

The Quest For WAS

I have been a ham for about 4 years and I have kept both a paper and a computer log of all of my contacts. Recently I spent some time looking through my records and remembering the fun times that they record. Having a modest station with only a multi-band trap vertical antenna, my log is certainly not very spectacular, but every one of its 1834 QSO's represents a whole lot of fun!

One of my greatest enjoyments has come from my pursuit of the ARRL Worked All States award. Even prior to getting on the air I had been excited about the possibility of earning WAS specifically with a cw endorsement). So, after passing the Novice exam, and while waiting for my new license to arrive, I set up my station, taped Q-signal crib sheets to my desk top, stuck a map on the wall, and organized my record keeping. All the while I was dreaming about my "soon to arrive" WAS certificate! I was ready!

On April 28, 1993 I sat down at the rig and sent my first 40 meter CQ. My wife, Susan, came down to the basement shack to watch and she even snapped a couple of pictures. I was so nervous that I was literally shaking! Much to my surprise Doug, KD4QZW, was able to copy my stuttery cw and gave me a call! He was very patient with me as he coached me through that first QSO, and he told me that he would be glad to QSL North Carolina for me. One state down and 49 to go!

I had been so nervous for that first QSO, that I went QRT and did not turn the radio on again for 3 days. On May 1, I worked Mark, N8VLT in my own state of Michigan. He asked me for my phone number and after our contact called me long distance to welcome me to ham radio. What a great way to encourage a rookie! I now had two QSO's and two states!

Work and family obligations kept me off the air for about a week, but my very next QSO gave me Minnesota. Contacts four and five were repeats of North Carolina and Michigan, but I had expected a few duplicates so I was not too concerned!

Occasionally "old timers" would com-

plain to me about the declining sunspot cycle and would imply that I had little chance of reaching my goal (especially with an antenna which radiates "equally bad in all directions"), but I just kept plugging along. From my first contact in late April until the middle of August, I was averaging about one new state every 3 days, and that included the time away from the rig for a two week family vacation! I calculated that at this rate I could be hanging up my WAS certificate by Christmas!

All of a sudden, with 35 states confirmed, I hit a wall. Over a month past before I was able to get state number 36 (Wisconsin) and another month went by before working N7TYQ for Idaho! Even with the expanded privileges from a General class upgrade, higher cw speeds, and improved operator skills, new states were becoming rare events!

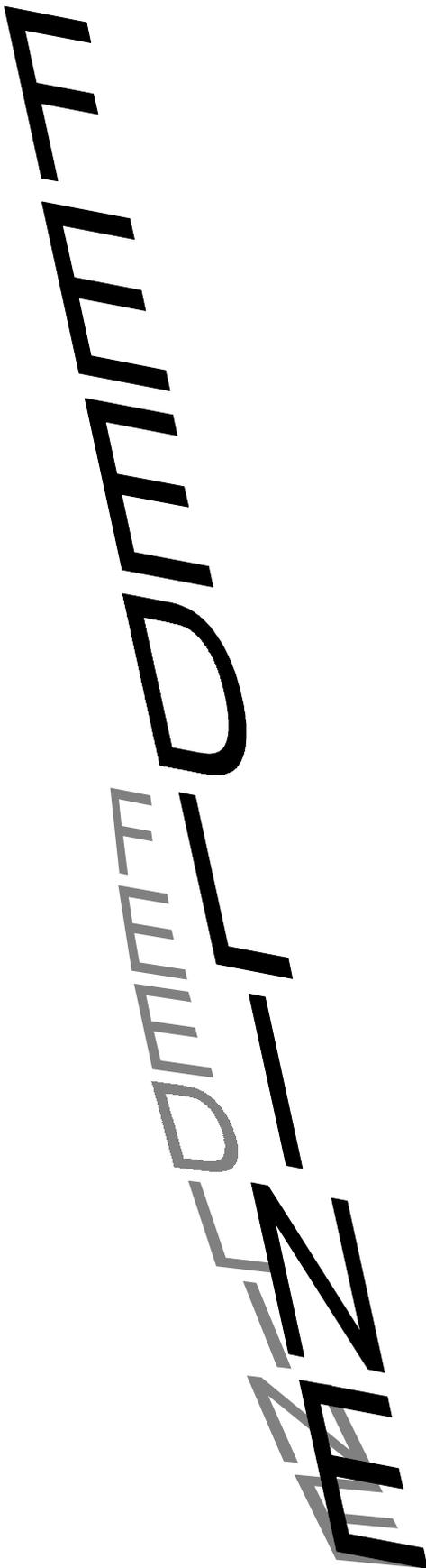
Christmas came and went without my coveted WAS certificate! By the time that my first anniversary as a ham rolled around I had 44 confirmed states in the log but had not been able to record a "new one" in over four months!

Two days later, on April 30, 1994, I finally logged KB0LFV in North Dakota for state number 45. Then things started to pick up again and over the next two months I added four new states with KA3S in Delaware bringing my total count of confirmed states to 49. Only Hawaii remained.

Now the "doldrums" really set in. Although I was continuing to improve my operating skills and I got on the air as often as my schedule permitted, propagation forecasts seemed to be getting worse by the day and I just couldn't find that KH6! Don't misunderstand me, I was still having a lot of fun with ham radio but my old WAS goal was slowly fading out.

Finally, 1 year and 12 days after state number 49 was put in the log, on June 30, 1995, I found Dave, NH6SV on 14.044 at 0107 Z. I had once before

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Bumper Sticker:

Auntie Em,

Hate you, hate Kansas, taking the dog.

Dorothy.

Feedline

Feedline is a member-supported publication of the Cary Amateur Radio Club and is published monthly. Deadline for submissions is the second Thursday of the month.

Editor: Tom Klimala, KM4LB
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Cary, North Carolina 27511

Cary Amateur Radio Club

The Cary Amateur Radio Club meets on the fourth Thursday of the month, **7:30 p.m.** in the lower level of the Christian Life Center of White Plains United Methodist Church. The June, November, and December meetings are held off-site. Call for location of those meetings.

Next Meeting: February 26

1997 Officers

KE4ZEQ	Frank Lynch	217-1999
	President	
KE4CDI	Charles Nichols	639-1049
	Vice-president	
K4IWW	Will Harper	467-0224
	Treasurer	
W3HL	Herb Lacey	467-9608
	Secretary	

HerbLacey - W3HL

Club Notes

The January meeting was held off-site at the WRAL-TV, Channel 5, station complex over in the Garner-Auburn area. The tour of the facilities was hosted by Charles Strickland, WA4OSS, TV engineer, extraordinary. He also has on his resume' a stint as CARC President. He gave a good overview of the history of the station - including the December, 1989, loss of the 2,000 foot tower (along with Channel 28 tower). The statistics on the new tower - miles of cable, tons of steel, yards of concrete, etc., put the average Radio Amateur's mind to race trying to comprehend the immensity of 24-hour/day, seven days/week operation. Charlie, it was a blast! Thanks for the tour and the hospitality.

You can pick up your tickets to the Charlotte Hamfest at the February meeting or before 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 7.

Hope to see you at the February meeting.

Herb, W3HL

JanAvinger N4UTT

From ARRL Headquarters

US amateurs soon will not need to apply for reciprocal licenses in order to operate during short visits to most European countries. While an official announcement still may be a few weeks away, it's been learned the US request to participate in the European guest license arrangement has been approved. Similarly, most European hams visiting the US no longer will have to submit FCC Form 610A.

Under the soon-to-be-implemented arrangement, a US Technician license would be recognized as a CEPT Class 2 (VHF-only) license, with full privileges above 30 MHz. Holders of Tech Plus through Extra tickets would be given a CEPT Class 1 license, with full privileges on HF and VHF. Novice licensees would not be eligible for a CEPT equivalent license since most CEPT countries don't offer a license of this type.

BillHales W4FNB

Worth Repeating

Jack, WA4OOD, was rescued after a break-down on I-40 due to a failed distributor cap! Help was swift with Frank (KE4ZEQ) arriving within 5 minutes to remove JD from the perils of a rainy Interstate 40 before daylight with subsequent delivery to RTP. Bob (K4HA) provided 2 days of rides until the car was repaired. The RARS patch provided the final tow coordination phone link; the trusty PCRN 147.15 patch did not operate for some reason. Jack says THANKS to all!

Overheard:

He is working split!!

huh?

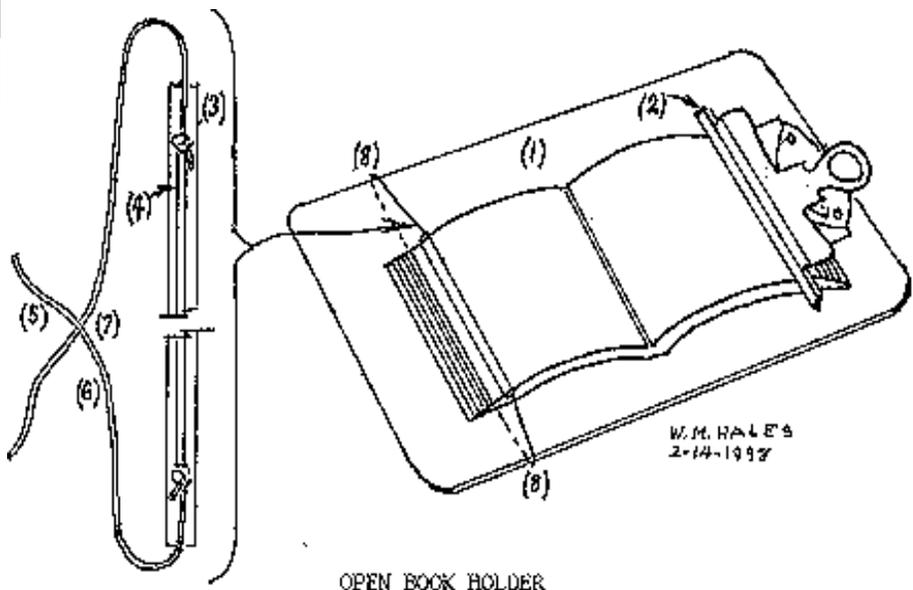
He is listening up!!

huh??

He is not listening on this frequency!!

Then why is he transmitting here?

Open Book Holder



- (1) CLAMP BOARD FOR 8-1/2 x 11-INCH PAPER SHEETS
- (2) PLASTIC PINCH SHEET BINDER (PROTECT PAGES) SLIDE OVER CLAMP JAW EDGE
- (3) CLEAR PLASTIC DRINKING STRAW
- (4) 3-INCH x 1/8th INCH RUBBERBAND LOOP
- (5), (6) BRAIDED NYLON STRING or FISHING LINE; USE HOT SOLDERING IRON TO SLIGHTLY MELT KNOTS AT RUBBER BAND TO PREVENT SLIP

FEED ASSEMBLY THROUGH STRAW AS SHOWN AT LEFT. TIE LOOSE ENDS AT (7) WITH SLIPKNOT; SLIDE OVER CLAMP BOARD AT (8)-(8).

Construction Note:

Variation shown is for left-handed reader. Right-handed clampboard usually available at local office supply.

73 Bill, W4FNB

It's been quite a while since I've undertaken a kit building project. Kit building is something I really enjoy, but with church, family, and work commitments, time for my hobby is hard to find. Radio time has been limited to mostly short wave listening late at night using a Kenwood TS-50. This is obvious overkill since the TS-50 transmitter hasn't been keyed in several years.

To complicate matters, the radio was discretely hidden under our bed as the wife doesn't see the elegance of exposed ham gear sitting next to a four poster bed and hand made quilts. Tuning was a bear since the display was well out of sight. I made good use of the programmable memories.

Then came an announcement of the TenTec Model 1254 receiver kit. It is a microprocessor controlled, dual conversion, SSB-CW-AM receiver that tunes from 100 kHz to 30 MHz. The kit was ordered in early December as a Christmas present from the family. It arrived in January as promised and assembly took most of a Saturday (excluding a couple of time outs for kid's ball games) and several hours Sunday afternoon to complete. The kit is not for the 'never built anything' ham, but if you're good with a soldering iron, you'll find it a breeze. If you not good with a soldering iron, but careful in learning, you'll be good when you're done and pleased with the results.

The radio is assembled in seven phases. The display goes together first, then the logic. Apply power and the first check out begins. There is a simple check out procedure at the end of each assembly phase. These insure you're ready to continue. Electronic instruments re-



quired: voltmeter!

It's incredible to me that TenTec was able to provide good and often clever checkout procedures on a phase by phase basis using only a voltmeter and your ears. An example: 'Lay your test wire so it is near the LED frequency display.... you should hear a strong music-like blend of tones...' These check out procedures helped me identify and find a solder bridge produced during a mid-assembly phase. Once solved, I was cleared to proceed.

With the board assembly complete, only the mechanical assembly remained. TenTec did a super job on the mechanical package. Things fit together well and the final product has found itself worthy to be exposed in our otherwise antique bedroom. Receiver perfor-

mance is outstanding using a MFJ long wire tuner and 15 feet of wire hanging straight down out of our second story bedroom window. AM and SSB signals are easily tuned. The 4kHz filter bandwidth is a little wide for CW. Frequency stability is very good.

Final points to note: The kit cost just under \$200, just over with shipping. The parts count was absolutely perfect. No missing parts and no extras. This is a kit of over 400 parts, most of which are small capacitors and resistors of many different values. There are 10 integrated circuits, 26 transistors, and 16 diodes (for those that are interested in such facts). The lengthy and well-written as-

sembly chapters (72 pages) only had three errata that I found, two of which I sorted out because the parts count was perfect. A call to TenTec for the one question I had on frequency calibration put me immediately in contact with a knowledgeable engineer and an answer to my question.

I highly recommend this project and the results. But if you're not up to the kit, I've got a TS-50 for sale that has been well protected from vehicle bruises and any fading due to sunlight.

73 Mike, K4EN

TenTec info: 1-800 833-7373
www.tentec.com

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worked a KH6 only to find out that he was in the navy and his current QTH was in Florida, but when Dave told me that he was in Pearl City, Hawaii, my excitement went through the roof and my cw nearly went into the trash! I'm still amazed that Dave was able to copy me for the necessary information! Not only did I now have my WAS, but appropriately enough this was my 1000th QSO as a ham!

Some Final Thoughts

Several lessons from all of this come to mind. First, don't let the "old timers" discourage you from striving for your goal. Even during the bottom of the sunspot cycle there are good days, with QSO's waiting to be made.

Second, don't get upset when you do not seem to be making any progress towards your goal. Ham radio is a hobby and it is supposed to be fun. Lighten up a little bit and enjoy your self. Remember, if WAS (or some other award) were easy to get, it wouldn't be worth the effort!

Finally, "old timers" need to remember what it was like when they were trying to get that piece of paper to hang on the wall. Do you ever tune to the Novice or Technician subbands to give some encouraging QSO's and friendly advice to the rookies who will be the future of our hobby? Do you always QSL when requested?

I think that it is a shame that almost 1/3 of my states were not confirmed from the first QSO because the person on the other end did not respond to my QSL request! Remember, a stamp is cheap but it can bring a big thrill to someone looking for that "last one."

73 Paul - N8XMS
phuff@edcen.ehhs.cmich.edu

OLD MEGAWATT

Ham 1 -- Hey I hear Old Megawatt is re tiring from Ham Radio
Ham 2 -- Yeah I heard him say that before
Ham 1 -- I know, but this time the FCC said it!

TomDoligalski - N9CGD

A really interesting site maintained by a local-area ham is located at <http://www.qsl.net/n2mca/RADIO.HTM> and deals with the fascinating world of radio monitoring (scanners). This site has dozens of reviews of most currently-available scanners, some really-good lists of local frequencies, lots of general information about radio monitoring (FAQs, etc.), and a large number of very interesting links. Rich, N2MCA, obviously spends lots of time updating this site, and it should be a required bookmark for all those interested in this facet of the hobby.

While on Rich's site I followed a link to the Icom site at <http://www.icomamerica.com/amateur/dualhand/#IC-T8A> and got to read about Icom's new IC-T8A 6 Meter/2 Meter/440 MHz Tri Bander Handheld. This tiny radio is 2.3 X 4.3 X 1.2, and only weigh 9.9 oz including its NiMH battery. Cool!

I gave Yaesu equal time at their site at <http://www.yaesu.com/ft847.html> and read about their satellite+HF FT-847 transceiver. This new rig features 100 Watt output on HF / 6-Meter bands, while 2-Meter and 430 MHz bands feature a full 50 watts power output.

Next I went over to the Kenwood site searching for their "Dayton releases." I didn't find any new radios their, but did head over their FTP site at <http://kenwood.net/c/web-site/htdocs/kenwood/kenftp> where Kenwood keeps all their service bulletins and application notes. This is a "must see" if you own Kenwood gear!

Finally, I headed over to the Ham Radio Online Site at <http://www.hamradio-online.com/> of which I've written before. This is a really nice online ham radio magazine. The reason I mention it in this article is that the lead story states that the Federal Communications Commission's 1998 rule making agenda includes an item to consider "privatization" of the Amateur Radio Service! Stay tuned for this one folks! There are also many other articles of interest, including one describing how an eight-year old YL recently achieved her extra license (this should motivate some un-mentioned CARC members to think about upgrading?!?!).

**We are born naked, wet, and hungry.
Then things get worse.**

CharlesNichols KE4CDI

Vice- President's Column

Hi! I'm Charles, your V.P.. I think this year is going to be both interesting and a lot of fun.

Last month the club visited the WRAL transmitter site. We had a good turnout and Charles, WA4OSS, did a great job of showing us around.

This month's technical presentation will be "Evaluating Compliance with FCC Guidelines for Human Exposure to Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Fields" Jack's, WA4OOD, presentation will cover the impact to the Amateur, a review of FCC 97.13, including who is affected, and how measurements are made.

I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting on February 26.

73 Charles, KE4CDI

Ham Radio Internet

Rarsfest Tables

Hey, gang. It is time to reserve tables at RARSfest, again.

CARC usually reserves four, however, at five tables, the cost drops to \$9 from \$10. Some of you may want tables of your own. Also if ARES, PCRN, WDCG need space, we can get them together as well as get a price break.

Let me know if you want a table. We don't need the money, yet. Just the indication that you commit to taking a table. OK? OK!

73

Herb, W3HL

P.S. I suggest that we hold a WDCG meeting

In trouble at Boeing

Some Boeing employees recently "liberated" a life raft from one of the 747s on the company's production line.

Later, they took it for a float on the Stilliguamish River. Imagine their surprise when a Coast Guard helicopter "rescued" them after homing in on the emergency locator beacon that activated when the raft was inflated.