

# THE SIGNAL



**Newsletter of the Bella Vista area Radio Club**

*Arkansas' Largest  
Amateur Radio Club*



**March 2024**

**Monthly Meetings: 1<sup>st</sup> 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**

**Repeaters: 147.255 +offset, pl 162.2**

**Website: [www.bellavistaradioclub.org](http://www.bellavistaradioclub.org)**

**444.100 +offset, pl 162.2**

## **WEEKLY NETS:**

### **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

### **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**



# NEXT BVRC MONTHLY MEETING

Thursday, March 7, 2024 @ 7pm  
Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy  
3424 S. Downum Road  
Springdale, AR

## March Meeting Information

**HAM 101 Workshop, 6pm preceding monthly meeting** – BVRC newsletter editor, Don Banta – K5DB, will be on hand with his program entitled, “What Is A Lid?”. This program will be geared for newcomers, especially new to the HF bands, and will concentrate on proper on-air operating ethics, a very important element to your amateur radio experience. If you don’t know what a “Lid” is, join us for this month’s Workshop to find out.

**BVRC March meeting, 7pm** – One of BVRC’s very valued members, Jon Williams – K5DVT, will be on hand to re-visit a very interesting topic “Where’s Waldo – An introduction to APRS, the Automatic Packet Reporting System”. Although APRS isn’t mentioned as much these days as when it first premiered in the ham radio world, it is still a very integral part of the hobby and is used every day by thousands of operators.

It was invented and developed by Bob Bruninga – WB4APR on an Apple II computer in 1982, and was fully introduced for use on the ham bands in 1984.

Although many people use GPS on their cellphones, APRS has much, much more for the amateur operator. It is an amateur radio based system for real time digital communications of information of immediate value in the local area. In addition to Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates, APRS includes weather station telemetry, text messages, announcements, queries, and other telemetry. APRS data can be displayed on a map, which can show stations, objects, tracks of moving objects, weather stations, search and rescue data, and direction finding data.

If you are unfamiliar with this aspect of our great hobby, Jon’s presentation will whet your appetite to explore this great digital platform.

***Don’t miss this super informative program! See you then!***

## BOARD MEMBERS

### *President*

Jan Hagan – WB5JAN  
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### *Vice President*

Joe Hott – W5AEN  
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### *Secretary*

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Glenn Kilpatrick – WB5L  
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### *Board Member At Large and Public Information Officer*

Tom Northfell – W5XNA  
[w5xna@arrrl.net](mailto:w5xna@arrrl.net)



## APPOINTED OFFICERS

### *VE Testing Committee*

Chair: Don Cooper – KC7DC  
[don\\_c@hotmail.com](mailto:don_c@hotmail.com)

### *Elmer 911 Committee*

Chair: Vinson Carter – WV5C  
[vinsoncarter@gmail.com](mailto:vinsoncarter@gmail.com)

### *Nets Committee*

Chair: Dana Widboom – KI5TGY  
[dcwidboom@gmail.com](mailto:dcwidboom@gmail.com)

### *Membership Committee*

Chair: Tom Northfell – W5XNA  
[w5xna@arrrl.net](mailto:w5xna@arrrl.net)

### *Social Media Committee*

Chair: Rebecca Garrett – N5REB  
[rebdgarrett@gmail.com](mailto:rebdgarrett@gmail.com)

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## BVRC WELCOMES GUEST SPEAKER JOEL HARRISON - W5ZN FOR FEBRUARY PROGRAM

Once again, BVRC members showed their attendance dedication as it was another packed house for the February 2024 meeting, when attendees were treated to an outstanding program from guest speaker Joel Harrison – W5ZN from Searcy, AR. Joel is a 50+ year ham veteran, a past ARRL President, current Arkansas DX Association President, current International Amateur Radio Union Secretary, and has one of the most extensive ham stations in Arkansas.



When posed the question as to what his topic would be, Joel replied, "Your club is very diversified with newcomers and veteran operators alike. I want to share something that will benefit all of them, no matter how long or how short of a time period they have been in the hobby." Hence, attendees were treated to his exceptional program "What's In Your Station? - Taking Your Amateur Radio Experience To The Next Level".

Joel began the program by showing members his station in Searcy. Even though his current station is massive, of course he didn't start that way. Over the decades with experimentation and experience with all kinds of radios, antenna arrays, feedlines, phasing systems, test equipment, and many other aspects of station components, Joel has learned a LOT. It was in his program for the evening that he shared a condensed library of information to the club.

Joel's first topic of the evening was – of course – THE RADIO. Which radio is the best? Joel said choosing a radio is somewhat like choosing a vehicle: the 'cosmetics' of the radio, ease of operation, and features all

play an important role in selecting a radio. Joel's answer to this quandary was, "Look at the specifications of the radio. Does it have a good filters? Does it possess the features you're looking for, for your particular type of operating? Read the reviews of the radio. But, one of the best ways to determine the better radios is to look at which radios the big contesters, DXers, and DXpeditions use. If a given make of radio works for them, it will probably also work for you."

The next item on the agenda was THE ANTENNA. Joel said, "The best antenna is the one that works best for you. Always look to improving your antennas. Install what your budget will allow, but whatever type antenna you install, *do it right*. Make sure you use quality components. – Your station will always only be as good as your antenna(s).

Next came COAX CABLE. Concerning coax cable and feedlines, Joel's philosophy is "Cheap Is As Cheap Does". RG-213 is good coax. However, there now are better coaxes on the market that use double shielding and have better outside jackets, such as LMR-400 and DXE-400.

One of the absolute best type of coax is RG-400. This coax is quite pricey, ranging from \$3.35 to \$5.00 per foot. You wouldn't want to use this coax for your main feedline (the afore mentioned types would be used for that), but it does make for excellent jumper and connecting cabling inside your shack. Joel said he exclusively uses this type coax for all his shack interconnections. Don't use cheap, "budget" coax.

And then of course, came coax CONNECTORS. Once again, Joel advised, "Cheap is as cheap does."

Don't buy cheap connectors out of bins at hamfests. You usually don't know what you're getting for your money. Use quality silver-plated brass shell and hole connectors such as Amphenol 83-1SP-6 or DXE PL259CS8U. By using quality connectors, you'll be able to set your mind at ease and not be worrying about the conductivity of the connector or having a high SWR spike.

YOUR SHACK – Don't allow your shack to look like a public landfill. Neaten it up! Not only in the arrangement of your station components, but also in your cabling and in the interconnections behind your equipment. *Label all your cables*. Never have a doubt in your mind as to what cable is going where. Joel uses 3M Scotch 35 Vinyl Color Coding Electrical Tape in his shack, with a Sharpie marker to label with. You can use whatever color tape appeals to you, or use different colors for different applications. Be organized with your cabling.

GROUNDING. – Have everything at the same ground potential. Use aluminum flashing you can purchase at any

home improvement store (Lowe's, Home Depot, etc.). Place the flashing under your equipment and connect it to your ground buss. Above all, Joel emphasized when it comes to grounding, everyone needs the book "Grounding and Bonding" by Ward Silver – NØAX (who was our guest speaker for the January meeting).

As far as on-air operating itself, Joel said your main enemy in this area will be NOISE. In the event that you're trying to contact a weak station, you're not going to have a fun time doing it if you have to copy





through noise. Years ago, line noise was the only threat to the decent receiving of signals. Today, there are many electronic devices that generate noise. Some of the biggest culprits of this problem are wall-warts, modems, and routers. These newer devices are notorious for generating noise in the shack. Joel said the best way to eliminate wall-wart noise is to eliminate the wall-warts! Go through your house and make a comprehensive inventory of the devices that are powered by wall-warts that you really do not need to be constantly running. If it is imperative that these devices

stay running, then consider removing the wall-wart and powering them directly from a 12v power supply. There is a catch there also. – Many switching power supplies generate noise! Joel said that in his years of trying the different types, he has concluded that MFJ manufactures the “quietest” switching power supplies.



Another way to reduce noise in the radio shack is to use the ‘trial and err’ method, using toroids. Toroids are ringed devices made out of different materials and mixtures. These mixtures have different frequency ranges where they are most effective in “choking out” noise. Toroid cores can be used for RFI (Radio Frequency Interference) suppression and are an integral part of transformers like baluns and ununs. These are highly used in amateur radio antenna systems, although they can also be very useful in suppressing or “choking” the common mode current that travels on the outside of a coax or cable inside the shack. Joel said the most common/popular type of toroid to use is the Mix-31 variety, although Mix-43 and some others can also be beneficial. Again, using different mixes on different cabling from different devices is usually a trial-and-err operation, but toroids can definitely be a great help in reducing noise in your receiver.



**TEST EQUIPMENT.** – Finally, Joel highlighted the need for a work bench to keep your cabling, connectors, accessories, etc. up to par. Besides a VOM, (Volt-Ohm Meter or Multi-Meter) the two most important pieces of test equipment you can possess are a good antenna analyzer and an RF signal source.

To top-off his super presentation, Joel was kind enough to bring with him a list of links to websites that he uses for sources of information, equipment, and components he featured in his program, which he distributed to the attendees.

In case you weren't able to attend the meeting, we have included that handout for you on the following page.....

## References from W5ZN

Sherwood Engineering: <http://www.sherweng.com/index.html>

Choosing a transceiver – far from simple: <http://www.sherweng.com/ctu2010/NC0B-CU-2010-5b.pdf>

A Ham's Guide to RFI, Ferrites, Baluns, and Audio Interfacing, by Jim Brown – K9YC:

<http://www.k9yc.com/RFI-Ham.pdf>

Toroids – Use #31 mix:

Mouser website:

<https://www.mouser.com/ProductDetail/Fair-Rite/2631803802?qs=P8bU7i9nNAWMk1EJQzshLg%3D%3D>

Noise Cancelling Devices:

Timewave ANC-4+: <https://timewave.com/support/ANC-4/anc4.html>

Available from Ham Radio Outlet, and sometimes on E-bay.

How to properly use a noise cancelling device, by Steve – VE6WZ:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gt0Hokz\\_m3w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gt0Hokz_m3w)

RG-400 Coax available from Aircraft-Spruce:

<https://www.aircraftspruce.com/catalog/elpages/coaxialcableconnectors6.php>

and DX Engineering:

<https://www.dxengineering.com/part/dxe-rg400-ctl>

RF Signal Source: Elecraft XG3:

<https://elecraft.com/collections/test-equipment/products/xg3>

Aluminum flashing for placement under station gear:

14" X 10" available from Lowe's, Home Depot, etc.

Thank you, Joel, for what will be deemed one of BVRC's best programs in 2024. We very much appreciate you coming to visit us, and hope that you will bless us again sometime with another great program on another amateur radio topic.

We appreciate your passion for the hobby that you have had over the decades, and sharing a small portion of that passion with us!



**BVRC President Jan – WB5JAN presents  
BVRC's Certificate of Appreciation  
to Joel Harrison – W5ZN**



# FEBRUARY HAM 101 WORKSHOP

## FEATURES NEW DIGITAL MODE

Prior to the BVRC monthly meeting on Feb. 1, newcomers and veterans alike were treated to the new digital mode of JS8Call in the February HAM 101 Workshop that convened at 6 pm. Gregg Harrison – K5GKH was the instructor/coach as well as control operator. It was a great Workshop turnout with approximately 25 persons attending.

Gregg conducted a live demonstration on how JS8Call allows for reliable weak signal keyboard to keyboard communication even under poor band conditions, making it a valuable tool for emergency and remote location communication with limited infrastructure. Gregg says he uses it because "It's just plain good fun!"



**A portion of the large HAM 101 Workshop turnout observes a live demonstration of JS8CALL, as instructor Gregg – K5GKH explains the new digital mode. At lower right, visitor Violet conducts a live contact with Jeff – KU4WW in Cherokee, AL. After a 10-minute digital QSO, Violet and Jeff ended communications with a "Thanks and 73".**

Club members were intrigued by the possibilities of this digital mode and expressed interest in learning more about its capabilities and how to incorporate it into their own operations.

Overall, the presentation was well received, and members left the meeting with a newfound appreciation for the power of digital modes in amateur radio communication.

For those interested in learning more about JS8Call, Gregg recommended the following:

JS8Call Official Website  
Download - <https://js8call.com>  
and,

Ham Radio Made Simple - JS8Call from A-Z Covering the Basics to Advanced Settings In One Video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FiCkfcnuOo>

The Bella Vista Radio Club looks forward to exploring the world of digital modes further and incorporating JS8Call into their amateur radio activities. Stay tuned for more exciting developments in the world of ham radio! And also.....Great job Violet! 350 miles with 10 watts and a wire!



# From the Desk of the President



## **Amateur Radio Remains Relevant and Exciting with an Old School Charm to New Hams**

According to Wikipedia, the amateur radio digital mode APRS or Automatic Packet Reporting System, “is an amateur radio based system for real time digital communications of information of immediate value in the local area. Data can include object Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates, weather station telemetry, text messages, announcements, queries, and other telemetry. APRS data can be displayed on a map, which can show stations, objects, tracks of moving objects, weather stations, search and rescue data, and direction finding data.”

This, along with all the other digital amateur radio modes developed over the last several decades have widened the scope and reach of amateur communications beyond the traditional legacy modes of phone and CW. It is this continual development of newer communications modes that keeps amateur radio fresh, relevant, and attractive to new amateurs who join our wonderful hobby to enjoy “old school” communications as well as digital age enhancements.

Speaking of new amateurs, through our BVRC VE testing program and the quality license classes offered by our club, BVRC membership continues to grow as new ham radio operators are trained and licensed. Our membership includes well over two hundred members with BVRC welcoming many newly licensed hams into our club in the last two months.

At our March meeting we anticipate an interesting scenario where these trends come together – a presentation regarding the interesting APRS digital mode as well as the presence of many newly licensed BVRC members in attendance. As I flashback to memories of amateur radio club meetings decades ago, it is clear to me that the amateur radio hobby that we enjoy so much is as relevant and interesting today as ever. The March meeting will be interesting indeed.

To all our new members joining BVRC as well as our long time amateur radio veterans learning about these digital modes, *welcome* and 73!

Jan  
WB5JAN







Any club members wanting to keep their BVRC membership current for the coming year, club dues can be paid in person at the monthly meetings, cash or personal check via regular mail to the club treasurer Marc Whittlesey – WØKYZ (address on QRZ.com), or via PayPal by using Marc's e-mail address:

[almarc11@yahoo.com](mailto:almarc11@yahoo.com)

### **THE DEADLINE FOR PAYING DUES IS MARCH 31**

And don't forget, BVRC memberships are also family memberships to include all other licensed family members living under the same roof, at no additional charge.

*Also note – BVRC Life Memberships are now available to any radio amateur age 73 or older. Just advise BVRC Treasurer Marc via e-mail or in person at one of our club meetings that you have reached 73 years of age. From that time forward, your BVRC membership is free.*

If you wish to pay in person at a meeting, please see Marc to make sure he has you noted on the BVRC membership roster when you pay.

Dues are \$15.00 per year.

Additional information can be found on the BVRC website. If you need more info, click [here](#).

### **Memorial Services for Alan Katz – KEØQFO Have Been Slightly Changed**

The family of Alan Katz-KEØQFO have announced that the two memorial services for our beloved SK member will now be:

**Memorial Service: 3:00 pm**

**Military Honors Service: 5:00pm**

**Saturday, March 23**

Services will be held at Whistling Springs Brewing Co.  
246 Whistling Springs Lane, Seligman, MO  
(Actual GPS location is just north of Pea Ridge)



**ALL ABOARD  
FOR THE 1<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL  
N5T  
BVRC  
TRAIN MOBILE EVENT!  
April 20, 2024**



**Bella Vista area Radio Club announces a very special operating event – the N5T Train Mobile Event on the Arkansas & Missouri Railroad excursion train! *This will be the trip of a lifetime, affording BVRC members the opportunity to operate from a moving train – train mobile! Train mobiles are extremely rare and the pileups from stations wishing to work them are always large – a great operational experience!***

**This will be a day-long 134 mile round trip which includes a three-hour layover in historic downtown Van Buren where you can enjoy lunch in one of several local cafes, shop along Main Street, and enjoy the rich architecture of the historic downtown buildings. The trip will travel through breath-taking views of the Boston Mountains, through the quarter mile tunnel at Winslow, and over high trestles, the highest being over 125 feet from the valley floor. Join us for exciting operating and great fellowship! Details about this extraordinary event are on the following page.....**



- If you are a BVRC member, a complimentary ticket will be provided for you and can be picked-up from Event Coordinator, Joe Dunn – WA5JD, the morning of the event at the depot.
- Spouses who are *licensed* members under BVRC's family membership plan are welcome and eligible for a complimentary ticket. Otherwise, they are still welcome but will have to purchase a regular ticket.
- We will be using the Special Event Callsign **N5T**. We will be running two stations on SSB and CW. Don Banta – K5DB will be the control operator for the event, and will be in charge of operating protocol for the stations.
- Upon arrival in Van Buren, you will have the option to either take a 90-minute lunch break in downtown Van Buren, or remain onboard for the middle portion of the train ride from Van Buren back up to Winslow, then back to Van Buren. A small lunch aboard the train will also be available for purchase during the middle trip (\$12.00). The train will then re-depart Van Buren for the return trip to Springdale, arriving around 5 pm.
- Water, soft drinks, and snacks will be available for purchase on the train. (Cash only).

The train will depart  
the Springdale depot promptly at 8:00 am on Saturday, April 20, 2024  
M&A Railroad Depot  
336 East Emma, Springdale.

**DON'T BE LATE!**

**THIS EVENT WILL ACCOMMODATE ONLY 40 PERSONS  
RESERVE YOUR TICKET NOW!**

→ *There are less than 10 tickets left* ←

To complete your ticket reservation form, click [here](#).

If you need more information contact the  
Event Coordinator, Joe Dunn – WA5JD at:

[kd5tlh@hotmail.com](mailto:kd5tlh@hotmail.com)

# BVRC TECHNICIAN LICENSE CLASS HUGE SUCCESS!

Twenty amateur radio students walked out of the Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy building Saturday afternoon, February 10, with big smiles on their faces as they acquired their first ham license during BVRC's winter Technician license class.

The course was organized in two class sessions a week apart, with students reviewing the first class's material while studying forward for the second class the week in between. After the conclusion of the second class a special Volunteer Examiner (VE) test session was conducted by members of the BVRC VE team.

With all due respect to the adults who successfully passed the exam, the highlight of the class was 4 young people also attaining the passing grade for the test. They were: Mercy Crandell age 11, Ben Cottingham age 12, Canaan Johnson age 13, and Jackson Smith age 17. You can view all the names and their new callsigns from this class as well as the other successful candidates from the regular monthly BVRC exam sessions also held on February 10 on page 17 of this issue of The Signal.

*Congratulations everyone!*





BVRC expresses its thanks to the following VEs for the stellar job they did in grading and processing exam paperwork for this large class: Mark Whatley – K5XH, Richard Thibodeaux – K50TH, Vinson Carter – WV5C, Glenn Kilpatrick – WB5L, David Gilbert – KB5SEZ, Joe Dunn – WA5JD, Michael Kemper – W5KMK, and Scott Cook – N5SRC.

A two thumbs-up goes to instructor Tom Northfell – W5XNA, for the incredible job he did in setting-up, coordinating, and teaching the class. THANKS TOM!



**Tom - W5XNA discusses an answer to one of the test questions.**



**Joe – WA5JD prepares some of the test forms, while Don – K5DB visits with Richard – K50TH about the upcoming test session.**

**Tom-W5XNA discusses the test session at grading table 1 with Glenn-WB5L, Michael-W5KMK, and Scott Cook-N5SRC, while Vinson-WV5C, Mark-K5XH and Richard-K50TH supervise grading table 2.**





A few sidenotes to this story:

- Tom has advised he will be exploring the prospect of a fall Technician class which is currently tabled, but a possibility.
- If these twenty newcomers (or any other Technician license holder) wish to upgrade their license to General class, they will have the opportunity to do just that thanks to our great club webmaster Glenn – WB5L who will be the instructor for BVRC's *General license* class coming-up sometime in mid-summer. Watch for more information on this class on the BVRC website and in a future issue of The Signal.
- At the time of this writing, we were informed by BVRC Vice-President Joe Hott – W5AEN, that he has completed his Volunteer Examiner test and is awaiting the arrival of his credentials from ARRL. Welcome to the VE team, Joe!

One of the youth test candidates that successfully passed the Technician exam, Mercy Crandell, 11, receives her Certificate of Completion from the VE team.



# THE LARGEST AMATEUR RADIO CLUB IN ARKANSAS!



*You're a part of it !*

*Thanks for your support !*

*Get involved in club activities!*





# **BVRC VE REPORT**

## **FROM DON COOPER – KC7DC**

### **BVRC VE COORDINATOR**

#### **FEBRUARY, 2024**



**Hear ye! Hear ye! – Congratulations to the  
January/February BVRC VE test sessions  
candidates on passing their exam!**

**Fred Fanning – KI5WVN – Bentonville – New Amateur Extra!**  
**Nathan Spears – KEØVPI – Lowell – New Amateur Extra!**  
**William Lopez – KJ5EGJ – Bentonville – New Technician!**  
**Justin Sleeth – KFØPAI – Cassville, MO – New Technician!**  
**Anthony Miles – KJ5ELC – Bella Vista – New Technician!**  
**Maxwell Bean – KJ5ELJ – Springdale – New Technician!**  
**Bill Cassidy – KJ5EKK – Greenland – New Technician!**  
**Ben Cottingham – KJ5EMI – Bella Vista – New Technician!**  
**John Cottingham – KJ5ELV – Bella Vista – New Technician!**  
**David Matheny – KJ5ENI – Springdale – New Technician!**  
**Nicholas Hayob – KFØPBY – Leawood, KS – New Technician!**  
**Jackson Smith – Call Pending – Fort Smith – New Technician!**  
**Jerry Reid, Jr. – KJ5ENJ – Lowell – New Technician!**  
**Jose Andrade – Call Pending – Springdale – New Technician!**  
**Canaan Johnson – KJ5EMJ – Bentonville – New Technician!**  
**Levi Crandell – KJ5EPZ – Farmington – New Technician!**  
**Mercy Crandell – KJ5EQA – Farmington – New Technician!**  
**Larry Wilms – KJ5EQB – Bella Vista – New Technician!**  
**Michael Thompson – Call Pending – Springdale – New Technician!**  
**Spencer Weech – KJ5ENV – Springdale – New Technician!**  
**LaCount Reber – Call Pending – Goshen – New Technician!**  
**Derek Dake – KJ5EMK – Combs – New Technician!**  
**Rhys Wimer – KJ5EML – Fayetteville – New Technician!**  
**Kathy Vanderlip – KJ5ENH – Lowell – New Technician!**  
**Laura Foster – Call Pending – Bella Vista – New Technician!**  
**Ryan Hansen – KJ5EOT – Centerton – New Technician!**  
**Cody Vaughn – Call Pending – Fayetteville – New Technician!**



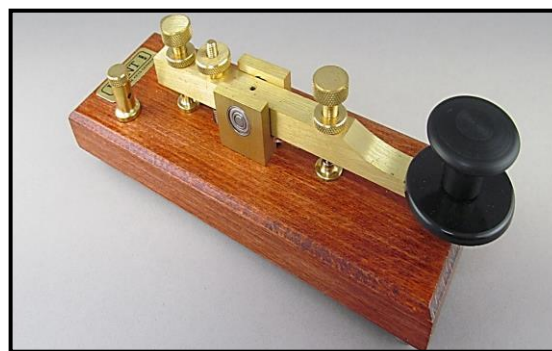
# CW: WHAT'S THE ATTRACTION IN TODAY'S HIGH TECH WORLD?

*By Howard Bernstein – WB2UZE*

Before I can answer the question why CW would be of interest to any ham in today's high tech world, let's spend some time first on how it all got started back in the day of the telegraph.

The telegraph was developed in the 1830s -1840s by Samuel F. B. Morse (1791-1872) and other inventors. It was a revolutionary long distance communication done by transmitting electrical signals over wires between stations. Morse invented a code (Morse code) that assigned a set of dots and dashes to each letter of the English alphabet, which gave an understandable format to the electrical signals.

The first telegraph transmission in 1844 was between Washington DC and Baltimore, and by 1866 an oceanic line had linked the USA and Europe. By the end of the 19th century telegraph communication became the backbone of our country. Yet with the invention of the telephone, telegraph lines became of less importance in the early part of the 20th century.



However Morse Code (CW or continuous wave) continued to be used with newly developed radio transmitters of that era. Even with the advent of AM transmission and later SSB, CW was the preferred mode for ship to shore, commercial, and military applications through the 1950s due to its effectiveness to get through in poor atmospheric conditions and with compromised equipment. With the coming of microwave, fax, and satellites, CW use waned but maintained its major use amongst the amateur radio community.







So is there value in CW today or is it a lost art of the past?

Let's take a look back to what it was like when I first got my license in 1965 when CW was still required by the FCC. The FCC required all entry level Novice licensees to be able to copy 5 words per minute.

Back then there were no computers, internet, or software for learning CW, so an aspiring Novice had to seek out a local ham to help with learning CW and theory. That local ham would also give the Novice exam and code test. There were no repeaters, so most all hams were HF active and imparted these skills to their eager students. So there was a direct connection between aspiring Novices and established HF operators. Seeing the experienced operators handling CW at high speeds was fascinating and motivating. There was also something very engaging about hearing CW over what we now call 'boat anchor' radios. When you tuned-up one of those vintage radios and saw the glow of tubes, it felt like real solid equipment which we developed admiration and respect for. For some older hams today, the need to own those very rigs is due to this same connection made years ago.

Once we became Novices, we were not allowed to have VFO privileges, and we worked off crystals. This meant we were stuck with a handful of individual frequencies. Our first receivers were not the best and we had to learn to receive CW with drifting receivers, poor sensitivity, and no selectivity, the very things we take for granted in modern radios. These challenges made us excellent listeners and with that our speeds and CW skills increased as we progressed in the hobby. To upgrade to a General license in those days, 13 words per minute was required, and 20 words per minute for the Amateur Extra. As we became more proficient to reach these required speeds we developed 'head copy' and CW became a language and not a series of dots and dashes. This is why many of the older hams are still preferring CW to voice and digital as they have developed a strong connection to the CW mode. To me, there is nothing more satisfying in the ham radio hobby than having a CW QSO at a rapid speed with the challenge of copying in poor conditions in addition to making few sending mistakes.

So getting back to the original purpose of this article: why should we be interested in CW today? I can list a host of reasons as follows:

- CW can get out better when the ham has a compromised antenna or low power. CW is ideal for QRP and portable operations. With weak signals it's harder to comprehend SSB than it is CW, so CW has a clear advantage.







We feel it's important to get students on the air quickly to help mitigate any fears and to see the value of their studies.

Like the learning of any language, I must admit there is a dropout rate as some students find out they don't have the time or commitment. However for those who stick it out, they are rewarded by carrying on a skill and tradition that is most enjoyable and unique.

I hope after reading this article, hams that were considering learning CW or had it on the 'back burner', will now spring into action. For more information, visit our website: [www.longislandcwclub.org](http://www.longislandcwclub.org). See you on the lower part of the HF bands!



## **Senators Roger Wicker and Richard Blumenthal Introduce S.3690 to Eliminate Private Land Use Restrictions on Amateur Radio**

On January 30, 2024, U.S. Senators Roger Wicker (MS) and Richard Blumenthal (CT) introduced S.3690, the Senate companion bill to H.R.4006, introduced last June. Both bills reflect the Congressional campaign efforts by ARRL to eliminate homeowner association land use restrictions that prohibit, restrict, or impair the ability of an amateur radio operator to install and operate amateur station antennas on residential properties they own.

In announcing the introduction of S.3690, Senator Wicker said: "Because communication during natural disasters is often hindered, we should be making every attempt to give folks more options. Reliable access can make the difference between life and death in an emergency. Our legislation removes roadblocks for amateur radio operators looking to help their friends, families, and neighbors."

In a similar announcement, Senator Blumenthal stated: "Our measure will help clarify the rules so ham radio enthusiasts can successfully continue their communications. In the face of emergency or crisis, they help provide vital, life-saving information that allow listeners to properly and safely respond, but prohibitive home association rules and confusing approval processes for installing antennas have been an unnecessary impediment. The Amateur Radio Emergency Preparedness Act resolves these bottlenecks and ensures that radio operators can function successfully."

ARRL President Rick Roderick, K5UR, and Director John Robert Stratton, N5AUS, Chair of the ARRL's Government Affairs Committee, both extended on behalf of ARRL, its Members, and the Amateur Radio community their thanks and appreciation for the leadership of Senator Wicker and Senator Blumenthal in their continuing efforts to support and protect the rights of all amateur radio operators.

# BVRC MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN 2024 WINTER FIELD DAY



Bella Vista area Radio Club's flagship callsign N5BVA went to the HF airwaves on January 27-28, as a three-man BVRC team braved the cold and rainy weekend to participate in Winter Field Day 2024.

The following information on the event was provided by Rick Pope – KG5MWG:

Alex Smith – KI5EQK was the Team Captain/Operator. Alex provided a 16' trailer, propane-fueled generator, awnings, small tent, 20m dipole antenna, 20' mast, transceiver & power supply and laptop computer.

Nathan – KEØVPI provided propane tanks, stool, small portable electric heater, 20m/40m fan-dipole antenna, 10' mast, transceiver & power supply, and laptop computer.

Rick Pope – KG5MWG provided ground rods & clamps, grounding/bonding wire, bus bars, portable tools & hardware, portable lights, extension cords, stool, CO monitor, street-side banners, IC-7300 transceiver & power supply, 20m/40m fan-dipole antenna, 25' push-up mast w/tripod base, and laptop computer.



**Nathan – KEØVPI checks the team's logging program to ensure proper operation**

On behalf of BVRC, Rick-KG5MWG thanked property owner Scott Musgrave by presenting him with the club's Certificate of Appreciation for the use of his pasture for the event.

Rick said they were plagued by several generator shutdowns, due to frozen propane supply lines, as the temperatures hovered around freezing most of the night and early morning.

The team used N3FJP logging software into which 83 QSOs were entered. Rick said it was a learning experience for them in braving the elements in a portable station situation.





## BVRC WFD 2024 Site



**Nathan – KEØVPI**  
helps raise one of the  
WFD antennas

**Rick – KG5MWG &  
Nathan - KEØVPI**



**N5BVA/portable on the air!**



# ***WELCOME NEW BVRC MEMBERS!***

James Rinehart – W5ROT – Bentonville  
David Snell – KE7EK – Pea Ridge  
Dale Green – AF6OE – Fayetteville  
Michael Routen – KG5BUE – Centerton  
Bill Kennamer – K5FUV – Fayetteville  
Sandy Kennamer – N5LEK – Fayetteville  
William Lopez – KJ5EGJ – Bentonville  
Justin Sleeth – KFØPAI – Cassville, MO  
Anthony Miles – KJ5ELC – Bella Vista  
Maxwell Bean – KJ5ELJ – Springdale  
Bill Cassidy – KJ5EKK – Greenland  
Ben Cottingham – KJ5EMI – Bella Vista  
John Cottingham – KJ5ELV – Bella Vista  
David Matheny – KJ5ENI – Springdale  
Nicholas Hayob – KFØPBY – Leawood, KS  
Jackson Smith – Callsign Pending – Fort Smith  
Jerry Reid, Jr. – KJ5ENJ – Lowell  
Jose Andrade – Callsign Pending – Springdale  
Canaan Johnson – KJ5EMJ – Bentonville  
Levi Grandell – KJ5EPZ – Farmington  
Mercy Grandell – KJ5EQA – Farmington  
Larry Wilms – KJ5EQB – Bella Vista  
Michael Thompson – Callsign Pending – Springdale  
Spencer Weech – KJ5ENV – Springdale  
LaCount Reber – Callsign Pending – Goshen  
Derek Dake – KJ5EMK – Combs  
Rhys Wimer – KJ5EML – Fayetteville  
Kathy Vanderlip – KJ5ENH – Lowell  
Laura Foster – Callsign Pending – Bella Vista  
Ryan Hansen – KJ5EOT – Centerton  
Cody Vaughn – Callsign Pending – Fayetteville



BVRC Members.....

One of Arkansas' best hamfests is right around the corner!



## Arkansas River Valley Hamfest

Dardanelle Community Center

Saturday March 2, 2024



Dardanelle Community Center

2059-2099 State Highway 22

Dardanelle, Arkansas

GPS coordinates 35.23566 -093.17514

Doors open at 8:00 AM

Admission \$10.00

# BVRC CLUB ACCESSORIES

*from Embroidered Memories*

**SHOW YOU'RE A PROUD  
BVRC MEMBER WITH:**

- Key Rings
- License Plates
- Name Badges
- Ceramic Mugs
- Mouse pads
- Luggage Tags
- Custom Hats w/Callsign



To order your personalized BVRC product, click [here](#)



Throughout eastern Oklahoma and northwestern Arkansas, trained and dedicated individuals monitor the skies around their communities during severe weather events. These storm spotters provide first-hand severe weather reports to their local officials, and to the National Weather Service in Tulsa, which are used to make critical warning decisions.

Being a storm spotter not only means dedication but also training. Each winter and spring the Tulsa office of the National Weather Service trains members of police & fire departments, emergency management officials, and amateur radio operators on spotting techniques. Typically, the training is coordinated by a local group (such as an emergency management agency) and a NWS meteorologist serves as the guest instructor. The goal of the training is not just to recognize tornadoes, but to have some understanding of storm structure, which in turn better prepares the spotter for the extreme and unusual circumstances. Other topics covered include an update on the latest NWS technology and procedures, ideas for organizing/coordinating spotter groups, severe weather reporting, and important safety considerations.

If you are interested in attending a live, in-person class, three opportunities will be available to you this spring in the Arkansas River Valley and NW Arkansas:

- 1) The Figure Five Fire Station, AR Hwy-59, Van Buren, Feb. 18 @ 6pm,
- 2) Sebastian County EOC, 8400 Zero Street, Fort Smith, Feb. 25 @ 6pm, and
- 3) Walmart Auditorium, NW Arkansas Community College, Bentonville, Feb. 26 @ 6:30pm.

The classes are free and open to the public.

If you need additional information, contact Ed Calianese at the National Weather Service office in Tulsa: [ed.calianese@noaa.gov](mailto:ed.calianese@noaa.gov).



# BVRC HAMS LICENSED THREE YEARS OR LESS: JOIN US, AND PARTICIPATE IN THE 2024 SSB ARRL ROOKIE ROUNDUP!!!

*The ARRL Rookie Roundup is a contest aimed at amateurs who have been licensed for three years or less, to introduce them to HF operation. This fun-filled 6 hour event is held three times per year (April for SSB, August for RTTY, and December for CW).*



***The Rookie Roundup for SSB (microphone) this year is on  
Sunday afternoon, April 21, 2024, from 1800 – 2359 UTC (1pm – 6:59pm local time)***

As we do for each year, several of our BVRC experienced operators will be welcoming you into their shacks to host this event. If you presently do not have HF privileges and/or do not have an HF station, you can still operate from one of the experienced operator's locations and enjoy & learn the fun world of HF! You will also learn the fun of logging contacts.

*(The experienced operator will be there as a Coach and control operator for you, but they are not allowed to operate or log.....YOU will do the logging and operating!)*

You will be using a callsign chosen by your Coach/control operator, BUT...  
If your station wins in one of the categories, you will win a certificate with your callsign on it:



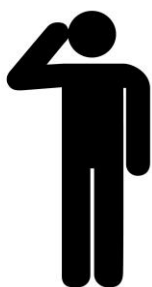
If you were first licensed any of the years 2020-2023 – *no matter which class of license you hold* – you are eligible to participate! Several new BVRC hams have already signed-up for this fun event, along with some of last year's participants!

***Our coaches for this year are:  
Don Cooper – KC7DC – Bella Vista  
Glenn Kilpatrick – WB5L – Bella Vista  
Dennis Tune – W5DM - Fayetteville  
Tom Northfell – W5XNA – Fayetteville  
Vinson Carter – WV5C – Springdale  
Don Banta – K5DB – Springdale***

***If you would like some real ham radio HF experience and fun, get on the sign-up list today! To sign-up, send an e-mail indicating your interest to participate to:***

***Don Banta – K5DB  
[arsk5db@gmail.com](mailto:arsk5db@gmail.com)***

***See you April 21!***

**THANK  
YOU**

# Mega Thanks to BVRC's Net Control Stations

Without Net Control Stations, there wouldn't be any nets to participate in and enjoy.

Net Controllers must be willing to devote their time and talent to a commitment of being dependable and trustworthy when it is their turn as an NCS. They must possess a spirit of cordiality, while at the same time maintaining total responsibility and authority in providing a smooth running net.

BVRC is blessed with just these type individuals as is evidenced each time a club net convenes. The Signal would like to acknowledge below these dedicated individuals who selflessly serve the club as Net Controllers.

We would also like to welcome new Net Controllers Michael Kemper – W5KMK and Joe Hott – W5AEN to the NCS ranks! We salute all our fine Net Control Stations for your service:

## BVRC Legacy Net

**Dana Widboom – KI5TGY (BVRC Nets Committee Chair)**

**Jan Hagan – WB5JAN**

**Glenn Kilpatrick – WB5L**

**Tom Thibeault – KN4SLP**

**Robert Hill – K5NZV**

**Dana Hill – W5DGH**

**Tom Northfell – W5XNA**

## HAM 101 Net

**Michael Kemper – W5KMK**

**Tom Northfell – W5XNA**

**Dennis Tune – W5DM**

**Mike Calvi – KF5RUO**

## Sunday 3830 Roundtable

**John Bryant – N5SU**

**Robert Hill – K5NZV**

**Mark Whatley – K5XH**

**Tom Northfell – W5XNA**

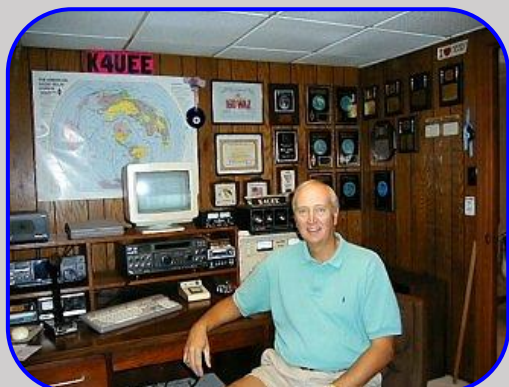
**Joe Hott – W5AEN**



# THE SIGNAL SALUTES

## BOB ALLPHIN – K4UEE, SK

Bob Allphin – K4UEE, of Marietta GA passed away peacefully at home Saturday morning February 10, with his family by his side, and became a Silent Key after a prolonged illness.



Bob experienced many milestones in his illustrious amateur radio "career".

He participated in, led, or co-led DXpeditions to ELEVEN of the DXCC "Top 10 Most Wanted".



Since his retirement over 20 years ago to pursue DXpeditioning more or less full time, Bob participated in ten MAJOR DXpeditions that have made over *1.25 million QSOs*. He has ELEVEN "DXpedition of the Year" plaques hanging on his wall.

He was an active contester and participated in 38 contest DXpeditions. From the mid-80s through the early 2000s, Bob set five single operator/single band world records and was a competitor in two World Radio Team Championships (WRTC) events in 1996 and 2000.

Bill Priakos – W5SJ from Fort Smith (who has given two excellent program presentations to BVRC in the recent past) and BVRC member Stan Stockton – K5GO operated with Bob from Stan's super contest station in Cayman Brac, Grand Cayman Islands – ZF5T, where they not only won but set a new world record in the Multi-Op Single Transmitter Low Power category in last year's ARRL International DX CW Contest. Bob had planned on operating with them again this year.

Bob is a member of the CQ DX Hall of Fame, Board of Directors of INDEXA, and current President of The KP1-5 Project. He was a former Chairman of the ARRL DX Advisory Committee (DXAC). Bob was also a member of the VooDoo Contest Group, FOC (First Class Operator Club), A-1 Operators Club, and the Southeastern DX Club Hall of Fame.

Bob was guest speaker at the annual Arkansas DX Association conference in 2017.

He visited 131 DXCC entities and operated from 85 of them!

Bob's passing marks the loss of one of the pillars in the national/international amateur radio DX community. Thank you so very much, Bob, for a job WELL DONE.

RIP.



# THE DXCC DEN



By Don – K5DB

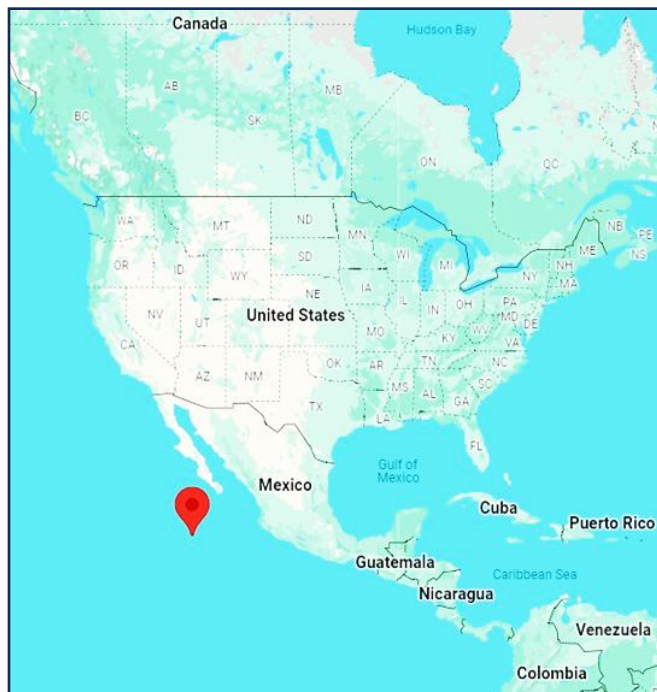
## This month's featured country:



### Revillagigedo Island Primary Callsign Prefix: XF

The Revillagigedo Islands (pronounced “Reh-vee-yuh-hee-Hay-doh”) are a group of four volcanic islands in the Pacific Ocean, known for their unique ecosystem. They lie approximately 285 miles southwest of Cabo San Lucas, the southern tip of the Baja California Peninsula. Historically linked to the Mexican state of Colima to which they were granted in 1861 to establish a penal colony, the islands are under Mexican federal authority and jurisdiction. The islands are named after Don Juan Vicente de Güemes, 2nd Count of Revillagigedo, the 53rd viceroy of New Spain.





### Location of Revillagigedo Island

On 25 July 1861, President Benito Juárez signed a decree awarding territorial control over the four islands to the Mexican state of Colima. His plan was to build an offshore penitentiary on Isla Socorro. Although this never happened, the decree whereby they were attached to Colima has never been repealed. In 1865, the island was explored by ornithologist Andrew Jackson Grayson, who discovered the Socorro dove, Socorro mockingbird and the Socorro elf owl which were later given scientific names in his honor.

In July 2016, the Revillagigedo Archipelago was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and in November 2017 they were declared to be a marine reserve and a national park of Mexico. Some of the volcanoes are active, with the last eruption of Volcán Bárcena in 1953, and Socorro in 1993. Traveling to the islands from their

No evidence of human habitation on any of the islands exists before their discovery by Spanish explorers. Hernando de Grijalva and his crew discovered an uninhabited island on December 19, 1533, and named it Santo Tomás (Socorro Island).

The Revillagigedo Islands have been visited by a number of other explorers: Domingo del Castillo (1541), Miguel Pinto (1772), Alexander von Humboldt (1811), Benjamin Morrell (1825), Sir Edward Belcher (1839) who made the first botanical collections and Reeve, who witnessed the eruption of Mount Evermann in 1848.





nearest land point takes approximately 26 to 30 hours, as they are typically reached by sea. A small military airstrip does exist on Socorro.

On November 24, 2017, President of Mexico Enrique Peña Nieto created North America's largest marine protected area around the Revillagigedo Islands. This protected area covers 57,000 square miles around the islands, and bans fishing, mining, and tourism development in the protected area and on the islands. Consequently and like many other marine and wildlife preserves of many countries (including the United States) public visitation to Revillagigedo is highly restricted. No tourism facilities exist, and the islands have no reliable sources of fresh water of their own. A naval station in the south of Socorro Island has a population of 45 staff members. Clarión Island houses a small naval garrison with nine men. The islands are otherwise uninhabited.



As we have discussed in previous 'DXCC DEN' articles concerning rare and hard-to-get entities, Revillagigedo is no exception. It is a highly restricted wildlife refuge and the only way you are going to be able to contact this entity and add it to your worked and confirmed DX countries list is for a DXpedition team to obtain permission from the Mexican government and wildlife refuge authority to go there. Revillagigedo is currently #29 on the Club Log DXCC Most Wanted List.



According to my research and prior to 2000, an 8-man Mexican team activated Revillagigedo with the callsign XF4MDX in 1982. In 1987, XF4DX activated the island with a 7-man team. A 2-man Mexican operation then took place from the islands in 1991 with the callsign XFØC.



Since 2000, DXpeditions to the islands have been fairly numerous in the last quarter century.

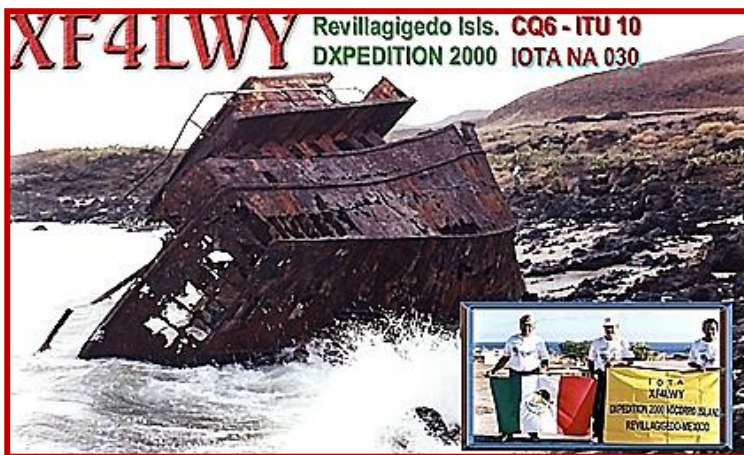
At the turn of the Millennium, a 3-man team headed by Enrique – XE1LWY activated the islands from Socorro Island in March of 2000 with the callsign XF4LWY.

Then, in 2006, a Mexican-German team activated the islands with the callsign XF4DL.

Then in March 2011, an international team activated Revillagigedo with the callsign 4A4A (along with 'XF' being the primary prefix for Revillagigedo, 4A, 4B, and 4C are also Mexican callsign prefixes).

The last DXpedition to Revillagigedo was in March 2018 with callsign 4B4B. Both the 4A4A and 4B4B activations were led by Mark – XE1B.

According to my findings, there have been four DXpeditions to this entity in the past 24 years, an average activation rate of about every 6 years. So, keep your eye on the DX websites concerning Revillagigedo. This year marks the 6th year since the last activation, so hopefully a new DXpedition to this rare entity will be organized in the near future.



↑  
**My Revillagigedo QSL  
from the 2000 operation**

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