mode of CW (Morse code), read this article. It will provide information to help you make that decision.

With the new digital modes now in our midst, I have thoroughly enjoyed one of them for the past 4 years – FT8. But don't forget the mainstay modes of SSB, CW, and RTTY are still alive and well on the bands! Of course, CW testing is no longer required to obtain a U.S. amateur license, 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 54 years ago when I was 13 years old and 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 a new year…make it one of your ham radio goals to learn CW in 2024!

As everyone knows, in earlier times all hams had to learn Morse code to obtain an amateur license. That all ended in February 2007, when the FCC dropped the Morse requirement for all classes of amateur licensing, resulting 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 16 years ago, but I have news for you: CW on the HF bands was, and is, FAR from dead. It has experienced ongoing use on the bands not only by veteran operators but in fact, by many who, free of the *required burden* of learning the code, have discovered on their own how much fun and how useful it can be to implement on the air.

You might say, "Well Don, now just how do you know that? Do you have anything to substantiate that there are that many newcomer no-code hams that have learned it and are using it?"

Absolutely! I have first-hand proof in my logbook. I have heard it live on-air, during the ARRL CW Sweepstakes contest!

When you participate in Sweepstakes, the information you exchange with the stations you work consists of a sequential serial #, your operating class for the contest, your

ARRL section, and…. *the last 2 digits of the year you were first licensed*. While operating during the contest, I have worked many stations that have sent me "07" through "23" denoting they were first licensed from 2007 to current. This means that they have learned the code on their own!!! Now, you may say "Yeah, right…. they're actually using a code reader and keyboard or a skimmer for sending and receiving. True, some of them might, BUT – I've heard code long enough that I can distinguish when it's being manually sent by a paddle or straight key, or if it's being sent by software. I am thrilled each time I work one of them during the annual Sweepstakes contest.

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, why 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) 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 contacts 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 few months or so to learn the basics of the code, then apply it by practicing it on the air. ***It's really that simple.***

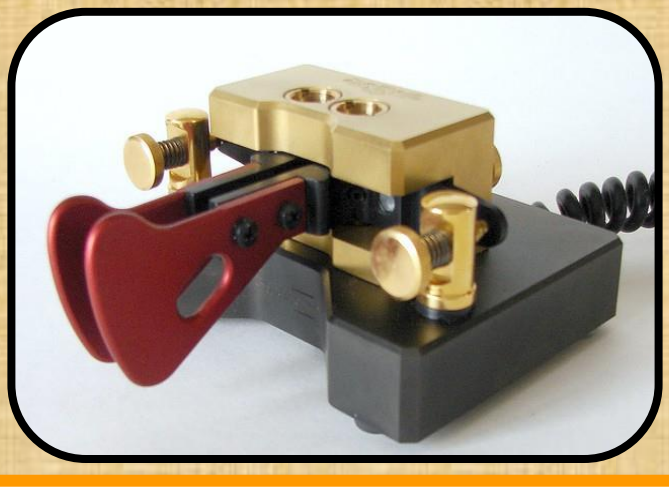
To begin the process of learning CW, you can acquire one of the computer-based code teaching programs such as the Koch or Farnsworth method. These programs will teach you the alphabet, numbers, and a few punctuation marks and operational signals (ex: period, comma, slash, BT, AR, etc.). For more information, look at these websites:
www.ac6v.com/morseprograms.htm,
www.lcwo.net , and
www.arrl.org/learning-morse-code .
That's one method…

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, going on into the future, let's say you have now learned the code, made a practice contact with a club member (which is an excellent thing to do), 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 they cease 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 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 red 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, no two separate characters. 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:)

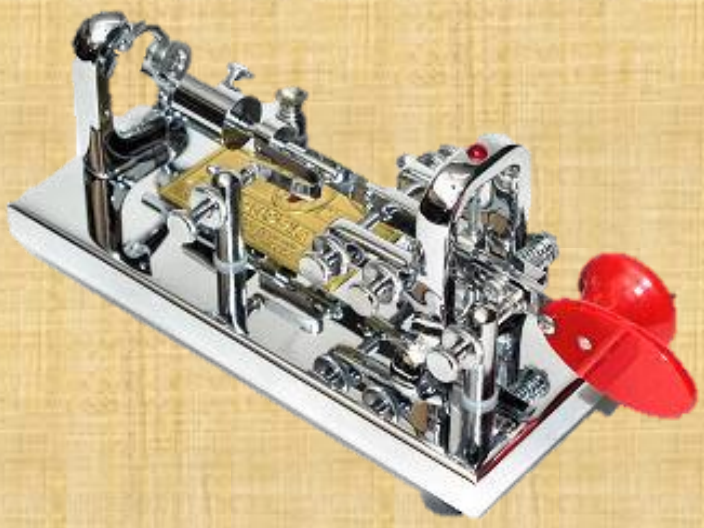
W5ABC DE [FROM] K5DB. TNX FER [THANKS FOR] CALL [CALLING ME] BT [BREAK] UR [YOUR] RST [SIGNAL STRENGTH] IS 579 579 BT [BREAK] NAME IS DON DON BT [BREAK] QTH [YOUR LOCATION] IS SPRINGDALE, AR SPRINGDALE, AR BT [BREAK] HW CPY? [HOW COPY?] W5ABC DE K5DB K [OVER – YOUR TURN TO TRANSMIT]

The other station will 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 or send is going out 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, PSK, and JS8-Call. 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.

You can view the Q-Signals list at this website:
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 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.

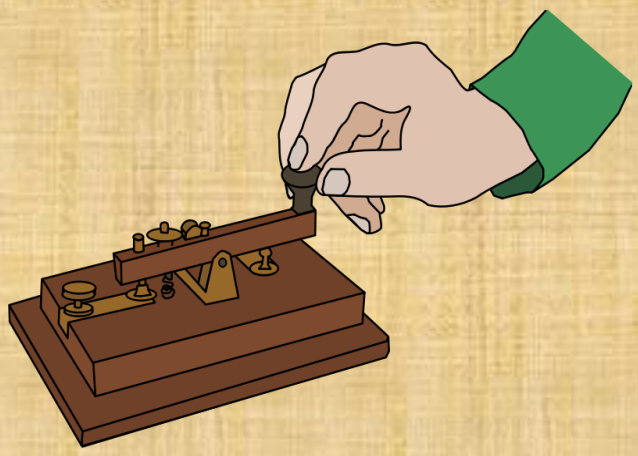
To be cordial but frank, over the years I've heard hams come-up with endless excuses for not learning CW. Most of the time I hear them say say, " I have tried and just can't learn it", when actually their inability simply lies in using the wrong method and/or not approaching learning the code with a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

So, allow me to exhort you to consider learning CW as a goal for 2024. 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, to work on increasing your code speed, or to improve your copying efficiency, there's no better way to do than finding a good CW generator website, or better yet 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

Whether you choose to learn it online or in our upcoming 2024 BVRC CW Academy class (info on



YouTube

Would an informative amateur radio video on many aspects of the hobby help you? Would you like to see some of the great programs you missed before joining BVRC? You surely can! Go to YouTube and query "Bella Vista Radio Club", then go to the BVRC Channel page and subscribe! BVRC has many interesting and informative videos that you will enjoy!

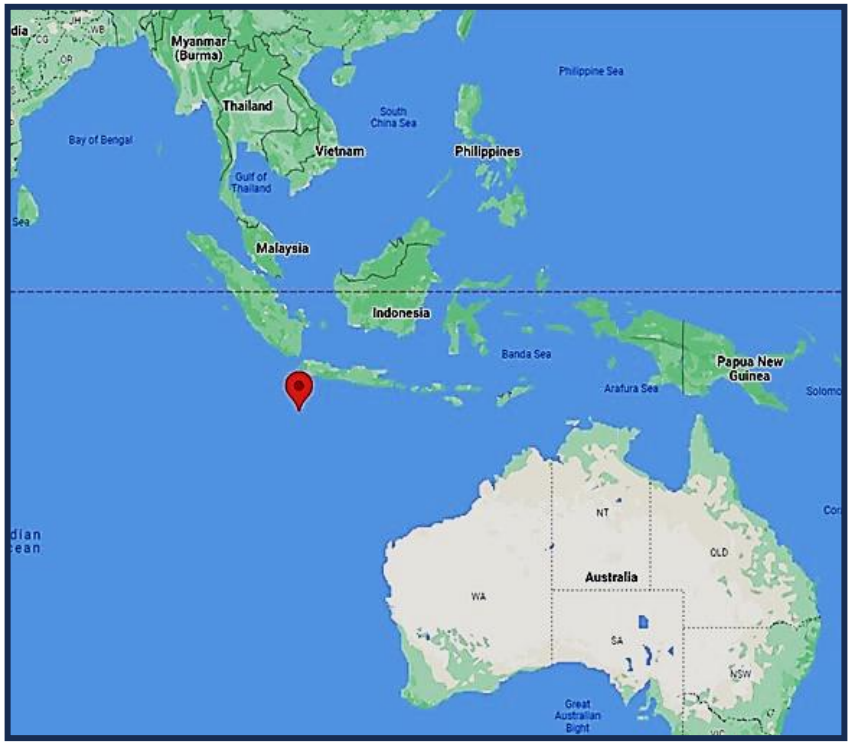
With the Christmas season upon us, what better DXCC entity to feature for this month's Signal issue than a salute to Christmas Island!

Christmas Island is an island and surrounding territory under the administration of Australia. It is located in the Indian Ocean about 190 nautical miles south of Java and Sumatra and about 840 nautical miles northwest of the closest point on the Australian mainland. It has an area of 52 sq mi.

Christmas Island had a population of 1,692 residents as of 2021, the majority living in settlements on the northern edge of the island. The first European to sight Christmas Island was Richard Rowe of the *HMS Thomas* in 1615. Captain William Mynors named it on Christmas Day, December 25, 1643. It was first settled in the late 19th century.

The majority (63%) of the island is included in the Christmas Island National Park, which features several areas of primary monsoonal forest. Phosphate, deposited originally as guano, has been mined on the island since 1899.

The island originally was claimed and annexed by Great Britain in June 1888. Phosphate mining began in 1899 using indentured workers from Singapore, British Malaya, and China. John Davis Murray, a mechanical engineer and recent graduate of Purdue University, was sent to supervise the operation on behalf of the Phosphate Mining and Shipping Company. Murray was known as the "King of Christmas Island" until 1910, when he married and settled in London.



Location of Christmas Island

Christmas Island satellite view

At Australia's request, the United Kingdom transferred sovereignty to Australia, with a $20 million payment from the Australian government to Singapore as compensation for the loss of earnings from the phosphate revenue. The United Kingdom's Christmas Island Act was given royal assent on 14 May 1958, enabling Britain to transfer authority over Christmas Island from Singapore to Australia by an order-in-council. Australia's Christmas Island Act was passed in September 1958, and the island was officially placed under the authority of the Commonwealth of Australia on October 1, 1958.

Only small parts of the shoreline are easily accessible. The island's perimeter is dominated by sharp cliff faces, making many of the island's beaches difficult to get to. Some of the easily accessible beaches include Flying Fish Cove (main beach), Lily Beach, Ethel Beach, and Isabel Beach, while the more difficult beaches to access include Greta Beach, Dolly Beach, Winifred Beach, Merrial Beach, and West White Beach, which all require a vehicle with four wheel drive and a difficult walk through dense rainforest.

Probably the most unique characteristic of the island is its playing home to millions of red crabs. Christmas Island is never more amusing than during the red crab migration. As *50 million* crabs leave their forested habitat and set off to the shore, the local community does everything they can to make the mass journey flow as safe as possible. Even though the distance is short enough (about 3 miles), the roads are deliberately closed during that period, and bridges are built across the parks to ensure convenient movement; still, hundreds of thousands are reported to be found killed as the route lies through a human habitat. Nevertheless, most crabs reach the shore, lay eggs, and return back to the forests. The red crab migration annually occurs on one of the weeks between October and December, depending on the moon phase as its relation to the tides.

When it comes to amateur radio, Christmas Island is fairly rare. The island does possess an operational club, CIARC – the Christmas Island Amateur Radio Club. The club callsign is VK9XX. When and if you work and confirm Christmas Island, this entity will fill various spots in your DX pursuits - Islands Of The Air (IOTA): VK WWFF Parks Award (Christmas Island National Park), and Grid Square OH29.

VK9XX does entertain guest ham operators, but operations from the station are few and sporadic. In 2017 Rob – N7QT and Melanie – AB1UH (now N7BX) activated the island with the callsign VK9X/N7QT. A Polish DXpedition team also activated VK9XSP in 2014. ▼

A special opportunity to work Christmas Is. is currently in progress at time of this newsletter release, as two hams have activated **VK9XY** from Nov. 14-Nov. 27. They plan to be on 80-10m with CW, SSB, FT8, and FT4.

Additional views of Christmas Is. ▼

Christmas Island red crab migration ▼

As we near the Christmas season and the conclusion of 2023, we would like to keep with tradition as we have each year of this newsletter and conclude this issue of The Signal with the following excerpt from the 1947 motion picture "The Bishop's Wife" (modified for amateur radio):

The Empty Stocking

Tonight, I want to tell you the story of an empty stocking:
Once upon a midnight clear, there was a child's cry. A blazing star hung over a stable and wise men came with birthday gifts. We haven't forgotten that night down through the centuries. We celebrate it with stars on Christmas trees, with the sound of bells, with carols, and with gifts.....but especially with gifts. You give me a new set of headphones; I give you a new dual band HT. Aunt Martha has always wanted an I-tablet and Uncle Henry can do with a new FT-710. We forget no one, adult or child. And all the stockings are filled. --------- All that is. . . . . .except one.

And we have even forgotten to hang it up. The stocking for the child born in a manger. It's His birthday we're celebrating, you know. Let us never forget that . . . . . .

And let us ask ourselves what He would wish for most. Then, let each of us put in their share - lovingkindness, warm hearts, and a stretched-out hand of tolerance. All the shining gifts that make peace on earth.

Have a very Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and a blessed and prosperous 2024.

Don–K5DB, editor

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