



September

2011

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**The Central Texas Amateur Radio Club  
meets the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM at the  
Bell County Communications Center, 798 West Avenue O, in Belton**

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## President's Corner

*Kenneth Watkins, KE5ISN*

**HOT!** That best summarizes August. Record number of consecutive days with 100+, and the most days with 100 continues. Several daily record highs have been set, 110 for August 27<sup>th</sup> in Waco and 112 on August 28<sup>th</sup> in Austin.

Hurricane Irene is now history. The east coast received extensive rainfall, tidal surges and wind damage. This was the first hurricane of the season and the first to hit the U.S. mainland since Ike hit Texas in 2008. Did you get a chance to monitor the hurricane watch nets on 14.325 and 7.268 ? Propagation was as such that the nets were very weak at my QTH. There is other activity in the Atlantic; there is a low 400 miles south of the Cape Verde's Islands. This system is expected to strengthen and is currently expected to track toward the Caribbean Islands. We need to keep a watch on this system. The only upside in the weather that I see is the forecast for cooler weather and low rain chances the first few days of September.

September brings start of school with football games on Thursday, Friday and Saturdays. Go out and support your local team. With the start of school, the school zones will have reduced speeds and cell phone use prohibited. Several police departments have stated that they are placing special emphasis to watch for drivers using cell phones.

The opening day of dove season is September 1. With the dry weather that has persisted this summer, the choice of watering holes is limited and should provide for an interesting season.

October 1st is the Belton Hamfest. Now would be a good time to look at your equipment needs and decide if you want to upgrade your shack. New and used equipment with experience will be available. Have you thought about upgrading you license? Start studying now and you will be ready to take the test. Do you know of someone that wants to obtain their first license, why not help them. Exams will be offered for all classes of license.

The Nomination Committee for the upcoming CTARC elections in November has been appointed. The committee consists of Joe, W5VEX; Preston, KF5EVV; and Gerald, N5ZXJ. They will be looking for individuals for the office of President, Vice-president, Secretary, Treasurer and one Director. If you have a name of someone that would make a good candidate or if you want to serve, please contact them.

With the start of school, try to remember to check into the net on Thursday nights.

See you at the meeting on September 6.

*73 de KE5ISN*

# Strays

*“The man in the saddle is angular and long-legged. His skin is sun-dyed brown; the gun in his holster is gray steel and rainbow mother-of-pearl. The handle, unmarked. The gun has killed and the man has killed. People call them both, the Six Shooter.”*



*The Six Shooter* brought James Stewart to the NBC microphone on September 20, 1953, in a fine series of folksy Western adventures. Stewart was never better on the air than in this drama of Britt Ponset, frontier drifter created by Frank Burt. Stewart was right in character as the slow-talking maverick who usually blundered into other people's troubles and sometimes shot his way out.

Unfortunately, it came too late, and lasted only one season.

You can tune in again to the 40 episodes in the series, by visiting: [http://www.archive.org/details/OTRR\\_The\\_Six\\_Shooter\\_Singles](http://www.archive.org/details/OTRR_The_Six_Shooter_Singles)



The Central Texas Amateur Radio Net meets every Thursday at 8:00 PM on the W5BEC repeater, on 147.140(+) PL 123.0  
Join Us!

September NCS & Back-Up NCS Schedule:

September 1<sup>st</sup>:                      September 8<sup>th</sup>:

Net Control: KF5LNX              W5VEX  
Back-Up: W5VEX                      K6WXA

September 15<sup>th</sup>:                  September 22<sup>nd</sup>:  
Net Control: K6WXA              AD5SK  
Back-Up: AD5SK                      KE5ISN

September 29<sup>th</sup>:  
Net Control: KE5ISN  
Back-Up: KF5LNX



## ARRL September VHF QSO Party

Contest period is from 1800Z, Sept. 10 to 0300Z, Sept. 12<sup>th</sup> on all authorized amateur frequencies of 50 MHz and up. For complete information on this event visit: <http://www.arrl.org/september-vhf-qso-party>



## Texas QSO Party

The Texas QSO party is sponsored each year by the Northwest Amateur Radio Society - W5NC - to encourage contacts between Texas amateur radio operators and amateur radio operators throughout the world. This event is also an excellent opportunity for county hunters to add to their list of Texas counties worked.

Operating times are from 1400Z, September 24<sup>th</sup> to 0200Z, September 25<sup>th</sup> with then a break and again from 1400Z to 2000Z on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

For more info, see: <http://www.txqp.net>

## Why Do You Smell So Funny?

*William L. Duncan, WA6OHP*

As a child I played with an electric train and discovered it produced a strange smell. Later I noticed other pieces of electrical equipment generated that same fragrance. The odor was from Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) produced by the sparks of the brushes in the train's motor and also by the contacts on the tracks.

Ozone was discovered by Christian Friedrich Schönbein in 1840. He named it ozone after the Greek word for smell (*ozein*).

During the days of spark gap transmitters the term "ham shack" came into existence because the stations were housed in shacks outside the home. There were two main reasons for this; one was because of the noise generated by the spark and the other was because of the smell of the ozone produced by the transmitter.

Ozone fragrance is detectable at about .01 PPM. When the level reaches .1 to 1 PPM it will cause headaches, burning eyes, and irritation to the respiratory passages. Over 1 PPM it is considered very dangerous. The odor is not easily washed off and can linger on the flesh as well as in clothing.

Before amateur radio licenses were issued, when spark gap transmitters were the only kind of radio transmitters, Ed - W6CC (now silent key) was an active ham radio operator though still in elementary school. He related the time when his teacher took him aside one day and asked him, "Why do you smell so funny?"

So I guess in those days if someone said, "I smell a ham," they may have been referring to something other than the smoked hind leg of a pig.

## Special Event Stations

Keep an ear open for UK special event station **GB4BOB** to be active from September 1st to the 20th to commemorate the World War Two Battle of Britain. QSL's go direct to GØBPK or via the RSGB bureau.

WB6OJB will be on the air as **7P8JK** from Lesotho, between September 15th to the 22nd. QSL direct to his home callsign.

**4W6A** will be operational from Atauro Island in East Timor from September 16th to the 26th. QSL via MØURX.

Commemorating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 9/11, **KC2RA** will be operating from Staten Island September 10th from 1300 to 2100 hours UTC on 7.250 lower and 14.295 MHz upper sideband. QSL with a self addressed stamped envelope to the Kings County Repeater Association 911 Memorial Event, PO Box 280288, Brooklyn, NY 11228-0288.

**N3U/FLT93** will be activated from September 8th to the 15<sup>th</sup> in commemoration of Flight 93 which crashed near Shanksville in Somerset County, Pennsylvania during 9/11. QSL with a self addressed stamped envelope to N3U/Flt 93 via W3PN.

Members of the Dutch Low Land DXpedition Team are planning a trip to Luxembourg from August 30th to September 6th. Operators **PA3EWP**, **PA9JO**, **PA7FM** and **PA1AW** will be signing their individual home callsigns **portable LX** for this operation. QSL's should go to PA1AW.

**OK1XD** will be active from Lichtenstein **portable HBØ** between September 1st to the 10th. Operations will be on 80 through 10 meters using mainly RTTY and PSK31, with some SSB and CW.

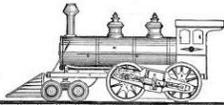
## The Death of Old Time Radio

Radio Drama, also frequently referred to as Old Time Radio, began in the 1920's and started to lose ground in the 1950's for several reasons. Mainly, television (though around for some time) exploded in popularity and, with the novelty of a visual aspect, stole the dramatic thunder from radio.



On **September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1962**, CBS radio broadcast the final episodes of *Suspense* and *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar* and the Golden Age of Radio came to a close.

## Nomination Committee Formed



At the August 2<sup>nd</sup> CTARC monthly meeting a nomination committee was formed consisting of Joe Dorn-W5VEX, Gerald Richmond-N5ZXJ and Preston Clark-KF5EVV with the purpose of presenting a slate of candidates to the club that will work to keep the club alive and active through the coming year.

The office of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and one Director will expire in December.

Elections will be held November 1<sup>st</sup>.



**KE5WVC** is in the process of installing a *KPC3 Plus* digipeater for APRS while **W5VEX** is doing its programming for it.

**N5ZXJ** was re-elected last month to serve another term as Director-at-Large for the Texas VHF-FM Society.

## Strays

### Texas VHF-FM Society Rejects 2 Meter Band Plan Proposal

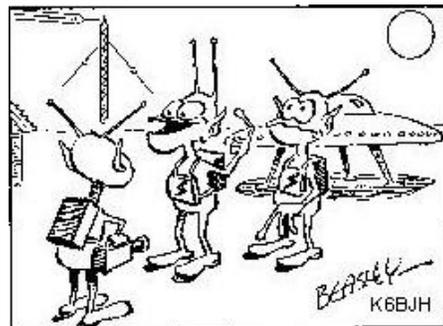
Texas VHF-FM Society members made their voice heard on the matter of a two meter band plan proposal (-See the August issue of the *Wavelength*, Page 4-) during their annual meeting last month at the Austin Summerfest.

In a nearly 2 to 1 vote, the Society rejected the proposal on converting some 2-Meter simplex frequencies to digital use only.



### Vanity Call Signs Fee Increases Effective Sep. 9<sup>th</sup>

The FCC announced via a Final Rule in the Federal Register, that the cost of an Amateur Radio vanity call sign will increase 90 cents from \$13.30 to \$14.20. The new fee takes effect September 9<sup>th</sup>.



I JUST MET SOME EARTHLING HAM - - HE TOLD ME TO BEND THESE STRAIGHT UP AND THEY'LL ACT LIKE A PHASED ARRAY!

## Bell County CoCoRaHS Report

Mark McGraw, KF5HUG

As the long dry summer wears on, we begin to wonder when or if we will ever see relief from the hot, dry days. Each month, I thought it would be interesting to compare rainfall in Bell County based on local CoCoRaHS observer readings for the current and previous year.

Volunteers made all observations. They may not report every day and they may even miss a few days here and there. I have attempted to use those stations for determining the averages that appear for the most part to have reported rain when there were rain events.

Rainfall Totals (inches)	2011	2010
Year to Date (Jan. 1 to Aug. 28)	10.19 *	22.10 **
August (Aug. 1 to Aug. 28)	0.06*	0.40 *
Days with Rain Reported	47 days	93 days
Max. 24 Hr., August (Jan. 1 to Aug. 28)	0.13	0.76
Max. 24 Hr., (Jan. 1 to Aug. 28)	3.91	3.21

\* Average of 11 Reporting CoCoRaHS Stations

\*\* Average of 6 Reporting CoCoRaHS Stations

Each year the number of active observers in Bell County has grown. There is always a need for more volunteer observers in the program. Take a few minutes and check out the CoCoRaHS website at cocorahs.org for more information. The newest observer to join the ranks in Bell County is James Cleveland, N5ONI. James' observations will help fill a void at the northern end of the County. Thank you James.



## RAC-L Hospital Network

Joe Dorn, W5VEX

I have now officially resumed the oversight of the Central Texas Trauma Council's (RAC-L) 16 hospital amateur radio network. I will initially visit each hospital and determine the status of the equipment and meet whoever is now in charge of the hospitals emergency communications. I will then start training and assigning hams for and to the major locations.

Since one of our major concerns is supporting hurricane evacuations from South Texas, particularly Brazoria County, I will be coordinating with and copying a lot of the South Texas ARES groundwork. I used Travis and Williamson County's ARCHES operation as a guideline when the network was initially set up so a lot is already in place.

I have contacted Tom Whiteside, the ARES South Texas Section Emergency Manager, to start my update process and he has sent me some info including their operations manual. If you are interested in participating in the activities then this would be a good start in understanding our neighbors to the south and some of the items I will be trying to set in place.

HF was not in our original planning but has become a bigger player due to the Texas Hurricane Evacuation Plan and I will be trying to get HF radios at the major hospitals and support EOC's. The Bell County EOC and the new Bell County Communications Trailer as well as Texas Department of Health services already have HF capabilities.

The counties involved are: Bell, Coryell, Hamilton, Lampasas, Milam and Mills.

For more info, email W5VEX at:

[jbdvex@gmail.com](mailto:jbdvex@gmail.com)



## Storm of the Century

*The 1935 Labor Day Hurricane*

The storm was born as a small tropical disturbance due east of Florida near the Bahamas on August 29<sup>th</sup> and drifted west toward the Gulf Stream, when U.S. weather forecasters became aware of a potential tropical storm. The storm strengthened to a Category 1 hurricane as it neared the southern tip of Andros Island in the Bahamas early on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

As the hurricane entered the Gulf Stream late on September 1<sup>st</sup> it underwent rapid deepening. It intensified without pause for a day and a half while its track made a gentle turn to the northwest, toward Islamorada in the upper Keys. The hurricane reached peak intensity on September 2nd, making landfall between 8:30 and 9:30 p.m. EST at Craig Key.

The compact and intense hurricane caused extreme damage in the upper Florida Keys, as a storm surge of approximately 18 to 20 feet affected the



region. The hurricane's strong winds of 185 to 220 mph, destroyed most of the buildings in the Islamorada area, and many World War I veteran workers were killed by the storm surge. Portions of the Key West Extension of the Florida East Coast Railway were severely damaged or destroyed. A 10-car evacuation train, sent down from Homestead, was washed off the track by the storm surge, only the locomotive remained upright on the rails. The hurricane also caused additional damage in northwest Florida, Georgia, and the Carolinas.

The National Weather Service estimated 408 deaths from the hurricane. One survivor of the storm, who has repeatedly told the tale of this great hurricane, Bernard Russell, lost the majority of his family that day. The day before the storm, the Russell family was made up of 61 members. After the storm there were only 11.

The 1935 Labor Day hurricane was the strongest tropical cyclone during the 1935 Atlantic hurricane season, and one of the most intense hurricanes to make landfall in the U.S. in recorded history. The second tropical cyclone, second hurricane, and second major hurricane of the season marked the most destructive Atlantic hurricane of the United States; and it was the first of three Category 5 hurricanes the United States endured during the 20th century (the other two being 1969's Hurricane Camille and 1992's Hurricane Andrew).

The Labor Day Hurricane was the only storm known to make landfall in the United States with a minimum central pressure of 892 mbar; only two others have struck the country with winds of Category 5 strength. It remains the third-strongest Atlantic hurricane on record, surpassed only by Hurricanes Gilbert (1988) and Wilma (2005).



### ***Irene* – first hurricane of 2011 Atlantic Season...**

born as a tropical storm on the 20<sup>th</sup> of August east of the Antigua islands, it quickly grew and became organized as a Category 1 hurricane with winds of 80 mph on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. On August 24<sup>th</sup>, Irene gained Category 3 strength making it also the first major hurricane of the 2011 Atlantic season. Irene went on to make landfall along the North Carolina

coast becoming the first hurricane since 2008's Hurricane Ike, to strike the U.S.

The storm left millions without power across the eastern seaboard, forced airlines to cancel nearly 9,000 flights and left a reported 37 dead in the U.S., most of them as a result of trees crashing through roofs or onto cars.

And the experts say an increase in tropical systems appears likely as well. On Aug. 4, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration increased the number of expected number of named storms to 14 to 19. The original forecast was 12 to 18 named storms.

**Texas wildfires close to home...** two wildfires in Coryell County, the "*Pilot Knob*" fire and the "*Robinette*" fire, each burned on Fort Hood have together consumed 7,680 acres. Resources had to battle the fires from the air as ground resources were unable to work the fires due to the potential of unexploded ordnance.

Texas is currently battling its worst fire season in state history. Texas Forest Service and local firefighters have responded to 20,155 fires that have burned a record-setting 3,529,261 acres since



fire season began last November 15<sup>th</sup>.

Texas Initial Attack crews and equipment have been pre-positioned throughout the state to assist local fire departments with wildfire suppression actions when requested.

Hot and dry conditions are predicted to persist at least until early fall, unless relief is provided by tropical storms or hurricanes.



**Drought forecasted to continue...** the statewide extent of extreme and exceptional drought is currently at all-time record levels. The heat is expected to continue the remainder of the summer, with the drought continuing unabated well into the upcoming autumn. With the potential for another dry La Nina winter, there is little to suggest any end of the drought. The U.S. seasonal drought outlook maintains the

Texas drought through at least October. But little, if any, improvement in the drought conditions is expected.

In San Angelo, the O.C. Fisher Lake officials there say that long periods of 100 degree plus days and lack of rain in the drought-stricken region over the past few years has nearly dried out the man made reservoir that once spanned over 5400 acres.

## Can Crickets Really Tell You the Temperature Outside?

Rachelle Oblack, About.com Guide

Male crickets “chirp” for multiple reasons, including warning off predators and attracting female mates. But the sound of the actual chirp is due to a hard rigid structure on one of the wings. When rubbed together with the other wing, this is the distinctive chirp you hear at night.

But can crickets really indicate outside temperatures?



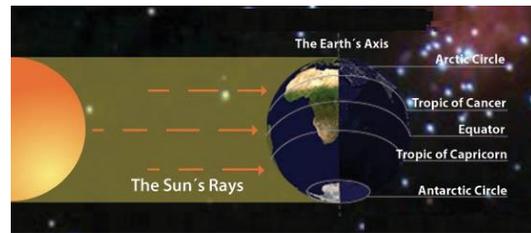
Yes! Anyone outside at night listening to crickets “sing” can determine the outside temperature with a small math problem. First, count the number of chirps a cricket makes in 15 seconds. Record this number or remember it. Next, add 37 to the number you wrote down.

That’s it! You now have a good estimate of the temperature outside in Fahrenheit.

The idea was first studied by A. E. Dolbear in 1898. He systematically studied various species of crickets to determine their “chirp rate” based on temperatures. Using T for temperature in degrees Fahrenheit and N for number of chirps, Dolbear published his results in the form of an equation -  $T=50+[(N-40)/4]$  This equation for cricket chirping is now known as Dolbear’s Law.

## Autumnal Equinox

The September equinox (*also referred to as the autumnal or fall equinox in the northern hemisphere*) will occur at 09:04 Coordinated Universal Time on Friday, September 23, 2011. For those of us here in Central Texas, the first day of fall will arrive at 4:04 AM CDT on that date.



The term *equinox* is derived from the Latin *aequus* (equal) and *nox* (night), because around the equinox, the night and day have approximately equal length. On a day of the equinox, the center of the Sun spends roughly an equal amount of time above and below the horizon at every location on the Earth, with night and day being of roughly the same length.

One effect of equinoctial periods is the temporary disruption of communications satellites. For all geostationary satellites, there are a few days around the equinox when the sun goes directly behind the satellite relative to Earth (i.e. within the beam-width of the ground station antenna) for a short period each day. The Sun’s immense power and broad radiation spectrum overload the Earth station’s reception circuits with noise and, depending on antenna size and other factors, temporarily disrupt or degrade the circuit.

The next celestial-weather event will occur on December 22<sup>nd</sup> with the Winter Solstice.

*With the entrance of the United States into World War One, amateur wireless was shut down with the takeover of all radio transmitters by the U.S. government. The September, 1917 issue of QST was the last one before it suspended publication for the war. QST, September, 1917, page 16:*

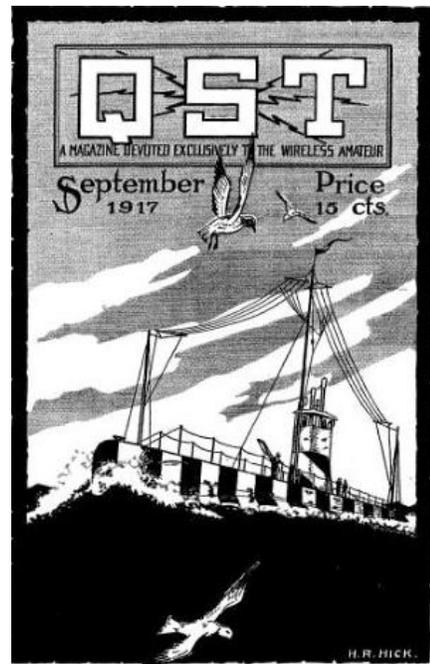
## ***ANOTHER SEASON OPENS, BUT- - -***

Good old September has come around once more with its promise to cut down on the static, but----. In happier days the coming of September would start us thinking about the cells in the "B" battery, and wondering how many of them had thrown up the sponge during the summer, but----. Probably many of us would already have gone so far as to take another look over that article on how to build a regenerative receiving tuner, and have made a few sketches of what would best suit a certain particular stock of miscellaneous pieces of wood and general junk, but----. Not a few would be writing in asking what was doing on audion bulbs about now and what the chances were going to be to get inside on something especially sensitive, but----. No doubt several would be measuring off the back yard and giving serious thought to Kruse's illuminating treatise, recently printed in QST, on "Tin Masts," but----. Anyway, the various manufacturers would be noting a big increase in their mail and they would be rolling up their sleeves getting ready to handle the coming business, but----.

This time, old September is different than he has ever been before. None of these little things dear to the heart of the Amateur Wireless Bug are happening. Not since "Amateur Number One," first strung a wire in the air, has there been a September like this fateful one of 1917. Not a single amateur aerial is in the air, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The little buzzing spark is gone and dust covers the once shining apparatus. How long this condition will last is a guess. It probably will be many months, and we expect to see at least another September come and go which will be not much different.

'Tis a sad, sad tale. But, like most sad tales, it is not without a big ray of hope. This hope is that the present conditions cannot go on forever, and that the spirit of amateur wireless is just as much alive in these dead days as it ever was. Whether the law closes up our stations or even takes away our apparatus, whether we

ourselves are scattered to the four winds of heaven, whether we are in the army in France, or in the Navy on the tossing sea, we are still Amateur Wireless Bugs, and nothing will ever change us. Dead Septembers may come and go and the years may change us from springy youth to sober age, but the call of the "spark" will still be in our hearts and the desire to have and use the little old set up in the attic or down in the cellar will still be the one great yearning. We will always be Amateur Wireless Bugs, come what may. That's right, isn't it, fellows?



## “7031 kHz”

Ray Larson, WØGHX

The other night I got on the air again after a QRT of about eight years. A couple of weeks earlier I had hooked up my old receiver to a hay-wire antenna and had been listening around the bands to see what was happening and to get my code speed back up. I noticed that there are a lot more S9 signals and electronic keyers on the air than there used to be - often in conjunction. After a couple of weeks of SWLing I couldn't stand it any longer. So I carried my exciter up from the basement and put it alongside the receiver. The antenna seemed to load up alright on forty. So, I got my old bug out of the closet and was all set for a QSO.

I was tuning around the band looking for a victim when I came across a fist that sounded hauntingly familiar (it was a bug, not a keyer). He was sending CQ on 7031 (my receiver may be old but it's accurately calibrated), and when he signed, sure enough, it was Al, W4---. I quickly zeroed in and gave him a call.

Even as I was calling I began to have misgivings. Old Al was one of the reasons I had gone QRT, though in my excitement I had forgotten it. It's not that Al was a bad guy, really, but, he was the crotchiest, orneriest, most reactionary old geezer I had ever run into. Not just politically, mind you, but in everything. And he was always a decade or so behind the issues. Back in the '60s he was denouncing the transistor, the one-piece bathing suit (I doubt that he had heard of the two), SSB, the automatic transmission, and the Lindy - demoralizing and un-American influences all. He was the Archie Bunker of the airwaves. There was absolutely no way to get him off a subject. You just had to suffer. I tried to avoid him but he always seemed to find me out. In self-defense I had finally gone QRT altogether.



“Lord knows what he's into now,” I thought as I began to sign. “Probably Goldwater's presidential campaign.” I half hoped the antenna wasn't getting out. I tried to console myself. “Maybe he's mellowed with time,” I thought, “and anyway, this time I won't let him get to me, no matter what.” I signed AR and turned up the receiver gain.

Sure enough he came back. He remembered my name as though our last QSO had been yesterday instead of eight years ago and gave

me my report - 459. In Al's tight-fisted world, this meant I had a solid signal. The best I used to be able to get out of him when I had the kilowatt connected to a dipole was a 349. “Maybe he *has* mellowed,” I thought. I gave him his report and tried to avoid everything but the most uncontroversial clichés. The weather should be safe: WX HR COLD ES CLR - TEN BELOW IN MPLS THIS AM.

QRG? was his only reply. Al was always laconic except when it came to one of his pet topics. That seemed harmless. “7031 kHz”, I replied, rather proud that I had kept up with the world enough to know that “kc” had been replaced by “kHz” during my QRT.

The receiver went berserk. For a moment I thought that my gain control had gotten noisy from being unused for so long. But no, it was all right. Al was making spluttering noises. His bug sounded like a demented cricket. I finally made out some of it...

SCHMERTZES - WHATS MY FREQ? FREQ MEASURED IN CYCLES NOT  
BUSHEL CUBITS OR RODS - HERTZ RENTS CARS.

"My God!" I thought, "I've done it." 7031 kc, I replied and then, instead of turning it back, I tried to change the subject. I brought him up to date on my family, how my son was ten now and playing the French horn in the school band. I hoped Al didn't have anything against French horns.

He ignored it and went on with his harangue. He said that a cycle is a phenomenon of the physical world, a Hertz a member of the human world, and probably an immoral one at that. He capped his outburst with this, QRSing to 20 wpm and carefully spelling out each word:

Mourned a doleful old-timer named Gertz,  
"I'm appalled that all cycles are Hertz.  
kHz is a fright, And MHz outta sight,  
And when I ride on my biHz it hurts!"

By now I was shaken and badly in need of a drink. I gave him a rundown of my gear and then went into a detailed description of my antenna its



exact resonant frequency (in kilocycles), its length and the height at each end, in feet. Too late I realized I might be in deep water there. I hoped he wasn't a metric nut.

But Al picked up his tirade where he had left off. A cycle, he said; is a perfectly descriptive name for a thing that has frequency, like a wave of water or energy. A Hertz, on the other hand, is descriptive of nothing. It is the name of a family - a *foreign* family. How would they like to be called "Cycle?" They should have the decency not to foist their family name off on a natural phenomenon. The silly thing, he continued, is that everyone knows a cycle is really a cycle, they just pretend it's a Hertz. And on and on.

I replied that I was planning on putting up a real antenna in the spring. What did he think about the relative merits of a dipole as compared to a ground plane on forty meters?

But Al wasn't about to be derailed. Measuring frequency in Hertzes, he said, is like measuring time in Methuselahs or velocity in Wright Brothers, because these people had something to do with age and speed. CAN U IMAGINE DRIVING 60 WBPH? he asked, rather rhetorically. Must we reHertz our used beer bottles? Will the Pope start issuing enHertzicals? Can you feature looking things up in the EnHertzopedia Britanica? Are we going to be plagued by eleven-year sunspot Hertzes and will scholars start ranting about Hertzical history? Then he fell into his demented-cricket swing again and, as ill luck would have it, the QSB was at the peak of its Hertz and he was over S9:

Flattety-thrattety, it's a conspiracy, Hertzian frequencies crowding the air.  
Gone are the cycles that, aesthoerotically, used to remind us of Sophia, bare.

I pulled the big switch and went down for a drink. The next day I carried my old receiver and the exciter back down to the basement and put the bug back in the closet. They cluttered up my study anyway. I really don't have room in the yard for an antenna. Maybe in a few years...

# HamEXPO!



Sponsored by the Temple Amateur Radio Club -W5LM, the *Belton Hamfest* returns to the Bell County Exposition Center in Belton, **Saturday, Oct. 1st** from 7:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

Getting there is easy; from U.S. Highway 190 take the exit for Loop 121 and follow the signs to the Exposition Center. Plenty of free parking!

Talk-in frequency is 146.820(-) PL 123, and call for W5LM.

General admission for the public is \$5.00 at the door. Admission price includes one free raffle ticket for various door prizes raffled off during the event. Winners must be present to collect their winnings.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.tarc.org/hamexpo>



## Ham Expo Amateur Radio Test Session

In conjunction with the HamExpo, amateur radio tests are planned to be given, sponsored by the Central Texas Amateur Radio Club.

The location of the testing site has not been announced, but as of this writing, it will **NOT** be held at the Belton Police Station as in previous years.

Preliminary '*expectations*' are that the test site will be somewhere within the HamExpo complex. More information on this matter will be provided as it becomes known.

Despite this, since the test session is in conjunction with the very popular Ham Expo, it is expected that between 25 and 50 people will be wishing to take the tests. This will require at least 10 Volunteer Examiners to properly staff the event. General and Extra Class VE's will be needed since all test levels will be made available.

This is a 'Ham Community' effort and all area VE's are needed and most welcome to participate. If you're a VE and will be able to participate, please send an email to Joe Dorn - W5VEX, at: [w5vex@arrl.net](mailto:w5vex@arrl.net), or you can contact him by phone at (254) 939-5918 or (254) 721-0829.

People taking the test do not need to register before hand, just show up at test time. A photo ID and one other form of ID is required. The test fee is \$15.00.

Texas is still a last frontier. It is the part of the United States where the traditional virtues are still operating. In short, a piece of living history.

- Author John C. B. Richmond

## 2 Meter Quarter-Wave Groundplane “A Resurrection Project”

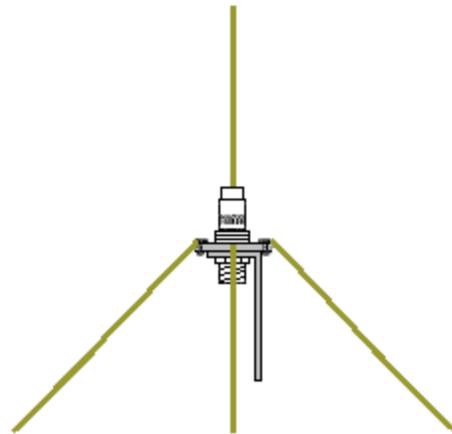
*Rick Murray, K6WXA*

Some decades ago, probably while one of the Roosevelt's was in office, my Dad - Jim Murray - W6WXA (SK), decided to build a quarter wave ground plane for use on 2 Meters. For who knows how many years, the antenna proudly stood its post exposed to the elements.

Eventually Dad took it down and retired it to the garage rafters where again, after who knows how many years, I stumbled on it. Corrosion, gunk, junk, dirt and all kinds of icky unidentifiable substances had covered the antenna and had leached their way into all the connections. Initial testing with a volt-ohm meter found either inconsistent or no electrical continuity throughout the antenna. It was definitely a candidate for the garbage can, but I just couldn't do it.

The antenna was completely disassembled, and all the materials - surface mounts, connectors, radials, nuts & bolts were scrubbed with sandpaper and a wire brush. It was during the disassembly process that I found what a nifty design this antenna was for the person who likes to tinker.

The surface mount or base plate if you will, is a near square shaped cut piece of aluminum. At each corner a hole has been drilled to bolt on the ground radials made from 1/8th inch brass rod. A separate piece of aluminum has been bent to an “L” shape, and serves as the mast support. Through the bottom portion of this “L” shaped aluminum piece, a half inch hole has been drilled through it. At the center of the base plate, a half inch hole has been drilled out and an SO-239 barrel connector has been put in place with nuts and washers which secures the base plate to the mast support. The bottom portion of the SO-239 connector serves as the coax feedpoint for easy connection to a PL-259 connector. The radiating aerial is also cut from 1/8" brass rod, and is soldered to the center pin of a PL-259 connector and screws on to the top of the SO-239 connector. The PL-259 connector is then filled with epoxy to seal it.



After reassembly, all the connections and mounting points were sealed or “gooped” with a Marine adhesive and the antenna was painted with two coats of Pettit Marine Brand EASYPOXY to permanently weatherize the antenna.

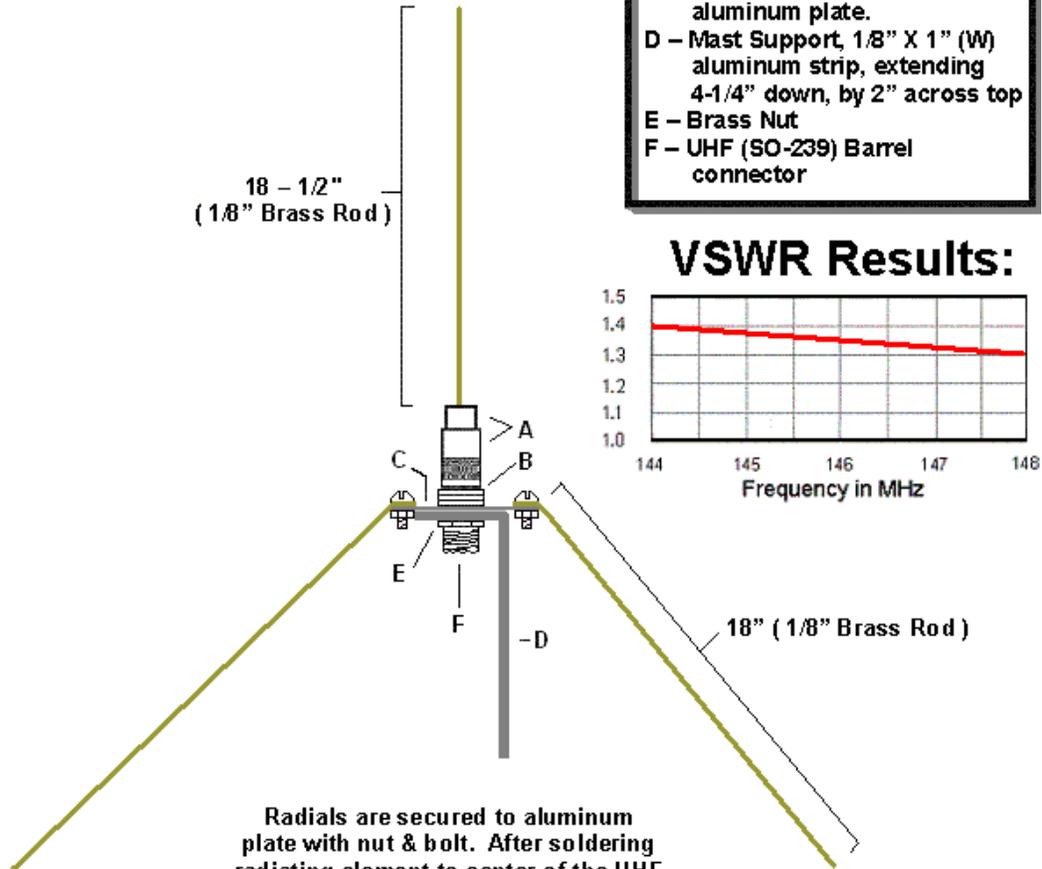
Set up and testing showed all the continuity problems had been fixed and a VSWR of 1.4:1 to 1.3:1 was measured from 144 to 148 MHz.

Judging by the materials that Dad used, this had been a junk-box project, and admittedly, there is an easier way to build a quarter-wave groundplane using just brass rods and an SO-239 chassis mount. But this is the way my Dad did it.

If you'd like to duplicate his antenna design, complete construction plans are on the following page.

# 2 Meter 1/4~ Ground Plane

- A – Outer sleeve of PL-259 connector.
- B – Metal washers as spacers.
- C – 3-1/4" X 3-3/4" X 1/16" aluminum plate.
- D – Mast Support, 1/8" X 1" (W) aluminum strip, extending 4-1/4" down, by 2" across top
- E – Brass Nut
- F – UHF (SO-239) Barrel connector



Radials are secured to aluminum plate with nut & bolt. After soldering radiating element to center of the UHF connector, inside of PL-259 connector is filled with epoxy for water proofing. Weatherize all connections.

