

KEY CITY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

January 2005

Christmas Dinner

Kent West, KC5ENO

We had no meeting in December; rather, we had our annual Christmas Dinner. For the past several years we've had it catered at ACU. It's always been a nice, classy affair. However, this year we elected to have a more down-home dinner, and so we reserved one of the back rooms at Harlow's Steakhouse. It turned out to be a good decision. The turnout was very good. The food was great. The camaraderie could not be beaten. All in all, it was a great event, and I'm looking forward to next year's Christmas Dinner even more than I was to this one.

It's now official: Lance, KD5EFB, is President. Matt, KE4DXE, is Vice President. Peg, KA4UPA, is Treasurer. And Kent, KC5ENO, is Secretary.

Club Meeting Reminder

Remember to attend the next meeting of the Key City Amateur Radio Club Monday, 10 January, at 7pm on the second floor of the Abilene Public Library.

Another Firefox Feature

Kent West, KC5ENO

Everyone has heard my opinion about Mozilla Firefox; it's a great web browser, and is much preferred, for both features and security, over the web browser built into Windows, Internet Explorer.

I've just learned of a feature with which I was unacquainted: Smart Keywords.

Smart Keywords are essentially a special type of bookmark ("Favorite", in IE-speak) that allows you to use all sorts of search engines from the address bar. For example, type into the address bar "dict dragoon", and you'll be taken to www.dictionary.com's definition of dragoon.

Or type in "niv romans 8", and you'll be taken to an online NIV Bible turned to Romans 8. (Try "kjv" and "esv" and others while you're at it.)

Or type in "imdb elvis" to get to the Internet Movie Data Base page on Elvis Presley.

Or you can create your own Smart Keywords. For example, go to <http://www.tigerdirect.com>, and right-click in the Search field. This should produce a pull-down menu,

from which you should select "Add a Keyword for this Search". This will open a new dialog box. Give this search a name, such as "Search TigerDirect.com", then give it a keyword, such as "pcshop". Now whenever you want to search TigerDirect's database for your next hard drive just enter into Firefox's address bar the phrase "pcshop hard drive". You can create a Smart Keyword for any page with a search field.

ARRL Website adds RSS Feeds

Kent West, KC5ENO

If you've browsed to the ARRL web site lately (<http://www.arrl.org>) with an RSS-enabled web browser, such as Mozilla Firefox, you may have noticed that the site has added RSS feeds. For example, when you connect to this site with Firefox, you'll see a small orange icon at the bottom-right corner of your Firefox window. (Users of other browsers might notice the "RSS Feed - What's this?" link on the front page of the ARRL web site, or be notified in some other manner.) If you click on the orange icon, it'll pop up a small window

saying "Subscribe to 'ARRL Amateur Radio News...". Click on this button, and the "Add Bookmark" window will appear. Click on "Add", and you've just subscribed to the ARRL RSS feed.

Now, instead of connecting to the ARRL web site every day to see the latest headlines on their home page, just look in your bookmarks. There will be a main bookmark named "ARRLWeb: ARRL Home Page", and under this bookmark will be a bookmark for each headline. The bookmarks are "live", and change as the headlines change, so that tomorrow your bookmarks will point to tomorrow's headlines, and the next day's bookmarks will point to the next day's headlines, and so on. And of course, since Firefox has tabbed browsing, you can open all the headlines in separate tabs with a single click.

(PS. You might also notice that if you click on the "RSS Feed-What's this?" link on the ARRL home page, you'll see that the site is running on Linux, allowing them to use that old 700MHz machine that would otherwise likely be considered obsolete.)

Kids Like Code

Kent West, KC5ENO

Chuck Counselman, W1HIS, recently visited a first grade class. With 21 kids gathered around him he built a CW transmitter from a handful of parts, based on a simple Colpitts LC oscillator shown in the 2000 edition of The ARRL Handbook. With no antenna and very little power, the CW signal could be picked up on the AM broadcast band, even out in the playground.

Each child got a chance to transmit, and they had so much fun that

the original plan of spending half an hour with the kids expanded into half a day.

Chuck's story in his own words, along with pictures, is found at: <http://www.arrl.org/news/features/2004/12/31/2/>.

New World Record by Amateur Radio Operator

Kent West, KC5ENO

Working out to 13 million miles per watt, radio amateur Bill Tippet, W4ZV, of North Carolina copied the word OMAHA from a beacon transmitter operating on the 80 meters band. The transmitter had a peak transmitting power of only .0000406 watts, making this the longest mile/per watt QSO on record. The full story is available at <http://www.eham.net/articles/9982>.

Refresher

Kent West, KC5ENO

The following definitions are not completely accurate, but they're hopefully useful as mental concepts.

Voltage is the pressure that pushes electrons from one place to another, the driving force of electricity (electromotive force).

A **conductor** is a substance through which electricity flows, such as a copper wire.

A **diode** is a one-way valve. It allows electricity to flow in only one direction through a conductor.

A **transistor** is an adjustable diode. Think of it as having a much smaller controlling flow of electricity that squeezes the diode so as to reduce the flow of electricity, regulating the flow anywhere from completely off, to some flow, to completely on (saturated).

A capacitor is a very short-term rechargeable power cell (battery).

Tidbits

Kent West, KC5ENO

* According to <http://weather1.herald.com/auto/mi/amiherald/history/airport/KABI/2004/12/15/DailyHistory.html>, the average yearly rainfall for Abilene is 23.12 inches, but this year it has been the second wettest year since records have been kept, at 36.94 inches.

* Our condolences to Peg Richard and family; her father, N9MAH, McKinley Woodworth, Jr, became a Silent Key on 16 December 2004.

* Gary Peterson, NZ5V, reminds us: "There is a ham breakfast on Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of every week. If your work schedule permits, I would encourage you to come to breakfast one morning. You'll have to check with him for time and location.

* If you only watch one really stupid, but really funny, movie this year, make it "Kung Pow". Ooh-whee-ooh-whee-ooh-whee-ooh.

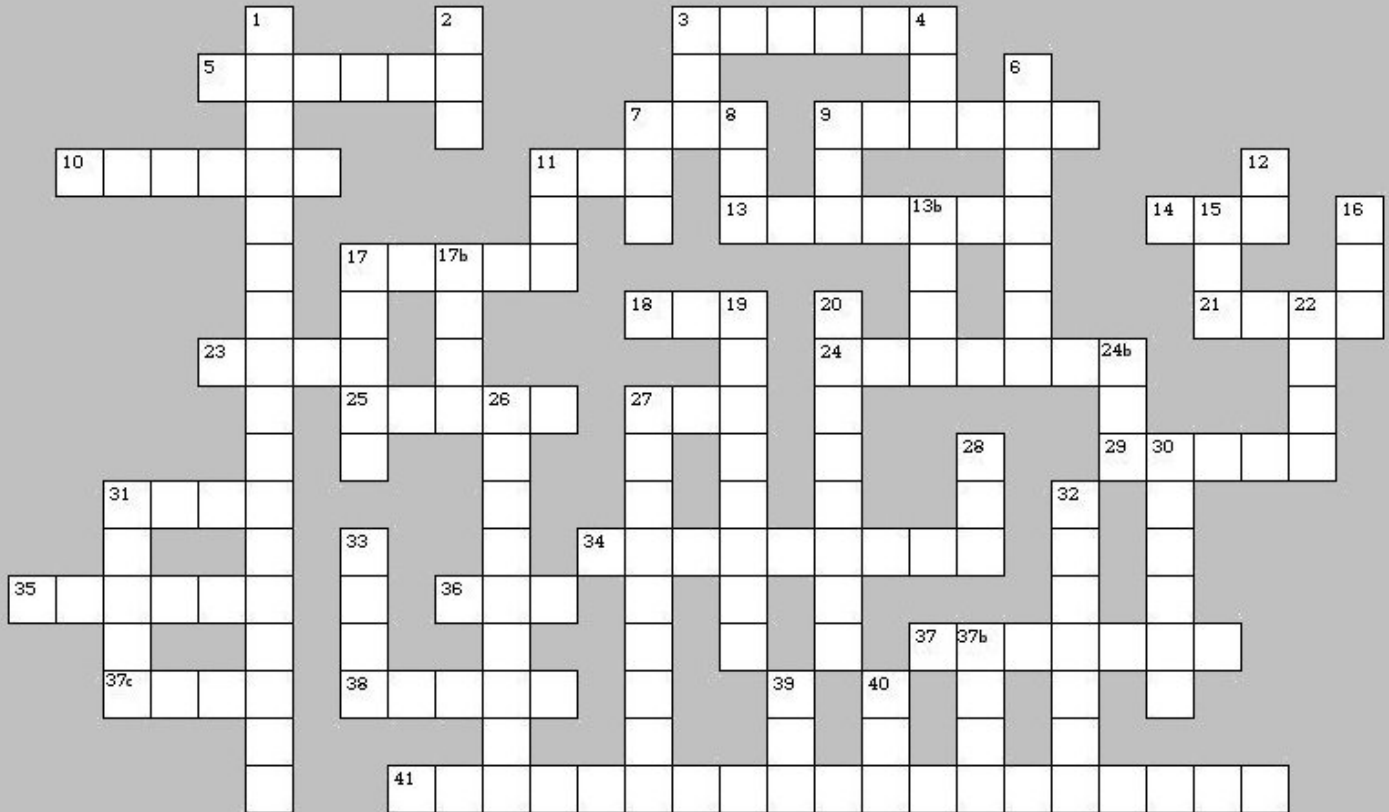
* The Martian rovers "Spirit" and "Opportunity", designed to last only 90 days, are now a year old (roughly) and still going strong.



The fun you can have with a small red light and a 15-second exposure time on your camera.

http://www.zzz.com.ru/index.php?area=issues&action=show_issue&issue_no=196&session_id=0

Ham Challenge



Across

- 3 Yo! Buddy! I'm calling you! (repeated thrice)
 5 Highest region of ionosphere
 7 Decrease power
 9 A baby's first Morse transmission, "M"
 10 Shows signal strength: _ ____
 11 Current time
 13 Programming language shipped with MS-DOS
 14 Between hf and uhf
 17 Not a noun, but _ ____
 18 Receipt acknowledgement
 21 2005 KCARC vp
 23 2005 KCARC secretary
 24 To increase in strength
 25 High-flying repeater
 27 Adam was first
 29 2005 KCARC president
 31 Extinct bird
 34 Popular proprietary OS
 35 Return path for AC
 36 Ham's main piece of equipment
 37 Free, cross-platform web browser with built-in pop-up blocking, smart keywords, tabbed browsing, and unfriendly to viruses and spyware
 37c Irish musician of "Watermark" fame
 38 Popular free GPL'd OS
 41 FM

Down

- 1 BSOD
 2 Signal interference
 3 Passenger automobile
 4 Current location
 6 Traditionally considered the father of radio
 7 Call sign
 8 2005 KCARC treasurer
 9 Half of the husband/wife team that created Debian
 11 Distance between us, in KM
 12 Below 30 MHz
 13b Fleamarket" ____fest
 15 Amateur radio operator
 16 E, in Morse
 17 Type of RTTY
 17b Extended narrative poem celebrating heroic feats
 19 Telephone system
 20 Sabbath
 22 Transistor's ancestor
 24b Crazy robot gunslinger, King Mongkut, and Rameses
 26 Type of modulation based on signal strength
 27 CW (two words)
 28 Send more slowly
 30 Continuously varying signal (not digital)
 31 An electronic one-way valve
 32 RF radiator
 33 National ham organization
 37b the International "version" of the ARRL
 39 Change frequency
 40 Increase power

Slashdot mentions Ham Radio

Lifted from
<http://slashdot.org/index.pl?issue=20050102>

SonicSpike writes "A University of Central Florida ham radio operator K4VUD (and founder of their film program) was caught in Port Blair during the earthquake and following tsunami! He and a team of other ham radio operators arrived in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to setup the region's first ham station 2 weeks prior to the disaster. Once they realized what happened they immediately began transmitting for 20 straight hours

Fill out the enclosed survey, and bring it to the club meeting Monday night.

using car batteries as a power source. Most cellular and land-line communication was down. His team became the main link to the rest of the world from the region."

Handheld outplays cell phone in accident's wake

Lifted from the front page of
<http://www.arrl.org/> on 23 December 2004.

When Storey County, Nevada, Emergency Coordinator Randy Davenport, KA4NMA, got into an automobile accident early on December 10, he sure was glad to have his 2-meter handheld transceiver along. "I was going down a side road and hit a sheet of ice," he reports. "I fishtailed into the other lane and nearly hit a car

head on! But for some reason, my Ford Explorer turned sideways going down the road, and it did not roll over." Instead, he ended up sliding off the roadway into a creek, sustaining some injuries in the process. "I had no cell phone service, so I grabbed my HT and put out a call on 146.61," he said (the antenna for his 2-meter mobile was broken in the accident). Richard Foreman, KK7SL, an ARES Assistant Emergency Coordinator in Carson City, heard his distress call and dialed 911. "The fire and sheriff department was on the scene within minutes," Davenport said. "Lesson learned: Cell phones do not work everywhere. Always carry a 2-meter radio (or other band) of some sort--handheld with charged battery or mobile--for emergency communication."

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