

The Antenna

Brandon Amateur Radio Society



Presidential Chatter

I would first like to thank those who have stepped forward recently to fill crucial roles within the Society. First we have Jim Smith (K4PPK) volunteering to be the Secretary and now volunteering to give the newsletter publishing a shot, then we have JR Calvert (W4MIG) who took over the social media accounts. I certainly don't want to minimize everyone else's contribution either. It is absolutely appreciated when people step forward to volunteer their time and energy into our organization, whether volunteering to be an officer, director, or take on a role or responsibility that was handled by members having to step away. We've even formed the Ship's Crew, a group of members lead by Ron Perrett (K4FZU), who have volunteered their time to maintain an area of the SS American Victory. As I've said before, this is YOUR Society.

For those who missed the membership meeting last Thursday, I want to restate a point I made during that meeting. We are a society of people, young-at-heart but not necessarily young of age, who enjoy the hobby, technical thrill, and the social aspects of Amateur Radio. We need to start thinking about how to recruit and retain members in the Society. For the younger hams, I think Boy Scouts might be a good way to get started with this endeavor. I am planning on having some conversations with Ken Lyons (KN4MDJ) about his RadioScouting group to see what we can do as a club to get more younger folks involved. If anyone has any other ideas on how to recruit new members, young or young-at-heart, please let me know. 73's!

Steve, NS4M

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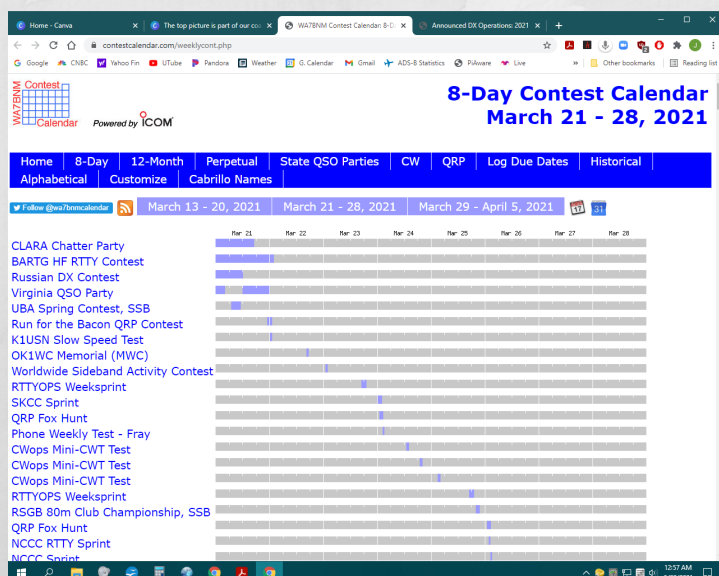
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Contest Anyone?

There is one thing about contests on the radio. Everyone has an opinion on them. Some love the contests and will spend countless hours on the air. There are contests almost every weekend on the HF bands. Then there are those that can't stand contests or for that matter contesters. After all they are the ones that populate the same frequency where you have been having you rag chew with you ham buddy for the last twenty years on the same frequency at that time. After all, shouldn't that give you squatters rights to the frequency. Which ever side you come down on, one thing is for sure. Contests are here to stay.

Before you make up your mind, you should give contesting a try. I have had a lot of fun contesting. But just when and where are these contests? Since there is a website for just about everything, there has to be one for radio contests doesn't there? You bet your boots there does. It is called the "8-Day Contest Calendar" and you can find it at this site:

<https://www.contestcalendar.com/weeklycont.php> . Each contest has a hyperlink that will tell you everything you need to know on how to operate that contest. It describe everything from the exchange you need to make between the two participants to where to send the report of your contest activity. Give one of them a try. Who knows, you may be that @&@% guy that has taken over my favorite frequency next weekend.



Upcoming Activity

Two meter net – every Monday at 8PM on 147.165 MHz FM

Six meter roundtable– every Tuesday at 7PM on 50.200 MHz USB

Virtual Coffee Hour – every Wednesday at 7:30PM on Zoom

BARS Business Meeting – third Thursday of each month at 7:30PM on Zoom

Eighty meter roundtable– every Friday at 7PM on or near 3.830 MHz LSB

March/April DX

Minami Torishima

March - June

Nicaragua

Mar22 - Mar30

Marshall Is

Mar 23, 26 & Apr 1

Maldives

Mar 28 - Apr 10

Svalbard

Apr 26 - May 9

For the full DX story check out this web site:

<https://www.ng3k.com/misc/adxo.html>

Next Club Meeting

April 15, 2021

7:30 PM

This meeting will be virtual.

Not another @#^% R9 Antenna !!!!

Want to spend an enjoyable afternoon with BARS members? How about an antenna party. That's what six of us did on March 7, 2021 while trying to tune Dick Hoff's Cushcraft R9 nine band vertical antenna. At about 1:30 PM, Ken and Janet Watts, Jim Stocks (#3), Jim Smith (#1), Ron Perrett and I (#2) met at Dick's house to find out what he had learned from a Cushcraft engineer on how to better tune his antenna. We had put up Dick's antenna late last year and tried to tune it with not much success on 80, 40 and 20M. The engineer suggested we cut off a small section near the upper end to tune 20M, then remove part of or all the top hat for 40M. That sounded awfully drastic, but what the heck, "no risk it, no biscuit", right?

Well, these intrepid hardy folks went right to it with hacksaw, nut drivers and SWR meters. Jim Stocks and Ron Perrett did a bang up job sawing off a total of six inches at one inch at a time. Of course after each change, we had to raise the hinged 31.5' antenna attached to a 10' pole (yes that's over 41' tall!). Over and over we made changes, and like a precision squad of old men, we methodically pushed and pulled that beast toward the sky, then read our meters to see if we succeeded, then gently lowering it onto a makeshift tripod support. Of course it took a better part of four hours to do this. At one point I told Dick if we can't do this I would buy him some butternut squash. Of course, Dick didn't hear me right and thought I said Butternut antenna, but that's another story.



We toiled like Sisyphus* of old and did achieve some success except for 20M. Dick is still evaluating his albatross, I mean antenna, so what the future holds is still a mystery. For my part I think that is my last R9 antenna project, but hey, we had a good time with lots of laughs on a beautiful Spring day. That's what being a "Ham" is all about.

Authored by Jim Moorehead WF4AC
Pictures by Jim Stocks KK4CWO

*Sisyphus - a figure from Greek mythology who was punished by forever rolling a boulder up a hill in the depths of Hades. The story teaches us to never give in to circumstantial disappointments or try to escape from the failures, rather accept failures the same way we accept our achievements. And most importantly, no matter how much we lose in our quest, we must never back down till we fulfill our potential --
Wikipedia



Frequency Measuring Test

The ARRL will conduct its spring Frequency Measuring Test on April 8, 2021 beginning at 9:30 PM (01:30 Zulu). The event allows you to check the accuracy of your HF receiver, have a little fun and compete with your fellow hams across the country. In the past they have run tests on 40 and 80 meters but this year they are adding 30 meters to the event. In addition there will be two stations sending signals for identification.

K5SCM

30-meter schedule near 10103 kHz

01:30 Call up

01:33 Key down

01:34 End 30-meter run

W8RKO

30-meter schedule near 10103 kHz

01:45 Call up

01:48 Key down

01:49 End 30-meter run

K5SCM

40-meter schedule near 7064 kHz

02:00 Call up

02:03 Key down

02:04 End 40-meter run

W8RKO

40-meter schedule near 7064 kHz

02:15 Call up

02:18 Key down

02:19 End 40-meter run

K5SCM

80-meter schedule near 3598 kHz

02:30 Call up

02:33 Key down

02:34 End 80-meter run

W8RKO

80-meter schedule near 3598 kHz

02:45 Call up

02:48 Key down

02:49 End 80-meter run

It is not necessary to have expensive test equipment to participate in the test. Most of the modern transceivers today are stable and accurate enough to allow you to participate using your radio, your computer's sound card, and software you may already have. One of the simplest programs and the one I recommend is FIDigi. You may already be familiar with it if you operate PSK or any of a myriad other digital modes. And FIDigi has been recently updated to allow you to select a mode called, of all things, "Frequency Measurement Test". And all license classes are eligible to participate since you are just copying, not transmitting.

After you copy the six one minute "Key Down" tone and determine what frequency you think is the sending frequency, you can submit your entry to the ARRL website as an official entry. About three days later the ARRL will publish the frequencies that the stations transmitted on and you can see how well you did. Of course you don't have to submit your answers to the ARRL to participate. You can just compare them yourself to see how well you did. However if you want to send me (k4ppkjim@gmail.com) your answers following the event and before the ARRL publishes the answers, you will be eligible for a free breakfast when we start that again if the differences of your closest three frequency entries are better than my three best ones (The decision of the Judge is final). So what do you say. Give it a try, have a little fun and maybe get yourself a free breakfast.

If you have any questions, give me a call and I will try to help you get started in this fun event. And the bonus is once you completed the above, you are all set up to begin operating the digital modes.

Additional information on the frequency measuring test can be found on page eighty of the April issue of QST.

Preview of Coming Attractions

Arduino Watt/SWR Project

By Jim Moorehead

Sometimes I just can't help myself. When it comes to microcontrollers such as the Arduino, I have a solution looking for a problem. Shouldn't it be the other way around? So after reading *Arduino Projects for Amateur Radio* by Dr. Jack Purdum and Dennis Kidder, McGraw-Hill, 2015, I decided to try my hand at building such a device. My project, however, requires a high wattage capability not 25W as Dr. Purdum's which means a more robust dual directional couple (DDC). In addition, I wanted better resolution than an Arduino's 10-bit analog to digital converter (ADC) and use a thin-film-transistor liquid-crystal (TFT) display rather than his LCD.

Are you familiar with these terms? Want learn more about these devices and my first-try failure and subsequent success? Well, plan on attending the April BARS meeting in which I will satisfy your curiosity with a look at what it takes to make an accurate power meter capable of operating at 1500 watts. See you then.



Do you know what this is?



Ham Test - Gray Matter Check-up"

So you say you are a HAM do you? Have a try at these from the pool of questions to test your knowledge of the hobby.

Technician Class License:

Which of the following is a purpose of the Amateur Radio Service as stated in the FCC rules and regulations?

- A. Providing personal radio communications for as many citizens as possible
- B. Providing communications for international non-profit organizations
- C. Advancing skills in the technical and communication phases of the radio art
- D. All of these choices are correct

General Class License:

On which HF/MF bands is a General class license holder granted all amateur frequency privileges?

- A. 60 meters, 20 meters, 17 meters, and 12 meters
- B. 160 meters, 80 meters, 40 meters, and 10 meters
- C. 160 meters, 60 meters, 30 meters, 17 meters, 12 meters, and 10 meters
- D. 160 meters, 30 meters, 17 meters, 15 meters, 12 meters, and 10 meters

Extra Class License:

When using a transceiver that displays the carrier frequency of phone signals, which of the following displayed frequencies represents the lowest frequency at which a properly adjusted LSB emission will be totally within the band?

- A. The exact lower band edge
- B. 300 Hz above the lower band edge
- C. 1 kHz above the lower band edge
- D. 3 kHz above the lower band edge

Answers

The picture is a portion of our coax feedline to the repeater antenna at the TECO site after it had been chewed on by a hungry squirrel or two (I hope he was not eating while the repeater was in use).

The Answers to the Ham test questions are:

Question 1 – C

Question 2 – C

Question 3 - D

A word from the "temporary" Newsletter editor

I have put together this Antenna simply because no one else stepped up to do it. It is certainly not up to the standards of Scott and Dana in the past. I am not a writer/publisher by any stretch of the imagination.

It is my hope that someone will volunteer to serve as the Newsletter editor. And whoever does it will need to have input from other members of the club. So whenever you are doing some activity related to ham radio remember that others would likely enjoy and benefit from what you are doing. We all have a camera today as a part of our cell phone. Take a picture and write a short story about the picture. The editor can help you wordsmith the story. If you participate in testing take a picture. If you are working on the repeater or some project at home take a picture. If you go to a hamfest or tail gate take a picture. If you go to a meeting such as ARES or you are our representative to the WCF Hamfest planning group write a story and take a picture where appropriate.

This is your club. Please don't just sit on the sidelines. Add your considerable talent to the club. If you feel the club should be doing something that it is not doing, look first to yourself. Maybe you are the one that is causing the club to fall short of meeting your expectations.

Now who wants to volunteer to serve the club as the Newsletter editor.

Thank you to the members and staff of Arise for your kindness In allowing BARS the use of their facility!

BARS Website

<http://www.brandonhamradio.org/>

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<https://fb.me/brandonhamradio>

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/brandonhamradio>