

THE

SIGNAL



*Newsletter of the
Bella Vista area Radio Club*

**ARKANSAS' LARGEST
AMATEUR RADIO CLUB**



- OCTOBER MEETING – SDRs
- Heights For Horizontal Antennas
- Ham Radio Newlyweds!
- HF Mobile Contesting – Part 2
- CW Series #1 of 4 –
Apprehensive about CW? Don't Be!
- The Wide World of Radiosport
- DXCC DEN: Malpelo Island

November 2024

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

(Repeater Nets)

(Contesting & Special Events)

Repeaters: 147.255 +.600 khz offset, pl 162.2

444.100 + 5 mhz offset, pl 162.2

Website: www.bellavistaradioclub.org

WEEKLY NETS:

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

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

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

November Meeting Information

HAM 101 Workshop, 6pm preceding monthly meeting – BVRC's newly appointed Social Media Coordinator, Alex Smith – KI5EQK, will be our HAM 101 instructor for November. His topic will be "Ham Radio Go-Pro Operation". This nifty electronic component can be used in many areas of life, and especially amateur radio. Be sure and experience Alex's program. It will be a good one.

BVRC November meeting, 7pm – We have as a guest speaker for this month's program, Ryan Vaughn, former owner of the Fayetteville Radio Shack. Ryan will be giving the history of the store, what it accomplished during its many years of operation, and how it helped hundreds of NW Arkansas amateurs with their ham radio needs. It will be a great stroll 'down memory lane' and a great amateur radio historical program.

SEE YOU THEN!

BOARD MEMBERS

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Board Member At Large and Public Information Officer

Tom Northfell – W5XNA
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Chair: Don Cooper – KC7DC
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Nets Committee

Chair: Dana Widboom – KI5TGY
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Membership Committee

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Social Media Committee

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Webmaster

Roger Dickey – KJ4QIS
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Don Banta – K5DB
arask5db@gmail.com

SDRs Highlight October Program

BVRC members continue each month to demonstrate their dedication and never ending hunger for amateur radio knowledge. October was no exception as once again the BVRC meeting room was packed.



This month's featured speaker was BVRC Secretary Marc Whittlesey – WØKYZ. Marc has many years of amateur radio experience under his belt, but with the advent of the computer age Marc has progressed with the times. One of the area of the technological era that has caught Marc's fancy is SDRs.

Marc said that SDRs are all over the world and all you need is a PC and a web browser. A popular software program being used by hams today for SDRs is a program called OBS. It is a freeware platform.

SDRs are basically radios that are built around software and processors instead of a standard radio. Most radios of the past 5-10 years have SDR components in them.



Marc - WØKYZ

Here were Marc's closing comments on SDRs, how to get started, and how to use them:

"Here is the link to access the map of world-wide Web-SDR sites:

<https://rx-tx.info/map-sdr-points>

The links to download the OBS program, the websocket and the links for W5IUA's files to use online SDRs are:

The links to download the OBS program, the websocket, and the links for W5IUA's files to use online SDRs are:

<https://obsproject.com/>

<https://github.com/obsproject/obs-websocket/releases>

<https://hams.live/obsfiles>

<https://hams.live/hfiles/>

For detailed instructions on how to install and setup OBS using the above four links, go to <https://hams.live/inst/>. There is also a short video at <https://hams.live/videos/> that demonstrates how to run OBS and turn on various SDRs. Be sure and watch the mouse movements carefully to see how to select and turn on various SDRs and listen to them.

If you have questions or need some additional help, please feel free to call or e-mail me and I will be glad to help you out. E-mail: almarc11@yahoo.com, Phone: 479-876-1128."

Thanks for an excellent program, Marc! We appreciate you not only for a great show, but for the decades of your service as BVRC treasurer!!!

Marc related to club members there are two types of SDRs:

- **Web-based SDR:** Each of these may have a different appearance and set-up when seen on the monitor.
- **Kiwi SDR:** All of this type look the same.

Marc illustrated how SDRs being at various locations around the globe aid in receiving a given station(s) that may not have a very strong signal at one location, but very copyable at another.

He showed how, using the software, you can filter a portion of the band, a particular geographical area, etc., rather than using the entire waterfall feature that comes with the software. So, you have several appearance options to suit your operating style.



Marc conducts a live SDR demonstration

Announcing the First BVRC Santa Net !



The Bella Vista Radio Club is pleased to announce our club's next big operating event – The Santa Net! Coming this December – BVRC's N5BVA Santa Net will be on the air!

Yes, BVRC is developing and sponsoring an opportunity for all children in the Bella Vista area Radio Club's footprint to have a real-time QSO with Santa Claus this Christmas season.

The net will run on Friday, December 6, and again the next Friday, December 13.

The Santa Net will be a special net in that there will be no on-air check-ins. Instead, to participate in the net with your young children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, etc., check-ins for the net will be by registration. All you need do is simply complete the Santa Net registration form on the BVRC website. Persons registering will choose which date and time slot they can be on frequency to check-in to speak to Santa. The NCS will use the registered slots as a net check-in list. *Be sure and be on frequency that evening.* The Net Control Station will call you when it's your turn. This will not only enable your little ones to speak to Santa, it will also introduce them to ham radio! **THE NET WILL USE THE NW ARKANSAS SKYWARN LINKED REPEATER SYSTEM.**

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN, SO SIGN-UP EARLY! Click [here](#) to go to the BVRC homepage, then click this icon to register:



If you need more information, contact the Santa Net Coordinator, Dale-W5DSL at lddale@gmail.com or phone 479-531-3600. **HO! HO! HO! – SEE YOU THEN!**

From the Desk of the



Leverage your amateur radio hobby for even more fun!

It was while I was staying at two beautiful campsites in October that it hit me.... our wonderful amateur radio hobby is even more fun when you combine it with another interest that you enjoy.

For me, my enjoyment of camping and RV travel is a perfect complement to my interest in the popular "Parks On The Air" program. Being at a scenic state or national park location and then activating the park "on the air" or hunting other parks with "park to park" contacts brings even more fun to our travel to local or far off camping destinations. Besides the enjoyment of exploring the beauty of the park's location and its surrounding areas, sharing this location with amateurs around the country over the radio adds to my enjoyment of our camping experience.

However, there are so many other areas of interest that make for a perfect pairing for amateur radio. Several members in our club combine biking through our wonderful Northwest Arkansas trails and bikeways with amateur radio communications as a natural fit.

Many off road jeep and ATV enthusiasts use amateur radio to bring even more enjoyment to their explorations as well as provide a means for emergency communications.

Scout leaders use their amateur radio skills and interests to provide an exciting opportunity for young people to learn about radio communications in a way that is rewarding and useful in their roles leading young people in their scouting adventures.

These are but a few examples of how our amateur radio hobby can enhance our other interests and hobbies.

The point is this – our wonderfully interesting hobby that already has so many directions of interest to be explored can be even more rewarding when combined in interesting ways with our other life adventures.

I challenge you to think of how you can enjoy our hobby with your other interests you enjoy. Get out there and enjoy your amateur radio journey!

BVRC Welcomes New Social Media Coordinator Alex Smith – KI5EQK

The Bella Vista area Radio Club Board of Directors is pleased to announce the appointment of new Social Media Committee Chair Alex Smith – KI5EQK.

Alex's passion for radio began at an early age, sparked by classic films like Smokey and the Bandit. The iconic bridge scene from Smokey and the Bandit 2 still brings a smile to his face! At just 10 years old, while helping his father clean out a semi-trailer, Alex discovered his first CB radio. With a zero ground plane antenna and a power supply, he was ready to embark on his radio journey.



Alex with his niece Emma during last year's square-to-square event.

As he grew up, his love for communication deepened. His first vehicle, a Jeep CJ5, proudly featured a 29-channel Royce CB radio that allowed him to connect with fellow enthusiasts across Mexico and the Gulf. But he was hungry for more. It was later during his college career that he met Rick Pope – KG5MWG, who introduced him to the exciting world of ham radio and guided him through the process of getting his license. In the spring of 2019, he earned his Technician ticket and became an avid 2-meter mobile operator.

Alex has also become a very avid Bicycle Mobile operator. He checks-in regularly to the weekly BVRC repeater nets from his bicycle.

Alex also told us.....

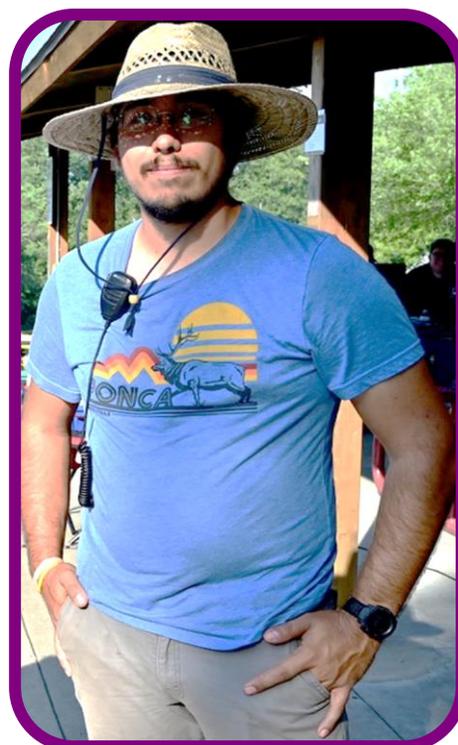
“Currently, I’m thrilled to accept the position of Social Media Committee Chair for the club! This role will allow me to connect with our community and share our passion for radio in new and engaging ways.

I’m also on a mission to achieve my General class license by the end of the year, thanks to a friendly bet with Nathan Spears - KEØVPI that keeps me motivated!

My ultimate goal is to return to the Register's Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa (RAGBRAI). Since August, I’ve been training tirelessly and optimizing my bike setup in preparation for the 52nd annual event in 2025. I’m documenting my journey through training videos, which you can check out on my Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Smithe079/reels/>.

Join me on this adventure as I strive to blend my love for radio with the thrill of biking, proving that with passion and determination, we can achieve our dreams!”

We heartily welcome Alex to his newly appointed position!





Dan Cassidy – N5DBC – Sherwood, AR
 Shawne Olson – KG5EXA – Bella Vista
 Robert Winkle – N3AZZ – Freedom, PA
 Jacob Smith – K15YDZ – Rudy, AR
 Johnathon Butler – KJ5ILK – West Memphis
 Detlef “Will” Koertge – KJ5IKS – Fayetteville
 Shawn Richey – Springdale
 Brandon Gage – KJ5IOP – Bella Vista



CONGRATULATIONS MR. & MRS. BOB WINKLE!

By Ron Evans – K5XK

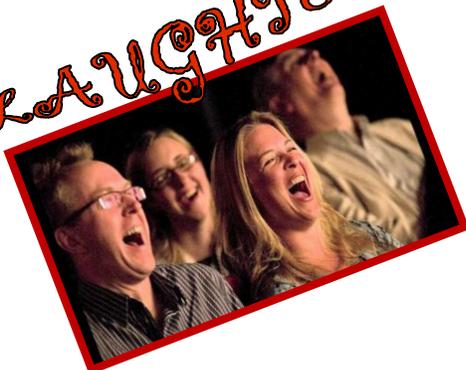


BVRC member Carol Wilson – W5CDW, was recently reunited with an old friend who first introduced her to the hobby 40 years ago, Bob Winkle – N3AZZ, from north of Pittsburgh, PA. They had both lost their spouses. Interestingly, I met Bob at the BVRC breakfast several weeks ago and learned they were engaged. And at the Saturday morning September 21 breakfast, they announced they are newlyweds!



Congratulations Bob and Carol !!!

LAUGHTER



**CHECK OUT THIS
TOP-NOTCH CW TEAM**



CLICK HERE

BVRC VE REPORT

From Don Cooper - KC7DC, BVRC VE Coordinator
September, 2024



Congratulations!

**Will Koertge - KJ5IKS - Fayetteville
New Technician!**

**Johnathon Butler - KJ5ILK
West Memphis, AR
New Technician!**

Next month's test sessions:

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

BASIC HORIZONTAL ANTENNAS FOR WORLD-WIDE HF COMMUNICATION

BVRC has numerous members (and especially newcomers to the club and hobby) who have upgraded to the General or Amateur Extra license and are now enjoying HF operation. Some are using HF verticals due to space limitation and other factors, and are being gratified with QSOs not only in North America, but globally as well.

Even though some members possess towers supporting directional antennas (beams, quads, etc.), the bulk of our members (and especially newcomers) are using wire antennas (quarter-wave balanced dipole, off center fed dipole, end fed half wave, etc.), and they too are experiencing the excitement of working stations all over the world.

For these members using horizontally polarized antennas, the table below will help you attain better performance from your wire antenna. For these type antennas, the farther away from the ground they are, the better the results. Increasing your antenna's height will improve its low-angle performance. If you have a multi-band antenna, use the recommendation in the table for the lowest band that your antenna operates on.

If you are unable to achieve these minimum heights for your antenna, you will still get reliable performance with good band conditions. This table is provided for you in case you desire to increase performance and are able to raise your antenna higher. As us old timers say about wire antennas, "The higher, the better."

Minimum Recommended Heights of Horizontally Polarized Antennas	
Band	Minimum Height
10 meters	20 feet
12 meters	20 feet
15 meters	25 feet
17 meters	30 feet
20 meters	35 feet
30 meters	45 feet
40 meters	50 feet
80 meters	50 feet

ARRL Volunteers Obtain Ham Exemption to Pennsylvania Handsfree Law



ARRL volunteers in Pennsylvania have successfully protected the legal right to use amateur radio while operating mobile within the state. A handsfree distracted driving bill had worked its way through the legislature over the past several years, and ARRL Atlantic Division Director Bob Famiglio – K3RF, successfully advocated for an exemption for licensed radio amateurs. "The bill survived until just before the latest vote, which stripped out our exemption but left in exemptions for commercial drivers, including truck drivers, bus drivers, and public transportation [drivers]," he wrote in a message to ARRL members in Pennsylvania.

In April, the exemption was stripped from the bill, sending Pennsylvania hams into a state of worry. ARRL members in the state rallied, contacting their state legislators to explain the benefit that licensed operators provide to the state. The bill also was going to remove the ability for first responders, such as volunteer firefighters, to use radios in their personally owned vehicles. "Hundreds of emails then went out to legislators and such and back to me. We also helped our volunteer emergency responders who were in the same boat as us with radio use from their personal cars. Many members are also emergency responders as well, and they picked up on this too," said Famiglio.

Last week, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives voted in favor of accepting the bill with the exemption. The Senate passed it last summer. The bill is now on its way to Governor Josh Shapiro's desk, where he is expected to sign it. Mobile use of amateur radio will continue in Pennsylvania, thanks to ARRL advocacy and government relations carried out by member-volunteers.

Last month we covered powering an amateur mobile station, cabling, installation and arrangement of mobile station components and antennas. In our concluding article on HF Mobile Contesting, we will explore the logistics of this topic and how to be successful at logging, record keeping, and route planning.

HF MOBILE CONTESTING PART 2



By Don- K5DB

So, let's first take a look at logging for a contest in which you are competing or just casually participating in a contest or some other type of amateur radio competitive-type operation (ex: POTA activation). Again, let me reiterate that what I share with you is *what works for me*. It may not work for you, but this will give you a starting point.....

For state QSO party contest operation – as well as all the other major contests, for that matter – I personally use N3FJP logging software. I know N1MM is another very popular logging software, but I was first introduced to N3FJP over 15 years ago, got used to using it, so that's what I use. It is still very much available and going strong today. Just so you will be aware, N1MM is freeware and N3FJP has a one-time, lifetime registration fee. If you want more information on probably the two most popular programs, here are the links:

<https://n1mmwp.hamdocs.com/>

<https://www.n3fjp.com/>

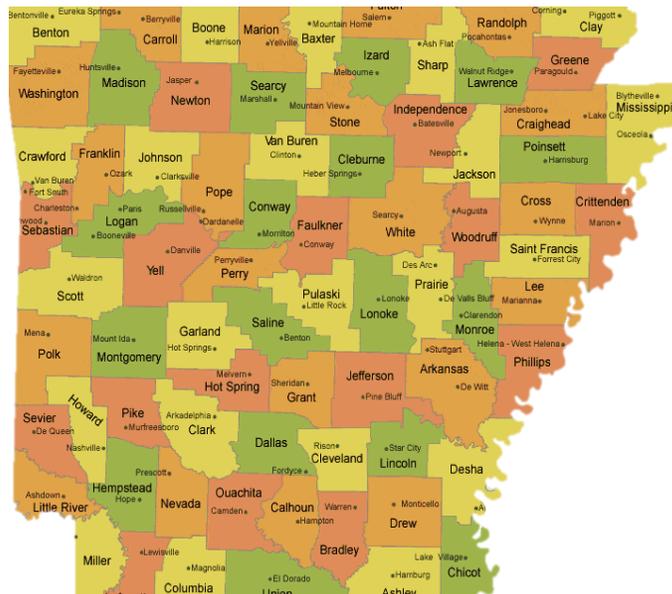
Since I am only familiar with N3FJP, I can advise you of these features: It has separate logging programs for most of the state QSO parties (including Arkansas!) and other major contests. You don't have to manually set parameters for a particular contest from a generic logging platform. You simply download the contest file package you need from his website, adjust your preferences, and you're ready to go. The scoring, county/state/DX list, etc. is already programmed into that particular contest's package.

Here is a screenshot, using the Arkansas QSO Party from the club's W5NX operation from last May near Millwood Lake in southwestern Arkansas as an example. There are other examples on the N3FJP website:

The screenshot displays the N3FJP's Arkansas QSO Party Contest Log 2.4.5 software. The main window is titled 'Recent Contacts' and shows a list of contacts with columns for Record Number, Call Sign, Station Type, Date/Time, Mode, Band, Received, County Received, Sent, and County Sent. A 'Score Statistics' panel on the right shows a total of 2,136 contacts, 2,136 QSO points, 64 multipliers, and a total score of 136,704. Below the contact list, there are buttons for 'Call', 'RSTr', 'SPC', 'AR Cnty', and 'RSTs'. A large cyan box in the center says 'Ready to begin! Please select your band and mode from the menu options!'. To the right, there are buttons for 'DX - 5', 'Cty Wkd - 15', 'Cty Rem - 60', and a grid of state abbreviations. At the bottom, the current band is set to 20 and the mode to CW. The call sign W5NX/P and the name Howard are displayed.

Again, you can operate mobile in many types of contests, but we will use the Arkansas QSO Party as the example of the event we're operating in.....

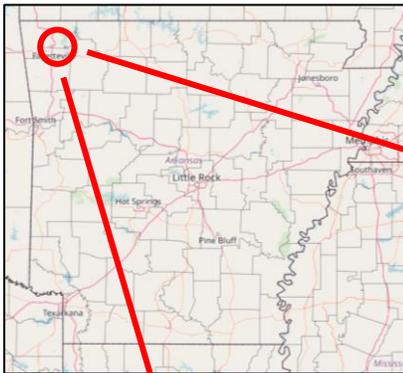
The logistics bottom line of efficient mobile contesting operation is your timetable. As I said before, I operate while stopped. During a QSO party, where are my stops? On county lines. At a minimum, I stop on a bi-county line which enables me to "give out" two counties at a time and also log two QSOs at a time per each station I work. But whenever and wherever possible, I stop on a tri-county line or even a quad-county line (they're tougher to find, but they're out there!). And when you activate another county line, you're in a different location, so you can work everybody again. I make each operation stop count as much as possible by putting-out as many counties as I can during a stop – more QSOs, more points.



The trick in amassing the maximum number of QSOs and counties that you activate lies in trip planning – how much time it will take to travel between stops and how much time spent at each stop. For example, I spend a little more time at a tri-county line than at a bi-county line because it takes more time to transmit the extra county abbreviations. Plus, you normally get bigger pileups calling you when the other stations know they're getting a "three-fer" or "four-fer" as opposed to a "two-fer", and that more than likely will result in having to remain at that stop a little longer than usual.

The way I plan and calculate all this is nothing brilliant, just common sense and "putting the pencil" to it.

First, I use an online map with county lines for all the United States superimposed on it (<https://mob-rule.com/gmap>). Let's use the Benton/Washington County Arkansas line as an example:



After zooming-in on the area you are interested in, you will see a red line. The red line is the county line. If you hover the mouse north of the line, you will see the name of the county – Benton – at the top of the screen. Likewise, if you hover the mouse south of the line, the map indicates this county's name is Washington.

I then construct the route I will take, crossing as many bi-county and multi-county lines per stop that I can find, and figuring-out where my start point and end point will be. As an example for the Arkansas QSO Party, I would be figuring a 12-hour run (the duration for that particular contest), counting all travel time between county line stops and time spent at each one. I calculate all this out, then document in a Word document, stop by stop, transit by transit. I use good ol' Google maps for this. I also compare the area I'm looking at on the county line map with the same area on Google maps and use the origin and destination designations that Google maps uses to program into my GPS. (The reason I have to use two maps instead of one is because Google maps does not show county lines, which I wish it did.)

Finally, I use Google maps Street View to take a screenshot of what the actual county line looks like on the road I am using, and crop and print that as a picture on an accompanying Word document that I use. We'll use the Benton/Washington county line on AR-112 just north of Elm Springs:



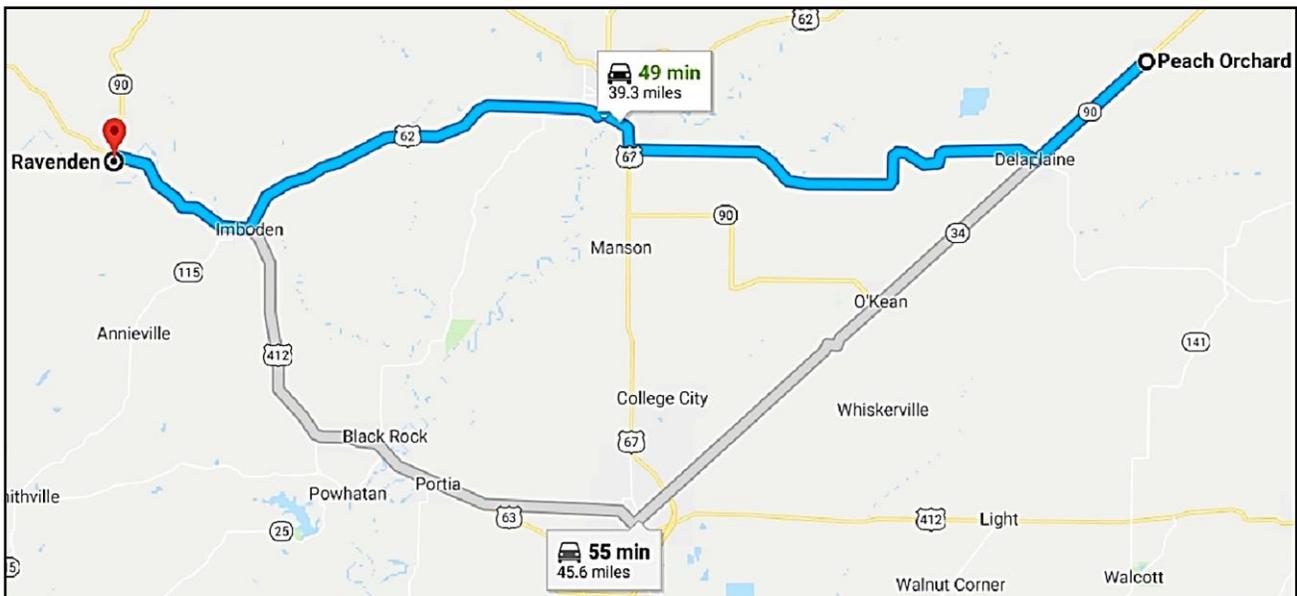
If there is a landmark (red barn, house, bridge, white pasture fence, etc.) before a county line, I also insert a note under the picture using that landmark to alert me (along with the GPS audio alert) that the line is just ahead, so that I can begin slowing down and not drive past it.

There is usually a road at the line, or pull off spot at or very near the line where I can stop and activate the counties.

After printing a screenshot of what all the county lines actually look like on the road, I print the document to take with me.

While preparing all this route plan at home, and while I'm still using Google maps, I then use the directions feature (altering the route if necessary) to use the Google maps origin and destination locations to enter into an Excel spreadsheet.

For example, I ran one of the Arkansas QSO Parties in northeastern Arkansas, proceeding west across the northern tier of Arkansas counties, ending my route at the Boone/Carroll County line. After completing my 4th stop on the Clay/Greene County line at Peach Orchard, AR, I was ready to proceed to Ravenden, AR where the tri-county line of Lawrence, Randolph, and Sharp counties is located. Here is the screenshot of the directions and shortest practical route to take between my starting and ending points (which many of you are familiar with):



I then proceed with these same steps from county line to county line, stop by stop. When I am finished with all stops, travel time, and time spent at each stop, I now have an Excel spreadsheet to keep me running pretty close to my timetable schedule, along with my county line “pictorial” Word document. Here’s an example of the spreadsheet:

START	STOP	LOCATION	TIME SPENT
1400	1445	CRITTENDEN / CROSS / ST. FRANCIS	45m
1445	1530	Travel: Heth, AR - Whitton, AR	45m
1530	1600	MISSISSIPPI / POINSETT	30m
1630	1700	Travel: Whitton, AR - Hancock Junction, AR	30m
1700	1730	CRAIGHEAD	30m
1730	1815	Travel: Hancock Jct - Near White Oak, AR	45m
1815	1845	CLAY / GREENE	30m
1845	2000	Travel: Near White Oak - Ravenden, AR	1hr 15m
2000	2045	LAWRENCE / RANDOLPH / SHARP	45m
2045	2130	Travel: Ravenden, AR - AR-289	45m
2130	2200	FULTON / IZARD	30m
2200	2300	Travel: Ravenden, AR - Gassville, AR	1hr
2300	2330	BAXTER / MARION	30m
2330	0015	Travel: Gassville, AR - US-65	45m
0015	0045	NEWTON / SEARCY	30m
0045	0130	Travel: US-65 - Alpena HS	45m
0130	0200	BOONE / CARROLL	30m
0200		HEAD HOME	

Using my spreadsheet, Word document pictures of the actual county line locations, and Google maps GPS, this has kept me running very close to the schedule I wish to run for that year, plus the counties I have planned on activating.

So, this is the method to my madness. It may not work for you, and you may come-up with a better plan or way to accomplish running mobile on time during a competitive ham radio event. – If you tackle this and arrive at a better or more efficient means, let me know! I’m always ready to learn something new!

Finally, when it comes to activating POTA parks, you can basically use this same method for that....you will just be spending more time at each park stop if you only wish to activate a few in a day, or of course less time if you want to active several in a day.

Of course, there’s nothing more fun than setting-up a portable station for POTA operation. You’re either in a tent, a camper trailer, or out with Mother Nature herself on a picnic table in the park with your portable station gear. But if you’re not interested in that aspect of setting up and tearing down for each POTA park, mobile operation is probably what you’ll want to consider. – Pull into the parking lot that is within the park boundaries, get your laptop out for logging, and go to it with whichever mode you like: Phone, CW, or FT8! Better yet, all of ‘em!

Apprehensive About CW? Don't Be!

BY DON – K5DB



For the November 2024, December 2024, January 2025, and February 2025 issues of The Signal, we are going to feature the “All About CW” series as a prelude to the 4th BVRC CW Academy. The class will be held every two weeks on Monday evenings beginning April 7 and running through August 11, 2025. We hope this series will encourage any interested BVRC members to enroll in the course and have an exciting time learning an age-old, but still very prominent, skill and mode to use in their amateur radio experience. If you decide you would like to join a beginner’s group and have a lot of fun (along with an element of challenge of course) interacting with other club members in learning the code, be sure and sign-up early as there are only 8 spots available for the course. Send an e-mail to Don-K5DB if you are interested in enrolling in BVRC CW Academy. Enrollment is now open until February 14, 2025. Keys and oscillators will be provided, free of charge.

In the meantime, enjoy this first of four special articles on learning and using CW.....

THE HISTORY

Morse code or “CW” (Continuous Wave) as it is called, was first used in 1844. This year in 2024, it celebrated its phenomenal 180th anniversary of existence.

In the earliest days of radio, Morse-coded signals were extremely crude, just buzzing noises that switched on and off. Because of the method used to create these signals, they were called *spark* transmissions. It is important to point out that these were not continuous waves; they were known as *damped waves*.

Starting around 1920, hams began using radios that could generate signals comprised of continuous waves – CW.

This innovative technology quickly proved to be vastly superior to spark. For instance, a CW signal could be heard at a much greater distance than a spark transmission. This was true for two reasons:

- The CW signal was extremely “narrow” with a bandwidth of only 50 Hertz or less. Unlike the damped waves of a spark station, its energy was highly concentrated at one frequency, rather than being spread over many frequencies.
- At the receiving end, the listener could use filtering techniques to block everything except the frequency the CW operator was using. This greatly reduced the effects of noise and interference. The signal could then be amplified and made louder, which made the CW signal much easier to understand.



CW IN THE PAST 25 YEARS

On April 15, 2000, in their Report and Order #99-412, the FCC restructured amateur radio licensing. There were several elements in the R&O, two of which were:

- 1) A reduction of the number of operator license classes from six to three. The Advanced Class, Technician Plus Class, and Novice Class licenses were deemed redundant and would no longer be issued. However, existing licensees would retain their operating privileges and be allowed to renew (or upgrade) their licenses, and
- 2) A reduction of the number of telegraphy examination elements from three to one. Both the 20 WPM (words-per-minute) and 13 WPM Morse code tests were removed in favor of a standardized 5 WPM as the sole CW requirement for both the General and Extra Class licenses.

In 2003, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) ratified changes to the radio regulations to allow each country to determine whether it would require a person seeking an amateur radio operator license to demonstrate the ability to send and receive CW. The effect of this revision was to eliminate the international requirement that a person demonstrate Morse code proficiency to qualify for an amateur radio operator license with transmitting privileges on frequencies below 30 MHz. With this change of international rules, the FCC announced on December 15, 2006 that it intended to adopt the ITU rule changes which would eliminate the Morse code examination requirement entirely for U.S. amateur operator licenses. Shortly thereafter, the effective date of the new rules was announced on February 23, 2007.



THE OUTCOME

When the FCC's history-making ruling was made to remove the code requirement to obtain a ham license, the ham internet forums and chat rooms went viral. Myriads of pros and cons as to the ruling being applicable/fair or not, jammed the internet by the thousands. Bigotry ensued. For example, when a person passed their Amateur Extra exam, some of the veteran Extra Class operators slandered and denigrated the new Extras by labeling them “Extra Lights” because they had not been required to pass the 20 wpm code element to acquire their Extra license.

I am proud to say I did not associate myself with these idiots. First, I realized that if the governing radio body of our country deemed that CW was no longer required to obtain a license, then that's the way it was, regardless of my feelings either way...end of story. Accept it. Second, I realized that as with anything else and the passage of time, things change – new modes were coming into existence, and the computer age was giving rise to a new breed of ham operators. Third, I was aware of the fact that even though CW had been removed from the requirements, that the THEORY exams still remained and these new hams had to (just as I did) study, calculate, and assimilate the areas of study needed to pass those exams. As a VE, I can assure you those exams are no less easy than the ones I passed. Indeed, the FCC increased the difficulty level of them somewhat. So in essence, with or without code, these persons could be very proud and gratified in passing the exam for whichever license class they attained. I am pleased to say that I have been present many times to see the look of gratification and success on their faces at many VE test sessions.

So, regardless of mine or anyone else's opinion on the issue, CW disappeared – *as far as the licensing requirement aspect was concerned.....*

THE PRESENT STATE OF CW

However, for those of you today who have received no-code licenses, I want to sincerely encourage you to learn and use CW – and I don't mean to use a code reader to receive it, and a software program to send it – **learn it for yourself** in addition to your other favorite modes, because...

CW is still alive and well on the ham bands!!!

If you don't believe me, just start tuning-up from the bottom of any band (3.500, 7.000, 14.000, etc.) during a CW contest weekend and you'll see that it is FAR, FAR, FAR from reaching the point of extinction.

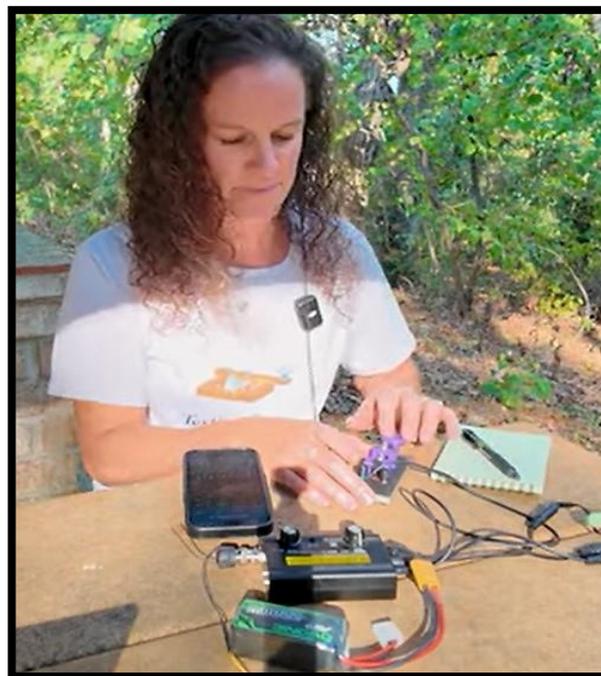
CW TODAY

Morse-coded CW operating – simply referred to as *CW operating* – as I previously stated, is 180 years old, but it still remains VERY popular. Despite all the digital technologies available to us today, CW is still highly effective for long-distance communication, even at low power levels.

CW is also spectrum efficient, and that's important in today's crowded bands. Like FT8, CW also has a narrow bandwidth enabling many CW conversations to take place within a small slice of the frequency spectrum. Think about it this way: Consider the 2,500-Hertz bandwidth required for just one single sideband (SSB) voice signal, whereas *dozens* of CW QSOs (conversations) could take place within that same bandwidth.

And CW has one more ace up its sleeve – it is the only non-voice communication mode that does not require a computer. You can send CW by using nothing more than a hand-operated switch (known as a *key or paddle*) to turn a transmitter on and off. When it's time to receive, a CW signal requires only your ears. In fact, the human brain has a remarkable ability to understand Morse code signals during poor band conditions that would be impossible for a computer to handle.

So as you can see from what I previously stated, CW may be old, but it is far from dead.



THE SPECIAL WORLD OF CW

I found this interesting list of reasons as to why CW is so special while browsing the internet recently. I'm not sure who the author is, but it's very deserving to be noted:

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



Moreover, for many non-English speaking amateurs, it is much easier to learn how to handle a basic CW QSO than it is to learn how to pronounce and speak English correctly! By not knowing or using CW, whether you realize it or not, you are literally cheating yourself out of an entire other realm of amateur radio that is really exciting.

But the foremost reason to get involved with CW, is that IT.....IS.....FUN.

In addition to really enjoying CW (and I do not go about "blowing my own horn" about it), I have the personal and private satisfaction of knowing that within myself I have a hidden talent that puts me in a select group of individuals that know and use a UNIQUE mode of communication that the bulk of the world's billions do not! About 5 years ago, for the first time, I added a digital mode to my ham radio regimen and began using FT8. Although CW is, has been, and always will be my first love in ham radio modes, I have had a lot of fun and excitement with FT8. I am glad I made the decision to broaden my interests and learn something new.

So.....If I can get excited about something new to me such as the digital modes, how about you giving CW a try? I promise you, if you will earnestly strive to learn CW and use it faithfully in your ham radio experience, it doesn't matter how old CW is, YOU WILL BECOME HOOKED!!!

Now, you might be saying, "I hear what you're saying, but I just don't think I could ever learn CW. It's just too difficult."

Is it? Have you tried learning only a handful of letters to come to that conclusion and given up? If that's the case, you haven't given it a fair chance.

And, of course it takes time and effort to learn code, but then again – doesn't anything worthwhile in life require effort? Now it's true, you will not switch your rig on when you complete your learning of CW and feel at ease about making QSOs at first. You'll be slow and clumsy.....JUST LIKE ME AND EVERYONE ELSE THAT HAS STARTED-OUT!!!! (We'll talk more about on-air beginning CW operation later in this article.)

However, most people greatly over-estimate the amount of effort required to learn CW. After you earnestly learn your first 5-10 characters you'll be hungry for more.

“OK, THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHING TO THIS...SO HOW DO I GET STARTED?”

First, find you a good online CW teaching course. There are many out there that you can use. Or...enroll in BVRC's annual CW Academy. Or both. (In 1969, I attended a live class and I think that accelerated me in learning the code faster than anything. For me personally, I did better in a classroom group atmosphere because I was having to make an effort to spend time attending class with other beginners.)

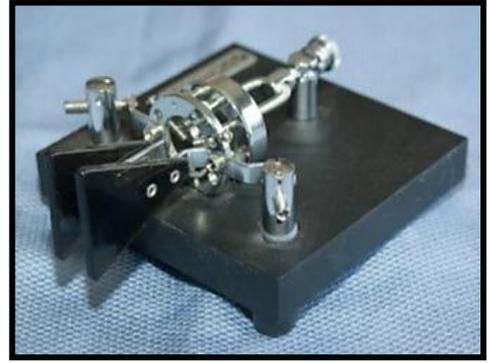


Then, purchase (or borrow from someone who has one if you can) a code oscillator and a straight key, or a combination unit. Don't become aggravated with the “buzzing” of the oscillator. Yes, they sound cheap, but you're learning code...you're not attempting to hear the code characters through theatre quality surround-sound digital Dolby.

And notice that when you first begin to learn code, the tool you use with the oscillator is a **STRAIGHT KEY**...not a paddle...a **STRAIGHT KEY**. Not only are you learning how to COPY code, you're also learning how to SEND it. Beginning with a straight key will develop the fundamentals of your properly sending and forming the dots and dashes correctly. After you master the straight key, you can later move up to your “graduation present” – the paddle.



Using a paddle is a skill in its own rite, and while you'll certainly want to learn how to use one sometime – especially if you do a lot of casual contacts or contesting – it's best to leave it alone until you're comfortable with the mode. *Learn with a straight key first.*



DEVELOP A CODE LEARNING METHOD

If you choose to attend our CW Academy that begins each year in April, you won't have to worry about this...our CW classes already have a learning method and curriculum for you.

If you decide to learn on your own, find a good online code course and follow the methods set forth in the course. Or perhaps if it is more attractive to you, you can use the method I used in 1969:

Learn about 3-4 letters, 1 number, and 1 punctuation mark every two weeks. (The more commonly used punctuation marks are period, comma, question mark, hyphen (or "break"), and forward slash.) As for the numbers, you can learn those without much problem. Numbers are the easiest and fastest to learn, in my opinion.

However..... ***DO NOT learn the letters in alphabetical order!*** Mix them up. They're going to be mixed up when you're copying them during a QSO anyway, so you might as well mix them up while you're learning them. For example, in your first week, learn K, S, and Z. In the second week, learn B, R, and V, etc.



Try to spend 30 minutes to an hour each night at home and in the quiet with your oscillator, and send to yourself the characters you are learning for that week (use headphones if your oscillator is equipped with a headphone jack or terminal...if not, do the best you can to not annoy family members while you're practicing). Then begin combining them with the characters you have learned in the previous weeks.

"Don, that sounds interesting from the sending aspect, but what about learning how to copy code?" Hang on.....we're getting to that.

Learn all the characters at a slow and easy pace as described in the preceding paragraph. If you get impatient or falsely overconfident and try to learn 10 characters a week and “knock this out and have my code speed up to 15 words per minute in 3 weeks”, you’ll become frustrated and discouraged.

The more you practice *sending to yourself*, the more your forming the characters with your straight key will improve, and also the better you will be able to copy because you’re hearing the characters more and more as you practice sending them to yourself. In learning Morse code, sending and receiving work hand-in-hand. This learning experience differs with each individual, of course. But as a general rule, in about 3-4 months you’ll be amazed as you realize that you’ve enabled yourself to at least send and receive, with a fairly decent degree of efficiency, ALL of the characters!

And, about the copying aspect. – Learning code is like learning a foreign language – the best way is to learn THE LANGUAGE...not the converting of everything from English. If you’re learning Spanish, the correct way is to bypass converting everything from English to Spanish and vice versa. Skip the conversion process, and train yourself to think and speak ONLY in Spanish.



It’s the same way with code. You can regard CW as a “language” in itself. So, when you hear “dah-dit-dah” come through the speaker, you don’t say to yourself, “Uh...ok...that was a dash, a dot, and another dash...that’s a ‘K’”. – WRONG!

You go by the way the character *SOUNDS*...not dots and dashes. Train yourself to *THE SOUND*. When you hear “dit-dit-dah-dit”, your mind immediately shouts “F”! No converting. THINK in the “Language of Code”.

This is basically the self-taught method I used, along with attending code class, when I passed my 5 WPM Novice code test in 1969 (no online courses back then!) when I was 13. I was so captivated and fascinated by CW at that time, I achieved my General ticket a year-and-a-half later in 1971, passing the 13 wpm CW and written exams. But even though I was now licensed to use the microphone, I still used CW much more than SSB. With all due respects to phone operation (yes, I still operate phone and enjoy it very much), on CW I was working more U.S. States and DX and having more fun than I’d ever had on phone. In 1972, I was certified by the ARRL in code proficiency at 35 WPM. – AND IF I CAN DO IT, YOU CAN TOO!.....ABSOLUTELY!

Again, everyone is unique and learns differently, of course.

Now, let’s quickly examine the potentially negative side of learning CW. We’ll call it potential, because if you’ll approach learning CW properly and with a positive, never-say-die attitude, you won’t have any major problems.

However, if after about 3 months, you aren't making the progress like you think you should be, DON'T GIVE UP!!! There are two possibilities if you're encountering problems:

- 1) Your learning method might not suit you - seek advice from experienced CW operators. If someone is helping you, see if they know someone with a different style of teaching and using CW, who might be more attuned to how you learn. Again, we all learn differently.
- 2) You might simply lack confidence – this is common! If you are copying basic QSOs but don't feel your CW is up to par, you are almost certainly wrong!!! Get yourself on the bands, have a QSO or two, and eventually you'll begin to believe! It's like jumping into the ocean - once you get in, the water's fine.

ON THE AIR WITH CW

In years past when CW was required to acquire a ham license, it used to be taught to ensure people passed the 13 or 20 WPM exams solely for the purpose of gaining access to SSB on the HF bands. This is rather a pity. – CW should be taught to help people use it on the air. As some of you reading this will already have access to HF without CW, **that's exactly how you should use it.**

Before you're ready to actually take the plunge and make your first CW contact, find places where you can copy CW repeatedly. Your local repeater is a good place to start as well as contests. You will hear the same things over and over again, and you will now hear CW in a different way as you actually listen to the signals through the radio, instead of that trusty little oscillator you started with. And!.....one of the best ways to get ready to make your first 'official' CW contact with someone you do not know, is to ask one of the veteran CW operators in the club to conduct a few practice on-air QSOs with you. Most of them will be happy to help.

And just about the best way to get free, on-the-air code practice copying is tuning-in to the W1AW code practice runs. W1AW was my mainstay when I was learning the code and is still going strong. You can find the W1AW code practice schedule in any issue of QST, or on the ARRL website by clicking [here](#). W1AW transmits its code practice runs simultaneously on all the main bands. So no matter what time of day or what time of year, you usually can find a frequency that will accommodate you with a good signal to copy from. This is one of the biggest learning aids that I laud the ARRL for. W1AW has been faithful with these code practice sessions for decades, and has helped thousands of amateurs in attaining their abilities in using CW. You can also listen to W1AW on your computer any time you want and at different speeds by using the W1AW .mp3 archive files from the ARRL website: <http://www.arrl.org/code-practice-files>.

If you're randomly listening on the air, find stations calling CQ - they will repeat their callsigns over and over again. Find slower stations on the bands and copy what you can - don't worry if you don't copy 100%. They will repeat their names and locations at least once. There's nothing like listening to code to whet your appetite to use it.



And.....here's the real BEAUTY of CW: The first time you hear that DX station tapping out a "CQ" on 20 meters long after the SSB portion of the band has closed, and all you hear are scratchy sounds and carrier waves, you'll know what I mean!

"BUT I STILL MAKE A LOT OF MISTAKES!"

DON'T WORRY ABOUT THIS AT ALL!!!!!! Don't burden yourself with this. – CW operators understand what it's like at the beginning. We've all been there, and we all still make mistakes. Get you a tall, cold glass of sweet tea, plop right back down in front of your rig, and pound-out that CW QSO!

"HOW FAST DO I NEED TO BE ABLE TO COPY CW TO GET ON THE BANDS?"

5 words per minute is fine to start with. If the other station is too fast for you, simply ask them to "QRS QRS PSE I AM A NEW CW OP", which is CW shorthand for "PLEASE SEND SLOWER I AM A NEW CW OPERATOR". (QRS is the Q-signal for "please send slower.")

Also, here's a very important tip in helping you get started on the air:

Start making your first CW contacts on "FISTS" frequencies. FISTS operators are some of the finest, nicest people you'll meet on the air. FISTS has been around for quite some time now, and have their own website. Please, check this one out...it WILL help you!: <http://fists.org>.



Another excellent group that you could get started with and learn from is the Straight Key Century Club. They have events and activities that tailor to your current copying speed. Here's their web address: <https://www.skccgroup.com/>.

Believe it or not, once you are on the air, your speed will improve dramatically and without any special effort. If you are making QSOs at 5 wpm, most people find their speed improves just by being on the air and having fun until they hit the next plateau, around the 12-25 wpm mark.

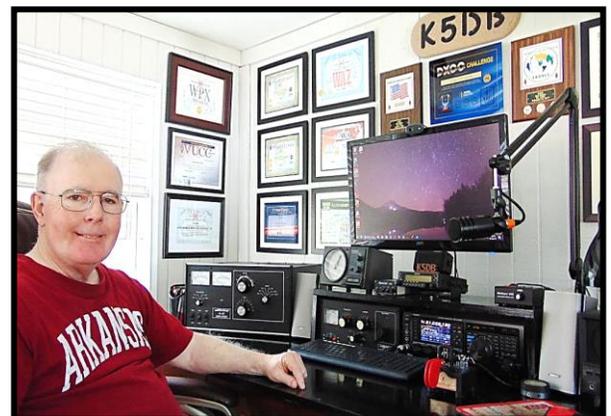
This is for real, folks. I'm not making this up. It WILL happen and it works.

AND FINALLY.....

I hope that this first installment of our "All About CW" series will stir a desire in you (as it did me many decades ago) that will propel you into becoming a successful CW operator. And again, I can't stress this enough to you.....CW IS FUN.

Yes, CW has been around a long, long time. So has the United States Constitution. Neither is obsolete. Stay calm, relax, listen to those signals intently, and don't fear that first CW QSO. Once you clear that hurdle, the path to CW ham radio fun will be wide open for you.

I know – I've experienced that fun for over 55 years.



CW OPERATORS NEEDED FOR ARRL SWEEPSTAKES CLUB COMPETITION



Once again in 2024, Bella Vista area Radio Club will be submitting individual BVRC member CW Sweepstakes scores into a cumulative club score entry for BVRC.

The annual ARRL Sweepstakes is the 2nd largest amateur radio contest in North America (Field Day being the largest). It is so large that the modes of CW and SSB have their own weekends of operation. CW Sweepstakes takes place during the first full weekend in November, and CW Phone (SSB) occurs during the third weekend in November.

All interested experienced operators are asked to participate in the CW Sweepstakes and help BVRC submit a good club score.

If you intend on operating this year's CW Sweeps, combining your personal score with BVRC's aggregate score would be GREATLY appreciated! When you submit your score via the ARRL contest portal, simply list BVRC as your affiliated club.

The ARRL CW Sweepstakes will be held this year from:
2100 UTC Saturday, Nov. 2 – 0259 UTC Monday, Nov. 4.

If you are planning on operating the 2024 ARRL CW Sweepstakes, please contact Chuck – KM5G at: korzendorferc@gmail.com by Oct. 15, so that you're callsign can be recorded and submitted to ARRL as a participating club member per the Sweepstakes submission rules.

Thanks in advance for your help!



If you’ve ever been tuning around the ham bands on a weekend and heard some urgent-sounding transmissions saying, “CQ contest, CQ contest,” then you’ve stumbled across one of the many competitive on-air events that may be going on at any given time. Competitive ham radio, also known as *radiosport* or *contesting* (with the accent on the first syllable of ‘contesting’), is a popular sub-hobby within amateur radio. The pace of contests is usually fast and exhilarating. For participants who are hitting the event hard, an on-air contest can require as much stamina, technique, and strategy as other, more traditional sports, but even hams who describe themselves as “casual testers” agree that a less-intense venture into a contest can be fun and rewarding. Here’s a little more about the fascinating world of competitive radio.....

An on-air contest generally involves individuals or teams of operators trying to make contact with as many other participating stations as possible over a specified period. A contest can be short, lasting only a few hours (these are sometimes called *sprints*), or it can be a longer event that lasts 24 to 48 hours. Contests are sponsored by IARU societies such as ARRL, as well as by ham radio clubs or organizations. This leads to there being a variety of contest opportunities available. In fact, you can usually find some kind of contest activity – whether it’s a longer contest or QSO party, or a shorter sprint-type event – pretty much any week of the year. A couple of good places to find information about contests are the ARRL Contest Calendar at <https://www.arrl.org/contest-calendar> and the WA7BNM Contest Calendar at <https://www.contestcalendar.com/>.

These websites will provide you with a list of events, as well as links to the rules for a specific contest.

Radiosport Is For Everyone

You don’t have to have an elaborate station or be able to put-in an entire weekend of operating time in order to have fun with radiosport. Even if you are a casual operator, the more serious players need every contact they can get, so get on the air and make some contacts. Many hams like the challenge of trying to beat their score from the previous

2024				October		
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

year, or establish a new personal best in terms of time on the air, or number of contacts made in 1 hour. there are many approaches to radiosport and all of them can be fun!

The Rules Of The Game

Each contest has its own set of rules that define the contest objectives,



so it's important to read the rules before jumping into a contest. The rules let you know which amateur bands you can use for the event. Some contests focus on only one band, while others still specify the use of several bands, as well as what mode or modes. Some contests are limited to a single mode, such as the ARRL November Sweepstakes CW and ARRL November Sweepstakes Phone, while others allow use of multiple modes.

A contest's rules include information about time – not only the start and stop times of the contest, but also any time limits. Some contests require you to take breaks from operating. For example, the ARRL Sweepstakes CW and Phone contests occur on the first and third weekends in November, respectively. Each weekend is devoted to either CW only or Phone only. The both last 30 hours, but you can only operate a maximum of 24 of the 30 hours.

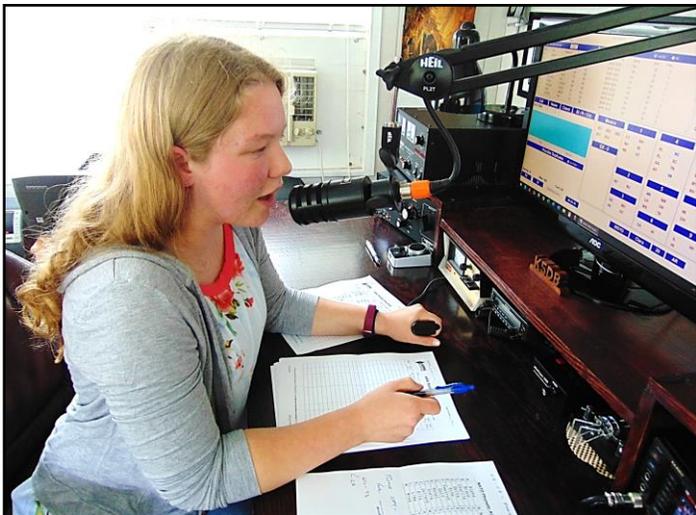
Other contest parameters include the maximum amount of power output allowed, whether it's okay to use spotting tools (such as websites like dxsummit.fi, where stations that are currently on the air are listed, or *spotted*), where to send your log for checking and scoring, and more.

The rules will also give details about the all-important *exchange* – the information that one station must give to another in order for the contact to be considered complete and counted for the contest.



Making The Exchange

Exchange information varies from contest to contest. An exchange can include several pieces of information, which can include your name, a sequential serial number, things pertaining to your location (state, province, ARRL section, geographic zone, grid square indicator) or other elements.



Let's use an example a typical contest exchange. In this example, W1AW is soliciting contacts in a contest where the exchange is a signal report and the station's ARRL section. W1AW is in Connecticut and W3VRX is in Eastern Pennsylvania. Here is how the exchange would sound when using voice mode:

"CQ contest, CQ contest, Whiskey-One-Alpha-Whiskey, contest." (W1AW is calling CQ asking for a reply from any station participating in the contest.)

"Whiskey-Three-Vector-Romeo-Xray" (W3VRX

responds to W1AW's CQ by sending his call sign once, phonetically. No other information is required at this point.

"Whiskey-Three-Vector-Romeo-Xray, Five Nine, Connecticut...that's Charlie-Tango." (W1AW sends W3VRX the contest exchange – the signal report 59, and their ARRL Section which is Connecticut. Or they could have also use the format, "You are 59 Charlie-Tango.")

“QSL. Five Nine, Echo Papa Alpha.” (W3VRX confirms receipt of W1AW’s information by saying “QSL”, and then sends his information back – the signal report 59, and since he is in the Eastern Pennsylvania ARRL section, which is designated EPA, he sends “Echo Papa Alpha” which is EPA in phonetics.)

“QSL, thanks and good luck! (or “73”) Whiskey-One-Alpha-Whiskey, QRZed.” (W1AW confirms W3VRX’s exchange by saying 73 or QSL and then saying QRZed to indicate that they are now listening for new stations.



As you can see, the communications are brief and to the point. In a contest, participants are racing to see who can make the most contacts, so it’s important to be quick, economical, and concise. Also, it is best to stick with the standard phonetic alphabet – making up your own phonetics can be confusing to others, leading them to ask you to repeat your exchange, which wastes valuable time.

It’s important for both stations in a contact to copy the exchange correctly. If some of the information is missed or logged incorrectly, it can affect your score.

Teaming-Up Or Going It Alone

Many hams participate in contests on their own, as a *single operator*, which means they perform all the operating and logging functions themselves. It’s also possible to participate in contests as a *multi-operator team*, which can range from just two operators to a couple of dozen of operators who work in shifts. Single operators and teams may enter a contest in one of several categories, based on their transmitted power and whether they are assisted by operating aids. Ham radio clubs with an interest in contesting will often participate as a club, combining the scores from individual members and teams of club members to arrive at an aggregate score for the club. To keep things on a level playing field, clubs are categorized by size.



Rec	# S	# R	Pre	Call	Check	Sec	Date / Time	Bnd	Mode	Operator
1011	1011	66	A	NBKT	71	SCV	11/20 02:48	40	PH	
1010	1010	199	A	AC3BO	17	EPA	11/20 02:46	40	PH	
1009	1009	8	A	K8CWC	63	OH	11/20 02:44	40	PH	
1008	1008	95	U	N2JJE	69	SNJ	11/20 02:43	40	PH	
1007	1007	239	A	W5AAF	68	SB	11/20 02:41	40	PH	
1006	1006	143	B	K1MMK	16	CT	11/20 02:40	40	PH	
1005	1005	129	U	W5GN	55	NTX	11/20 02:40	40	PH	
1004	1004	652	B	K4BAI	54	GA	11/20 02:38	40	PH	

Call	#	Pre	Ch	Section
CT	RI	DE	MDC	1
EMA	VT	EPA	WPA	3
ME	WMA			4
NH				2
ENY	NNY			5
NLI	SNJ	NFL	VI	7
NNJ	WNY	PR	WCP	0

Call	#	Pre	Ch	Section
AR	NTX	AK	NV	CO
LA	OK	AZ	OR	IA
MS	STX	EWA	UT	KS
NM	WTX	ID	WVA	MN
		MT	WY	ND
				NE
				SO
				Canada
				AB
				BC
				ON
				GH
				ONS
				MB
				PE
				NB
				QC
				NL
				SK
				NS
				TER

Band	Score
Total Contacts	1,011
Sections Worked	85
Sections Remaining	0
Total Score	171,870
QSOs / Hr (Last 20 min)	0
QSOs / Hr (Last 60 min)	0

Call	#	Pre	Ch	Section
1012	M	WSNX	20	AR

Keeping Score

After a contest, participants upload their logs to the sponsor’s website. Most events require that logs be sent within 7 days of the contest’s conclusion but this can vary, so check the contest’s rules. If you use logging software, this eliminates the need to check for duplicate contacts (which do not count) or calculate your score. The software will do this for you, so you can export the log file and upload it to the

sponsor's web portal or e-mail. Contest sponsors also use software to score the results. Most contests have different categories, so awards (which are often in the forms of plaques and certificates) may be issued based on an entrant's category or geographic region. There is no requirement to submit your log, however. It's perfectly fine to jump into a contest and make a few contacts just for fun. (Just make sure you know what the exchange for that contest is, if you decide to do this.) After all, fun is what radiosport is all about!

The Contest/Radiosport Dictionary

* * * * *

Q's

QSOs or contacts made in a contest.

QSOs

Contacts made in a contest.

QSO Points

A point value assigned to contacts in a contest. Depending on the contest, some contacts could have a higher point value. (Ex: SSB-1, CW-2, Digital-3)

Mults

Short for multipliers. Multiplier contacts are added-up, then multiplied by your total points to achieve a score.

Score

The total score for a contest is usually tabulated as the total QSO points, times the total multipliers, plus any bonus points.

Dupes

Duplicate contacts. In a contest, a station may only be contacted once, so a duplicate contact does not count.

Unique

A legitimate call sign in your log that does not appear in any other entrants' logs that have been submitted. Participants are generally not penalized for these contacts, however, a log heavy with unique calls will attract scrutiny from the contest committee.

Busted Call

A call sign that was not copied and logged correctly. Participants are generally penalized for these contacts.

NIL

"Not In Log". This is a call sign that's in your log, but does not appear in the log of your QSO partner. Participants are generally penalized for these contacts.

Rate

The number of QSOs made in a period of time.

THE DXCC DEN



By Don – K5DB

This month's featured country:



Malpelo Island

Primary Callsign Prefix: HKØ

For November, our DXCC travels bring us back to our own Western Hemisphere to explore the rugged and barren Malpelo Island. Malpelo is a small oceanic island in the eastern Pacific Ocean, located about 310 miles west of the Colombian mainland with a military post staffed by the Colombian armed forces. It consists of a sheer and barren rock with three high peaks, the highest being the 980-foot Cerro de la Mona. The island is about 1 mile in length from northeast to southwest, 700 yards across at its widest. It is the only island that rises above the surface from the Malpelo Ridge, which is a solitary volcanic submarine ridge that extends in a northeast-southwest direction for 190 miles.



Location of Malpelo Island

Other than a small Colombian military installation, the island is uninhabited. Malpelo Island is classified as a wildlife Sanctuary (Sanctuario de Flora y Fauna) by the Colombian national park authorities, and has the UNESCO status of a world natural heritage.

The exact date of Malpelo's discovery is unclear, although it may have been the first of the remote eastern Pacific islands to have been discovered by Europeans, as it

appears on Peruvian maps from as early as 1530. Malpelo became a possession of Spain following its discovery, and was subsequently annexed by Peru, and later Colombia.

At first glance, the island seems to be barren rock, devoid of all vegetation, but deposits of bird guano have helped colonies of algae, lichens, mosses, and some shrubs and ferns to establish, all of which glean nutrients from the guano. Lizards are the only non-avian vertebrates on the island. It is also home to a unique species of land crabs, *Johngarthia malpilensis*, first described in 1893.

The creature with the largest population on the island does not exist on it, but in the ocean around it – Hammerhead sharks. Malpelo is the home of a unique shark population. Swarms of 500 Hammerhead sharks and hundreds of Silky sharks are frequently seen by diving expeditions, making it a very popular shark-diving location.



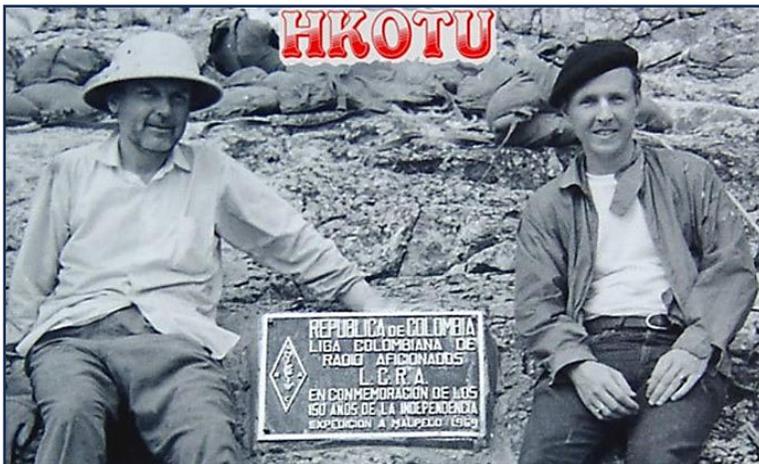
One of Malpelo's resident Nazca Booby birds



Small group of Malpelo Hammerheads

Even though there have been several DXpeditions to the island in past decades, the last one – HKØNA – was in 2012, 12 years ago. (BVRC member San Hutson – K5YY was on the HKØNA team.) Since that time, Malpelo has risen to a Top 50 member of the Club Log DXCC Most Wanted List, recently ranking at #37.

We have mentioned in previous DXCC DEN articles that most people have no conception of what it sometimes takes to get a DXpedition station on the air. Sometimes scenarios to these out-of-the-way and rare entities result in near life threatening situations. Malpelo was no exception for the HKØNA team in getting to a higher level of this virtually barren rock in the Pacific Ocean, which was of course a better antenna and station location. Watch this YouTube video and you will see why. After running a test QSO from the top of the island, the pileup was instant. Click [here](#).



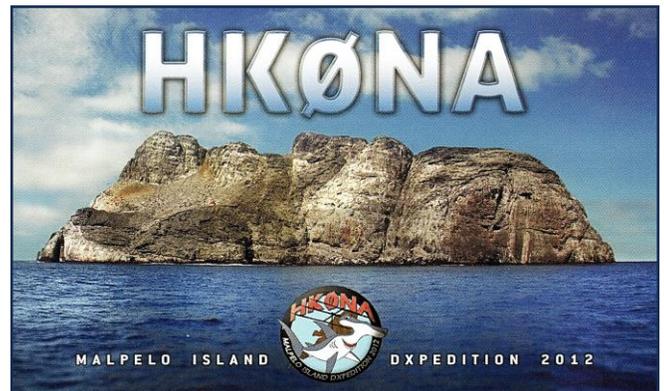
In 1969, the Radio Club of Colombia conducted a DXpedition to Malpelo while at the same time installing a plaque on the island celebrating 150 years of independence.

(Bob Dennison-WØDX and Don Blankenship HKØ/K6JGS)



Jutting rocks surrounding Malpelo

In years past Malpelo Island has been host to DXpeditions HKØTU in 1961, 1969, 1977, and 1990, HKØ/I2RAO in 1994, HKØ/HK3JJH in 2001, and HKØNA in 2012.



My QSL from the 2012 DXpedition

In case you haven't worked Malpelo Island and might be wondering when the next DXpedition to it occurs, the Colombian League of Radio Amateurs (HK3LR) and its Board of Directors has announced its main goal – to stage a DXpedition to Malpelo island, HKØ. There is hope for a February 2026 activity, but this is not yet confirmed. Watch your DX websites for more info in the future, including what the call sign will be.

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