



# Q5er – The Official Newsletter of the Skyview Radio Society

# A Year to Forget

Skyview's last General Business Meeting was in March 2020. Shortly after that, it was time for us to go into isolation.

Marty - AG3I, 2020 Vice President and 2021 President generously provided us with an unlimited ZOOM service. Marty also served as Master of Ceremonies for the many programs that he, Cooky - WC3O, and others arranged. Generally there was some kind of a program every Tuesday night. Invitations went out on the Skyview Groups.io reflector (you do subscribe to that, right?). Zoom session are not as good as face to face gatherings. But because the program presenters could be anywhere, we were treated to programs that we would have not otherwise been able to have.

A Tuesday night 80 meter net sprung up to provide another way of getting together. Targeted discussion items were pre-announced, once again on the Skyview Groups.io reflector. Hams are never really socially isolated.

Some brave souls did continue to congregate at the joint on most Tuesdays evenings. Only one scare that I know of that had attendees looking for COVID-19 tests.

After a good scrub down, VE Testing with a limited number of applicants allowed into the joint at once resumed. Seems like isolation generated a lot of new interest.

And, the contests kept going all through the last year. While a lot of the contest rules were modified to allow operating from home and aggregating to create club scores, very few have the operating facilities that Skyview provides. So, by being careful and minimizing spectators, most of the major contests were still operated from Skyview. Multi-Multi 1500 watt RTTY are us.

The government is really pushing to get us all vaccinated by the end of April. Like most, I signed up to be notified at multiple locations. I got lucky and was invited to receive my shots due to an end of the day surplus. But the places I signed up during the last two months are now starting to contact me. Hopefully the supply will allow everyone to get vaccinated this month.

The CDC has now said that those who have been vaccinated can begin to congregate again. So, perhaps we will be able to resume our General Business Meetings in May. And likewise, begin to congregate at the joint every Tuesday. Stay tuned to the Skyview Groups.io reflector and the Skyview Thursday Night 146.64 net for updates.

Jody - K3JZD

# 2021 is Skyview's 61st Anniversary !!

	April 1, 2021	
•	Five Watts and a Wire Free Stair Lift	
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Kul-Links



The Skyview Radio Society Clubhouse is the "Every Tuesday Place"...

Something is going on at 'the joint' each and every Tuesday evening, from about 1900 hours to whenever. See the general schedule of Tuesday events on the Skyview Web Page: <u>http://www.skyviewradio.net</u> For the latest up-to-date plan, check the Groups.io Reflector at : <u>https://groups.io/g/K3MJW</u>

Directions are on: http://www.skyviewradio.net

Guests are always welcome !!

## From the Editor

Sadly, 2021 has starting out looking too much like 2020. The Dayton Hamfest has been cancelled. And the Breezeshooters Hamfest has been cancelled. As this is being published, the Two Rivers Hamfest in McKeesport is still a go. Skyview will be evaluating the wisdom of doing each of our 2021 Social Activities as the time for each activity draws close.

This issue has Cooky - WC3O under the table and dealing with a mouse. Not necessarily in that order. Don't miss his enlightening articles.

For a while, we had several new people who were submitting articles. While I thought perhaps our being in isolation would bring some more authors out of the woodwork, that does not seem to have happened. Surely there is something that you would like to share.

**NOTE:** As this is being published, the Skyview Clubhouse is adhering to PA State Government requirements and is open at limited capacity.

## Members Only. Use at your own risk.

Follow <u>https://groups.io/g/K3MJW</u> for updates.

Jody - K3JZD

## From the Treasurer

This Skyview Member List published in this issue has been updated to reflect only those who are current with their 2021 dues as of 31MAR21. If you are not on the list, I think that you know how to fix that.

We carried over the funding for our 2020 improvements into 2021. Some preliminary activity towards getting the handicapped parking area setup and installing an assemble it yourself storage shed has already started.

Seems like there will be some opportunity for you to volunteer to assist in in the 2021 projects. Stay tuned to the 146.64 repeater to be aware of when the work parties are happening.

Maybe optimistic thinking, but the probability of having our August 2021 Swap & Shop seems to be improving as each month goes by. We are beginning to plan for it. Hopefully the rules for outdoor events will support our having it with the usual level of attendance. And hopefully by then enough people will feel confident about venturing out to attend our outdoor event.

Jody - K3JZD

Skyview Radio Society is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a charitable non-profit organization underSection 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code.Donations to Skyview are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

# Ham Radio is a Contact Sport

( Minimum QSO : 6'-0" )

People who think they know everything are a great annoyance to those of us who do. - Isaac Asimov

## Working Under the Table

If you've been to the Skyview clubhouse you've seen the radio room including the three HF stations and the VHF/UHF stations. There's also tuners, amplifiers, bandpass filters, antenna switch controllers, rotor control boxes and more. "Working under the table" is about the items under the operating table that allows all the stuff on top of the table to, well, work. We'll start full left and work our way to the right. First off - I've put an LED strip along the bottom of the table to allow easier working underneath. It helps to be able to see what you're doing.

### FULL LEFT

There is a short equipment rack. In the rack you'll find our internet modem, router and internet switch. This allows for internet via CAT5 cabling in the radio room, meeting room and pavilion. Below the internet equipment is an Astron linear power supply. There are two heavy cables that run along the length of the bench. This is our DC power bus that supplies all 12 volts (13.8 volt) to anything that needs it. The power supply is con-



nected to this bus. Later you'll see what's on the other end of the bus.

Below the 12 volt power supply sits a 1450VA full sinewave UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply). This guy supplies high quality AC power to the computers and monitors, as well as other important equipment that needs to be operational in the event of a power failure. It



does not supply power for things such as the linear amplifiers. Also one should be careful not to plug in anything like an electric heater to an outlet marked UPS. It uses four 7ah batteries.

### NEXT

Under the Green station you'll find two high power 40 meter bandpass filters. One is connected to the 40 meter beam and the other is connected to the 40 meter dipole. These are used to reduce inter-station interference on other bands, mainly 20 meters. Almost all sta-

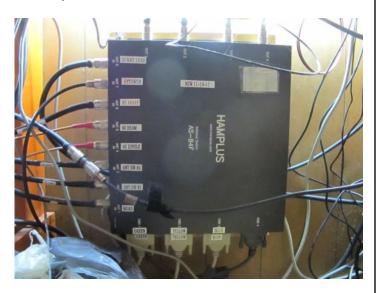


tion cabling is double shielded coax, either RG-400 or RG-214. This too is to help cut down on inter-station

### de Bob - WC3O

#### NEXT

Under the Yellow station is the main antenna switch. This switch allows any of four HF stations to have access to any of eight antennas. (We actually have more than eight antennas to choose from, but that's covered in the station operation guide) Each of the four antenna selector boxes are connected to this switch matrix. Coax from each or the four stations connect to the top of the switch. Antennas are connected on



the left. Cabling from the four selector units connect on the bottom. The plastic bags you see on the bottom left hold oil filled dummy loads. I connect these up to antenna ports on the switch if one or two antennas are out of service. This way, if someone tries using an antenna that's not there, no damage is done.

#### NEXT

Under the Blue station is a computer that is used for the remote radio that can be accessed via the internet. This computer also acts as a server to allow computer control of our three antenna rotors via the other computers in the shack. This computer is a mish-mash of parts and is the first attempt in our remote radio operation. It's quite slow. I'm looking to replace this computer in the near future with a much faster unit. Maybe a NUC or fanless



industrial computer with a solid-state drive. (Work still continues on making the remote station available to any Skyview member that wants to use it. I'm not happy with its current configuration. Stay tuned) To the left is an AC power srtip that's connected to UPS power. Along the top of the picture is the copper pipe that is used as the station ground bus. All major equipment is tied to this pipe.

#### NEXT

Here is the IC-7300 that is used as the remote radio (via KC3JBS/SK). Behind the radio is a large BIRD dummy load. If I recall the load is rated to 5000 watts! (We bought it at a good price) This load can be accessed via the main antenna switch, 8th position. You can tune a full-power amp until the cows come home and it won't even get warm. The metal hickey hanging off of the rear



of the 7300 is a coaxial relay. When the remote radio is turned off this relay grounds the antenna port on the radio and keeps strong RF signals from getting back into the radio through coupling. (We were hearing relays in the remote radio buzzing when it was off, when transmitting high-power from other stations in the shack!)

#### NEXT

Here you will find another 1050VA full sinewave UPS that is dedicated to powering all EMCOMM related items on the right side of the table including the EM-COMM computer. It is powered by three 7ah batteries.



Also on this side of the table is a large truck battery and it is connected to the other side of the 12 volt bus. This allows for continuous 12 volt power for an extended period of time during power failures. The bat-



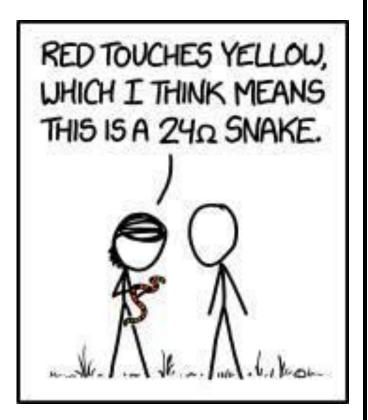
tery also helps minimize voltage sag along the bus. It is connected via a fuse. (You can also see part of a dummy load in the picture. It is not currently used)

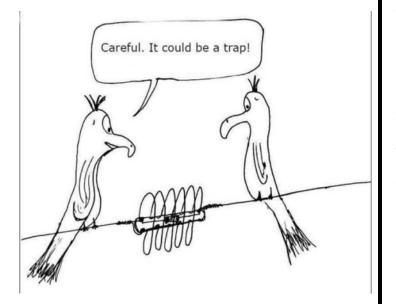
Well there you have it. It's not very comfortable to work on items under the table, but that's where it fits. I've used a lot of labels to allow others to figure out what is what. Also labels noting when a particular item was new. So next time you're using the radios, appreciate there is a whole underworld that supports the operation of all things above the table.

> Bob - WC3O Radio Officer



The difference between fiction and reality? Fiction has to make sense – Tom Clancy





## **Innovation Center**

de Jody - K3JZD

In addition to the Asian packages that regularly show up in my mailbox from my eBay parts purchases, I have also been getting some packages that have come from various European and former Soviet Union countries.

Most of these purchases that I have made from the European and former Soviet Union countries have been small ham related items being sold by a ham. Most have been inexpensive. Most have been clever and/or innovative. I tend to gravitate towards the ones that are both innovative and inexpensive.

It seems like the geographic center for the creation of these clever and/or innovative items is shifting to that area. The sources for ham created and sold items in this country are rapidly drying up. Many of the items that American hams have created and sold over the years are no longer available due to retirements and deaths. It is rare for someone to pick them up and keep them going.

I'm not a philosopher, but I have pondered this shift in the supply center a little. Perhaps the hams in the European and former Soviet Union countries are younger and have more ambition and creativity. Perhaps they are living in a lower income environment where creating and selling items is more beneficial. Perhaps we in this country are too busy creating 'big things' and have no time to create and sell 'little things'.

I hope it is not an engineering talent thing. But it could be. Some days I think that the main method of succeeding in America is to be an expert in some service industry. One need to be able to import items and sell them. Not invent them, manufacture them, and sell them. Thus a focus on business, not engineering in the schools.

Another thought was that perhaps the hams in the European and former Soviet Union countries are required to have more technical skills in order to obtain their ham licenses. As we all know, the technical requirements for getting our ham licenses are now very minimal.

I'm not drawing any conclusions here. Just noticing what seems to be an increasing geographical migration of the ham created and sold items, and pondering why.

Jody - K3JZD

## Downsizing

For most people, I guess 'Downsizing' implies moving to a smaller house. For me, Downsizing meant making some more room in my shack by moving to a smaller General Coverage Receiver.

I reluctantly found a new home for my 1949 vintage Hammarlund HQ-129-X. I had purchased that receiver used from Henry Radio back in 1959. That was back in the day when you would write them and ask them to mail you their current list of available used equipment.

Can't recall what I paid for it. I know it was \$129.00 back when it was new (\$1395 in today's dollars). It had served me well. It was never recapped, never had a tube replaced, and was still working quite well when ever it departed.

It had a pretty darn good crystal selectivity feature as well as a phasing adjustment. I added a Heathkit Q-Multiplier to get just a little more out of it. Tuning in a SSB signal was a little more challenging, but I used it mostly for CW operation and AM Shortwave broadcast listening (which sadly has diminished greatly over the years).



#### de Jody - K3JZD

Like any tube radio, it wanted to be warmed up for at least 30 minutes before the frequency stabilized.

I had purchased the factory speaker with my HQ-129-X. That big 12" speaker, in the heavy insulated metal case had the right frequency response for a communication receiver. But like the radio, it was big. And heavy. The common items in the photo suggest it's size.

Not wanting to be without any General Coverage Receiver, I looked around for a smaller replacement. After looking around a while, I settled on a small Software Defined (SDR) receiver that Curt - WU3U had found and recommended.

This Belka-DX General Coverage Receiver is without a doubt a little smaller. I used the same two common items in the photo suggest it's size. The small speaker that I found on Amazon does not have quite the same quality as my HQ-129-X speaker had. But it works .



Coverage is continuous from 1.5 to 31 MHz. It has CW, USB, LSB, AM, and NFM modes With the minimal set of menu driven multi-function buttons, it takes a little longer to move around. But I setup memories to jump right to a ham band. Sensitivity and selectivity are both pretty good.

While the Belka-DX will not warm my shack in the Winter, I now have a lot more space available to work with.

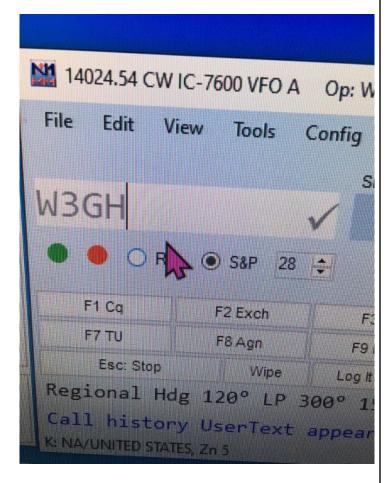
Jody - K3JZD

## Where Is That #+\*@^ Mouse Pointer?

If you're like me (read getting old), your eyes are not what they once were. Like many others, I find myself looking aimlessly at the computer screen/s wondering where the hell the mouse pointer went!

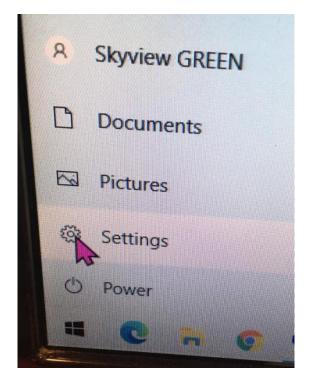
We were talking about this at the club and we made the mouse pointer much larger - and easier to find. This was all good except it made it harder to actually use the mouse because it was too big! We made a change to the computers at this clubhouse that I think is a good compromise and you might like to do yourself.

We bumped the mouse size up one notch and made the pointer bright pink! The bright color makes the pointer much easier to find for us half-blind users. I think you might like it as well.

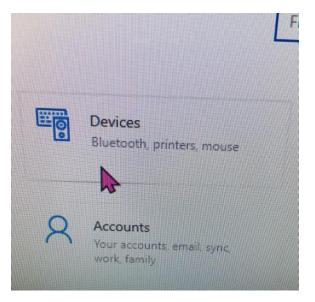


For WINDOWS 10:

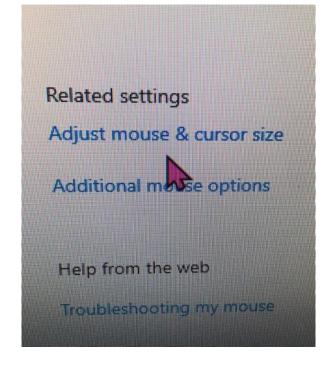
- Go to the Start menu
- Click on Settings



Click on Devices



- On the left click on Mouse
  evices
  Bluetooth & other devices
  Printers & scanners
  Mouse
  Typing
  Pen & Windows Ink
- On the right click on Adjust mouse and cursor size



- On the pointer size adjustment slide control move the size up one increment (or to your liking)
- Click on Change pointer color and click on the square with the colors displayed
- Select your bright color

Mouse ponter
Make mouse pointer and touch feedback easier to see.
Change pointer size and color
Change pointer size
₽ <b>-</b>
Change pointer color
Suggested pointer colors
+ Pick a custom pointer color

• Now back out to your desktop.

So now you don't have to look like a deer in the headlights while looking for that damn mouse pointer!

What thinks you?

Cooky

## **Upgrading My Shack - Part 4**



# **Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes**

Well best laid plans are doomed to be changed. So, what's happening to my grand plan? It all started these past few months which were so cold that I didn't get an opportunity to begin clearing out the stuff stored in the room above the garage. Personally, I can't stand the cold weather like I used to, so not much was going on in my development plans. This actually gave me time to consider the next moves for when the weather would break, and spring temps would start to show up.



de Rich - WQ3Q

Having time to consider my plan and to work on some of the details of it, I came to the conclusion that locating the shack outside from the house would force me to get out there in the cold winter days, and the very hot muggy summer days. Further, I thought of how I'd have to heat, or air condition the space to make it livable for both me and the equipment. Another consideration is that there would be extensive remodeling to be done to make that room usable, so a lot of work on just that alone will be costly and time consuming. Lastly, it would be more of a deterrent to using the radios just because of the fact that I'd have to leave the house, when I could just upgrade what I have here inside and forget relocating.

So, I am going to refashion my office in the house to accommodate the radio equipment. Then, since the tower placement is good, the only thing outside of the house on my to-do list will be securing the tower with guy ropes and getting the TH-6 and Antron 99 antennas up.

Well, reality has bit me in the bum, but has also taught me to consider how realistic my plans were. I will have couple more reports on raising the antennas (there are some real challenges on this alone,) as well as how to best set up my office/shack. I feel good about the new direction and hope that when the next segment of this story comes out, I should be done or close to it. 'til then...

73

Rich/WQ3Q Quack Quack



This map shows locations of 44 CW stations that I contacted on March 10th using 5 Watts and a Temporary 53' End Fed Random Wire Antenna.

This was during my Summits On The Air (SOTA) Activation at Seven Springs. I was using my Elecraft KX3 that was running 5 watts.

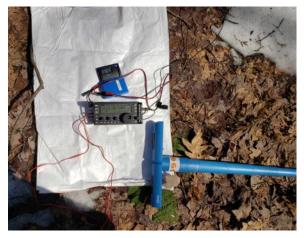
I used 20 meters for the first 30 minutes and had to manage quite a pile up. I made 25 QSOs during that first 30 minute period, including all of the QSOs into Europe. I then tried 30 meters, but did not find any activity there. Fifteen of my East Coast QSOs were then made on 40 meters, followed by four more using 60 meters.

My 53' EFRW Antenna has a 9:1 Unun, and I use a 25' counterpoise with it. The far end of my wire was supported by a tree, using a slingshot, a fishing weight and fishing line. The low end was at 1' and the high end was at about 30'. The KX3 internal tuner tuned all of these bands with no problem.

Three of my QSOs were Summit to Summit, made with SOTA Activators who were in NC, NJ, and PA. The PA one was with N2GBR who was at Mt Davis.

Seven Springs is at Elevation 909 Meters (2983 Ft), which is a bit higher than my local park at Elevation 1220 ft. That, and the fact that SOTA Activations are actively "Chased", greatly contributed to my success with Five Watts and a Temporary Wire.

Jody—K3JZD



## Noise Cancelling Headphones

To say that using noise cancelling headphones is a big advantage opposed to standard headphones is an understatement. To get rid of most all background noise is a wondrous thing. Amplifier fan noise GONE! Furnace noise GONE. Most ALL outside noise GONE!

There are a number of manufacturers that make active noise cancelling headphones. However, I think it safe to say that Bose has this technology buttoned up.

I have owned a few different Bose QC (Quiet Comfort) headphones over the years. Here is my opinion on what has worked best for me:

First off - They make around-ear sets and on-ear sets. I prefer around-ear. Some people find around-ear sets less comfortable, but I feel they are the way to go. The on-ear model is the QC2.

There are a number of around-ear models to choose from. I specifically recommend the QC25s. There are a number of reasons I say this:

- They work great (But all of the models work well)
- They use a common AAA battery that can be quickly replaced
- They still work with no battery/dead battery (sans the noise cancelling function)

Are the 25s perfect? Not so much. They do create a certain amount of background hiss. Very small amount. But



the tradeoff is a no brainer. To be rid of the other distractions is fantastic.

de Bob - WC3O

The QC25 is the only model that works without a good battery. This way if you're in the middle of something important and the battery craps out, simply switch them off and you can keep going.

The older QC2 sets also use a AAA battery, but do not work when the battery is dead. All of the other models use a proprietary Lithium ion battery that will need charging before you can continue. (Unless you've purchased a spare battery. The batteries are easily replaceable)

Bose recently came out with the all new 700 model. These also work great. Why is this good for you? Because it has caused a major drop in the price of the QC25s! You can readily find the 25s for sale, both new and used for really good prices. (They were once at \$300.00) The most you might need to do is replace the ear pads. (The Bose replacement pads are expensive, but the cheap ones work just fine)

To review:

- QC2 Older version. Works well. Single AAA battery. Will not work without battery
- QC3 On-ear version with proprietary battery. Will not work without battery.
- QC25 That's the one you want!
- QC35 Bluetooth or cable. Proprietary battery. Will not work without the battery.
- 700 Newest version. Bluetooth or cable. Proprietary battery. Will not work without the battery. (Plus other nice features)

### So what else:

Bring these on your next trip on a jet. Oh mama! That's where these QC headsets really shine. Listen to your favorite music. Audiophiles will argue with you about Bose, but for the average person they sound great. (Audiophile rip - "No highs, no lows, must be Bose")

Well that's what I thinks anyways

73, Bob, WC3O

elcome New Members ‼	Skyview Radio Society Roster as of 31MA			
	NM3A	K3HSE	AJ3O	N3L
	AD3AD	<b>KB3HXP</b>	WC3O	W3L
	KB3APD	AG31	KC3OCA	KX3V
/elcome the following Skyview Radio	NAØB	KC3IIO	KC3OCB	K3V
ociety Members who have joined us	WI8B	WA3IKQ	KC3OCC	N3V
	W3BUW	W3IU	K3OGN	W3V
since publishing the February 2021	KF3C	K3 JAS	N3OIF	N3V
newsletter:	K2CI	<b>KA3JOU</b>	KB3OMB	K3W
TIEWSTELLET.	K3CLT	ND9JR	NK3P	N3M
	K3DCG	K3JZD	K3PC	K3V
	KC3DIA	KC3KEI	KC3PEM	N3X
	KC2EGL	WA3KFS	KC3PIM	KB3Y
	KC3EJC	KB3KHR	K2PMD	W3Y
N3XF - Dave Sarault - Ligonier	AB3ER	ACØKK	KE3PO	W3Y
	K3ES	N3KNB	KC3PSQ	WA3Y
	KC3EVT	W4KV	N3PUR	K3Z
	KB3EYY	KC3KXZ	KC3PXQ	W3Z
emember that something is going on up at	WB3FAE	WE3L	WQ3Q	
'the joint' every Tuesday. Sign up for the	KC3FEI	WA3LCY	KC3QAA	
3MJW Groups.io Reflector to get the latest	K3FKI	KC3LHW	KC3QIR	
	KC3FWD	W3LID	KC3QWF	
news and event announcements by email.	AC3 GB	KØLIN	NJ3R	
	N2GBR AC3GE	WB3LJQ KG4LLQ	K3RMB W3RRK	
	KC3 GIL	K3LR	12RTF	
ou are a reader who is interested in becoming a	KC3 GIN	KC3LRT	KQ3S	
view member, then go to:	KC3 GPM	AB3LS	KB3SOU	
://www.skyviewradio.net/ for information.	K3GT	KC3LZH	K3STL	
	AB3GY	N2MA	KB3SVJ	
	KC3GZW	KC3MBM	KC3TEX	
	NC3H	N3MHZ	N3TIN	
ou are a reader who is not yet a ham, and you	NY9H	K3MJ	N3TIR	
interested in becoming a ham, , then go to:	WD3HAY	N3MRU	W3TLN	
://www.skyviewradio.net/ for information.	WA3HGW	KS3N	N3TTE	
<u>Approximation of the monitation.</u>	KB3HPC	G4NFS	AG3 U	
	<b>KA3HPM</b>	<b>KB3NSH</b>	NS3U	

#### FREE Stair Lift Available

Bob, a non-ham friend of Skyview, is offering a Powered Stair Lift (aka Chairlift) free to anyone who can use it.

It is in full working order. Bob's parents had used it. It would require a pickup in the Murrysville area.

I do not have all of the details, but I can put you in touch with Bob if you are interested.

email me at K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET Jody — K3JZD

<u>Notes:</u> Only Call Signs are being published. Refer to QRZ.COM for more information. (Unable to publish those without Call Signs.)



## Kul - Links

Jody - K3JZD

There is lots of stuff out on the Internet... Some of it can brighten your day. Some of it can educate you.

I can't really copy and past it all in here. But, I can point you at some of it . . . .

Here is something that actually makes me sad. There is a short video that shows Westinghouse showing off an Engineered for Manufacture printer, made in the USA, to outdo the Japanese competition. It is worth a watch. It is sad, because we all know that everything has gone off-shore (and as this is being written that off-shoring of chip manufacturing is currently shutting down USA automobile production, and who knows what else in the USA will get shutdown before the imported chip shortages end).

#### https://tinyurl.com/yytjrysr

Here is a pretty good article about the Summits On The Air (SOTA) program, written by an Outdoor Magazine writer

https://www.outsideonline.com/2421479/ham-radiohobby-summit

I'll consider any Kul - Links that you find. Email then to me at: K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET They might just end up in the next issue

# **Previous Issues**

Previous Issues of the Q5er are available at

http://www.nelis.net

Next Newsletter will be June 1, 2021 Closing Date For Submissions : May 15, 2021 K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET

# Become Well Known Publish in the Q5er

The Q5er goes to other clubs and is available to all on our web site.

Submissions to: K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET

# >>>>> WARNING <<<<<<

An Alarm System has been installed up at the joint. Do Not go in there on your own until you learn how to disarm and rearm it.

# \*\*\*\* Skyview VE Testing \*\*\*\*

For Testing Dates, See : http://www.arrl.org/find-an-amateur-radio-license-exam-session Time: Usually 8:15 AM

Location: Skyview Clubhouse Meeting Room 2335 Turkey Ridge Rd New Kensington PA 15068-1936

> Contact: William C. Dillen (724) 882-9612 Email: bdillen@comcast.net

Please E-Mail or call to register!!! While walk-ins are accepted, the exam session may be cancelled if no candidates are scheduled.



Q5er Editor & Publisher: Jody Nelis - K3JZD

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email your comments and article submissions to: K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET



That's Easy . . . . Come up to the Skyview Clubhouse on any Tuesday and ask !!!

All General Information about the Skyview Radio Society is at <u>http://www.skyviewradio.net</u>

Subscribe to K3MJW **groups.io** reflector for All Current News & Activities : <u>https://groups.io/g/K3MJW</u> If you want to keep up with what is going on NOW, that is the place - have it forward msgs to your email



Is this how your dining room looks ?? Send in pictures of your Ham Shack