

Including Ham Radio Fun!

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Special Antenna Issue!

Build An Active Antenna

5-Band QRP Loop

2m/900 MHz Whip

The DX Dynasty Award



Review:
Automatic SatTracking



the son of the owner of the printing company was showing a visitor around and he ran a piece of paper through a small proof press. The entire union membership walked out.

Before that, I'd found the same situation in the television business. The stagehands' union was both closed to newcomers (unless family members), and protective of marginally skilled highly paid workers. On the TV set, if the director dared to move a lamp on a table on a set, the stagehands would go on strike because he touched a prop.

It was well known on Broadway that on Friday if the stagehands weren't paid before the start of the last act of a play, the play would not be allowed to go on. And paid in cash. None of this check business.

Maybe you remember the featherbedding of the rail unions.

No one has been holding a gun to the UPS workers' heads, keeping them from quitting. If they could get better pay and/or working conditions elsewhere, they'd be out of there.

Companies, as far as I know, have no responsibility to pay people more than they're worth just because the worker feels it is "owed" to him. If he's really worth more, then he should find an employer he can convince of that. And keep the employer convinced.

As someone who has had over a thousand employees over the years I can testify that very few of them, despite my best efforts at recruitment and subsequent encouragement, ever made any serious effort to be really outstanding at their work. Most did the least they could get away with. Unless watched they would come in late, leave early, and take amazingly long lunches. The bottom line for me was that I had to hire ten people to do the work of maybe five.

The few employees who took advantage of the learning experience I offered them have done very well. The others I

run into now and then, still working at some stupid job and still doing as little as possible.

It is pathetically easy to be better at what you do than 90% of those around you. Make that 99%, and it's still low.

I went to work at WPIX-TV in New York as an engineer. It wasn't long before I was chief cameraman. But then no one else on the engineering staff made any effort to learn and build their skills. I left there to become a director at KPIX in San Francisco. At WXEL in Cleveland I directed all of their network originations.

You are the one in charge of your fate, not your boss. If you need the brute force of a union to get more pay, you're lazy and unmotivated.

New Licenses

The FCC's figures for August 1997 show a drop of 94% in just the last two years in new General and Extra Class licenses. The new Advanced Class licenses dropped by 91%. Fortunately, the number of Techs upgrading to General only dropped by 42% in the same period. Which means, I suppose, that the ARRL Directors' sneaky plan to eliminate QRM on our HF bands is working. And just in time, too, what with the sunspots expected to get things back into action on what is projected to be one of the most active sunspot cycles in history.

Well, QRM has been the bane of HF operation ever since hamming started, so I, for one, will be delighted to not have to worry about it any more. But we hams will always be complaining, only now it'll be about those damned three-station pileups on rare DX.

When the last active ham in Wyoming dies will we be seeing Japanese DXpeditions going to Wyoming for the tens of thousands of young Japanese state hunters?

As an old 20 m fan, I'm beginning to appreciate the ARRL's single-minded insistence on maintaining the CW

Great Wall to keep what few newcomers we're attracting to the hobby up there on 2 m and keep the HF bands for us old timers. But then amateur radio has always been primarily for old men, right? OMs. Oh, we old men dream about young ladies (YLS), but when's the last time you heard one on 20 m? I worked an OL on 20 m back in 1965. I'd been on the frequency for a couple of hours making contacts when she broke in and told me to get the hell off there, that it was the YLRL's frequency. Sigh. Hi, Evelyn, remember that one? I was operating from PJ3CC.

Speaking (well, writing) of newcomers, how're we doing on new no-code Techs? Pretty good—they've only dropped off 61% in the last two years.

Are You Ready?

A while back I suggested that it would be prudent for hams living around our major cities to get serious about setting up emergency communications systems. Now comes news that the Soviets are missing around a hundred of their suitcase-sized nuclear bombs. Of course they're only kiloton devices, not like the 10-kiloton bombs we dumped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, so they would probably only blow a medium-sized hole in a big city, plus wipe out a few million people with the radiation. And probably also wipe out any solid state electronic equipment for a few miles around with its EMP pulse.

There is no shortage of groups pissed off at us who might want to smuggle such a suitcase into downtown Manhattan and put an end to Wall Street, or maybe try to do us a big favor by wiping out as much of Washington as they could. It might take two suitcases to take care of the Pentagon and the Congressional buildings, but that could still leave the CIA HQ in Langley intact. Say, where's the IRS HQ? Oh well, that's a self-serving thought and not worthy of me.

You're going to need a mo-

bile command station with a portable repeater and as many still working HTs as you can find. And the more you're able to intercommunicate with other services the better. And don't forget some Geiger counters.

In the case of New York, fortunately very few hams live in downtown Manhattan, so most hams, living in the other four boroughs and on Long Island, could survive the blast. But it's going to be a communications nightmare.

The cell phone and telephone systems will probably be out of commission for months, depending somewhat on how high up the bomb is exploded.

Is there a danger to Cleveland, Chicago, San Francisco, Atlanta and other major cities? With a hundred missing bombs and guys like Saddam Hussein and Qadafi with both the money to buy them and the means to set them off anywhere they want, who knows? North Korea is mad at us too, and something like this might keep us busy enough to let them invade South Korea again.

But even groups who haven't managed to buy a bomb could demand ransom to not set off a bomb that they just might have. That's a very attractive business proposition.

I'm willing to bet that, despite the danger, I won't see one single hint of any effort by ham clubs in or near our major cities making any effort to improve their emergency communications capabilities. I'll be watching the club newsletters, hoping that I'm wrong.

ET Mischief

A local paper ran a story about a cylinder-shaped UFO that hovered over Hinsdale NH one night. A little later a nearby farmer went out to the barn to feed his cows and found all 25 lying dead. An autopsy found they'd all been electrocuted, yet their hooves were intact, showing that they hadn't been struck by lightning, which splits the hooves. The barn showed no sign of any damage.

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NEVER SAY DIE

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A later check with a Geiger counter showed high radiation where the cows had lain, and also where they were buried. And the following year the corn planted where the cows had been buried formed a perfect circle and turned brown and died when it was about six inches high.

More ETs

Put yourself in the position of an ET visiting Earth. The fact that you're able to visit the planet, which is thousands to millions of light years distant, guarantees that your technology is at least thousands of years ahead of ours on Earth. Suppose you could travel back 50,000 to 100,000 years and look at the civilization Earth had at that time. Would you land and look for a welcome from the people you find? At that time

they hadn't even developed farming, much less towns or cities. And then, not too different from today, they were busy killing anyone who might be an enemy.

Well, it probably isn't much different for a civilization that's many millennia in advance of ours. So I suspect that many advanced races come here every now and then, take a look at how we're doing, maybe give us a little nudge, and that's that.

With some 50 billion solar systems in our galaxy, and with many probably having planets, since the same forces that form suns seem to also allow planets to form, and since most of 'em are a lot older than our solar system, the odds are that we're not hundreds or thousands, but perhaps millions of years behind millions of ET races. And that's just in *our* galaxy.

Considering all that, the surprising thing would be if we were not being visited by

advanced races, and it would be more surprising still if they bothered to communicate more than with an occasional person, and they probably would erase any memory of that.

As a small Roswell note, the GAO, in 1995, tried to review the Army records of the Roswell Army Air Field and found that the pertinent records from 1946 to 1949 had all been destroyed—without authorization.

Roswell Echoes

If you are either brainwashed by the media or just not keeping up with events, the Col. Corso book, *The Day After Roswell*, written by an ex-top Pentagon official, claimed that he had seen an alien body, plus an Army autopsy report on the alien, and had been put in charge in the 1960s of integrating alien technology recovered from UFO crashes into our industries. Now another player from the 1947 era has come forth. The UFO (or more probably, two UFOs) crashed in July 1947 in New Mexico. By September of that year the first integration of the alien technology recovered from the crashes had already made its appearance.

This new chap, interviewed on the Art Bell W6OBB show, claims that the transistor was not invented by Shockley and his two pals at Bell Labs in Murray Hill (NJ), but was reverse-engineered by them from the UFO recovered artifacts. So much for their Nobel prize for the invention.

Further, this chap attributes the development of ICs, digital signal processing, lasers, modems, nuclear-powered engines, and imaging devices to the recovered alien technology.

Well, maybe the artifacts helped, but I was around when modems started and I don't recall any unexplained jumps in technology. Ditto ICs.

ICs were a natural development. When transistors made smaller circuits possible we first went to wired circuit boards, then to printed circuit

boards, and finally to combining the transistors and circuits into integrated circuits, with each step shrinking the module size.

Heck, we were using RTTY modems in amateur radio in 1947. I got involved in 1949 and John Williams W2BFD had this technology well developed by then. Of course it took us a panel full of 6SN7GTs to do all of the work. I've still got a panel out in the barn that I built to connect my Model 12 Teletype machine to my ham rigs. I operated mostly on 2 m, but also made a bunch of 11 m contacts and even worked California on 80 m, back when the ARRL was still doing its best to keep FSK off the HF bands—worried that 60 wpm RTTY might put their CW traffic nets out of business.

The attribution to alien technology for our development of nuclear powered engines also doesn't make timeline sense to me. We developed the atom and hydrogen bombs in 1945, so we had a fair handle on nuclear power by 1947. And I haven't seen any hint that UFOs are nuclear powered anyway. Their powering technology seems to still be hundreds of years still ahead of us. Or more.

Any introduction of alien technology should be visible by sudden jumps in our technology, and most of our technologies have not shown such jumps. Except for transistors and fiber optics—although I was playing with glass filaments which I made in 1934, drawing out glass rods into long filaments. And I noticed how the glass allowed light to go through, even when it was bent. I had a lot of fun making tiny glass tubes by drawing out the Novocain tubes I got from a dentist friend.

There was no sudden jump in our move to digital communications. Our RTTY FSK signals were digital, with a start pulse, five data pulses, and a stop pulse. And that's not much different from ASCII, with its eight data pulses and an added parity

current stupor and realize the time to act is *now*? We can save our hobby. I think the first step is to get behind constructive proposals like Mr. Ruh's and get the FCC and the ARRL to act on them. So OK, Mr. Ruh's proposal isn't perfect, but with some modification, and more importantly its adoption, hams would be taking a giant leap forward in saving our grand old hobby!

Ozzie Levin W5RK. I met you in Chicago way back in the 1930s at a ham convention. I have followed your career and subscribed to your 73 magazine and read all your editorials and enjoy them immensely. I have been a ham for over 60 years, but believe me I am in complete agreement with you on eliminating the code. We should do everything within our power to overturn this detrimental portion of the ham exams. I have taught ham radio classes for over 40 years, both at the local high school and my home. I am proud

to say that I have turned out a large number of hams who have gone into the electronics industry as teachers, engineers, etc. Like you I have an inquiring mind. Having worked with pyramids, the Hieronymous machine, and built my own version using transistors, I also found the battery could be disconnected and it would still work, and by the way, after experimenting with pyramids, trying to find out what made them work, I discovered that they are affected by sunspot activity. During this low cycle experiments do not always work. I built most of the mind machines you mentioned in your last issue and they all work. So, to the scientific community and the rest of the doubting Thomases, you'll never know and that's too bad. There are many things in this world of ours that we cannot perceive with our five senses. Wayne, just wanted to say thanks for all your editorials and insight into things not necessarily related to ham radio. 

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