SKYVIEW
Skyview Radio Society, K3MJW
K3MJW
2335 Turkey Ridge Road
New Kensington, PA 15068

Q5er – The Official Newsletter of the Skyview Radio Society

August 1, 2026

- **ONLINE Skyview Swap & Shop Main Prize Raffle Tickets — See Page 6**
- **Gabfest Flier**
- **W8YW Op Ed**
- . . . . And More . . .

2026 SKYVIEW RADIO SOCIETY SWAP N SHOP!

SUNDAY AUGUST 30, 2026 8:00am until 1:00pm

LOCATED AT OUR CLUB GROUNDS NEAR NEW KENSINGTON PA

Aprox 13 miles northeast of Pittsburgh

2335 Turkey Ridge Road

New Kensington, PA 15068

Talk-in 146.640- 131.8pl

Admission $5.00 – Table space is $5.00 (Bring your own table)

Main prize ICOM IC-7610!

DX Engineering gift certificates - ARRL Handbook - MORE

Begali Simplex Blue CW paddle raffle

Breakfast and lunch served

Get your Skyview Burger and your Skyview Dipole Hotdog!

Contact: John Italiano WA3KFS - 724-339-3821

K3mjw@arrl.net

https://www.facebook.com/SkyviewRadioSociety

Location is near the intersection of Rt. 366 and Rt. 380

Parking Issue Has Been Resolved

We are Good to Go !!

2026 is Skyview's 66th Anniversary !!

Sunspot Cycle is on the Down Side

10 Meter Openings are getting scarce.

Work some DX on the HF Bands Now !!

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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: http://www.skyviewradio.net

For the latest up-to-date plan, check the K3MJW Groups.io Reflector at : https://groups.io/g/K3MJW

Directions are on: http://www.skyviewradio.net Guests are always welcome !!

From the Editor

Enjoy this issue.

Jody - K3JZD

Remember: The number of people older than you never increases, it only decreases

Ham Radio is a Contact Sport

From the Treasurer

All is good.

For the First Time Ever, you may purchase advance Skyview Swap & Shop Main Prize Raffle Tickets online .

There is super Main Prize this Year. Tickets are dirt cheap for a prize of this magnitude.

This is a great way to members and guests who cannot make it to the Swap & Shop to support Skyview.

See Page 6

Jody - K3JZD

ADVENTURE: The respectful pursuit of trouble.

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

As much as I hate to point it out, COVID is not 100% gone. There are still daily hospitalization admissions for the more serious COVID cases.

Sharing is not caring. If you are not feeling well, please stay home.

Keep going because you did not come this far just to come this far. *[unknown]*

Skyview Business Meeting Minutes

Don - WA3HGW

Skyview Radio Society

Monthly Business Meeting – June 7, 2026

Call to Order: 7:30 PM by President Brian Sauk, KC3VNB

Attending – 27 members: N3WMC, KC3LVG, AC3IE, KC3VNB, N3DRB, KB3OMB, AG3U, KC3CBQ, KA3CBA, KD3BYT, N4WMI, N3KAC, K3FAZ, K3JZD, WA3KFS, WA3HGW, WC3O, WB5LLI, NM3A, AB3IK, K3STL, KC3TTK, N2MA, AA3TZ, KQ3S, AC3Q and AC3GB.

Meeting Minutes: The minutes of the June 2, 2026 meeting were distributed for review. A motion to accept the minutes as presented was made by N3WMC and seconded by KA3CBA. The motion passed without objection.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Jody, K3JZD, reviewed the 30, June, 2026 Financial Report (attached). All bills to date are paid, and fixed expenses continue to look good for the rest of 2026. Some T Bills matured and the interest was applied to the building fund, with additional T Bills to be purchased. Income was from the 50/50 drawing and donation at the May business meeting. Expenses were for new picnic table frames and repair parts for a few Heil headphones. A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report was made by WA3KFS and seconded by KA3CBA. The motion passed without objection.

Membership Report: Tom, AB3GY, was absent, so Brian, KC3VNB filled in. He advised there are two new membership application this month. KC3VNB made a motion to open the membership rolls, which was seconded by KA3CBA. The applications are from: David Braxton, KC3OOS, a General class from Pittsburgh and Logan Artim, KD3BEM, an Amateur Extra class from Monroeville. Logan is attending Gateway High School, and is starting an amateur radio club there. As he is presently under 18 years of age, he would be elected a youth member. KC3VNB made a motion to accept these applications, which was seconded by WB5LLI. The motion passed without objection. KC3VNB made a motion to close the membership rolls, which was seconded by KA3CBA. The motion passed without objection. Membership now stands at 164.

Radio Officer Report: Bob, WC3O, reported that the main 2 meter repeater is back on the air. Some interference has been noted, and seems to be from over the air, not local to the repeater. The club logged about 3200 contacts for the 13 Colonies special event. QSL cards are already being received. The 160 meter dipole is repaired and ready to go back up as weather and time permit. The 80 meter vertical phased array is repaired, and needs to be put back up. Two new computers were installed at positions in the radio room, with two more to be replaced. Otherwise, all radios and other equipment is working well.

Kitchen Report: Bob, WC3O, reported that kitchen current balance is $426. The kitchen is well stocked with the exception of M&Ms for Linda, W1MP (and your club secretary as well).

VE Report: Bob, AG3U reported there were four candidates in June. All four passed.. There are presently no candidates scheduled for the July 18 VE session at this time.

Newsletter: The June Q5er is now out with lots of great articles. New material is requested by July 15 for the August issue.

Building Committee: The township scheduled zoning exception meeting was June 11. Our exception was granted. Now we can proceed with drawings and specifications to be submitted to the township so that building permits can be processed. Our emergency back-up generator has been purchased and is in storage awaiting installation. Construction workloads with the contractor caused the install to be pushed back to mid July at this time.

Calendar of Events
:
July 1 to 7 – 13 Colonies Special Event. No operation from K3LR this year due to Tim's other commitments.
July 15 to 21 – W1AW/3 operations from Skyview.
July 19 – Somerset, PA hamfest.
July 21 – Ice Cream Social at the clubhouse.
July 26 – Flight of the Bumblebees four hour QRP CW event.
August 8 – Uniontown club Gabfest. Free admission!
August 16 – Warren, OH Hamfest.
August 18 – Korn Roast at the Clubhouse.
August 30 – The one and only, not to be missed, Skyview Radio Society Swap and Shop. Be there!

Old Business: One new picnic table has been completed. Two more to go. The lumber for one is almost finished staining, and lumber for the third needs to be purchased and the stained. One of the old tables is to be reconditioned and placed under the Tulip tree near the 80 meter phased array for a shady place to congregate away from the clubhouse.

New Business: Founders day is scheduled for Saturday, October 17. VE testing procedures at Skyview have been adjusted to accommodate the new ARRL "paperless" system.

Weather Night:

Steve, K3FAZ, claimed he is not personally responsible for the recent extremely hot and humid weather we have had. The July 14 Weather Night topic is flash flooding. This is timely with localized heavy rain and associated flooding in the area recently. Steve thanked the many hams who operated the several Skywarn Nets during those weather events.

Elmer Night: June 27. Nothing scheduled at this time.

Smoke and Solder: Paul was working on his K4 and Joel a battery box project. Don brought a frequency counter so Harley could set the transmit frequency on his 20 meter Phaser kit. While not part of S&S, K2M 13 Colonies operations were ongoing in the radio room. All are welcome to stop by and check out the projects under way. Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30 PM.

Net Report:
June: 6/2 K3FAZ at 40, 6/11 K3STL at 31, 6/18 K3WM at 42 and 6/25 WC3O at 46. Average for May is 39.75. High check-in goes to WC3O. Congrats to Cookie.

50/50 Drawing: Total amount collected is $41 with $20.50 going to Dave, N3DRB, who donated the proceeds to the club treasury.

Meeting Adjourned: Brian, KC3VNB, requested a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by WA3KFS and seconded by KC3CBQ. The motion passed without objection. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Don Stewart, WA3HGW.

https://skyview.cybernode.net/

Skyview Swap N Shop **$100.00 USD**
Main Prize Ticket

1st Prize: ICOM IC 7610 compliments of DX Engineering & ICOM
2nd Prize: ARRL Handbook for Radio Communication; 101st Edition
3rd Prize: $100 DX Engineering Gift Certificate
4th Prize: The ARRL Antenna Book; 25th Edition
5th Prize: $100 DX Engineering Gift Certificate

Ticket Pricing:
1 for $2
3 for $5
7 for $10
15 for $20
40 for $50
90 for $100

Select quantity from dropdown menu below.
Tickets purchased online will have stubs filled out for the purchaser and placed in the drawing barrel.
Ticket numbers will be emailed to the purchaser, and remaining stub will be held at 'will call' for purchaser pickup.
Purchaser does not have to be present to win!
Select ticket quantity:

90 Tickets - $100.00 USD

Please provide your name, callsign, email address and any special instructions for the tickets:

PayPal

venmo

Checkout

+more

Go To

https://skyview/cybernode.net

To Order Your Tickets

I can't image who would want less than 90 chances for this radio for only $100.

But, you will be able to select the quantity that you wish to buy whenever you get to the Web Page !!

NOTE: The Drawing expected to be on 30AUG26.

But In the event of any cancellation or delay of this Swap & Shop event, the Main Prize Drawings will then occur no later than noon on 31DEC26.

My Adventures With 2m CW

Tom – AA3TZ

Modding a cheap radio to join a ham radio "gang" and score SOTA points

Does anybody even do 2m CW? It's a weak-signal mode that promises better range for local simplex contacts on VHF, but no modern HT comes with CW as an option. For 2026, the Summits on the Air challenge encourages experimentation with weak-signal 2m modes, and some recent developments have dramatically lowered the barrier to entry for working 2m CW.

Modding the Quansheng HT

The Quansheng UV-K5, not to be confused with the Baofeng UV-5R, was introduced in 2023 as a budget HT, retailing at just under $35.

At first glance, it looks like "just another budget Chinese radio," but one quirk of its design has made the Quansheng HTs stand out.

Like many modern radios, these have a microcontroller that run a firmware program to manage the physical controls and radio components.

The unique quirk is that the firmware for the Quansheng UV-K5 is stored on flash memory, which can be rewritten many times, in contrast to read-only memory that is written once and is more typically used to store firmware.

While this design choice was likely intended to allow users to implement bugfixes for the official firmware, it opened the floodgates for hackers to write custom firmware that unlock a variety of new capabilities: spectrum display, CW, SSB reception, and so on. Many such firmware projects exist (ezgumer, IJV, CEC, F4HWN).

In recent months, Brian NR7Y has fine-tuned his own firmware (based on ezgumer) for low-latency CW operation and support for various keying options. This is now the preferred firmware for 2m CW Quansheng aficionados.

The radio of choice is the new Quansheng UV-K1 "Mini Kong," which has twice the flash memory of its predecessor, enabling far more firmware experimentation. Getting this firmware is fairly easy. There are numerous firmware flashing tools with web interfaces, and the only hardware required is a USB-C cable.

Keying the radio with a standard key requires a hardware modification, which I performed on mine. The rework requires removing two surface mount resistors and soldering in two wires to reroute signals. Doing this disconnects the microphone line from the audio bus and reroutes an internal PTT pad directly to the radio's processor. This enables you to plug a straight key or paddle into the HT's 3.5mm jack to key the radio.

Of course, making these changes means that you can never use an external mic with this $35 radio, but its built-in electret mic is perfectly adequate for my use.

I came in for a Smoke & Solder session to make the mods to my UV-K1. The mod is well-documented online and is not too difficult. The trickiest part was being sure not to rip a ribbon cable that connects the front-panel's speaker to the PCB.

I tested the radio with Paul AC3IE's IC-705 and found it worked well, though the UV-K1's transmit frequency is not exactly what the LCD says it is, leading to a slightly higher sidetone on receive. In practice this just means your zero-beat is a touch off, not a dealbreaker for casual use.

The Brass Knuckle Gang does 2m CW

Back to the original question, *does anybody even do 2m CW?* I brought a modded Quansheng to Dayton Hamven-

tion and listened 144.025, the watering hole for the *Brass Knuckle Gang (BKG),* a club started by CW evangelist Forrest KI7QCF in northern UT to promote 2m CW. To get a membership number, you need to have a 2m CW QSO with a current member (pounding brass on a straight key is optional, but encouraged).

A few BKG members were walking around the fairgrounds with these modded radios. I ran into Justin N8JMS, a BKG member in OH, and asked for a QSO. He ducked behind some bleachers so we wouldn't overload the receivers by being right next to each other and made the contact. Just like that, I became BKG member #49, the first from PA. While this contact was good, clean, and silly fun, it was also very much contrived. I was curious about where to find these 2m CW QSOs in the wild.

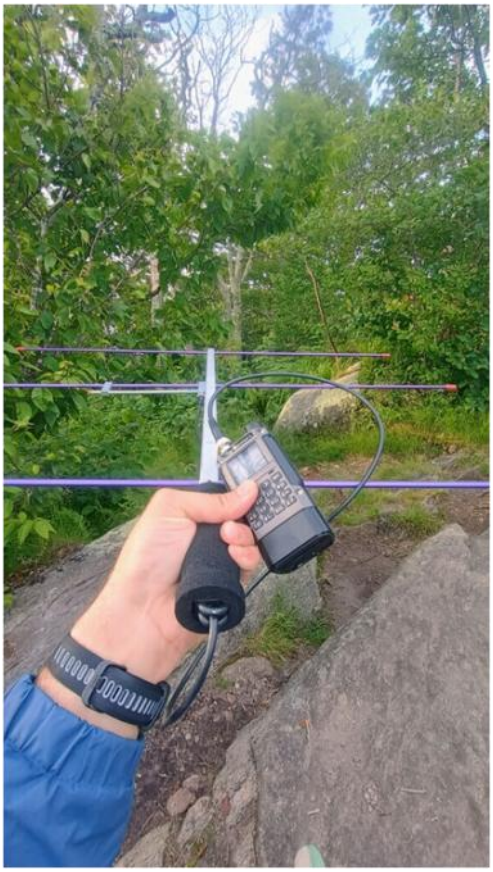
SOTA folks do 2m CW

Just before Field Day, I was in Charlotte, NC for a conference and decided to stop by Shenandoah National Park on the drive back. I had never seen Skyline Drive and was interested in doing some mountain hiking and SOTA activations out there. I posted a warning on the SOTA Appalachia reflector, and got a fair bit of engagement.

With the locals warned, I went out for a couple of mornings of SOTA.

I hiked Hawksbill, Stony Man, The Pinnacle, and Hogback, all hikes with less than 2 mi of round-trip travel.

I brought a 3-element Arrow Yagi-Uda with me for the 2m CW shenanigans.



On every single peak, I used the NR7Y firmware's memory keyer while waving the antenna in different orientations and directions. On every single peak, I was picked up by Mike W4GO's 2m RBN node (operated under his wife's callsign KK4HHP), a prominent SOTA chaser in northern Virginia. RBN picked me up, my spots were posted on the POTA and SOTA pages automatically, and I would attempt to work the handful of 2m CW-capable chasers in the area.

W4GO worked me on all four peaks from his home QTH in Midland, VA, and I also got QSOs with W4VIG in Stephens City, VA and KK4UZK in Broad Run, VA, each about 30-40 miles away. Notably, KK4UZK used a 5-element measuring tape yagi to work me on two of the summits. This is the kind of wacky fun that makes ham radio worthwhile!

Yinzers do 2m CW?

Shenandoah has the advantage of an active RBN node and a cluster of chasers nearby. Western PA is a tougher proposition: the most popular SOTA sites here (Mt. Davis, Blue Knob, Rager Mountain) are far from population centers, so the odds of scrounging up 2m contacts are low, and our hilly terrain doesn't do line-of-sight any favors.

That reality hit home on Field Day. While in Shenandoah, Brandon KD3CGE from McKeesport reached out, wanting a sked to join the BKG. It would be his first CW QSO! On the morning of Field Day, I went for a morning run in Homestead and then let Brandon know I was nearby and that we could try a QSO.

I had brought my UV-K1 with just a Signal Stick whip. He had the same setup, and was at the Two Rivers FD site in Lincoln. Of course, we had no luck due to the large hill directly between us. Brandon suggested a spot in West Mifflin with good LOS to him and we eventually got the QSO in the log.

So it's viable here, but it takes more legwork than out east. I had some luck bringing a 50W mobile radio to Blue Knob and calling on 146.52 this past spring, though I usually don't even bring a 2m radio along for SOTA/POTA activations. I'll be bringing the UV-K1 from now on.

From the POTA perspective, activating Point State Park or Allegheny Islands with just an HT is an attractive possibility, since you're close to population and more likely to find chasers. A local RBN node would help spur participation a lot.

I was recently made aware of the 2m simplex contest that the Wireless Association of the South Hills puts on every winter. This seems like the perfect time for people to try running around with modded 2m CW radios, and I'll probably participate as a rover next year.

Should you get a UV-K1?

Being a cheap radio, the front end of the Quansheng UV-K1 is easily overloaded. Since prominent mountain peaks also make great commercial radio tower sites, QRM can be a major issue for VHF SOTA activations. N6ARA Electronics is releasing a small and shielded inline BPF filter to improve the out-of-band signal rejection for 2m radios, in a direct attempt to make these and other inexpensive radios viable in high-RF environments.

If you're curious about this esoteric band/mode combo, the cost of entry has never been lower. Just over thirty bucks for the handheld, 20 minutes of your time to mod the radio, and you've suddenly joined the steadily growing ranks of 2m CW experimenters. There aren't many of us around here just yet, but with the barrier to entry being so low, why not try?

Want to try it yourself?

Here's the short version of how to do it:

Radio: Quansheng UV-K1 "Mini Kong" ($35): https://www.amazon.com/Quansheng-UV-K1-Multi-Band-Receiving-Replication/dp/B0G4QS74RL

Firmware: NR7Y's build, flashed via USB-C and a web-based flasher. Check out the firmware page here: https://github.com/briand/uv-k5-firmware-custom-cw/releases

Mod: A well-documented resistor swap + two wires to enable external keying (30-60 min with basic soldering skills). You do need a Torx bit to undo the two screws on the case!

Before you go calling CQ: There aren't RBN nodes for 2m CW around here, so most of the QSOs for the time being are with schedules.

Further Reading

IEEE Spectrum article on the Quansheng UV-K5: https://spectrum.ieee.org/quansheng-uv-k5-hacking

NR7Y firmware page: https://github.com/briand/uv-k5-firmware-custom-cw/releases

NR7Y's how-to video for UV-K1 mod: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_shVOdFm30

N6ARA 2m Tiny Filter https://n6ara.com/product/tinyfilter-2m/

Tom—AA3TZ

The Uniontown Gabfest Is Coming Up Very Fast

Uniontown Amateur Radio Club

76th Annual Gabfest

Saturday, August 8, 2026

The Uniontown Amateur Radio Club – W3PIE will conduct our
76th Annual GABFEST
Saturday, August 8th, 2026!

The gates open around 8:00 AM with vendors welcome at any time prior to 8:00 AM! Please check our web site www.w3pie.org for updates.

The GABFEST will be held at the Radio Club Grounds located on Old Pittsburgh Road just off Northgate Highway/RT 43 Mon Fayette Expressway--- near RT 51 and US RT 119 in Uniontown, PA

Talk in will be provided on 147.045 + (Full Time PL 131.8) Just call for W3PIE Gabfest Talk-In.
This talk-in is provided for directions and Gabfest information. No check in is needed if you know how to get here!

As always, free parking is available! Refreshments available! Free Swap-N-Shop Set-up with registration! Check our web site prior to the event for Updates.

Same Location, Same Free Parking, Same Great Food, New Presentations, More Fun – and always a good time and conversation with area hams

Hamfest Prizes for our event
Icom IC-7300 MK2
Yaesu FT-70DR (2)
uSDX 8-Band HF SDR (2)
Dual-Band Portable – 2 Pack
Plus More!

Address of UARC-W3PIE is 433 Old Pittsburgh Rd, Uniontown, PA

Contact Tony Alviar 724-430-1277 (M-F 8-4) or George Syner 724-439-1554 (leave message if no answer) if more information is needed. Also, Information is available anytime on 147.045 + (Full Time PL 131.8). Additionally- email officers@w3pie.org for information

Look forward to seeing everyone this year!

Why Join an Amateur Radio Club ?

Linda - W1MP

My first activation at Pittsburgh's USS Requin submarine was on June 2, 2024. Mike KC2EGL & John K3WWP had invited me to join them there for an activation. At that time, John elmered me and encouraged me on to reply to the POTA stations.

This is where they both said to me, we have a radio club you really need to meet. After visiting in June and applying, sponsored by John, Mike & Bob WC3O., I became a Skyview member at the July 2024 business meeting.

I continued to hunt POTA stations for the next three months before I realized I wanted to be a POTA Activator, not just a hunter. But (as usual) I was clueless.

After mentioning my goal at a club meeting, Paul AC3IE & Jack K3JAS introduced me to the fantastic Skyview Loan-Out Portable Radio Kit that Dan NM3A had assembled, It was a complete package, even including the paper and pencil needed to log contacts. It had detailed 'put it together' instructions as well as illustrated instructions for packing it all back into the case. Very helpful.

On October 25, 2024, I used the club's portable radio kit to do my first ever POTA activation at Keystone State Park (POTA US-1365).

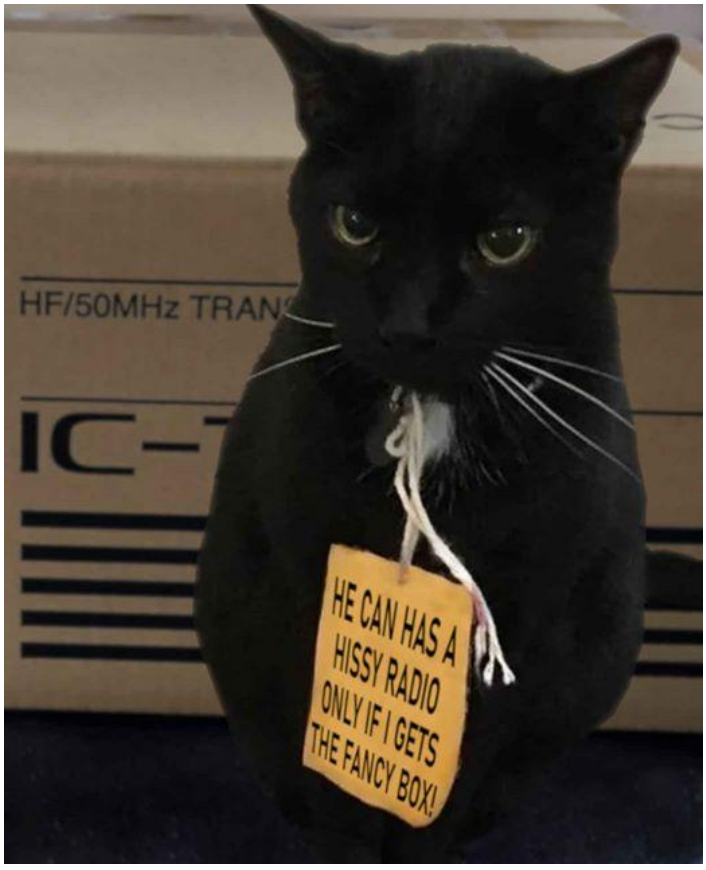
Jack & Paul assisted me, and spent a fair amount of time getting the EFRW that was included in the club's kit up as high into the air as possible.

Once I was all setup and activating, Jack said that I was so focused that I never even acknowledged the existence of the outside world.

That introduction and mentoring was all that it took to send me down this new path. I have since purchased my own portable radio and everything else that I needed to do my own frequent POTA Activations. I have experimented with different portable antennas. I do not think that I could have got to the point by myself.

My OM (SK) would have LOVED this club!!

de Linda W1MP



The Evolution of My POTA Antenna Setup

Joel - KC3LVG

The Evolution of My POTA Antenna Setup

Like most things I build, my Parks on the Air (POTA) antenna setup didn't come from a master plan. It started with an idea and evolved as I used it. I've found the best way to learn is to just start doing. I would try a new idea during a POTA activation, discover what worked well, and then find something else that didn't. Each activation gave me another problem to solve. Over time, those individual improvements became a flexible portable antenna system that is much easier to deploy and better suited to the way I operate.

Starting with the JPC-12

My first portable antenna was a JPC-12 vertical. The original antenna used several threaded metal sections, a coil, a spike, and an 8.2-foot telescoping whip.

The antenna worked, but the SWR wasn't as good as I wanted, and I wanted to be able to use the antenna without always using a loading coil. After doing some research, I bought an 18.4-foot telescoping whip from Amazon. Finding the correct whip took some effort because the JPC-12 uses a 10 mm thread rather than the more common 3/8-24 antenna thread.

The longer whip gave me considerably more flexibility. With the 18.4-foot whip, I could operate on 20, 17, 15, 12, 10, and 6 meters without using the loading coil. When I wanted to operate on 40 meters, I could use the JPC-12 coil.

Improving the Radial System

The next part of the system I changed was the radials. The original radial system used several thin wires that constantly became tangled and eventually started breaking off. I replaced the radial wires that came with the JPC-12 kit with wires cut to length for the 20- and 10-meter bands.

I made a radial connection plate from two PCB boards. I sandwiched the boards together and glued them using E6000 adhesive. I, then, added four connection points for attaching the radial wires. This was a relatively simple modification, but it noticeably improved my SWR.

The radial plate also made the system easier to organize because I had defined connection points instead of several loose wires attached around the antenna base.

Building Radial Reels

I decided to design reels for the radial wires. Each radial could be wound onto its own reel, carried without becoming tangled, and quickly pulled out when I arrived at a park. The weight of the reel helped keep the end of the radial in place, although my original plan was to secure each reel with a small ground spike to prevent the wire from curling back toward the antenna.

The reels made both setup and teardown easier. Instead of trying to coil loose wire by hand and hoping it stayed organized in storage, I could wind each radial back onto its reel. I designed and 3D-printed a carrying cage that keeps all of the reels together.

This didn't change the electrical performance of the antenna, but it made setup, teardown, and storage much easier.

Replacing the Ground Spike

The original JPC-12 configuration depended on driving a spike into the ground. That works in many locations, but I learned that some POTA sites don't allow operators to break or disturb the ground.

During one weekend trip, I forgot the JPC-12 ground spike and had to stop at a hardware store to improvise a replacement. That experience reinforced how dependent the original setup was on one easy-to-forget part. Not long after that, AC3IE suggested using a tripod instead.

That solved the problem of the ground spike, but it introduced another concern: keeping the whip stable when the wind picked up.

I designed and 3D-printed a part that fits over the antenna assembly. The printed part sits about five feet above the ground and gives me a place to attach paracord. I can run the paracord to counterweights to stabilize the antenna and reduce the chance of it blowing over.

This really came in handy during one activation when the wind pushed the antenna to about a 45-degree angle.

A Freezing Solo Activation

I completed my first solo POTA activation in the middle of December, with the temperature below freezing. Because I was operating alone, I had to make sure I brought everything I needed and could handle the entire setup and teardown myself.

The radial reels really helped keep me out of the cold. They let me deploy and retrieve the wires much faster than trying to manage loose radials with cold hands. That activation made me realize that faster deployment wasn't just a convenience. In cold weather, it could make the difference between an enjoyable activation and a miserable one.

Experimenting with Faraday Cloth

Even with the radial reels, I was interested in finding a faster ground-plane system.

I began researching conductive Faraday cloth and tested a piece at home as a ground plane. The initial results were good enough that I decided to build a more durable version.

I spent a day sandwiching the Faraday cloth between pieces of tarp. The tarp protects the conductive material from fraying and helps prevent damage during transport and deployment.

I also installed grommets around the edges. This allowed me to attach weighted water bottles to the grommets to keep the ground plane from blowing away.

Compared with deploying several individual radial wires, the Faraday cloth is much faster. I can unfold it, secure the edges, connect it to the antenna system, and begin tuning.

There is a tradeoff. The cloth-and-tarp ground plane is less convenient when it rains. A wet ground plane is harder to fold, transport, and dry afterward.

Creating Magnetic Vehicle-Door Mounts

I also wanted to have multiple antennas available at the same time so I could switch bands more quickly.

I started with an antenna mirror mount and converted it into a magnetic vehicle-door mount. I designed and 3D-printed an adapter that attaches the magnets to the mirror mount.

The antenna still needed a good electrical connection to the vehicle body. I attached a wire with a ring terminal to one of the bolts that secures the hatch's hydraulic lift support to the vehicle.

That bolt provides a solid connection to the vehicle body. I added another wire with a clip so I can quickly connect or disconnect the grounding wire from the antenna mount.

With this setup, I can generally tune antennas for 20, 17, 15, 12, 10, and 6 meters to approximately 1.2:1 SWR.
After using the first mount, I built a second magnetic door-mount assembly. This lets me have more than one vertical antenna ready for different bands instead of stopping to retune or rebuild the same antenna every time I want to change frequencies.

This came in handy during one activation when I was switching between 20 and 40 meters and checking PSK Reporter to see which band I was being heard on.
The magnetic mount has also been useful when I have very little time or space. During lunch at Contest University, I was able to run out to my car, attach the mount, put up a 20-meter vertical, make several FT8 contacts, and take everything back down in under 15 minutes.

Building the Elevated Dipole

In January, I bought a DX Engineering Complete Fiberglass Tubing and Cam Lock Clamp Kit, model DXE-TFK25.

I designed a 3D-printed V-shaped mount that holds two 18.4-foot whips. The two whips extend outward from the mount and resemble a pair of rabbit ears.

This arrangement allows me to use the whips as an elevated dipole. The center of the dipole, where the two whips attach to the V-shaped mount, sits approximately 25 feet above the ground. From there, the two whips extend upward and outward.

This has become my favorite POTA antenna.

Since switching to the elevated dipole, I've noticed that I receive more 59 signal reports. I've also received a few 59+10 reports, and some operators have told me that my signal was "booming."

This is a personal observation rather than a controlled antenna comparison. Propagation, band conditions, distance, and the receiving station can all affect a signal report. Still, the reports have been encouraging, and the dipole has performed well enough that it is now the antenna I prefer when the site gives me room to install the mast.

My Current POTA Setup

My current portable system can support as many as three vertical antennas and one elevated dipole.

I don't deploy everything at once. I usually set up antennas for 40 and 20 meters because those are where I make most of my contacts. Depending on band conditions, I may also jump onto 15 or 17 meters.

The tripod is useful because now I don't have to put a spike into the ground. The magnetic mounts work when I have space constraints or need to set up and tear down quickly. The Faraday cloth ground plane is useful when fast deployment matters and the weather is dry. The elevated dipole is my preferred choice when I have enough space for the fiberglass mast.

The biggest lesson I've learned is that a portable antenna system improves through actual field use. A design that looks good at home may still have problems when it is cold, windy, raining, or being assembled alone in a parking area.

Faster deployment matters, especially when the temperature is below freezing. Every solution also has tradeoffs. Radials work well but can tangle. Faraday cloth is fast but less convenient when wet. A ground spike is simple, but park rules may prohibit it. A mast can improve antenna height, but it requires more equipment and space.

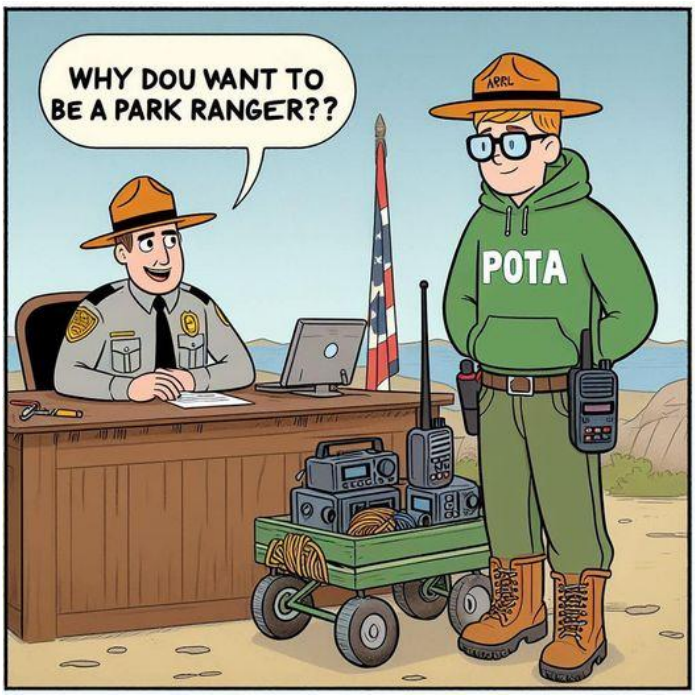
3D printing has allowed me to solve several small but important problems, from stabilizing the vertical to holding magnets and building the rabbit-ear dipole mount. None of those parts operates the radio, but each one makes the station easier to use.

The best portable antenna isn't always the antenna with the most impressive specification. It is often the antenna that fits the location, the weather, the park rules, and the goal of that particular activation.

Joel - KC3LVG

Parks on the Air

https://docs.pota.app/



Another Dayton Story

Cooky - WC3O

Many of you likely heard me tell the story of when I was first licensed.

Well here it is again...

I started out as a lowly CBer after winning a $50 strip ticket at the Saint Raphael Church Bizarre. I was going to either buy a CB radio or a Fender Precision bass guitar. You can likely guess which way I went.

Growing up in the neighborhood of Morningside, I found that I was being "splashed" by a very strong nearby signal but dang if I couldn't find where it was coming from?

It was kind of obvious, but there was a house down on Jancey Street that had a huge Moonraker 4 (An 11 meter 4 element cross polarized beam) mounted on a relatively small chimney. I went and knocked on the door.

Enter Vic Capocciama. Vic was also a bootleg CBer with a WAY COOL Tram D201 radio and a Varment 600 linear amplifier! OH MAN! I couldn't find his interfering signal because he had modified his radio to work below channel 1 of the CB band. How could I not follow suit! I landed up with a Robyn T123B radio and a Varment 400 amp.

I had a PDL2 beam on the roof, an Alliance U100 rotor and life was good. I STILL use the very same D104 mic that I used with that station. Vic's station was in his coal cellar underneath his front porch.

Vic smoked CONSTANTLY. I would go hang out and watch him work DX with that Tram D201. It was great. I worked my share of DX from home as well. I was probably quite the pain in the ass to him but...

While a lowly CBer I met another CBer that lived in Penn Hills. It was Mike, AKA 'Little Red'. I was Phantom 309. Mike and I got into all sorts of mischief together.

Eventually, Vic decided to get his ham license. He became KA3BDH. He bought a Yaesu FT-101E and the matching Yaesu amplifier. Vic is the one that got me hooked on the Dentron MT3000 antenna tuner.

How could Mike and I not follow suit? Mike and I took our Novice tests on Vics sunporch. (Different testing rules at the time) We stapled our, then 610 forms together and mailed them off to the FCC.

Some time later an envelope from the FCC arrived in the mail! It was one of those strange envelopes that you had to rip off the two perforated sides to get the letter opened. Mikey also got his

As it turned out I was KA3EDC (Extremely Dead Cat) and Mikey was KA3EDD (Extremely Dead Dog. This was in 1979. Mike and I came up through the ranks together as General, then Advanced and finally Amateur Extra. (There's a story there too)

Mike was my Dayton buddy for many years. We would sleep right in the flea market at Hara. We had a blast. Again, more stories…

Mike, now WA3O, eventually moved to Monroeville and now lives in West Virginia. I don't get to talk to Mike much other than chance meetups.

Well who should I see this year at Dayton? Mikey!

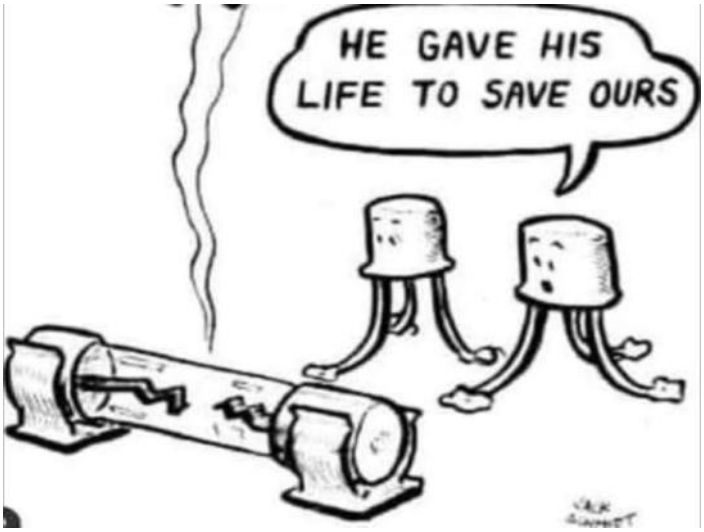
Through the years I was always kind of an appliance operator where Mikey was always much more hands on. Be sure to check out his QRZ page and his work with water cooled LDMOS amplifiers. He also has extensive experience on the lowfer bands.

Vic is a silent key now. I wish I would have reached out to him before his passing. Too late now.

There's much more to the story but we'll stop here.

What a great hobby.

Cooky — WC3O



Outing at a SOTA in a POTA

Dan - NM3A

The K4NN Field Day, with my FD partner Jim - WS6X, in Harrisonburg, VA was over.

But Janice and I had a memorial service to go to in Virginia. So we took advantage of the two extra days to spend some time at Big Meadows in Shenandoah National Park (SNP).

Surprisingly, the campsite was not completely full - unusual for this time of year. I suspect that high gas prices made some rethink their summertime travels.

Summits On The Air (SOTA) peaks have a point rating from 1 to 10 based on elevation, with 10 being the highest peak in a given SOTA area. The points are relative to the area and not absolute.

For example, Mt Davis is the highest peak in Pennsylvania at 3212 feet and is a 10 pointer, while in Colorado, Booth Mountain is a 1 pointer at 6470 feet. SNP has about 15 ten or eight point SOTA peaks and at least as many lesser point peaks. Many of these are accessible with an easy, short hike from a parking area off of Skyline Drive.

The first day we took a short hike to ten pointer Hawksbill Mountain (W4V/SH-001).

At 4059 feet, it is the highest peak in SNP. It's not far from Big Meadows and the hike is pretty easy - about 1 mile and only about 400 feet elevation gain.

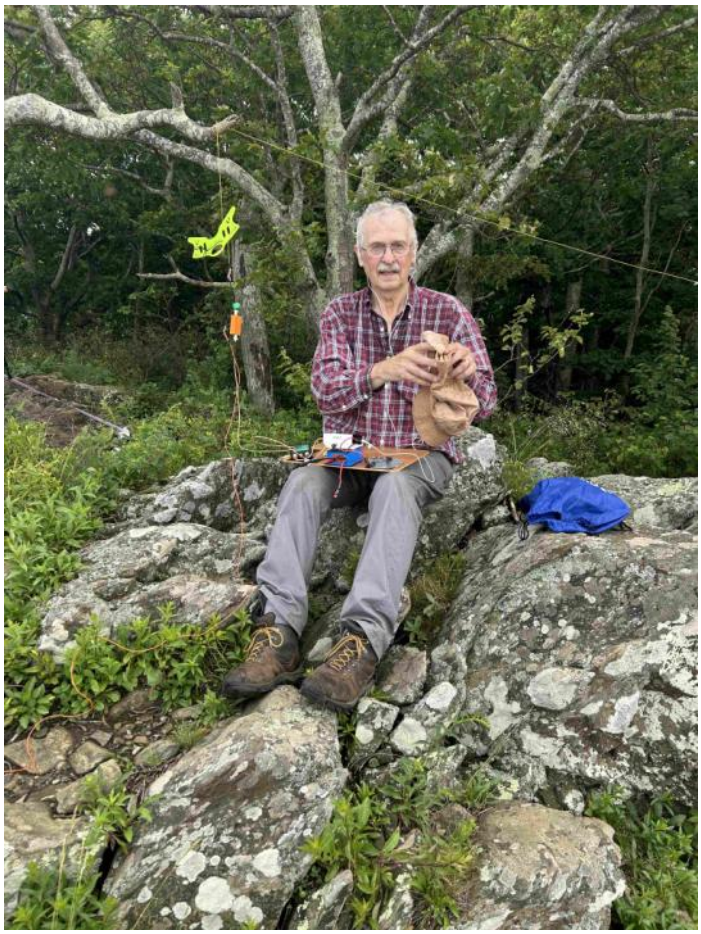
The trail was wide and without many rough or muddy spots.

There's a small lookout platform at the top and quite a large rocky area where you can usually get a great view toward the west of the South Fork of the Shenandoah river valley below.

Of course, I took advantage to activate the summit, as well as the park. That was the highlight, as the view that day was just of the low clouds with rare short breaks of haze over the valley below. We could not see Massanutten ridge which is less than 20 miles west of Hawksbill and only barely got a glimpse of the valley.

I strung up my usual 85' end fed wire. There aren't any tall trees there on the mountain top, but plenty of scrub brush and short trees. I hung the wire at about 7 feet elevation on branches I could reach. That kept my wire out of the heads and hair of other hikers. I found an out of the way rock to operate from. The wire and a 17 foot counterpoise were connected to my low bands (80-20m) QMX radio via a homemade 9:1 unun.

As usual, I did not use a choke. Operating at 5 watts or less and using a counterpoise does not present any significant RF feedback issues. A 3 Ahr lithium iron phosphate battery, an Elecraft T1 automatic matching unit, ear phones, and a BaMaTech TP-III paddle on my lap table rounded out my equipment.



I began on 40 meters to work some of the locals. Notable Qs were with Howard, K4LXY, who was also part of our K4NN team for FD and Jim, KU3J of Skyview. The rest were more regular SOTA chasers.

I got 10 total CW Qs on 40, 30, and 20 meters to qualify as a POTA activation (US-0064) as well.

Half a dozen hikers stopped to ask what I was doing. One even recognized that it was amateur radio. Other curious hikers looked, but did not stop.

On the way back we came across a beautiful ring neck snake resting on the trail.

Not quite the rattler that I keep looking for, but a nice sight all the same. It hurried off after some grass brushed up against it.

Before leaving the next day, we took a leisurely walk on the Limberlost Trail and another short walk on the Appalachian Trail (US-4556) as well.

No, I didn't activate the AT - I didn't think to!

On the way out, I chased another ham up on Hawksbill on 146.52 FM simplex. I suspect he got an easy 4 (the SOTA minimum for an activation) or more Qs from other hams in the park.

Gotta spend some more time here in SNP. This place is awesome in more ways than one!

Dan - NM3A

Shenandoah National Park, VA

Reprinted From the June 2026 South Hills Amateur Radio Club WashRag

ARRL: Op Ed

Thomas Henderson W9YW

Bloomington, IN, May 19th, 2026 – I've been involved in this discussion for a while, and went to see Dave NA2AA at the ARRL booth at Hamvention with the purpose of getting clarification on the 'not a representative democracy' idea foisted in his editorial.

It is certain, and without a doubt in our conversation, that he does not believe the ARRL is a representative democracy in almost any sense of the word. Moreover, without naming this site and perhaps this very thread, he began to reference the ARRL bylaws, and additionally, critics, which he does not like.

My experience with The League, starting in the mid 1960s, doesn't agree with his assessment. I was also told by him about a ham who left his multi-million 401K to The League. And while I understand hallowing The Big Fruit, it would seem that the $59 membership/members have in certainty, become the lowest rung of his pecking order. Thrown in by habit were rubrics like Spectrum Defense, etc.

All of us as members come from a staggering variety of backgrounds. We're both an erudite, considered, endlessly curious, but also motley crew.

I have to vote No Confidence in Minster's leadership.

And worse news, Steve Goodgame, who runs ARRL Education, is leaving the organization to go back to teaching FT. I hope this doesn't lead to further serial discontinuities.

I had hoped for something that would express egalitarian leadership, not just the voracious stewardship idea, but was not rewarded. Worse, the L word was invoked, as in CT Lawyers- the hallmark of the inept.

God Save The League.

Welcome New Members !!

Welcome the following Skyview Radio Society Members who have joined us since publishing the June 2026 newsletter:

N3WKN - Corbin Bobinski - Arnold, PA

KD3BEM - Logan Artim - Monroeville

KC3OOS - Dave Braxton - Pittsburgh 15235

Remember that something is going on up at 'the joint' every Tuesday. Sign up for the K3MJW Groups.io Reflector to get the latest news and event announcements by email.

If you are a reader who is interested in becoming a Skyview member, then go to: http://www.skyviewradio.net/ for information.

If you are a reader who is not yet a ham, and you are interested in becoming a ham, , then go to: http://www.skyviewradio.net/ for information.

Skyview Radio Society Roster as of 31 JULY 26

NM3 A	KC3 GPM	K3 MJ	AA3 TZ
K3 AEB	K3 GT	W1 MP	AG3 U
KD3 AET	AB3 GY	K3 MRN	NS3 U
N3 AFS	KC3 GZW	N3 MRU	WU3 U
KD3 AMZ	NY9 H	KS3 N	KB3 UIO
KD3 ANT	WB3 HFP	AC3 NA	KC3 UNP
KD3 AQP	WA3 HGW	KB3 NSH	W3 UY
NA0 B	KB3 HPC	AJ3 O	KX3 V
N3 BAH	K3 HSE	WC3 O	KC3 VCX
KD3 BEM	AK4 HZ	WO3 O	KC3 VNB
W3 BRL	AG3 I	KC3 OCA	K3 VRU
KD3 BUF	AC3 IE	KC3 OCB	N3 VXT
W3 BUW	KE3 IF	K3 OGN	KC3 VYK
KD3 BXY	KC3 IIO	KB3 OMB	W3 VYK
KD3 BYT	AB3 IK	KC3 OOS	N3 WAV
KF3 C	WB3 INB	K4 PDF	W3 WC
KA3 CBA	W3 IU	KC3 PIM	KC3 WCJ
KC3 CBQ	KU3 J	K2 PMD	K3 WM
W3 CDW	WJ3 J	KE3 PO	N3 WMC
K2 CI	K3 JAS	W3 PRL	N3 WMI
K3 CLT	WB3 JHC	KC3 PSQ	KA3 WVU
WB6 CQA	N3 JLR	KC3 PXQ	K3 WWP
N5 DB	KA3 JOU	AC3 Q	N3 XF
K3 DCG	ND9 JR	NU3 Q	W3 XOX
N3 DL	K3 JZD	KC3 QAA	KC3 YEZ
N3 DRB	N3 KAC	N3 QZU	N3 YJN
KB3 DVD	WA3 KFS	NJ3 R	KC3 YMC
KC2 EGL	AC3 KI	K3 RMB	W3 YNI
KC3 EJC	AC0 KK	N3 ROV	W3 YS
KA3 EKO	K3 KR	W3 RRK	KB3 YT
AB3 ER	N3 KWN	I2 RTF	KE3 Z
WA3 ERT	KC3 KXZ	KI2 RTF	K3 ZAU
N3 ERW	WE3 L	K3 RWN	KB3 ZFC
K3 ES	WA3 LCY	KQ3 S	KC3 ZOH
KG3 F	AC3 LD	K3 SBE	W3 ZVX
WB3 FAE	KC3 LHW	WA3 SCM	
K3 FAZ	K3 LL	KC3 SDJ	
KC3 FEI	WB5 LLI	KC3 SNZ	
K3 FH	KB3 LND	KB3 SOU	
K3 FKI	K3 LR	K3 STL	
KC3 FWD	KC3 LRT	KC3 STV	
NG3 G	AB3 LS	W3 SW	
AC3 GB	KC2 LVG	N3 TIN	
N2 GBR	KB3 LYA	W3 TLN	
AC3 GE	N2 MA	KK3 TM	
K3 GIR	KC3 MBM	N3 TTE	
KB3 GKX	KC3 MIQ	KC3 TTK	

Notes: 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 to some of it . . . . .

Nothing this month

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 October 1, 2026
Closing Date For Submissions : Sept 15, 2026
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: Bill Dillen - N3WMC
(724) 882-9612
Email: bdillen@comcast.net
http://www.skyviewradio.net/ve-tests/

Please E-Mail or call to register!!!

– NO WALK INS—MUST REGISTER —

Q5er Editor & Publisher: Jody Nelis - K3JZD

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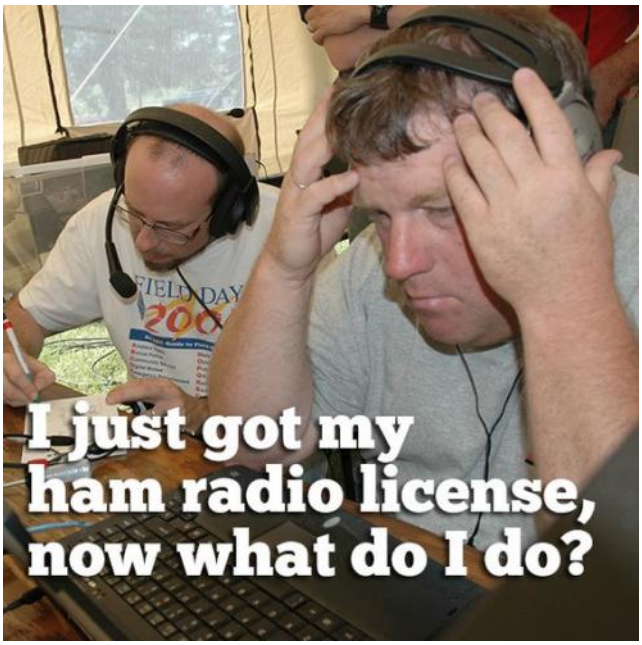
email your comments and article submissions to:
K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET



That's Easy . . . .

Come up to the Skyview Clubhouse on any Tuesday and ask !!!

And See : https://tinyurl.com/y79tqsr8

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

Subscribe to K3MJW **groups.io** reflector for All Current News & Activities : https://groups.io/g/K3MJW
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