

# THE SIGNAL



*Newsletter of the*

*Bella Vista area Radio Club*

***Arkansas' Largest Amateur Radio Club***



- January Program – “Living the POTA Life”
- DXCC Processing Update
- ★ **ANNOUNCING NEW SIGNAL DEPARTMENT:  
Experimenter’s Corner**
- 2025 Rookie Roundup Forming Now
- Storm Spotting Classes Now In Session
- Twelve Days of Christmas Event Summary
- CW Series #4 of 4 –  
The Top 10 Reasons To Try Morse Code
- Major Amateur Radio Enforcement Story
- Becoming A Ham Radio Master
- DXCC DEN: Djibouti

**February 2025**

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**  
 (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](http://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, February 6, 2025 @ 7pm  
Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy  
3424 S. Downum Road  
Springdale, AR

## February Meeting Information

HAM 101 Workshop, 6pm preceding monthly meeting – Signal editor Don Banta – K5DB will host this month's workshop with the topic "Special Event Stations". This will be a repeat presentation of a couple of years ago, for all our recent new members to the club and hobby. Special Event Stations are an integral and extremely fun part of amateur radio HF operation. If you don't know that much about them or missed the previous presentation, join us for all the information.

BVRC February meeting, 7pm – For our February meeting, BVRC welcomes back Joel Harrison – W5ZN from Searcy, Arkansas. Joel spoke to us a year ago for our February 2024 meeting, and says he's very excited to see us again! Joel says he has a very good time when he visits northwest Arkansas and speaking to BVRC makes it that much better. Joel is Past President of ARRL, current President of the Arkansas DX Association, and current Secretary of the IARU – the International Amateur Radio Union. Speaking of the IARU, do you know what it is? Do you know why it exists? Joel will answer those questions and more with his presentation "The International Amateur Radio Union – Keeping Amateur Radio On The Air For Over 100 Years". Don't miss Joel's program as he always provides top-notch information and a first class program, no matter what his topic.

**SEE YOU THEN!**





## **BOARD MEMBERS**

### ***PRESIDENT***

Jan Hagan – WB5JAN  
[ianhagan51@gmail.com](mailto:ianhagan51@gmail.com)

### ***VICE PRESIDENT***

Joe Hott – W5AEN  
[joe.hott@gmail.com](mailto:joe.hott@gmail.com)

### ***SECRETARY***

Dana Hill – W5DGH  
[dana.hill1979@gmail.com](mailto:dana.hill1979@gmail.com)

### ***TREASURER***

Marc Whittlesey - WØKYZ  
[almarc11@yahoo.com](mailto:almarc11@yahoo.com)

### ***TECHNICAL OFFICER***

Tem Moore – N5KWL  
[temmoore@gmail.com](mailto:temmoore@gmail.com)

### ***NSBVA TRUSTEE***

Roger Dickey – KJ4QIS  
[dickeyr@gmail.com](mailto:dickeyr@gmail.com)

### ***BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE & PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER***

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

## **APPOINTED OFFICERS**

### ***VE TESTING COMMITTEE***

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

### ***EDUCATION & 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@arrl.net](mailto:w5xna@arrl.net)

### ***SOCIAL MEDIA COMMITTEE***

Chair: Alex Smith – KI5EQK  
[ki5eqk@gmail.com](mailto:ki5eqk@gmail.com)

### ***WEBMASTER***

Roger Dickey – KJ4QIS  
[dickeyr@gmail.com](mailto:dickeyr@gmail.com)

### ***NEWSLETTER EDITOR***

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



## From The Desk of The President

These past few weeks I have had the opportunity to travel through six states during my recent trip to San Diego to visit our children for the holidays and reconnect with our Southern California friends.

Of course, taking a road trip like this allowed me to bring along my Parks On The Air portable station set up so that I could activate several parks and get on the air during our journey.

The experiences I had operating away from home and out in public spaces confirmed the experience I had activating parks closer to home ... people in general are very interested and curious about how amateur radio works and existing licensed amateurs are always interested in saying hello and sharing information about their stations, their experiences on the air, and the joy our hobby brings into their lives.

On the road I've met young, newly licensed amateurs, retired men and women who discovered our hobby in retirement and several husband-and-wife couples of all ages who enjoy our hobby in conjunction with other interests such as camping, off roading, hiking, biking and other outdoor adventures. In talking with amateur radio enthusiasts across the country I have come to realize that the culture of enthusiasm, wonder and joy in communicating with others without the need of modern infrastructure is something we amateurs all share wherever they live in our wonderful country.

Yes, the same open fellowship we experience here in our Northwest Arkansas region, becomes very evident when visiting with other amateurs on a road trip across the states.

I've come to realize that our hobby is about more than just the technology that fascinates us. In addition to the satisfaction that working with our radios, antennas and other technology brings to us, our hobby is also about the joy of sharing our hobby's successes, challenges and achievements with fellow amateurs.

You only need to spend a few weeks on the road meeting amateurs across the country to confirm what we already know. – We enjoy one of the best hobbies in the world!

73, Jan – WB5JAN



# BVRC Kicks-Off 2025 With Excellent POTA Activator Program



Bella Vista area Radio Club got off to a stellar start for 2025 with its great attendance and great program for the January meeting. The house was packed as Robert Hill – K5NZV gave members an excellent program on activating parks for the Parks On The Air (POTA) program. Robert's presentation was titled "Living the POTA Life".



Robert, along with his XYL – BVRC Secretary Dana, W5DGH – are BVRC's leading members in Parks On The Air operation. They have 142 total activations at 58 unique parks in 13 states with over 5,800 QSOs, and are constantly increasing those numbers. Robert's program contained information about the POTA program, as well as tips on conducting a successful POTA activation.

The POTA movement began in the United States. It was originally founded on September 15, 2010 to encourage ham radio operators to operate their equipment from national, state and provincial parks. It generated enough interest to cause the ARRL to host a one-year program called National Parks On The Air (NPOTA) in 2016 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park System. A nonprofit organization was founded in 2018 to continue POTA on a permanent basis, since then it has been a popular method of community and student outreach, with events taking place both in parks and sometimes at other public events. The organization has now expanded worldwide and activity from the program is continuous, 24 hours a day.

Robert's presentation contained a large amount of valuable information on activating a park. Some of the main points of Robert's program were:

There are two ways to participate in POTA:

- HUNTER – Working (chasing) parks from a fixed station or home domicile.
- ACTIVATOR – Traveling to parks listed in the POTA database and operating portable or mobile from them, giving POTA hunters the opportunity to work a given park and add it to their list of parks worked (contacted).

As an Activator, any mode will work for POTA as long as you can call "CQ" and it's not automated. (SSB, CW, FT8, AM, FM, Satellite, etc.). Repeater operation is not allowed except through amateur satellites.



**Robert – K5NZV**

Robert then brought-up one of the main features of the POTA program, which indeed is a great feature and very handy for POTA hunters. – Yes, you can (and probably should) keep your own personal POTA log of stations and parks worked. However, as a Hunter, you do not have to worry about submitting your log to attain confirmation and credit for working the various parks. The responsibility of confirming a park that you have worked rests on the shoulders of the *Activator*. After an activator completes an activation, they are expected to – within a reasonable amount of time – submit their log to the POTA organization. That log will then be entered into the POTA database, which keeps up with over 500,000 hunter's records. Your own personal Hunter record can be viewed on the POTA website whenever you desire. *You will have to create a POTA account to view your record, statistics, and any awards that you have acquired.* You can then download and print your award(s) for your shack wall if you so desire. It is a remarkable database.



Robert said if you are operating as a Hunter from a fixed station, there are three simple rules you need to follow:

- 1) Follow the law.
- 2) Follow the DX Code of Conduct (click [here](#))
- 3) Follow the Golden Rule

Robert also said another plus to participating in the POTA program is that you can use whatever type equipment you have. It requires no special gear.

He then said if you are operating as an Activator, follow the three rules above plus:

- 4) Leave no trace of your presence when you leave the park
- 5) Follow any instructions from park rangers that you meet
- 6) Be courteous of the public space you're using
- 7) You must have a POTA account



Here are additional important points from Robert's program if you wish to be a POTA activator:

- To receive credit for a park activation, you must complete at least 10 contacts. If for some reason you cannot complete the minimum 10 contacts required, you are still expected to submit your activation log for that park, so that the Hunter stations that worked you receive credit for working that park(s) you operated in.
- Sometimes several park boundaries can overlap each other. In this instance, you can activate several parks at one time, thus giving Hunters credit for working more than one park with just one contact. You will have to submit the same log to POTA for each individual park if you conduct a multi-park activation.
- POTA is NOT a contest. It is a 24/7/365 operating event.
- Make sure when you activate a park that you are within the park boundary and that you do not violate any access rules in locating yourself within the park.
- You will need to use a logging program capable of generating an ADIF (.adi) file. You use the ADIF file format to upload your activation log for each park to POTA.



- Steps to take during your activation:
  - Spot yourself on the POTA spotting page if you have internet access. If no internet is available, ask the first few stations that find and work you to submit a spot for you
  - After submitting your spot, be patient. – It may take a little time for Hunters to find you
  - Give priority to QRP, DX, and Park-to-Park stations
  - Log as accurately as possible
  - Be courteous...give notice before you go QRT
- After you complete your activation:
  - Collect and pack all your gear
  - Safely return home
  - Upload your logs
- To open an account, use the spotting page, see all the POTA rules, use award tracker, and many other features of the POTA website use these links:

<https://parksontheair.com/>

<https://pota.app/#/>

*THANKS ROBERT FOR AN EXCELLENT PROGRAM!!! WE HOPE YOU'LL HAVE OTHER GREAT PROGRAMS IN STORE FOR US IN THE FUTURE!!!*





In addition to our great program for January at 7pm, BVRC's HAM 101 Workshop that convenes at 6pm in the smaller classroom at the ALETA complex, was filled to capacity with newcomers to the hobby and the club. This month, they were treated to Autopatch Operation. The instructor for January's workshop was 2024's BVRC Ham of the Year, Jon Williams – K5DVT. Jon (as always) gave attendees an excellent program. *THANKS JON!*

**For BVRC DXCC enthusiasts that have not as yet heard, this from ARRL on 27 DEC 24:**



The following is an update on DXCC® application processing:

In October, we reported that the ARRL DXCC® System had been returned to service. Since then, over 3,000 DXCC applications have been logged into the DXCC System for processing. It is important to understand that the queue of submitted applications is very large, and has included nearly 6 months of applications for processing. ARRL Awards staff and additional staff and volunteers have been working extended hours and weekends to process applications.

DXCC is ARRL's most popular award. Even while previously submitted applications are being processed, new applications are being submitted and received every day. We continue to appreciate everyone's patience as we process the large queue of submitted applications.

#### Application Processing Queue

DXCC applications enter the DXCC System from one of three sources: from DXCC applications created by users in Logbook of The World® (LoTW®), from traditional paper applications, and from the Online DXCC Application.

The DXCC System has logged applications received via Logbook of The World from May through October 23, and paper applications received through mid-December. On December 13, the Online DXCC Application was returned to service.

We are currently processing paper applications received in November and December, and applications from LoTW submitted in November.

We have resumed mailing orders for paper DXCC Certificates and endorsement stickers. Over 350 certificates were mailed on December 26.

The easiest way to determine if your DXCC application has been processed is to review your LoTW account. From the Award Account Menu, select Account Status. The "Awarded" column will reflect those QSOs that have been awarded to you after your application(s) has been fully processed.

We appreciate your continued patience as we work to return to normal processing times. Our team is committed to ensuring that all applications are handled as quickly and efficiently as possible. Thank you once again for your understanding and support during this time.



## Welcome New BVRC Members!

Allen Risler – KE5FAR – Harrison  
 Bernie Skoch – K5XS – Elkins  
 Thomas King – KK6IZK – Rogers  
 Albert Everett – KF5LNM – Little Rock  
 Edge Nowlin – KB5PZG – Fayetteville  
 Brock Hessing – Bella Vista  
 Charles Wesenberg – Garfield  
 Bob Quin – KB5YFH – Fayetteville  
 Orlin Bible – KJ5JND – Huntsville  
 John Greenlund – KJ5JUA – Rogers

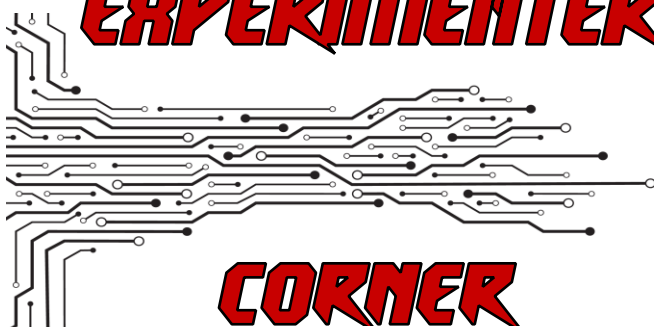
**SPECIAL  
ANNOUNCEMENT !!!!**

## *The Signal Announces A New Department!*

### “Experimenter’s Corner”

The Signal heartily welcomes Dr. Bill Durham – KG5ZCI and his new column addition to the newsletter, “*Experimenter’s Corner*”. Bill is not only BVRC’s Hospitality Director, he is a retired professor from the University of Arkansas and an avid electronics and machine shop enthusiast. Bill has helped many BVRC members in construction and repair projects. (Many of us are in his debt!) Please enjoy Bill’s first Experimenter’s Corner installment on the following pages, with many more to come! These articles will be an inspiration, especially to our members who enjoy analyzing, probing, examining, and “tinkering”. We also thank Bill in advance for the great articles he has in store for us on the horizon!

# EXPERIMENTER'S



## CORNER

By Bill Durham – KG5ZCI

### From an Experimenter's Bench

### A Review of the RuoShui 4080 Handheld LCR Meter

My daughter who lives in Florida, KQ4NVU gave me a RuoShui 4080 Handheld LCR Meter for Christmas. We exchange Christmas lists in our family, and this was on my list. I love to collect junk at ham fests especially grab bags or miscellaneous boxes of parts so this will come in handy sorting out the parts. This is a bit overkill for that, but not so much in actual projects. In the interest of keeping this short, I will just provide a few measurements along with comparisons to good quality knowns.

The unit costs a little over \$100 and that is subject to change at any time and in any direction. It has a USB rechargeable battery.

The device is extremely easy to use despite the number of buttons and screen options. In reality, there is a significant duplication of function. Only one button is needed for a typical measurement (two if you count on/off). Turning the device on requires a three second hold on the red button. The white button (Auto/R/C/L/Z) just below the red one, is the actual business button. It switches between what you wish to measure, C for capacitance, R for resistance, L for inductance, and Z for impedance. The default on start-up is capacitance. It is auto scaling so no other user information is required. The device under test (DUT in electronics jargon) is are short and this is for good reason. Everything has capacitance, resistance and inductance that can potentially interfere, including your hands so keep them away when making a final measurement.



First, let's see how the capacitance reading agree or disagree with expectations. Below is a table of a few measurements which are typical applications.



Capacitor Label	Meter Reading	Comments
1000 pf	1001	Precision Capacitor Standard
100 pf	100.97	Random stock
47.3 pf	48.3	Random stock
56 pf	56.7	Random stock
330pf	35	Clearly mislabeled at factory
47 uf	43 uf	Electrolytic

The precision capacitance measurement is impressive. The next three readings are in excellent agreement and are better than expected for commercial capacitors with reasonable tolerances. The next may be what you expect for low-cost grab bags. I triple checked the reading with capacitors with comparable values and the results are correct. The value for the electrolytic may seem off but the tolerances for electrolytics are wide so this is really no surprise.

There is one additional button that may be useful, and this changes the frequency used to make the measurements. For capacitors, the default setting of 1 kHz seemed to work well. Other frequencies did not show much change in the measured capacitance, likewise, with resistance measurements. Inductance measurements, however, were very sensitive and only the highest frequency, 100 kHz, gave correct inductances. The lower frequencies gave wildly different values.

Moving on to resistors with a selection of resistors with tight tolerances:

Resistance	Meter Reading	Tolerance
1	1.039	0.10%
6200	6333	Gold, 5%
20,000	20,029	0.25%
205,000	206,200	1%
9.90 Meg	9.90	0.03%

Only the 1 ohm resistor is slightly out of range but the source of that resistor is unknown and could be questionable. The readings are clearly much more than adequate for most applications.

A handful of inductors were taken from stock. None were high precision. The table at right shows the results. The measurements were made at 100 kHz.

Inductance	Meter Reading
1 uh	1.43
15 uh	16.1
82 uh	84.9
330 uh	311.8
391 uh	391.6
20 mh	19.00



I am including one actual application from a past project, which was part of the tuning coil for a 500 kHz tuned amplifier receiver. It was made with high quality Litz wire, cotton covered ~200 strand. There are two separate coils for antenna matching. The largest had a measured inductance of 131.6  $\mu\text{H}$  and the smaller one, an inductance of 32.9  $\mu\text{H}$ . The calculated values using an on-line program are 137 and 33, respectively.

The calculations are very sensitive to the inductor dimensions which were obtained from the actual coils.

In conclusion, the unit performed well above expectations and I am happy to add it to my shop.

*(Editor's note: Thanks for a great first article, Bill! We look forward to interesting and informative future articles!)*



ARRL, The National Association for Amateur Radio®, has introduced a sweepstakes offering members the chance to win an Icom Dream Station including a limited-edition IC-7760 HF/50 MHz transceiver, IC-PW2 amplifier, and microphone, generously donated by Icom America.

The ARRL Sweepstakes will run from January 3 to December 31, 2025. It is an exciting centerpiece of a year-long campaign to encourage new membership, and a fun way for current members to extend their support for ARRL.

For more information, click [here](#).

**BVRC HAMS LICENSED THIS YEAR, OR 3 YEARS PREVIOUS:**

# JOIN US FOR THE 2025 SSB ARRL ROOKIE ROUNDUP!!!

*The ARRL Rookie Roundup is a contest aimed at amateurs who were first licensed in 2025, 2024, 2023, or 2022, 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 13, 2025, 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 2022-2025 – *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***  
***Dale Locander – W5DSL – Bella Vista***  
***James Wood – N5ZMX – Lowell***  
***Stephen Ponder – N5ZE – Springdale***  
***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 have loads of fun, get on the sign-up list today! To sign-up, send an e-mail stating you want to participate to:***

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

***See you April 13!***





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) Crawford County EOC, 1820 Chestnut Street, Van Buren, Feb. 8 @ 9:30 am
- 2) Washington County Sheriff's Office-East Annex, Fayetteville, Feb. 25 @ 6:00 pm
- 3) Walmart Auditorium, NW Arkansas Community College, Bentonville, Mar. 10 @ 7:00 pm.
- 4) Sebastian County EOC, 8400 Zero Street, Fort Smith, Mar. 18 @ 6:30 pm

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).



## TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE BELLA VISTA area RADIO CLUB:

### Are you an ARRL Member?



### If not, why not join the 160,000 members of the ARRL?



BVRC is an ARRL affiliated club which requires at least 50% of club members also being members of the American Radio Relay League. We are proud to be an ARRL affiliated club. However, we also have members who have not joined. In case you are unaware, the yearly membership fee for the ARRL is \$59.00 (\$4.90/month). This membership includes a subscription to QST, the iconic flagship publication of amateur radio, which each month includes great articles about all facets of our hobby.

Along with QST being sent to you as you choose each month – digitally or hard copy – as an ARRL member you will enjoy these great benefits:

- **ON THE AIR** – A digital subscription that is also available to members. On The Air is geared to new hams coming into the hobby with loads of articles to help get them started on the right foot.
- **QEX and NCJ** – You membership also gains you access to yet 2 other great amateur radio periodicals, QEX-dedicated to the technical side of the hobby and NCJ-National Contest Journal dedicated to the radio sport of contesting.
- **ARCHIVE and PERIODICAL SEARCH** – Members have access to search for QST articles 1915-2011, and indexes for ARRL's QEX, NCJ, and Ham Radio publications.
- **FREE LICENSE RENEWAL** – When it comes time to renew or modify your license, ARRL will process, or help you with, your renewal/modification (if you wish to forego doing it yourself via the FCC Universal Licensing System) for free as a member.
- **OUTGOING QSL SERVICE** – If the need arises for you to exchange QSL cards with a foreign ham, as a member, ARRL can serve as your mail carrier and handle your overseas QSLing chores. The savings in postage you accumulate through this service alone can pay your membership dues many times over.

- **YOUR LEGAL ADVOCATE** - ARRL supports legislation in Washington, D.C. that preserves and protects access to existing amateur radio frequencies as a natural resource for the enjoyment of all hams. As a member, you contribute to the efforts to preserve our privileges.
- **MANY OTHER BENEFITS** – When you join ARRL you can avail yourself to becoming involved in a plethora of other activities that ARRL offers such as: continuing education, regulatory information branch, public relations, ARRL Field Organization, ARRL sponsored contests, operating awards, ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service), hamfests and conventions, the VEC (Volunteer Examiner Coordinator) Program, and many other ARRL member features.

Recently, Joel Harrison – W5ZN, past ARRL President, and current President of the Arkansas DX Association (and our featured guest speaker for BVRC's February meeting) recently made this statement to ADXA members, but can be applied to all of us:

*“Your ARRL membership is critically important beyond the DXCC program. There is no other organization in the United States – NONE – that promotes and defends the amateur radio service at the FCC, in Congress, and many other agencies and organizations. Internationally, ARRL is a vital member of the International Amateur Radio Union team defending amateur radio at the International Telecommunications Union and at World Radiocommunication Conferences that have the authority to take the radio spectrum, shuffle it like a deck of cards, and hand it out to whoever they see fit.*

*Let me state this one more time – there is no other organization in the United States that does this – NONE! If amateur radio is important to you, then ARRL should be just as important. Oh, you say you don't like ARRL because of some of the decisions that were made? Well, I served on the ARRL board for 22 years and four years as ARRL President, and it may come as a shock that I didn't agree with everything either! Collectively, though, the ARRL board reaches decisions based on member input and has maintained a strong amateur radio service for over 110 years.”*

To view all the membership options: <https://www.arrl.org/membership#dues>

To apply for a new membership or renew your current membership:  
<https://www.arrl.org/membership>

***If you're not an ARRL member, you're missing out.***





# Twelve Days of Christmas Event Tallies Another Great Year

FROM DON — K5DB

Throughout each ham radio calendar year, there are several on-air events that, from the large number of participants submitting log entries, stand out as being the most popular.

Of course, ARRL Field Day would rank #1. The California and Florida QSO parties, ARRL Sweepstakes, ARRL DX, and CQ World Wide contests would be high on the list as well. However, there are some non-contest events that draw a large interest with radio amateurs who look forward to participating in them each year. – The Annual 13 Colonies event occurs each year from July 1 – 7, the goal being to work a Special Event Station in each of the 13 states that were the original colonies, plus also working the Bonus Stations during the event. (For more info, click [here](#).)

Another popular event is the Route 66 event which has a similar operating format. (For more info, click [here](#).)

And recently, a great operating event to wind-up the year with, is the Twelve Days of Christmas event from Dec. 14 – 25. 2024 marked the 6<sup>th</sup> year for the TDOC. For the past two events in 2023 and 2024, I was afforded the opportunity to be one of the 26 TDOC stations. It has become one of my favorite annual operating events. As well as the fun and excitement, I also receive a great looking certificate for my efforts.

Of course, the most exciting moments for me in operating during the event is when I work a fellow BVRC member! The TDOC has gained popularity within our club and our members have their TDOC certificate to prove it! I look forward to working many more of you in the next TDOC event!

### Here are statistics from the 2024 Twelve Days of Christmas:

- Total QSOs: 38,972
- Total states worked: 50
- Total continents worked: 6
- Total CQ zones worked: 33
- Total countries worked: 103
- Total U.S. counties worked: 1,869
- Total grid squares worked: 904
- Total certificates issued: 11,525



If you have General class or above license privileges, mark your calendar for Dec. 14–25, 2025 and enjoy chasing and working the Twelve Days of Christmas stations, and also earn a handsome certificate for your shack wall! It's fun and challenging to work the pileups! I'll look forward to working you as well!

For more information on the TDOC, go to the K2RYD page on QRZ.com, then scroll down for the info. (Click [here](#).)

# BVRC VE REPORT

From Don Cooper - KC7DC

BVRC VE Coordinator

January, 2025



## Congratulations!

John Greenlund - Rogers

KJ5JUA

New Technician!

### Next month's test sessions:

- **Feb. 8, 10 am – Shiloh Museum, 118 W. Johnson Ave, Springdale**
- **Feb. 8, 2 pm – Bella Vista Public Library, 11 Dickens Place, Bella Vista**

Here is The Signal's 4<sup>th</sup> and final installment on the series, "All About CW" :



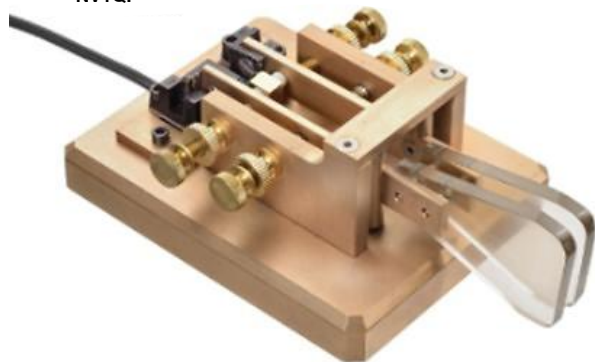
**Morse code – otherwise known as CW (for continuous wave) – has been an integral part of amateur radio from the start, and some stalwarts still consider it the essence of ham radio. A substantial segment of the world's ham radio community still enjoys CW, and you can too.**

If you hold a Technician class license, you can join the crowd on 80, 40, 15, and 10 meters. You'll meet new friends and enjoy a special sense of accomplishment in the bargain. To help spread the enthusiasm, we offer "The Top 10 Reasons To Try Morse Code".

### 10. IT'S A NEW WAY TO COMMUNICATE

And we bet it's very different from all the other ways that you currently communicate! A CW chat is a welcome diversion at the end of a day filled with meetings, emails, power lunches, phone calls, and other forms of hard work.

Hams' love of the tools used to send Morse code is evident in this beautiful handmade paddle by Juergen Malner, NV1Q.



### 9. AGE IS NO BARRIER

While many old-time hams enjoy Morse code, younger hams seem to have a particular fascination for it. They love hearing the 'dits' and 'dahs' and learning how to send their names. As with most languages, it's easier for younger people to learn Morse code.

### 8. IT'S A MINIMALIST MODE

CW is simplicity itself. All you need is a basic transceiver and antenna, and some way to turn the transmitted signal on and off to create Morse characters. It's also the preferred mode for low-power (QRP) aficionados, who transmit using no more than 5 watts. Radio amateurs send CW using keys or keyers. A key is simply an on/off switch. A straight key is often the first Morse instrument for beginners. After they've gained some experience, most CW operators graduate to an electronic keyer and an instrument called a paddle. An electronic keyer and a paddle can send an infinite series of perfectly spaced dits and dahs. Many modern transceivers have built-in keyers.



## 7. YOU'LL KNOW SOMETHING THAT MOST OTHER PEOPLE DON'T

If you think you'll have trouble learning the code, you're not alone. Even some hams who passed their CW tests long ago were reluctant learners. In this present era, you can operate CW without learning Morse code. – There are products on the market that decipher CW characters on a built-in display, and some hams use computers to receive and send CW. – But, you'll miss out on an important part of the CW experience. Learning to copy code doesn't happen overnight – a potential downside in this era of immediate gratification. Like other skills from singing to skateboarding, perfecting CW takes practice...but it's worth it.

## 6. IT'S LIKE TEXTING WITHOUT THE MONTHLY BILL

Morse code is yesterday's texting, but better. A lot of the shorthand is even the same. Ham radio doesn't require any infrastructure, and typical CW speeds far exceed texting throughput. During a May 2005 face-off between Morse code and text messaging on *The Tonight Show With Jay Leno*, two ham operators using CW won hands down.

## 5. MORSE MAKES YOU USE YOUR HEAD

Most people start copying code by writing down every letter they hear, gradually advancing, along with code speed, to copying in their head. It becomes second nature, and you may find yourself even thinking in Morse code!

## 4. CW HAS A LOW PROFILE

You don't need a big, fancy, powerful station to have fun with CW. The most complicated thing you might need is an IF (Intermediate Frequency) filter for your transceiver. When using a set of headphones, you needn't worry about disturbing the entire household. CW operation can be very quiet, which is often an asset to domestic tranquility. You can also get away with less than optimal antennas.

A straight key is little more than an on/off switch, but they come in *many* varied sizes, weights, and styles. This example is a Camelback Bullseye Red Key, available from Gigaparts for \$31.95. Other straight key versions and models can be found on major amateur radio dealer websites, as well as E-Bay and Amazon.



## Tips for Getting Started On the Air with Morse Code

Once you've learned the code, listen to contacts on the air that you can copy. Get a feel for what's being said. Contacts follow a pattern that you can learn to identify.

Schedule your first CW contact with a friend. This helps build confidence and overcome jitters.

Follow a contact "formula". – Send your signal report (RST), location (QTH), and name, each just once, then hand the contact over to the other station who will likely respond similarly.

Don't be afraid to ask the other station to slow down (QRS) if necessary. A good CW operator will be happy to comply – and be pleased to be your first contact, or one of your first.



The Cric-Key kit from Four State QRP group comes together in about 2 hours to give you a paddle and keyer all in one.

### 3. MORSE CODE REMOVES LANGUAGE BARRIERS

If there's a "world language", it's Morse code. Q-signals or Q-codes are three letter abbreviations that all start with the letter "Q", and they're widely used in Morse code and they are also *internationally recognized*. (To see a list of Q-signals, click [HERE](#).) For example, QTH means location. If someone sends you "QTH?" via CW, they are asking you "What's your location?" It's a convenient way to get around language barriers when you're making contacts with people all over the world!

### 2. IT'S A GREAT WAY TO CONTACT DISTANT STATIONS

Though voice contacts seem easier, they just don't have the reach of CW. If you have a modest station, you may find that contacts that are out of reach on Single Sideband (phone) are within your grasp on CW.

### 1. YOU'VE ALREADY GOT CW PRIVILEGES

No matter what class of license you hold, *you now may operate on HF using CW!* The ARRL band chart (shown in each issue of QST and available for free download from ARRL, or request from Don-K5DB) spells out the operating privileges you have, depending on your license class. Even if you're starting out as a Technician, you can operate CW on three HF bands (80, 40, and 15 meters). Take advantage of the opportunity. You'll never look back!

## Resources for Learning and Practicing Morse Code

- [morserino.info](#) The Morserino is a full-featured device that you can build from a kit. Learn and practice Morse code on the built-in paddle, or connect an external paddle or straight key.
- [qsobot.online](#) In conjunction with the Morserino, you can practice having real contacts with this website as the "other end of the contact". It also has a number training game in which the site picks a number from 1-100, and you have to guess it, based on clues of "higher" or "lower". You have to be very good with your keying, or the site will ask you to send again. Many find this a great way to work on their sending, without the pressure of talking with someone else.
- [morsecode.ninja](#) Kurt Zoglermann – ADØWF, has made thousands of hours of practice sets at all speeds. You select the speed and the content and the site redirects you to a YouTube video for the practice. Many CW enthusiasts will listen to the phrase, pause the video, send the phrase on their key, and then resume the video. This is a good way to practice sending and receiving at the same time.
- [hamradio.solutions/vband](#) This is another great site. Multiple people who want to practice together can do it over the internet. Either use your computer keyboard as a straight key or paddle, or plug your key in with a USB adapter.
- [morse.mdp.lm](#) Mark Percival – KC4T, has created this interactive game and news headline website. It pulls news headlines and plays them at different speeds. He has also made some games to make practicing more enjoyable.
- [longislandcwclub.org](#) The Long Island CW Club offers classes, podcasts, videos, and articles. If you're a beginner, they'll teach you the code, and if you already know the code and want to increase your speed, they have classes for that too.
- [BVRC CW Academy](#) If you prefer an in-person, live classroom atmosphere along with great fellowship in learning with other CW beginners, Bella Vista area Radio Club offers yearly classes from April through August of each year. If you wish, you can use the above resources to enhance your learning experience while attending the classes.

# **AMATEUR RADIO ENFORCEMENT: FCC Upholds Record \$34,000 Forfeiture Against Amateur Licensee**

**(From ARRL...)**



The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) assessed a record **\$34,000 forfeiture** against an amateur radio licensee for “willfully and repeatedly operating a radio station without authorization and interfering with the radio communications of the United States Forest Service while the U.S. Forest Service and the Idaho Department of Lands were attempting to direct the operations of fire suppression aircraft working a 1,000-acre wildfire on national forest land outside of Elk River, Idaho.”

As ARRL News first reported in 2022, the FCC proposed the fine against Jason Frawley of Lewiston, Idaho, for allegedly interfering with radio operations of the U.S. Forest Service during firefighting activities for the Johnson Creek Fire near Elk River in July 2021. The FCC stated in the Notice of Apparent Liability (NAL) that Frawley holds an Extra-class Amateur Radio Service license, WA7CQ, and is the owner/operator of Leader Communications LLC, licensee of eight microwave licenses and one business license.

In response, Frawley acknowledged that he operated on a frequency reserved for government use and for which he lacked authorization but argues that he did not cause interference to the government’s fire suppression activities that were being coordinated on the channel and acted with “good faith and non-malicious intent to help.” Frawley requested a reduction or cancellation of the proposed forfeiture based on the number and duration of the unauthorized transmissions, his history of compliance and corrective measures, and his inability to pay the proposed forfeiture.

In the Forfeiture Order released on January 3, 2025, the FCC rejected Frawley’s request and assessed the full proposed forfeiture of \$34,000.







# Becoming A Ham Radio Master

Your ham radio license is really a license to *study*. Take advantage of every learning opportunity, including learning from your mistakes. (You'll have plenty!) Each problem or goof is also a lesson. Masters got to be masters by starting as raw recruits just like you and then making one improvement at a time, day in and day out. You may think that ham radio veterans surely have stores of secret knowledge that took years and years to acquire — knowledge that makes them the masters of all they survey. Certainly, the veterans have experience and expertise, but they also rely on simple principles that work in many situations. You can use these ten principles, too:

## Listen to everything

Masters get more out of listening and monitoring than anyone else because they've learned the value of doing it. Every minute you spend listening is a minute learning and a minute closer to becoming a master, whether it's as a net control, a top contest operator, setting up a balloon tracker, or just giving out directions to the club meeting. Listen and learn how.

## Learn how it works

Operating a radio and building an efficient, effective station are much easier if you know how the equipment works. Even if you're not terribly tech-savvy, take the time to get familiar with the basics of electronics and how your equipment functions. You will be much more effective if you learn the effects of controls and their adjustments. Learn how to make simple repairs to keep your station on the air.

## Follow the protocol

Use the expected terms and give information in the form and order in which it is expected. When calling another station, follow "Gift Tag Order – To, then from:" Start with that station's call sign to alert that operator, then give your call once or twice as necessary. Use the recommended phonetics that others in your group prefer. In a competition, exchange your information in the same order published by the sponsor.

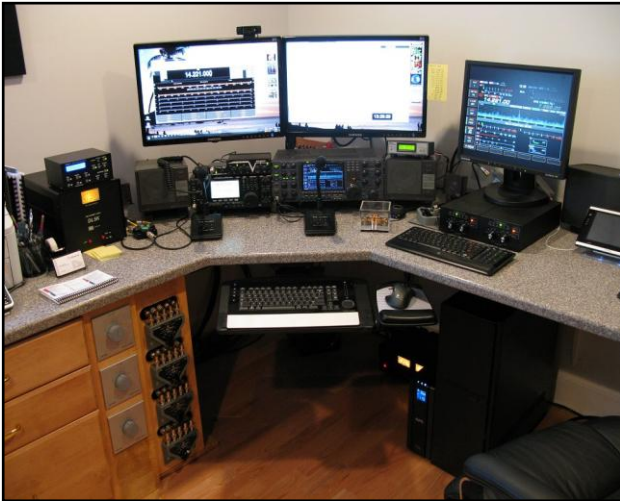
## Keep your axe sharp

When asked what he would do if he had eight hours to cut down a tree, Abe Lincoln replied that he would spend the first six hours sharpening his axe. If you have battery-powered equipment, be sure that the batteries are charged and fresh. Make sure fuel for a generator is fresh. Lay out your "go kit" from time to time so that you are sure it's all there when you need it. Test your station's basic operation from time to time on all bands and modes. Keep your equipment and skills sharp. When they're needed on the air, you'll be ready.

## Practice to make perfect

Even a sharp axe gets dull if it isn't used. Get on the air regularly, keeping in touch with conditions. An experienced operator knows what stations are active, from where, and when, as well as when important nets and on-the-air events take place. Even if you know the procedures by heart, check in to your local net each week. Take advantage of contests or special events to





exercise your skills and make sure your equipment is working.

Make operating your radio station a natural and comfortable activity by keeping yourself in shape with regular radio exercise.

**Pay attention to detail**

Masters know that the little things are what make the difference between 100 percent and 90 percent performance — or even between being on the air and off the air. The most expensive station isn't worth a nickel if it doesn't work properly when you need it. Waterproofing that connector completely or having your CQ sound just right, really pays off in the long run. Masters are on the radio for the long run.

**Know what you don't know**

Take a tip from Mark Twain, who warned, "It's what you know for sure that just ain't so." If you get something wrong, don't be too proud to admit it. Find out the right way; track down the correct fact. People make their worst mistakes by ignoring the truth.

**Maintain radio discipline**

When you are performing public service, whether in an emergency or not, practice your radio discipline: Know and follow the rules of the operation, follow the instructions of a net control station, transmit only when authorized and necessary, use plain language, and pay attention so you are ready to respond. Strive to make your operating crisp and clear so that anyone can understand.



**Make small improvements continuously**

Any improvement in the path between stations should not be neglected. Anything that makes your signal easier to understand — 1 dB (decibel) less noise received, 1 dB better audio quality, 1 dB stronger transmitted signal — makes the contact easier. Make your station and yourself better in small, regular steps and you'll get a lot more out of ham radio!

**Help others and accept help from others**

Sooner or later, you will encounter operators needing assistance. If they ask for help, offer your services. They may not be aware there is a problem, such as with poor audio, a distorted signal, or erratic operation. New operators may not know the right way or time to call another station. Before informing them of the problem, ask yourself how you would want to learn about a problem with your station. When describing the problem, be polite and be as clear as you can in your description.

When other operators tell you that you have a problem, don't get mad or embarrassed. Thank them for bringing the problem to your attention and make them feel good about helping you. Ask them to help you troubleshoot. *Ham radio is all about helping each other, on and off the air.*







By Don – K5DB

## This month's featured country:

### Djibouti

Primary Call Sign Prefix: J2

Djibouti (Jih-boo-tee) is officially called the Republic of Djibouti. It is a country bordered by Somalia to the south, Ethiopia to the southwest, Eritrea in the north, and the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden to the east. The country has an area of 8,958 sq mi. Djibouti is a multi-ethnic nation and as of May 20, 2024 has the smallest population in mainland Africa of 1,066,809. French and Arabic are its two official languages. Afar and Somali are also national languages. It is near some of the world's busiest shipping lanes, controlling access to the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. It serves as a key refueling and transshipment center and the principal maritime port for imports from and exports to neighboring Ethiopia. In recent times it was owned and administered by France, until the citizens voted for independence in a landslide election in 1977 creating its own republic.





**Location of Djibouti**



**Downtown Djibouti City**

Djibouti's coastline stretches 195 miles, with terrain consisting mainly of plateau, plains and highlands. It has a total area of 8,958 sq. mi.

Djibouti has eight mountain ranges with peaks of over 3,300 feet. The Mousa Ali range is considered the country's highest mountain range, with the tallest peak on the border with Ethiopia and Eritrea. It has an elevation 6,654 feet. The Grand Bara desert covers parts of southern Djibouti and the majority of it sits at a relatively low elevation, below 1,700 feet.



**Camels on the Djibouti desert**

The mean daily maximum temperatures range from 90 to 106°F, except at high elevations. December and January are the coolest months with averages low temperatures falling as low as 59°F.

Djibouti Telecom is the sole provider of telecommunication services. It mostly utilizes a microwave radio relay network. Mobile cellular coverage is primarily limited to the area in and around Djibouti city. As of 2015, 23,000 telephone main lines and 312,000 mobile/cellular lines were in use.

In the amateur radio world, Djibouti could be classified as semi-rare. It is on the air somewhat, but not often. It currently ranks #116 on the Club Log Most Wanted List.

The majority of amateur radio operations out of Djibouti of the past 15-20 years or so have been DXpeditions.

A very successful DXpedition occurred in 2007 with a 7-operator Italian team, running J2ØRR on CW and J2ØMM on phone.

A Djibouti DXpedition – J2ØDX – was planned for 2019. It consisted of amateurs from Spain and Scotland, but had to be cancelled. According to DX World, “EA3NT got his gear through customs, but MMØOKJ & MMØNDX did not; theirs were impounded until departure home. This meant a lot of the needed equipment never arrived. In addition, upon seeking some clarification from “National Security”, they were sent on a wild goose chase around the country requesting (and seeking) an authorization letter that was promised to them but never came. The whole trip can be categorized as a waste of time and money. It should be noted they had official documentation from Djibouti Telecoms, including the amateur radio transmitting license – alas “national security” and Djibouti Telecoms do not work in tandem with one another.”

Another DXpedition was planned in 2020, but also had to regrettably be cancelled due to too many uncertain factors for the team in negotiations with the licensing authority, the national security authority, and customs.

The last major operation from Djibouti was in 2022, when an international team from the U.S., Romania, and Germany netted over 90,000 QSOs using call sign J28MD:





Although the easiest way to add Djibouti to your worked and confirmed countries list is to watch for future DXpeditions, there are native Djibouti operators who do pop-on the air from time to time. – J28MM was on 40 meters CW on Dec. 18, J28ZZ was on 15 meters FT8 on Nov. 25, J28ZC was on 15 CW on Nov. 16, J28TT was on 14 phone on Oct. 18, and J26K was on 15 and 20 phone on Mar. 31 of this past year, to name a few.

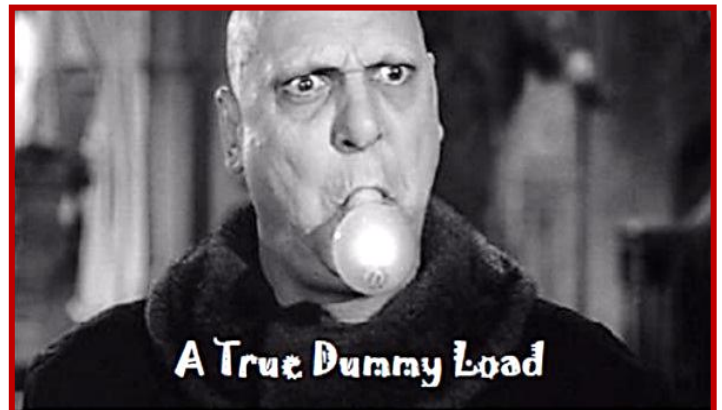
So, Djibouti does surface on the bands from time to time. Keep a close eye on the spotting websites as much as you can. Who knows? – You may sit down at your station some evening and there “J2” will be!

As far as future DXpeditions to Djibouti, no plans are being made at this time, so keep an eye on the DX news outlets and the “Announced DX Operations” page on NG3K.com. Happy hunting!



My Djibouti QSL from the 2007 DXpedition

**HAM HUMOR**



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