

Setting up your new ham station on a budget.

By Dave Lugo, W5TAZ

Ok, so you have successfully passed your test and achieved that goal you have worked so hard for these past day's. Your new ham call is either going to be a reality or is pending or maybe you have already recieved it and your thinking about the cost of your new station.

Although the prospect of setting up a new station can be reather expensive for those just starting out, there are ways to combat the high end cost of this task. We will explore the way's you can get around the cost and get away fairly cheap, or inexpensive if you will, in the prosscuss of setting up you new station.

We will hold our discussion on the assumption that you are starting out as a Technician Class operator. This is an exciting time for all new ham's no matter what the age! There are alot of new folks to listen to, get to know and make friends with.

The topic's of conversation varies from group to group. Keep in mind that everyone has an opinion and what I try to do is ask several what I need to know and see if they all agree.

Let's start out with the radio. You can come across radios on the market today that can be had fairly cheap. \$50 can get you one if you keep your ear open and look patiently for a bargain. With all the excitement of your new call that is not an option to most.

New radios can be gotten for low cost and I an not to particular as to the name brand. Kenwood, Icom, Yeasu, Radio Shack, Alinco and others all have great products. You can get an Alinco 2 meter H/T for about \$100 to \$150. You can also get a mobile for from around \$159 on up. \$200 will get you a very nice radio **new!**

Most of the mobile rigs on the market today are 50 - 60 watt rigs and have all the tone capabilities that are needed to get you into the repeaters. Radio

Shack has a 25 watt 2 meter mobile for around \$129, the last time I looked that was the cost of it.

Keep your eye out at the local pawn shops or simply put the word out for a power supply. You will need about a 15-20 amp supply to run a 50 watt rig.

The next time you get the opportunity to go to one of the local ham fest's you should be able to find a descent power supply. Don't be affraid to haggle with the vendor and try to get the best price you can. You can probably pick one up for \$50, give or take a little.

Look in the "**Projects's Page**" of the ITARS club web page and there you will find some nice plan's to build a J-Pole omni directional antenna as well as plans to build beams. The J-Pole can be Built for about \$10 dollars.

If you have any trouble, just ask one of the club members for advice or help. Most of the folks you meet on the ham bands are very eager to help guide any new ham down the road to sucessful and positive radio skills.

So, let's recap, \$50-\$200 for a radio, \$25-\$100 for a power supply and about \$10 for a J-Pole and let's not forget the coax which is available at you local Rat Shack as well and that puts us in the neighborhood of any where from \$100-\$325 for a station.

You can get very expensive on your new station if you don't watch what you are doing. My suggestion is that you start out inexpensive and operate for a while to see what you want to set as a goal for the future. Even if you wind up getting interested in other areas of ham radio you will always have a need for your meager station.

The main thing is to have fun, get to know some folks and make some new friends on the ham bands. The more you learn, the more you will want to branch out into different modes. Experiment with antenna's, do a little building and take pride in your on the air operations. Be the best Radio Operator you can be and you will gain the respect of the ham community!

73 and see you around the bands. **DE W5TAZ**