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It Was One of Those Days.....

By Doug Welcker (WB4KGY)

OH Yes...it was a very busy long day at the Stuart SWITCH.

There were two major areas of work going on simultaneously.

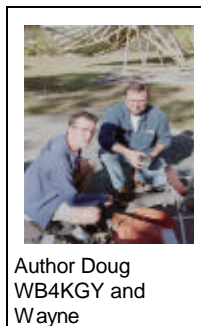


First was getting the tower work done. A friend of my mine, Wayne (N4PZJ) climbed the tower with two antennas and one mounting bracket. On the way up the tower he had to mark the two transmission lines as no one knew how high they terminated on the tower. They were marked with yellow and blue electrical tape.

The first transmission line (75 ohm CATV type) ended at 290 ft and was connected to a HUSTLER Dual Band(2/440) antenna of which the top half had fallen off. Interestingly enough, Wayne and I installed this antenna in April of 1992 and how do we remember this? Well as it turns out this was the first out of town trip for Wayne's new Chevrolet Truck which gave him a chance to check the mileage. (Funny how one remembers some things - mostly by association) The antenna mount was no longer required (3/4 galvanized water pipe) so Wayne removed it and tossed it off the tower out over the fence and began installing the new mount and the J-Pole.



While this was going on John (WB4MOZ) and Andy (KF4ATC) started working in the equipment cabinet. It was quite a hodge-podge as the site evolved over the years it was never really rewired to what needed to be done. Besides this we knew there was a problem with the backup battery (which turned out to be a shorted cell) so we brought a new replacement. Then it was found that the power supply, a 50 amp Astron, was not charging just hummming. The backup power supply was installed, a 7 amp Astron, but after floating the battery for a period time it was found the voltage was only 12.8 Volts when a float should be around 13.5 Volts. In the process of adjusting up the voltage the power supply released all its smoke, rolled over and died. That is what happens to some supplies when there is no back-feed diode in series with the output.



Mean time I'm working with Wayne checking the transmission for continuity which at first looked good. After he installed the J-Pole we lost continuity which led to a lot of connector investigation. As it turns out the transmission line had a TV "F" fitting that had gone bad so, being as prepared as a boy scout, I had sent two new connectors up the tower with Wayne. They were CATV line to "N" Male and also enclosed were appropriate jumper cables to the antenna. Then more problems. The new connectors inner sleeve is suppose to slip inside the aluminum CATV line outer sheath. Well it didn't by less than .020"! We were stopped in our tracks here so Wayne followed the other transmission line to 320 ft. and found the connector to be an "N" female and in good condition. It was just an abandon piece of 7/8 Heliac on the tower. He proceeded to mount the second antenna, a commercial folded dipole to the west leg of the tower and started his way down.

Back at the power supplies laying in the driveway - the filter cap from the 7 amp unit was installed in the 50 amp unit as the filter cap screw post had burned off of the original capacitor! That worked even though we are about 50,000 uf short on capacity. Now the SWITCH stack came back on line and everything began working. Along with this the shelves were relocated closer together vertically to make room for a backup computer (not installed yet), should the primary fail, and another shelf installed for the APRS equipment.

While all this was happening Mike (N0IL) from the Stuart repeater club showed up to see what is wrong with their repeater. Turns out that on the way to the site we communicated thru this repeater and the sensitivity and reception were significantly reduced in range. While Wayne was getting ready to climb the tower someone noticed that the repeater transmission line was almost broken in half so we quickly pointed this out to Mike.

While Wayne was climbing down the tower Pete (KD4SPW) hooked up his TH-D7 to the APRS antenna and began investigating what was out there. Ranges seemed a bit short but what does one expect from 2 watts? After finishing installing the APRS radio and TNC, Rich (K4GPS) and I completed some changes to the program parameters and put it into operation. Rich began testing it through his mobile setup and it didn't seem to be working well at all. Back into the building - found that an adapter used to transmission from "N" to "PL" had fallen apart so it was replaced by coax cable with the correct fittings attached. Still not working as well as expected. Started checking - Inner to outer resistance of the line (remember a folded dipole is short). Ohm meter reads 7.5 ohms a little high. humm... Next the Bird - 40 fwd/15 not good. Fortunately Mike had a TDR (Time Delay Reflectometer) with him. A TDR is like a little radar. It sends out a pulse and you look at the results on a scope which allows you to detect short/opens and all perturbations in between. This was attached to the line - looked perfect with a short at the antenna which it should be. Next Andy's MFJ impedance tester was connected and showed - 50 ohms 1:1 @ 168 Mhz. oh well...I said it was a commercial antenna. Reconnected the antenna and went home.

The Switch is working much better than it had for some time and hopefully in the next month we can get back up the tower and make some changes. What we decided to do is put a tri-band antenna where the J-Pole is and move the J-Pole to the upper transmission line and remove the folded dipole.

Turned out to be a very long day. We arrived at 9am and left at 4:30 with no stopping for lunch. The APRS equipment is working but with shortened range. Did we help APRS coverage? Definitely - the Vero Beach and Melbourne locations are now visible to us in the Palm Beaches as we are to them.

I want to thank Rich (K4GPS) for the pictures.

MIAMI TROPICAL HAMBOREE SOUTH FLORIDA SECTION WORKSHOP

Bill Manley KB4XE

From my point of view the anticipation of the Miami Hamboree was driven by the hope to see the Icom IC756 Pro. After 3 months of hype, there it was. Pushing the buttons disclosed that it was a rig of its own, different than its predecessor. The menus were different, somehow seeming more logical than its earlier kin, the IC756. On the drive home, I prided myself in having resisted the temptation to challenge my credit card to the \$3000 ante. But, sure would like to have it in the shack for a week or so.

The bad news about the Hamboree was that the crowds seemed alarmingly thin. This was also the good news in-as-much-as you could navigate up and down the aisles without the shoulder-to-shoulder confrontation experience of previous years. There was easy access to all of the booths. The crowd of bargain hunters was somewhat more dense in the flea market areas.

New to this Hamboree was the South Florida Section Workshop organized by Phyllisan West KA4FZI, our recently appointed section manager for the South Florida Section. Even with the logistic mishap rendering the appointed meeting room unavailable, Phyllisan wasted no time in commandeering an alternate site.

Following introducing her new cabinet, splinter groups were broken off with the cabinet members acting as chairpersons. I attended the meeting conducted by Sherri Brower PIC. In addition to myself representing the *White Noise* newsletter, there were other PIOs, radio club presidents, RACES coordinators, and liaisons. Attendees for the PIC splinter group were:

Al Alviani, N4LML, RACES Officer, Sarasota County
 Jeff Beals, WA4AW, ACC, ARRL SFL Section
 Sherri Brower, W4STB, PIC, ARRL SFL Section
 Bill Manley KB4XE, TS, ARRL SFL Section, Palm Beach Packet Group *White Noise* editor
 Chris Myers, KF4OQY, Pres., Vero Beach ARC
 Rick Vahan, N4PBF, Pres., Dade Radio Club, PIO, Dade County

Sherri and Phyllisan were well prepared with an agenda and many handouts. One of the interesting topics discussed concerned hams, working with the State Forest Service while fighting forest fires, setting up the Service's commercial radio systems.

SOUTH FLORIDA SECTION CABINET

Section Manager:	Phyllisan West KA4FZI	ka4fzi@arrl.org
Section Emergency Coordinator:	Manny Papandreas W4SS mpapandr@bellsouth.net	
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Public Information Coordinator:	Sherri Brower W4STB	w4stb@iu.net
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Section Government Liaison:	John Hills KC4N	hillsj@worldnet.att.net
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Dist. 3 Emergency Coordinator:	Jim Sparks AA4BN	
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PBPG MINUTES

JANUARY 13, 2000

OPENING AND REPORTS

President Doug Welcker (WB4KGY) brought the meeting to order @ 19:30 hrs. All present were acquainted, introductions were dismissed. It was announced that Burck (KC4UEV) was having health problems, and with this situation the minutes would be taken by Bill (KE4GUM). We wish Burck a quick and speedy recovery.

TREASURER'S REPORT

See attached - Ed

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

President Doug Welcker (WB4KGY) gave the technical report. Andy (KF4ATC) has a replacement APRS radio ready for the Clewiston site should it become necessary. Andy and Doug added 3/4 of a gallon of watered to the batteries at the West Palm Switch on January 6th. The next week John and Doug investigated BBS forwarding port problems. Found the transmitter 2.5khz high; the next day John (WB4MOZ) fixed a problem created by last trip which disabled the link to BOCA. APRS installation at Stuart is scheduled for 22nd of Jan.

OLD BUSINESS

Adelphia provides the Palm Beach Packet group tower and equipment space at the West Palm Beach location near IBIS on North Lake Blvd. and in Stuart, a few miles north of the new causeway, as a public service. Recently Adelphia has turned the responsibilities of tower management over to ANI who manages many towers in South Florida and Virginia. This was done with the stipulation to ANI that we, the PBPB, will continue to be located at these sites at no charge. Thank you again Adelphia. (Take a look at the ANI website - I think you will find it very interesting; www.anisite.com).

Handouts for SWITCHES & NODES are now on the website.

PBPG has six Packet Books are for lending (Burck).

NEWS & INFORMATION

In the future we will be hearing about:

"SDR's" software defined radio's.

"Bluetooth" A system at 2.4Ghz linking computers to local devices, printers, phones, alarm systems, HVAC, other computers, etc. Named for Danish King Harald of the 10th century.

Ericsson sheds Radio Business (formally GE) to Com-Net Critical Communications.

TV channels 60 through 69 reallocated to commercial radio service/auctioned.

RS selling 10M SSB 25 watt transceiver \$ 135.00

HAMFEST LISTINGS:

Sarasota Jan. 15/16

Arcadia Jan. 29th.

Miami Feb. 5/6

Orlando Feb. 11/13

NEW BUSINESS

Elections for new Officers for 2000 were held, the results.

President, Doug Welcker (WB4KGY)

Vice Pres, Richard Schofield (AF4OR)

Treasure, Marvin Kaskowitz (KD2CK)

Secretary. Burck Grosse (KC4UEV)

Dr. & Mrs. SCHILLER donated a Kenwood TS-120 transceiver as he is moving back to New Jersey. Doug & Andy accepted the donation and removed his 2M & HF verticals from their Royal Palm Beach condominium.

If you would like to get involved with PBPG. Please contact a club officer. They can use your help.

ADJOURN/BREAK/WORKSHOP

Marvin (KD2CK) held everyone in high suspense, describing his adventure installing and implementing APRS/GPS, in his automobile. Bottom line is that tracking his vehicle, in case it was stolen, it would be cheaper to hire a full time person to sit in the car 24 hrs. a day. A funny presentation. You had to be there.

Next meeting is Thursday Feb.10, 2000.

Broward Amateur Radio Digital Society

January 15, 2000

Attendance was up this weekend with 9 for breakfast and 10 for the meeting. Seymour did a great job on his presentation of the 8 channel A to D converter. After an introduction to the functions, he gathered data over coffee break. Then we graphed the temperature changes in the room. Seymour showed slides of the KPC-3 commands and the program that would allow the KPC-3 to store or transmit data.

Next meeting is on PSK-31. This digital transmission of modulation that is phase shift keying and only about 31 Hz wide. It can be recovered at noise level signal strengths.

Bob, N4CU

IT'S A BOY!

Logan Richard Garcia finally arrived on Sunday Feb 6 at 12:52 p.m. Logan was born weighing 7lbs 2.6oz and he came very quickly once mom knew it was time. Mother and son are doing very well and we are back home tonight.

Rich Garcia K4GPS EX: N2CZF KA2FXA
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Jupiter Farms, Florida