



WASHRAG™

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N3SH
WA3SH
NP2SH/B



Wireless Association of South Hills

Countdown to 2010

WASHFest

It's 2 weeks to go until the 2010 **WASHFest** but the way table reservations are coming in it feels like we are down to the last two weeks. As of this writing, we have 52 tables reserved for the hamfest but I know of at least ten more tables that will be reserved in the coming week. Last year we were full with 79 tables so you see we could be well on our way to matching last years table reservations. If there is a recession going on, at least the **WASHFest** is showing signs of it; thankfully. As of now between Carol Danko KB3GMN, Steve Lane W3SRL, and me, the hamfest is handled. Also Jacqu  Gosselin N3ZEL and Ed Oelschlager N3ZNI are gathering door prizes. I have to say that Carol has taken it very well that only her contact information appears in the February issue of QST. I did promise her though that I won't make that mistake again; wink wink.

There are two options for meeting on Saturday, February 27th for breakfast and set up of the hamfest. Last year we set up early at the Castle Shannon Fire Hall at 8:00 AM and had breakfast afterward at the nearby Trolley Barn Restaurant; which happens to be operated by the former Castle Shannon Fire Chief. We could repeat that again this year or return to our original custom of meeting for our regularly scheduled breakfast at the Beach House Restaurant near Finleyville and then head to the Castle Shannon Fire Hall to begin setting up. Setting up tables usually takes less than 2 hours so no matter which option we choose, everyone should be home by lunch time. I will put out a bulletin on the reflector and solicit opinion. If you have an opinion please let me know. I will inform everyone of a decision in plenty of time for plans to be made.

On Sunday morning, February 28th, I plan to be at the CSVFD Memorial Hall by 5 AM to open and begin letting vendors in to set up. It would be very helpful if club members show up no later than 6 AM to assist vendors bring their wares in. If there are questions give me a call at 412-953-4957 or email the reflector. I will also monitor the 443.65 repeater Saturday and Sunday morning. For now that is the status of the **WASHFest**. Last minute details will be shared on the reflector and if there is anything you can do for Steve, Carol and me you can be sure we will let you know.

Just check your email and the Sunday evening FM net during February. See you all at **WASHFest**.

— 73, Kevin Smith N3HKQ

146.955 Update

Steve Lane W3SRL reports, as of mid February, that it's "50/50 at best" for the 146.955 MHz repeater to be ready and available in time for **WASHFest 2010**.

He does tell us that the repeater repair is going slowly, but there is progress.

Steve also mentions that Frank Bobro N3FB is helping him with technical support. The biggest problem right now is simply time. The snow storms earlier this month have thrown off everyone's schedules, especially theirs, as they've had to devote time to urgent and emergency situations. Frank being without power at home for several days, as happened to many of us, didn't help either.

Hamfest talk-in will have to shift to full-time duty on N3FB/R 443.650 MHz. Should Steve & Frank get a break on their schedules, and 146.955 is up and running in time, we will revert to using .955.

On a related note, if a club member has a dual band or 440 MHz radio that can be loaned for the talk-in station for **WASHFest 2010**, please contact W3WN.

Also, if you are providing anyone with directions ahead of time, be aware that **the Grove Road Bridge is scheduled to close** for 5 months starting February 15th. The bridge is being demolished and replaced. If you normally use Sleepy Hollow Road to Grove Road to get to the fire hall, plan on detouring via Castle Shannon Boulevard & Route 88!

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Next Meeting: February 18th, 2010

The next monthly meeting of the **WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH HILLS, INC.** will be Thursday, February 18th, at the **Peters Township Library**, 616 East McMurray Road, McMurray, starting at **7:30 PM**.

The **WASH 2 Meter Simplex Contest**, **WASHFest 2010**, Dayton Hamvention, Breezeshooter's Hamfest & Field Day planning will be on the agenda.

Talk-in on the 146.955(-) N3SH/R and 443.650(+) N3FB/R Repeaters (131.8 PL). All members, guests and interested parties invited!

"Seen" at the Christmas/Holiday Party



Carol KB3GMN pulling the "Chinese Raffle" tickets at the party.
Photo courtesy of & ©Copyright 2010 Bob Timmins AB3ED

WASH 2010 OFFICERS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

President	Ron Notarius W3WN
VP / Secretary	Bob Timmins AB3ED
VP / Treasurer	Mark Stabryla N3RDV

AND WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT:

N3SH / WA3SH Trustee	Steve Lane W3SRL
NP2SH Trustee	Paul Jordan NP2JF
N3SH / WA3SH / NP2SH QSL Manager	Ed Oelschlager N3ZNI
NP2SH 2009 QSL Manager	Carl Schroeder K9CS
VE Team Liaison	Jacqué Gosselin N3ZEL
Webmaster	Randy George N3ZK
Quartermaster	Harold Rosenberger K3HCR
WASH FM Net Manager	Kevin Smith N3HKQ
WASHFest 2010 Committee	Kevin Smith N3HKQ, Chairman Carol Danko KB3GMN

Activities & Operating Events	Bob Timmins AB3ED
Ways & Means	Carol Danko KB3GMN
Field Day 2010 Coordinators	Kevin Smith N3HKQ Randy George N3ZK

CLUB-AFFILIATED REPEATERS, BEACONS, & DIGIPEATERS:

Mt. Lebanon	N3SH / R	146.955 MHz (-)	PL 131.8
Mt. Lebanon	W3SRL / R	442.550 MHz (+)	PL 131.8
Canonsburg	N3FB / R	443.650 MHz (+)	PL 131.8
St. Johns, VI	NP2SH / B	28.276 MHz	Propagation Beacon
Canonsburg	N3SH	144.390 MHz	APRS Digipeater

N3SH / WA3SH WASHNet, the weekly on-air net of WASH, meets every Sunday Night, 9:00 PM ET, on the 146.955 & 443.650 repeaters. All radio amateurs, WASH members or not, are welcome to join in!

THE LEGAL STUFF

"The WASHRag™" (formerly "The Mariner™") is the Official Newsletter of the **WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH HILLS, INC. (WASH)**

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Editor & Publisher: Ron Notarius W3WN

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Ron Notarius W3WN
3395 Rosewood Drive
Castle Shannon, PA 15234-2546

e-mail: [newsletter at n3sh dot org](mailto:newsletter@n3sh.org) or [w3wn at arri dot net](mailto:w3wn@arri.net)

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The **WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH HILLS, INC.** was founded on August 23rd, 1993, as the original **SOUTH HILLS AMATEUR RADIO CLUB**, and operated under that name through 1998. WASH was also known briefly in late 1998 as the **N3SH AMATEUR RADIO CLUB**. It is not in any way affiliated with the "South Hills Amateur Radio Club, Inc." and is not responsible for that group, it's members, or it's actions in any way, shape, or form.

As always, special thanks to the owners of both the N3SH-W3SRL Repeater System and the N3FB/R Repeater System for permitting the **WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH HILLS, INC.** and it's members to use their repeaters for club purposes. Special thanks also to Glen Roberts KE7FD of The Internet Guild for his assistance in providing space on-line for our website for back issues of "The WASHRag™" which can be found at www.washrag.info

WASH Amateur Radio Club News Briefs

Next WASH VE Test April 15th

The Next WASH VE exam sessions will be **Thursday, January 21st, 2009, 6:30 PM**, at the **Peters Township Library**, 616 East McMurray Road, McMurray, PA. Talk-in on the 146.955 MHz and 443.650 MHz repeaters. All examiners are ARRL VEC affiliated.

Walk-ins are always welcome, but if you plan on attending the test session, please contact VE Team Liason Jacqué Gosselin N3ZEL:

Telephone (724) 746-9235 or E-Mail: n3zel@comcast.net

Please bring the following to your test session:

- Picture ID or other suitable identification (2 forms of ID required)
- Pen / Pencil / Calculator
- Original FCC license plus a copy of license (if upgrading)
- Original CSCE plus a copy of CSCE (if upgrading)
- Check or Cash in the amount of **\$15.00** (payable to: ARRL VEC)

Thursday, July 15th, 2010
 Future test dates: Thursday, October 21st, 2010
 (tentative) Thursday, January 20th, 2011
 Thursday, April 21st, 2011

January 30th was still a cool and bright day, with no clue of the coming Month of Snow. With shovels bravely stored for the future, members of **the WASH Breakfast Gang** at **The Beach House** in Finleyville. This month, the hungry brood included W9UK, K3VX, N3SBF, KB3GMN, K3HCR, W3VFA, AE3DL, N3DFK, W3WH, W3WN & N3BPB. Morning topics included spinners, the *Bum of the Month*, CQ 160 Contests, spring boating, long wires, electric gloves, flat screen monitors & TV's, hamfest door prizes, cell phone jamming, repeaters, new Breezeshooter's treasurer, bi-partisanship, "I love spreading hate and discontent" (N3BPB, who else?), anaconda snakes in the subway, mixed fruit, estate sales. PC memory, joining the Army, Pasta II vs. Olive Garden, NASA going to the moon (not), global warming myths, car insurance rates, new roofs, flu shots, recycling, old boats at the boat show, and a ton more.

Our next breakfast will coincide with hamfest setup, either before or after. Keep an eye on the club reflector for any changes. Pending changes, why not plan on joining us this and every month for breakfast and a good time at **The Beach House**, Library Road, Finleyville, just south of Trax Farm. Our next gathering will be on Saturday, February 27th. See you there!

Had enough snow this month? February 2010 has set the record for most snow in February, with half a month to go. The all time record is in sight... someone needs to have a word with Joe DiNardo!

Remember that this month's club meeting is being held one week late, February 18th, due to the heavy snows last week. Starting time will be 7:30 PM or as soon as the previous occupant of the room leaves. Because of the schedule change, we have a lot of last minute planning for **WASHFest** to handle in less time than usual, so be prepared.

WASHFest 2010 will be here in less than two weeks! Most of us who've been around the last few years pretty much know what needs to be done, but still, it never hurts to put the word out and let newer amateurs in our area know that the best little winter hamfest in the region is coming up before you know it! Kevin N3HKQ as always needs a hand covering all the little details, so if you can do so, get a hold of him and let him know. We're really looking forward to another good year, but we can't sit back and assume that it's going to happen on it's own... a little effort from a lot of people ensures we'll have another big successful event!

Carol KB3GMN has been working very hard, and as of deadline, we have most of our tables pre-sold. We may well have another sell-out by meeting time! Now we have to do our part, and drum up interest among those who haven't decided to attend yet (or who may have never before attended) to get a great turnout for our vendors! And wait until you see the door prizes that she's managed to gather!

Meanwhile, Ye Editor spoke with Atlantic Division Director N3LLR, and Bill tells us that he and WPA Section Manager N3MSE are looking forward to being there. In addition, Ye Editor had a nice conversation with WPA DXCC Card Checker NQ3A, and Art has also indicated that he can be available for the hamfest. We may have other surprises on that front upcoming...

Mark N3RDV is having some computer issues, and as a result, **we have not received an updated club roster** for Page 4 from him. Don't worry if you don't see your call in there yet, if you paid Mark, he has it on the record — just give him a little time to get his computer taken care of!

As has been mentioned elsewhere, the **Hamfest Talk-In Station would like to borrow a 440 MHz** or dual-band FM Mobile rig. If you can loan one, please contact W3WN.

Greg KQ3DX has had the final tally for the annual Dayton Hamvention trip. If you haven't heard from him and are expecting to stay with us at the University of Dayton, please get a hold of him immediately.

There are rumors that there have been **daily sun spot sightings**. Could the bottom of the cycle finally be over?

The ARRL is planning to re-launch their web site with a new design this month. Keep an eye on arrl.org to see what the new look will, well, look like! And congrats to new ARRL President Kay Craigie N3KN!

WASHNet 2010 NCS Schedule

02/07 - Bill W3WH	07/25 - Bill W3WH
02/14 - Harold K3HCR	08/01 - Harold K3HCR
02/21 - Carol KB3GMN or Richie N3SBF	08/08 - Carol KB3GMN or Richie N3SBF
02/28 - Bob AB3ED	08/15 - Bob AB3ED
03/07 - Kevin N3HKQ	08/22 - Frank N3FB
03/14 - Dave N3IDH	08/29 - Dave N3IDH
03/21 - Frank N3FB	09/05 - Kevin N3HKQ
03/28 - Dave N3DFK	09/12 - Dave N3DFK
04/04 - Bill W3WH	09/19 - Bill W3WH
04/11 - Harold K3HCR	09/26 - Harold K3HCR
04/18 - Carol KB3GMN or Richie N3SBF	10/03 - Carol KB3GMN or Richie N3SBF
04/25 - Bob AB3ED	10/10 - Bob AB3ED
05/02 - Kevin N3HKQ	10/17 - Kevin N3HKQ
05/09 - Dave N3IDH	10/24 - Dave N3IDH
05/16 - Frank N3FB	10/31 - Frank N3FB
05/23 - Dave N3DFK	11/07 - Dave N3DFK
05/30 - Bill W3WH	11/14 - Bill W3WH
06/06 - Harold K3HCR	11/21 - Harold K3HCR
06/13 - Carol KB3GMN or Richie N3SBF	11/28 - Carol KB3GMN or Richie N3SBF
06/20 - Bob AB3ED	12/05 - Bob AB3ED
06/27 - Frank N3FB	12/12 - Kevin N3HKQ
	12/19 - Dave N3IDH
07/04 - Dave N3IDH	12/26 - Frank N3FB
07/11 - Kevin N3HKQ	1/2/2011 - Dave N3DFK
07/18 - Dave N3DFK	

WASH's latest VE Session was held Thursday, January 21st, at the Peters Twp. Library.

Unfortunately, no candidates appeared to be tested.

My thanks to Don AB3DL, and Ed N3ZNI, who joined me to provide the requisite three VEs.

- 73, Jacqué N3ZEL

Join WASH or Renew your Membership for 2010 Today! Membership Application on Page 11!!

Minutes, December 10th Meeting

Ron Notarius W3WN, Acting Secretary, **WASH**

Larry K3VX, called the meeting to order at 19:15 hours. There were 22 members and guests in attendance.

A moment of silence was observed for recent silent keys and other deserving persons.

A motion was made by Jim WB4GCS to accept the minutes of the November 2009 meeting as published in the December newsletter, seconded by Patty KC4WTT. The motion was voted on and passed.

Committee reports:

Treasurer (N3RDV): No report

Secretary (AB3ED): No report.

VE Report (N3ZEL): Next exam is January 21st, 2010.

Repeaters (N3RNX, W3SRL & N3FB: The N3SH 2-meter and W3SRL 70-cm repeaters were moved. Partial success as the 440 machine is functioning well, but the .955 machine is experiencing some problems. Steve hopes to have it up "soon". It was noted that the new site's Height Above Average Terrain (HAAT) is about 175 feet!

Net Report (N3HKQ): Schedule for 2010 is "owed" and will be out via email soon (*Editor's note: see Page 3*). Kevin apologized for forgetting about the "special guest" NCS.

Contests (K3VX): W3WH & K3VX made over 400 QSO's in the 160 Meter contest. ARRL 10 meter and Stew Perry contests coming up this month, ARRL VHF Sweepstakes and our 2 Meter simplex contest next month. Reminder that the date for the 2 Meter contest is January 9th, not the 16th.

Ways and Means (KB3GMN): 50/50, Show me the money!

Public Service (N3IDH): Nothing coming up.

Christmas/Holiday Party (KB3GMN): Don't forget that the money is due for the January Christmas/Holiday party, to date we have 38+ planning to attend. Again, a big thanks to Carol KB3GMN for organizing this.

WASHFest (N3HKQ): Prizes being ordered from R&L on Saturday (to take advantage of Customer Appreciation Day sale). WACOM has been kind enough to loan us their vendor & attendee lists. Carol KB3GMN has been a big help! Also a great deal of help from Steve W3SRL—10 table sold.

President's Report (K3VX): No report.

Old Business: None

New Business:

- Discussion on repeater antenna. The current antenna (at the new site) is about 10 years old. Kevin N3HKQ moved to authorize purchase of a replacement antenna whatever the President & W3SRL think is appropriate. 2nd by Carol KB3GMN. Amendment by Dick N3QMV to include money to pay for our share of the commercial tower crew (to climb the tower). Motion passed with two opposed (N3SBF & N3FB).
- Kevin N3HKQ moved to replace the tent (owned by WB4GCS & KC4WTT) damaged at Field Day 2009, and repair the old tent for our own use, ie, to make restitution to the tent owners. 2nd by Glen KE7FD. Passed unanimously with two abstentions (WB4GCS & KC4WTT)

Good of the Order: Frank N3FB mentioned that he has "a bunch" of electronic parts let him know if you need anything, he may have it. Larry K3VX also mentioned that he has an assortment of parts.

Motion to Adjourn: Made by Carol KB3GMN seconded by Dave N3IDH The motion was voted on and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 19:45 EST.

Program: Snacks and holiday treats by many club members, organized by Kevin N3HKQ (thanks Kevin) and general conversation.

Note:

There was no formal meeting at the end-of-season Holiday party held in January.

Outgoing President Larry Comden K3VX announced that Steve Lane W3SRL has been named recipient of the 2009 Kilowatt Award, in recognition of all his hard work this past year and in years past in maintaining the 146.955 and 442.550 MHz repeater systems.

WASH Spotlight: N3FB



After 4 ½ days without power, Frank N3FB was quite happy with his

generator's performance. But then, there was the driveway to consider...

(Photo courtesy of & ©Copyright 2010 Frank Bobro N3FB)

Every month we're going to feature a **WASH** club member, something about them, something they're involved in or a club-related activity that we're involved in, in the **WASH Spotlight**. Submissions for the Spotlight should be sent to Ron W3WN at [newsletter at n3sh dot org](mailto:newsletter@n3sh.org)

Monthly WASH Breakfast

Please join us for the next **WASH** Breakfast! We usually get together on the LAST Saturday of every month for a chance to informally sit down, shoot the breeze, compare notes, drink lots of coffee, and just have a good time!



Join us this month at **The Beach House**, on Route 88 in Fiinleyville, just south of Trax Farms and adjacent to Mineral Beach. Start time is about 8 AM until ????? Monitor 146.955 & 443.650 for talk-in or any last minute changes.

All are welcome, **WASH** members or not, amateurs or not!

Wireless Association of South Hills Membership

AB3ED	KB3IAC	N3QMV	WB3CAI	WASH FL	WASH VI
AB3EN	KB3IRQ	N3RDV	WB4GCS	KA3UPY/MM	NP2JF
AE3DL	KB3IVW	N3SBF	WO3Z	W4ZE	Silent
AC4KU	KB3IVX	N3TIR	Mary Jean	WASH GA	Keys
K3AIR	KB3ORR	N3ZEL	Senk	K3OL	K3EED
K3AVQ	KB3SRB	N3ZNI	Jane	KB3IJX	(George)
K3GW	KB3SVX	N9OKM	Wagner	WASH NC	KA3NMG
K3HCR	KC4WTT	NU3S		N3RNK	KB3ENX
K3LGM	KE7FD	W3LE		WASH NE	KB3FNM
K3SGT	N1NCZ	W3RJM		NØPEU	KB3FQT
K3VX	N2QIV	W3RWS		WASH OH	N3FZ
K3WJL	N3AWF	W3SRL		N8DPW	N3KEH
KA3TWI	N3BPB	W3VFA		WASH TN	N3OBD
KB3DCO	N3CZZ	W3WH		KE3XB	N3SKR
KB3GMN	N3DFK	W3WN		N3YPB	N3SRC
KB3GMP	N3FB	WA3JPP		WASH TX	N3XFE
KB3GMU	N3HKQ	WA3NB		K3LGM	W3ZLK
KB3HFP	N3PN	WA3RVD		Jane Wagner	

Through December 6TH, 2009

List compiled by

Mark Stabryla N3RDV, Vice President/Treasurer

2010 WASH Upcoming Events Calendar

Meeting Topics & Other Significant Club Events — Subject to Change

February 14 th	BVARA TechFest	http://www.w3sgj.org
February 18 th	WASH Meeting (Rescheduled)	Final WASHFest Planning Session
February 20 th -21 st	ARRL DX Contest CW	http://www.arrl.org
February 28 th	WASHFest 2010	http://www.n3sh.org
March 6 th – 7 th	ARRL DX Contest SSB	http://www.arrl.org
March 11 th	WASH Meeting	Post Hamfest Pizza Night
March 27 th – 28 th	CQ WPX Contest SSB	http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com
April 8 th	WASH Meeting	To Be Announced
April 15 th	WASH VEC Exam	Pre-register via n3zel@comcast.net
April 18 th	ARRL Rookie Contest SSB	http://www.arrl.org
May 13 th	WASH Meeting	To Be Announced
May 14 th – 16 th	DAYTON HAMVENTION	http://www.hamvention.org
June 6 th	Breezeshooter's Hamfest	http://www.breezeshooters.org
June 10 th	WASH Meeting	Field Day Final Planning Session
June 12 th – 14 th	ARRL June VHF Contest	http://www.arrl.org
June 26 th – 27 th	ARRL Field Day	http://www.arrl.org
July 8 th	WASH Meeting	To Be Announced
July 15 th	WASH VEC Exam	Pre-register via n3zel@comcast.net
August 22 nd	ARRL Rookie Contest RTTY	http://www.arrl.org
December 19 th	ARRL Rookie Contest CW	http://www.arrl.org

In a series of small ceremonies, the U.S. Coast Guard shut down LORAN-C, a navigation and timing system that has guided mariners and aviators since World War II on Monday, February 7th.

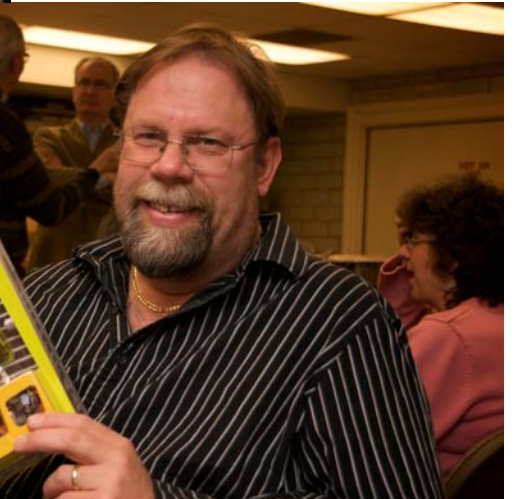
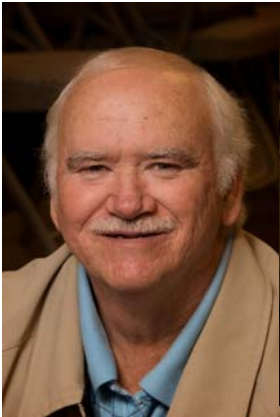
The death blow came last May when President Obama called the system obsolete, saying it is no longer needed in an age in which Global Positioning System devices are nearly ubiquitous in cars, planes and boats.

Killing Loran-C will save the government \$190 million over five years, Obama said. But supporters of LORAN — including the man known as "the father of GPS" — say the nation's increasing reliance on GPS paradoxically has increased the importance of maintaining Loran as a backup.

At 3 p.m. Monday, the U.S. Coast Guard turned off LORAN signals at 19 of the 24 LORAN stations. Signals remain at five stations because of agreements with Russia and Canada, but the Coast Guard expects those stations to be decommissioned by June after the United States receives verification that those countries have been notified of the change. The five stations that temporarily remain on line are at Attu, in Alaska's Aleutian Islands; and Caribou, ME; Nantucket, MA; Shoal Cove, AK; and George, WA. — CNN/Reuters

Scenes From A Party

photos courtesy of and ©Copyright 2010 Bob Timmins AB3EN



Experimentation is a major aspect of amateur radio. In fact, the innate learning style some of us are endowed with at birth, requires a hands-on approach, or we just don't get it! Others do very well with nothing more than reading books, while others excel in classroom-based learning. In the real world, the average person's learned intelligence is a combination of all three. Looking at this another way; if you're not endowed with at least a modicum of knowledge (book or classroom based) about the subject at hand, the results from your experimentation will be suspect at best. With that in mind...

Without doubt, the most prevalent experimental theme in amateur radio, and the most controversial, is the ubiquitous antenna. Everyone has to have one is some form another, and God knows there are more forms of it than any one person can imagine. There are dipoles, monopoles, yagis, off-center fed ones, verticals, wires, aluminum ones, mobiles, HF, VHF, inverted Vs, slopers, quads, and even dummy ones. And every single one of them must adhere to principles set forth by Kirchoff and Maxwell. There are no mythical antennas which can violate, defy, circumvent, ignore, or modify these principles.

It's agreed that not everyone is endowed with the capability to understand the aforementioned principles. However, you should have some basic knowledge about antennas just to install a store-bought one. When you don't have the knowledge, you could easily end up dead! At the least, you end up throwing your money away and/or be stuck with a less than stellar sky wire.

The following antenna examples all have a great following. Some users are so enamored with their choice, they ignore the inherent problems associated with them. A few even re-propagate the mythical attributes they're supposedly endowed with, even though they defy the aforementioned principles.

Nowadays, with the aid of modeling software like EZNEC, the masses can learn a lot more about antennas, what their radiation patterns look like, and even their approximate efficiency. Yet the myths about some of them just won't go away! Seemingly, once myths get into print, they obtain gospel status, as if commanded by the almighty. Well, let's look a little closer at some of the more popular antennas, with supposedly mythical properties.

Digressing. EZNEC, and some of the other numeric electromagnetic coding engines, are marvelous programs. They allow expert, and neophyte alike, to model all-manner of antenna parameters. However, the results are dependent on the data provided. For example, leaving out the feed line when doing an analysis will skew the results. Another common error is miscalculating ground losses. Therefore, assuming and quoting the results verbatim, without a basic understanding of how antennas behave, often leads users astray. In other words, they're a tool, not a panacea!

Case One: The End-Fed Dipole

If you just stop and think about the phrase end-fed dipole, the idea just falls apart. If it is end-fed, then it can't a dipole! A dipole is also a balanced antenna, and will technically have equal currents flowing in both poles. In the real world, the balance is not perfect, but is easily handled (using a balun perhaps) so that common mode current on its feed line will be at a minimum.

In the case of the proposed end-fed dipole, the return current must flow back down the outside of the coax feed line, as common mode. Some proponents argue that these unwanted currents can be choked off with a proper ferrite-based choke or balun. Others claim the common mode currents are an asset, allowing the antenna to work better; whatever that means.

One manufacturer openly claims the antenna is multi-banded, with a low SWR, even though the fine print says you need an antenna tuner. However, no matter how you cut it, the end-fed dipole is a lousy antenna, fraught with common mode (both ingress and egress), and claiming otherwise reeks in the face of reality. After all, you can't negate the aforementioned principles, no matter what you do.

Case Two: The Off-Center-Fed Dipole (?)

Almost universally, off-center-fed antennas are referred to as Windoms, albeit they have no resemblance to Loren Windom's, W8GZ (sk) original, single wire feed design. Some manufacturers prefix them with the name of a state, assumedly to set them apart from all of the rest of the modified designs.

Remembering that a dipole is an antenna consisting of two equal length elements with a connecting feed at its center, then how can it be off-center-fed, and still be a dipole? Like the misnamed end-fed dipole, the level of common mode current is inordinate. Proponents often espouse the use of a voltage balun in some unorthodox ratio. That might be 1:4, 1:6 or even 1:9, depending on the anecdotal proof of the pudding. About all that happens is, the balun saturates which adds loss, and uncertainty to its already poor performance. Allow me to digress once again.

I have a pet peeve with respect to how ratio baluns are represented in popular text. You often see 4:1 when in reality they mean 1:4. For example; If the feed line is 50 ohm, and we have a 4:1 ratio, then technically the output of the balun is 12.5 ohms. Expressed as 1:4, the input is 50 ohms, and the output is 200 ohms. The situation gets even uglier when you see ratios of 9:1 (5.5 ohm output), when they really mean 1:9 (450 ohms). While a nit perhaps, it is more defining than adding the universally missing verbiage—step up or step down as the case may be—after the expressed ratio.

The actual length of the two elements vary with the designer. To be sure, each one has his/her pet lengths and balun ratio, assumedly designed to negate common mode current and/or enhance some other presumed attribute. Whether or not problems arise due to common mode current (the design notwithstanding), has more to do with the installation parameters, which for all practical purposes are beyond anyone's control. This makes the off-center-fed antenna a true conundrum.

Just for the record, we're not talking about input SWR, which can be mediated to some extent by carefully choosing the lengths of the elements. And, there may be some designs which exhibit low common mode on some bands, but certainly not all, an included balun notwithstanding.

Case Three: The G5RV As An All-band Antenna

There are as many variations of the G5RV as there are variations of Windoms. There are shortened ones, elongated ones, juniors, seniors, and (no lie) off-center-fed ones! Fact is, Louis Varney, G5RV (sk) published several versions himself, both with and without baluns. Somewhere along the line, the notion got started that the G5RV was an all-band antenna. Here is a sentence (a verbatim cut and paste) from the web page of one of the companies which makes and sells a version of it: The G5RV is an excellent all-band (3.5-30 MHz) 102 Ft. dipole. The 102 Ft. dipole with 31 Ft. feeder of 450 ohm transmission line achieves a resonance on all bands from 80 to 10 meters with only one antenna without any loss in traps and coils. The impedance at the end of the 450 ohm feed line is 50-60 ohms. No wonder folks are confused!

If you really want to know what kind of antenna the G5RV really is, then here's the nitty gritty, complements of Tom Rauch, W8JI. If you read the data, you'll notice the high input impedance on 30, 17, and 10 meters. Unless you have a very good quality antenna tuner, you might not be able to find a match on these bands. Even then, the overall losses would be rather high. Realizing this, some all-band proponents of the G5RV, suggest removing the coax, and just feed the ladder line directly. When you do this, can it still be called a G5RV?

Case Four: Why 43 Feet?

Within the last few years, the 43 foot vertical has become popular, and available from several manufacturers. Proponents would have you believe the length is special. The truth is, it isn't. The length doesn't assure a good match except where it's resonant. Speaking of which, it isn't resonant across the HF spectrum as one company asserts. Contrary to some advertisements, it does indeed need radials (ground plane), as any vertical monopole does. Further, just because it doesn't have traps, doesn't mean much either. In fact, I suspect a properly installed Hustler 6 BTV will out perform it in any respect.

There's a dirty little secret about the requisite (?) matching balun you don't see in print very often. Most 43 foot vertical antenna sellers recommend a 1:4 voltage balun (always expressed as 4:1). Little if any thought is put into the fact a voltage balun can become a very lossy lump of ferrite when subjected to high reactive loads; almost a given no matter the band of operation.

Man Hospitalized With Anxiety Over Amateur Radio

Al Lorona courtesy of the [K3 Reflector](#) (thanks Jacqué N3ZEL!)

Southland County — A ham radio enthusiast was admitted to County Hospital today suffering from anxiety over what he perceived as serious problems with his new radio, authorities reported Tuesday.

Irv Stumpo, 55, of East Pharsalia, checked into the emergency room "in distress," according to the nurse on watch just before midnight Tuesday. "He was perspiring profusely and moaning over and over, 'My K-3 is no good, no good'," said Paula Stevens, a nurse at County. "He had enormous headphones clamped tightly on his head which we had a ton of difficulty removing, and he was also wearing ear buds," she said. "Isn't that strange? He was half incoherent but kept mumbling something about dynamic range and audio artifacts. I have no idea what that means."

Randy LaHood, a fifteen year emergency room veteran, said that during an examination Mr. Stumpo went into considerable technical detail about a radio he had recently purchased from Elecraft, a company that makes high-end ham radios. "He began by explaining that his radio had 'noisy receiver' and 'mushy signals'," explained Dr. LaHood. "From what I could gather, he had just spent a lot of money on a radio and hadn't actually noticed any of these problems himself, but others in a internet group kept putting the ideas into his head," he said. Over a course of weeks, Stumpo became distraught over various imperfections in what Dr. LaHood said was a classic case of the power of suggestion.

The hospital records also said that Stumpo drew mathematical figures he labeled "AGC slope", and filled four pages by writing "AGC off", "Ear Isolation" and "K3" repeatedly. Hospital officials could not explain the cryptic scribbles.

Dr. LaHood said that Stumpo repeated the phrase "mushy AGC" for at least four hours while he waited for treatment. Other patients who were in the waiting room at the time moved to the other side of the room for fear he might endanger them. J. B. Archer was one of those in the waiting room at the time who had brought in his twelve-year-old son with a basketball injury. "Good ol' boy was pretty upset, I just told him it would be alright, but he wouldn't let up with 'I can't pick out the pileups'. I thought he had been involved in a big accident on the highway. Then he said other things like 'the impedance of my headphones' and 'ride the R. F. gain'. Then he started with 'diversity problem' and I thought maybe he was having trouble with racial relations. He was in terrible shape, I'll tell you that."

Rick Culver, president of a local ham radio club, told the Morning News in a telephone interview, "A lot of these guys spend five or ten thousand dollars on a radio they think is going to be absolutely perfect in every conceivable way. When it's not, they go into a panic buying lots of other accessories which promise to fix the issue they think they're having. This is followed by a deep buyer's remorse." He went on to recount a recent case which epitomized this effect. "We had one guy who had a radio that put out 95 watts instead of 100. He went berserk and ended up smashing his radio with a baseball bat. Not everyone gets that violent, but he never would have worried about it if it hadn't been for an internet forum that drummed it into his head twenty four seven that his radio was broken."

Hospital officials said that Stumpo was treated with sedatives and is being kept for observation.

How would you like to be driving this around town for HF mobile?

From the Swan Corporation. archives, circa 1965, this is the late Senator Barry Goldwater K7UGA's 1963 Corvette Stingray. It came complete with an original Screwdriver antenna, and a Swan 400 set up under the dash by the front (only) passenger seat.

Which makes you wonder who was logging, and how, while the Senator was driving...



DX News Briefs

The **ZL8X** Kermadec Island 2010 team got Final Approval from New Zealand's Department of Conservation to land on Raoul Island for a period of 18 days. They will be travelling on the Braveheart, a ship well known to DX'ers. Their current (preliminary) timetable calls for them to depart New Zealand on 15 November, arrive on 18 November, and be QRV 19 November through 5 December. They will have an online log. More information at <http://www.kermadec.de/> — ZL8X



ZZ6Z will be an IOTA operation from SA-019 Santa Barbara Island, 25 - 28 February. QSL via PY6HD direct only — DX World

YT1AD and RA9USU recently spent 7 days in Yemen. Unfortunately, Hrane says that they were informed by the Director for Frequency and Regulations in the Ministry for Telecommunications that they will NOT be issued a **7O** license for "security reasons". The Ministry says that no valid licenses have been issued in Yemen for the last 20 years, no exceptions, not even for King Hussein JY1 (SK). Although there have been a few operations approved by the DXCC desk as valid, the bottom line is that the Yemen government is not issuing Amateur licenses at the present time, and will not do so for the foreseeable future — YT1AD, DXCoffee

DL2MLU is QRV as **V31MU** through 2 March. QSL via Home Call or the bureau, and he will confirm via LotW -- DL2MLU

Five Japanese operators are expected to be QRV from **JD1** Ogasawara 28 March through 12 April. Calls include **JD1BNN** (March only), **JD1BNJ** (RTTY & PSK31 only), **JD1BNK** (mainly CW), **JD1BNM** (mainly low bands & CW), and **JD1BNQ** (HF, 6 meters, CW). QSL routes have not been announced. — JD1 Project 2010

I5JHW is QRV "holiday style" as **6V7V** through 23 February. QSL via home call or the bureau — DX World

SM6CAS is leading **T32** Southern Line Islands IOTA DXpedition for one month starting 17 March. They plan to activate 4 new IOTA groups, OC-279, OC-280, OC-281 & OC-282. Details available at <http://t32line.webnode.com/>. QSL via SM6CAS — SM6CAS

XR2A will be a special event station for South American Lighthouse Weekend 2010, 26 - 28 February. QSL via QRZ address — DX World

N7OU and W7YAQ will be QRV from Tokelau **ZK3** 17 February - 10 March, call TBA. They will be QRV in the ARRL DX CW as a MS entry. Look for them 11 - 15 March from Samoa as **5W0OU** & **5W0YA**. QSL via home call or as directed — ADXO

Need Sardinia? Look for **IS0R**, QRV from EU-024 Isola Rossa, 7 - 15 May — F6KOP Team

Look for **ZF8/ZF2MN**, Little Cayman Island, 21 - 28 February, 40 - 10 CW only. QSL via K0UU — K0UU

QSL Routes

3D20CR via DJ8NK — K6GEP	KH5/KA41ST via WA3RHW — AC7DX
5N0OCH via DL3OCH — JR0AMD	LU1ZA via LU4DXU — LU2DKN
5R8IC via F6ICX — W3AWU	LY98FW via LY1FW — W4DN
5Z4/RW1AU via K5XK — RN3RQ	KH8/N9YU via YT1AD — W2IRT
9G5TT via I2YSB — PA0WRS	QJ0B via OH2BH — K6GEP
9G5XX via I2YSB — W3AWU	P29NI via N7RO — BA4DW
BA4TB via JK2VOC — JR0AMD	RX9FM via W3HNC — W2IRT
C91LW via UY5LW — JA1HGY	T6YA via F5OGL — W2IRT
C4I via LZ2HM — DO1DXX	TN5SN via IZ1BZV — JA1HGY
4W6AL via CT1GFK — RN3RQ	TO7RJ via DJ7RJ — K7VC
CT9L via DJ6QT — W5TFW	TY5WP via PA7FM — AA5AM
EL8RI via ZS6RI — DO1DXX	UP0L via DL8KAC — JR0AMD
EP3BN via JH1NBN — JA1HGY	V60DU via J16DUE — W4DN
ET3JA via OK3AA — G4GED	V73NF via JA2DSQ — RN3RQ
FS/W6IZT via N7XG — JA1HGY	XV2JR via OH4MDY — JA1HGY
FT5GA via F5OGL — NN3W	XV7RRC via RZ3EC — W2IRT
FW5RE via HA8IB — G4GED	YJ0PX via A15P — JR0AMD
H44MY via OM2SA — W3AWU	YN2GY via K9GY — JA1HGY
HC8GR via W5UE — JA1HGY	ZK2DL via DL2FAG — W2IRT
JD1BMH via JG7PSJ — PA0WRS	ZS9Z via ZS6EZ — K3LL

Thanks to the NJDXA DX News & DX Chat Reflectors, the DX-QSL Reflector, 425 DX News, OPDX News, Diamond DX Club News, ICPO Bulletin, & ARRL DX Bulletin for our DX News information. Thanks also to Bill Moore NC1L / ARRL DXCC Desk, & Bernie McClenny W3UR / The Daily DX for confirmations & additional information.



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FCC'S 100 MB to the Home: What It Means To You

Jeff Bertolucci, [PC World](#)

There's little debate that the United States lags behind other industrialized nations in high-speed Internet use. According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), more than 100 million Americans don't have broadband at home because they either can't get it, can't afford it, or aren't aware of its benefits. Some 65 percent of U.S. households have broadband, a far lower adoption rate than in other technologically advanced countries such as Singapore (88 percent) or South Korea (95 percent).

And that's why FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski is proposing a National Broadband Plan that would greatly widen the data pipe to most American homes. Speaking in Washington D.C. on Tuesday at the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners conference, Genachowski set an ambitious goal: His "100 Squared" initiative would bring 100-megabit-per-second broadband to 100 million U.S. households by 2020.

Pipe Dream?

Is the 100 Squared plan doable? It depends on whom you ask. Qwest Communications CEO Edward Mueller tells Reuters that not only is the plan is unrealistic, but that consumers don't want 100-Mbps broadband. But at DSL Reports, blogger Karl Bode writes that not only are home broadband speeds of 100-Mbps very feasible within 10 years, they'll arrive whether or not the FCC gets involved.

It's true that home broadband providers are busily upgrading their networks to enable faster connections. Verizon's FiOS Network could easily bring 100-Mbps service to the home, and cable companies are implementing the DOCSIS 3.0 spec to achieve similar goals. Comcast's Extreme 50 Service, for instance, currently offers download speeds as fast as 50 megabits per second. At AT&T, there's a broadband Uverse package with 24-Mbps downloads. Add these efforts together, and it's a reasonable assumption that 100-Mbps broadband in the home could happen within 10 years.

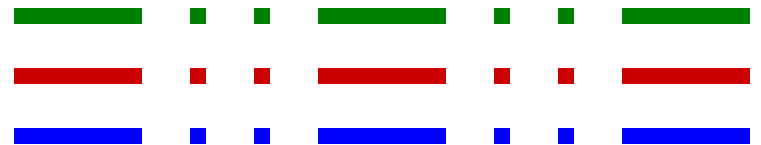
Will it reach 100 million homes? That's questionable. Certainly, consumers would benefit greatly from increased competition in the home broadband market — something better than today's telco-cable duopoly.

Don't Forget Google

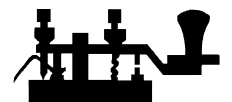
Google is planning a series of "experimental" fiber optic networks designed to bring blazingly fast 1-gigabit-per-second broadband — yes, that's 10 times faster than the FCC plan — to a small number of U.S. communities. While no one's suggesting that 1-gig service will go mainstream anytime soon, a successful Google broadband implementation would no doubt boost consumer demand for broadband service that far exceeds today's relatively poky DSL and cable modem connections.

Do we need 100-Megabit or 1-gigabit broadband? Absolutely. This is one of those build-it-and-they-will-come scenarios. "They," in this case, are the online applications that require faster broadband than what's currently available.

Genachowski [points out](#) that various Internet apps that aren't feasible today, such as numerous health care and educational uses, would be enabled by ubiquitous, super-fast broadband. I'd also add that the growing popularity of movie-streaming services such as Netflix, VUDU, and Amazon On Demand, are a good indication that consumer demand for a faster Internet will only continue to grow.



Silent Keys



Ernie Baur W3UHB, Penn Hills, 86, January 9th

Jim Danner K3JRD, Uniontown ARC VP, February 13th

Has Roadway found the tower yet?



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Mythical Antennas Continued from page 7

If you're using a shack-mounted tuner, feed line losses vary all over the board. While tolerable on some frequencies, it certainly isn't tolerable over the whole HF spectrum, balun or no balun, as some pundits claim. Here's a discussion about the 43 foot wonder which appeared in these very pages about 15 months ago. It begs reading if you use a 43 foot vertical, or thinking about buying one.

Case Five: The Quad

Some years back, an article appeared in a popular amateur radio magazine extolling the virtues of the quad antenna, and how much better it was than a yagi, especially at low mounting heights. It further stated the gain was 2 dB better than a comparable yagi; they were less prone to noise reception; and the take off angle was lower. The truth lies elsewhere.

It really doesn't make much difference what the supporting structure is comprised of, be it fiberglass or aluminum. Nor does it make a difference if the elements are DC grounded, used with balun or without a balun, or whether they're in a diamond or square orientation. Their gain isn't any better than a comparable yagi; they're not any quieter than a yagi; and their take off angle isn't any lower.

The only true attribute a quad has (other than they're less susceptible to corona discharge), is their inability to withstand icing conditions.

A Truth

Common threads in the reviews of antennas universally contain references to DX stations worked, and statements like this antenna just works, or this antenna rocks, and, the SWR is low clear across the band! These statements are nothing more than jabberwocky.

Here's a real-world truth many amateurs will openly argue about: When it comes to simplicity, ease of building, ease of erecting, and ease of tuning, it's very difficult to beat a simple resonant dipole fed with coax. If you mount it correctly, you can actually achieve about 8 dBi of gain. Not too shabby for two chunks of wire, and few miscellaneous pieces of hardware. And you know what? No experimenting needs to be done! Oh. And they really do work!

Conclusion

The best way to combat the misinformation highway, is to spend the requisite effort to learn basic antenna theory, using whatever method is best for you. While experimenting is part of the effort perhaps, it should be based on truths, and not on myths.

When it comes to the printed word, I think Joseph Pulitzer said it best; A cynical, mercenary, demagogic press will in time produce a people as base as itself. To paraphrase; Basing your experimental efforts on myths, and then repeating them ad nauseam, only places you in the same criticizable position as the myth itself.

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CLUBS			N3TTE	JOE	308
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See You At WASHFest 2010 February 28th !!



Somehow, it's probably a good thing that Larry didn't plan to do any tower work this month. Photo courtesy of & ©Copyright 2010 Larry Comden K3VX



Just too good a party picture to pass up, courtesy of & ©Copyright 2010 Bob Timmins AB3ED

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www.washarc.org
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