

Frugal Hamming

Radio doesn't have to be expensive; after all, it's a hobby. The main purpose is fun, not bankruptcy. Take it from me, one of the world's cheapest people. I would say that I am the cheapest, but that would require more confidence than I'm comfortable spending. I've been hamming for 25 years on very little money, with no more to show for it than a lot of contacts and great memories and happy feelings about ham radio. Ham radio has never broken, or even dented my budget. There's something very gratifying about communicating over great distances and having enough money left to buy a big box of generic raisin bran.

Whether you're getting started or more experienced, if you're looking to have more fun, you can do it for less than you think. Let's start with a quick quiz to see just how frugal you are. Answer these questions to the best of your ability.

1. How many of these things would you call "unnecessary luxuries"?
 1. A large, spacious automobile
 2. Fish sticks
 3. Interior walls
2. What possibly costly repair problems are you willing to ignore in your rig?
 1. Occasional power output drops.
 2. Slightly drifting at the higher frequencies.
 3. Smoking.
3. Of the second hand clothing that you have, who wore these garments before you?
 1. A sibling or parent
 2. An anonymous thrift store donor
 3. 30 lb. of Idaho potatoes

How did you do? If you answered "no.3" to two questions, you are definitely frugal. Three "no. 3" answers suggests that you're one of the elite. But how can you remain in top form?

Let's start by examining what I call "the mindset of the cheap." You may think that frugal people look at the features of a product, weigh them against the features of another, compare prices, and choose the one that offers the most for the lowest price. That's only part of it. While that process is a valuable skill, real savers also think actively in terms of needs, both now and future. When deciding on a purchase,

someone really economical will ask himself (or herself) questions like "Will I be enjoying this product just as much ten months from now as I will be when I first get it?", or "Just what do I really want a product to do, and what may I be paying for that I'll never use?", or even "Hey, is that a dime down there?" Questions like those indicate shrewd economic skills, and help you make informed purchases.

People who are good with money almost never buy anything on an impulse; they just don't function that way. I hasten to add that these same people will often spend generously on something really nice, like a rig or a good pair of tube socks, but when they do, they know they've bought something that they'll really use, with features that will come in handy for many years to come. All kidding aside, their purchases are a great source of gratification because they've put research and thought into them.

One way of saving money that's become very popular lately is with QRP rigs. These radios have much to offer: they combine low price with advanced design, they are small and convenient, and because of the low power they use, they hardly ever cause interference. This is especially important in today's world of apartments and congested living areas. About a year and a half ago I bought a small QRP set for fun, as a treat for myself. I'm now hooked.

The whole concept of QRP appeals to my deep rooted cheapitude in a way nothing else ever has. The idea of talking to people all over the world for what amounts to pennies a contact is a kind of frugality gone ballistic. Little else compares to that feeling of pride when the ham in Hungary or Argentina can't believe that you're only using QRP, because your signal "sounds so good." And my non-ham friends are amazed that something so small can communicate so far. I say this not to promote QRP as much to illustrate the whole "needs" idea. I like talking to other hams, and working DX

(Continued on page 3)

Note:

July meeting moved to the 17th. for Swapfest status session.

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.

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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: July 17 - 7:30

1997 Officers

N9CGD	Tom Doligalski	481-1236
	President	
N4AJF	Lee Swanson	467-8128
	Vice-president	
K4IWW	Will Harper	467-0224
	Treasurer	
N4UE	Herb Lacey	467-9608
	Secretary	

HerbLacey - N4UE

Meeting Report

June 26, 1997

Meeting opened at 6:35 p.m., by Tom, N9CGD, at the Field Day site. Introductions.

Treasurer's Report - Will, K4IWW

Savings:	\$174.93
Checking:	\$556.48
Cash:	\$212.00
Total:	\$943.41

Most of the SWAPFEST expenses have been paid.

Dues are due for new year starting April, 1997, at **\$9/yr.** CARC caps still available for \$4.

The rest of the meeting was devoted to Field Day planning and organization under the direction of the Field Day Czar, Will, K4IWW. We are going to use N4NC, in Class 3A. Enthusiasm seems to be good. The weather looks promising.

n4ue

TomDoligalski - N9CGD

About our Club

First, a quick note to all who participated in the highly-successful CARC Field Day exercise. This was one of the most satisfying CARC Field Days in a long time. We had plenty of operators, the rain gods cooperated, the bands were in pretty good shape, and all the equipment worked as advertised. Our score reflects this and I think we can even do better next year!

This month's meeting will be held on Thursday, July 17 at 7:30 p.m. Note that this is one week early so we can tie up loose ends for the Swapfest which is only two days later on the 19th.

Please plan to attend both the meeting and the 'fest, and remember there will be NO meeting of CARC in August.

LucaZooski - K4HA

Field Day Results

Field Day 97 results N4NC 3A NC (Bond Park, Cary NC)

BAND	CW	QSO	QSO	PTS	SSB	QSO	QSO	PTS
160	0		0		0		0	
80	509		2036		414		828	
80N	67		268		0		0	
40	852		3408		670		1340	
40N	8		32		0		0	
20	407		1628		305		610	
15	95		380		0		0	
15N	0		0		0		0	
10	2		8		0		0	
10N	0		0		49		98	
6	0		0		53		106	
2	0		0		7		14	

CW QSO's - 1940	CW Points - 7760
SSB QSO's - 1498	SSB Points - 2996

TOTAL QSO's - 3438 Total QSO Points - 10756
+ 1200 Bonus Points = Final Score - 11,956

Operators

K4MA, K4HA, K4IWW, AA4NC, N9CGD, K4PB, K4QL, KO4PY, N4AJF, WA4OOD, N4UE, KE4CDI, KE4QBG, KF4MHL, K4RKI, AA2LK, W2CS, AB4S, AB4V, NJ2E, N4ELM, KE4IZX, N3GCA, KE4ZEQ, KQ4FP,

Always remember that you are *unique!*

Just like everyone else!

when I can- period. That's what radio is about for me. A good QRP rig does this efficiently. I bought what I needed, only that and nothing more. This is the rallying cry of the money savers of the world. I've used bigger, more expensive rigs and they're great. I marvel at their capabilities, but they're not what I need at this time. It's this kind of attitude that drives some marketing people crazy; this type of cold analytical approach. But after all, you're laughing all the way to the bulk food store - with a pocket full of coupons.

Another way that I've saved cash and had fun, and I know a lot of newer hams are scared of this one, is with the older rigs. I was recently at a hamfest and saw a rig from the 1960's, a real beauty, with manuals and a few nice accessories for an outrageously low price. I mentioned to the seller that he would have no trouble selling the rig. He intoned sadly "You would think so. I've had this to six different hamfests. I can't sell it. I've shown it to some newer hams. I think they're afraid of it." I felt sad to think that someone could have been having fun with that radio, for very little money, instead of letting us two schlubs wander around next to it and talk about how hard it is to sell. These rigs often come with some replacement tubes, or use tubes that are very easy to buy, and the seller usually knows of a place where you can get the rig serviced should it need it. They're worth looking at, whether at a hamfest or through a private sale or dealer. Later that day I had the good fortune of meeting a few older hams who grew up with those rigs.

Those radios were like a fountain of youth to these guys, or a "fountain of middle age" anyway, as they were having a ball talking about the rigs- both how they worked then and how they work now. There's nothing mysterious about them, and you can save money and have a great time with one of these rigs; I know because I've had one for 25 years. In addition, if they intimidate you, just spend some time talking to the older hams who use these radios- you'll learn about them. Good sense is the best rule. Make sure you know what you're buying, or have someone with you who can help evaluate these rigs. Just don't immediately count them out.

When it comes to antennas, wire is the miser's dream, and you can get it at some

hardware stores for a few cents a foot. No project has provided me with more fun and more cuts on my fingers for as little an investment as a home brew wire antenna. Wire is also versatile- use it to make beams, loops, dipoles, verticals, etc. You can even use pieces of PVC pipe for insulators! Well, I did tell you I was cheap. You get the idea- it helps to use your imagination. That's always free, and maybe the most enjoyable accessory we have. I've had a great time with our hobby, a happy wallet, and after a session on the air, those fish sticks taste just a little better.

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English ...a crazy language

This is from the "LD Reader", an electronic newsletter, published by Richard Wanderman of new Preston, PA.

Lets face it -- English is a crazy language. There is no egg in eggplant nor ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in pineapple. English muffins weren't invented in England or French fries in France. Sweetmeats are candies while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat.

We take English for granted. But if we explore its paradoxes, we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.

And why is it that writers write but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham? If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth beeth? One -oose, 2 -eese. So one moose, 2 meese? One index, 2 indices?

Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one amend, that you comb through annals of history but not a single annal? If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it?

If teachers taught, why didn't preacher praught? If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat? If you wrote a letter, perhaps you bote your tongue?

Sometimes I think all the English speakers should be committed to an asylum for the verbally insane. In what language do people recite at a play and play at a recital? Ship by truck and send cargo by ship? Have noses that run and feet that smell? Park on drive-wave and drive on parkways?

How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and wise auy are opposites? How can overlook and oversee be opposites, while quite a lot and quite a few are alike? How can the weather be hot as hell one day and cold as hell another.

Have you noticed that we talk about certain things only when they are absent? Have you ever seen a horseful carriage or a strapful gown? Met a sung hero or experienced requited love? Have you ever run into someone who was combobulated, grunted, ruly or peccable? And where are all those people who ARE spring chickens or who would ACTUALLY hurt a fly?

You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language in which your house can burn up as it burns down, in which you fill in a form by filling it out and in which an alarm clock goes off by going on

English was invented by people, not computers, and it reflects the creativity of the human race (which, of course, isn't a race at all). That is why, when the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out, they are invisible. And why, when I wind up my watch, I start it, but when I wind up this essay, I end it.

via the ARNS

Bumper Stickers....

I smile because I don't know what's going on.

I like you, but I wouldn't want to see you working with sub-atomic particles.

Carl**says...**

CARC members attending the Mid-Summer Swapfest will attend the planning meeting on Thursday, July 17th. CARC members attending the Mid-Summer Swapfest who do not attend the planning meeting on Thursday, July 17th. spend a night in the box.

CARC members attending the Mid-Summer Swapfest will park their cars at the Cary Chamber of Commerce. CARC members attending the Mid-Summer Swapfest who do not park their cars at the Cary Chamber of Commerce spend a night in the box.

CARC members attending the Mid-Summer Swapfest will wear their CARC hats to identify themselves to visitors who may be in need of help. CARC members attending the Mid-Summer Swapfest who do not wear their CARC hats to identify themselves to visitors who may be in need of help spend a night in the box.

CARC members attending the Mid-Summer Swapfest will seek out the swapfest czar and ask "Is there anything I can do to help?" Any CARC member attending the Mid-Summer Swapfest who does not seek out the swapfest czar and ask "Is there anything I can do to help?" spend a night in the box.

CARC members attending the Mid-Summer Swapfest will eat fifty hard-boiled eggs. CARC members attending the Mid-Summer Swapfest who do not eat fifty hard-boiled eggs spend a night in the box.

The swapfest czar has the power to excuse CARC members from any *one* of the above orders.

This month's column might be titled "Odds and Ends" because it represents a lot of little items that are way-cool but don't encompass enough to write about alone (and because the CARC meeting is one week early this month, and thus I have less time to prepare a column!).

I've just read a fascinating article describing one ham's experience at Dayton this year at <http://www.contesting.com/kldgdayton97.htm> that talks about new antennas, radios, etc. from the perspective of a contest operator. Pretty neat description, and it should help induce you to attend Dayton next year!

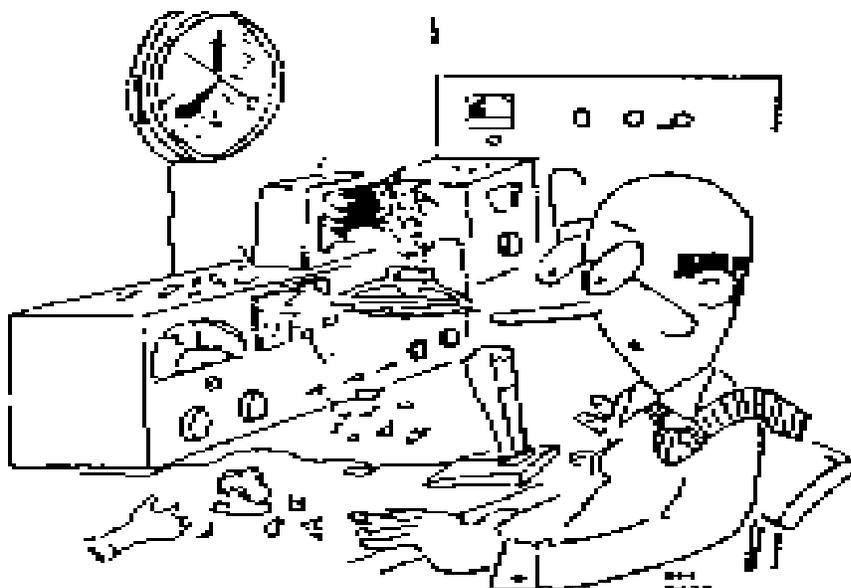
While we are talking about contesting, and still on the www.contesting.com site, you might want to check out a great article on 2-radio contesting at <http://www.contesting.com/km9p/2rigs.html> that might induce you to take that spare radio out of storage and hook it up. I recently brought my Icom IC761 out of storage to join my Yeasu FT-1000MP on my operating desk, so I was pretty interested in this article!

The Dayton article mentioned a few new "goodies" that were first announced at Dayton, and I surfed over to the manu-

facturer's sites to have a look. At <http://www.yaesu.com/vxl.html> you can check out the new Yaesu VX-LR which is a TINY dual bander. Very small and extremely wide range RX capability. I checked out the Cushcraft site to learn about their new "Big Thunder" tri-band beams at <http://www.cushcraft.com/%20Ham/X8/X8.html> and was really impressed these new 8 and 6 element antennas. Looks like you could add 40M to them too!

The Kachina Communications Company had a new hf transceiver, the S05DSP, which you can see at <http://www.kachina-az.com/prodO3.htm> that interfaces with your windows PC.

My "pick of the month" is <http://www.qth.com/ka9fox/mail-summaries.shtml> which summarizes searches of the various hamradio email reflectors and discussion groups about antennas, filters, hf rigs, etc. No longer do you have to search through the archives - if you are interested in summaries of a whole variety of interesting hf operating discussions you NEED to head over to this site!



"Say! That's a pretty good signal you've got there."

(from the April 1995 Indian River ARC, *Spurious Emissions*, Dick McKlveen, W4YWA editor.)