



Q5er – The Official Newsletter of the Skyview Radio Society

April 1, 2025

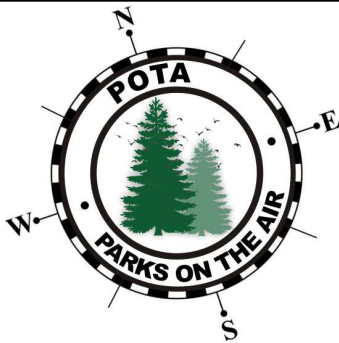
- Big Swap & Shop Prizes
-
- VE Testing
-
- Update on Mobile Install
-
- TRARC 2025 Hamfest
-
- New Members
-
- Skyview Roster

**Sunspot Numbers
Peaking**

**Time to exercise
the 10-12-15-17-20
Meter bands While
They are Hot**

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Parks on the Air (POTA) encourages portable amateur radio operations that promote emergency awareness and communications from designated national/federal and state/provincial level parks.

POTA “Activators” setup a portable or a mobile station at one of the designated “POTA Parks”.

POTA “Hunters”, who may be at home, or may be at another Park, attempt to contact the POTA Activators.

Activators and Hunters will post the Current Activations on the POTA Website in real time to announce where to find them.

SSB, CW, and FT8 are the most popular POTA Modes.

To keep it interested Activators and Hunters both get “Points” to reward their accomplishments. Point Totals are published.

Activators Submit Logs - Hunters do not have to.

If you are interested in getting started with POTA Hunting, see https://docs.pota.app/docs/hunter_guide-english.html#parks-on-the-air-hunter-guide

Activators may operate from where ever they want to within the geographic limits of the Park, limited only by Park Rules.

While most Activators use Battery Operated Stations or Small Generators, Commercial Power may be used.

Skyview has many members who are POTA Activators. They would be happy share their knowledge and provide support.

See the Skyview Reflector for details of the Skyview POTA Activation Event at Keystone State Park on April 19th and 20th

<https://parksontheair.com/index.html#>

2025 is Skyview’s 65th Anniversary !!



The Skyview Radio Society Clubhouse is the “Every Tuesday Place” . . .

Something is going on at ‘the joint’ each and every Tuesday evening, from about 1900 hours to whenever.

See the general schedule of Tuesday events on the Skyview Web Page: <http://www.skyviewradio.net>

For the latest up-to-date plan, check the Groups.io Reflector at : <https://groups.io/g/K3MJW>

Directions are on: <http://www.skyviewradio.net>

Guests are always welcome !!

From the Editor

Nice variety of articles from our authors. Enjoy.

Jody - K3JZD

Remember: The number of people older than you never increases, it only decreases

From the Treasurer

We are in pretty good financial condition.

It will soon be time to take those who have not paid for 2025 off of the Active Roster.

Jody - K3JZD

ADVENTURE: The respectful pursuit of trouble.

Ham Radio is a Contact Sport

Skyview Radio Society is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a charitable non-profit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code. Donations to Skyview are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Continue Use the Skyview Facilities At Your Own Risk - It is Not Really Totally History Yet.

Follow <https://groups.io/g/K3MJW> for COVID updates.

You miss 100% of the shots you don't take. – Wayne Gretzky

Skyview Business Meeting Minutes

de Don - WA3HGW

Skyview Radio Society

Monthly Business Meeting – March 4, 2025

Call to Order: 7:30 PM by President Jerry Lasalle, W3UY.

Attending – 26 Members: KB3DVD, KC3ZXY, KB3YT, WA3HGW, K3CLT, W1MP, WC3O, W3IU, NM3A, AC3IE, W3UY, WA3KFS, N3WMC, AB3GY, KC3PXQ, AG3I, AC3GB, NJ3R, KC3VNB, K3STL, AG3U, AC3KI, KD3ANT, K3FAZ, K3JZD and AC3Q.

Prior Meeting Minutes: The minutes of the February 4, 2025 meeting were distributed for review. A motion to accept the minutes as presented was made by N3WMC and seconded by AC3KI. The motion passed without objection.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Jody, K3JZD, reviewed the Financial Report of 28 February 2025 (attached). Jody noted February was a slow month financially. Routine expenses were paid. There were no building maintenance or radio expenses in the month. T-Bill interest income from the building improvement account were added to that account. There was income to the unallocated account from half & Half donations, surplus banquet funds and VE testing. A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented was made by AB3GY and seconded by AC3KI. The motion passed without objection.

Membership Report: Tom, AB3GY, advised there are two new membership applications for March, and made a motion to open the membership rolls. The motion was seconded by KC3PXQ. The motion passed without objection. The applications are from: Anees Udyawar, KD3ANT, a Technician from Pittsburgh, PA and Adam Bezilla, KC3XYZ, a General from Youngstown, PA. AB3GY made a motion to accept these applications, which was seconded by AB3GY. The motion passed without objection. AB3GY made a motion to close the membership rolls, which was seconded by AC3KI. The motion passed without objection. Membership now stands at 152.

Radio Officer Report: Bob, WC3O, reported all radios are working well. Still no progress with the crank-up tower or 80 meter dipole repairs. Those antenna repairs are still being held up by the weather. The back-up repeater is still

in use. Repeater repair is also being held up due to weather. Bob also showed the group the large number of foreign QSL cards that recently arrived via the QSL Bureau.

Kitchen Report: Bob, WC3O, noted the kitchen fund is at \$208. Supplies are good.

VE Report: There was one new Technician licensed in February. There were plenty of VEs in attendance despite the snow and ice making driving hazardous. Next VE testing is March 15. We have one applicant so far for March.

Newsletter: The February issue of the *Q5er* is out with 36 pages of great information and stories. Jody is looking for submissions by March 15 for the April 2025 issue.

Facilities: Ted KC3VCX was absent, therefore no report this month.

Building Committee: Marty, AG3I, noted the architect was hired, as approved at the last business meeting. He is already working on the details required for building permit application submittals.

Operating Events Recap: No report. Contest activities were not held at the club due to the antenna repair constraints.

Calendar of Events:

March 8 - Breezeshooters groundwave contest, Phone edition.

March 8 – International YLRL POTA activations.

March 8 – Warren, PA Hamfest.

March 15 - Breezeshooters groundwave contest, Digital edition.

March 16 – Skyview annual YSYEOK (You'll Shoot Yer Eye Out Kid) 11 AM at Trafford Sportsman Club.

March 29 – WEARS Hamfest, Greensburg, PA

March 29-30 – CQ WPX contest – Phone.

April 5 – Cuyahoga, OH Hamfest.

April 6 – Two Rivers ARC Hamfest.

April 19 -20 – Support Your Parks POTA weekend.

Q5er – The Official Newsletter of the Skyview Radio Society

April 26 – Hams for PanCan N3P special event. At the club house and Schenley Park.

May 4 – Pittsburgh Marathon. Hams needed for public service event.

May 15-18 – The fabulous Dayton Hamvention and associated events. Not to be missed!

June 8 – The fabulous, local, and not to be missed, Breezeshooters Hamfest.

Old Business: Nothing to report.

New Business: Discussions on Elmer night presentations needed and our annual YSYEOK event. See the calendar of events above.

Weather Night: K3FAZ suggested we update the weather station in the repeater shed. Bob, WC3O, noted that whenever there is a computer interruption, such as a Windows update, the present weather station needs to be reset. K3FAZ recommended an Ambient Weather Orion station as a replacement. This weather station has direct internet connectivity, eliminating the need for a computer. Estimated purchase price is \$189. WA3KFS made a motion we make the purchase, which was seconded by AG3I. The motion passed without objection.

Steve, K3FAZ, announced that Skyview was named a Weather Ready National Ambassador by the NWS.

March 8 – ARES meeting at the Red Cross in downtown Pittsburgh.

March 11 – Matt Brudy from Pgh. NWS spring severe weather Skywarn training via ZOOM.

April 26 – POSTPONED - National Weather Service Intercommunications test. New date TBD.

Elmer Night: March 18, Dave, AA3YW, presentation on SDR radio design.

April 29, WB3JOB presentation on communications system grounding.

Smoke & Solder Night: Every Thursday evening 6:30 to 8:30 PM. Some discussion on possible kit building going forward.

Net Report: Check-ins averaged 41.75 in February. NCS Cousin Joe, KC3PXQ, had the most check-ins at 48.

50/50 Drawing: The 50/50 total collected was \$46. The winner of \$23 was Marty, AG3I. Marty donated his proceeds back to the club.

Meeting Adjourned: A motion to adjourn was made by N3WMC and seconded by WB3DVD. The motion passed without objection. The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Don Stewart – WA3HGW
Secretary; Skyview Radio Society, Inc.



Skyview Swap & Swap *de Jody - K3JZD*

Yes, it is pretty early to start talking about the
2025 Skyview Swap & Shop.

Yes, it is nearly 4 months away.

However, I wanted to get some great news
out there early.

This year Skyview will have two major
Main Prizes :

Icom IC-7300 Transceiver

Astron SS-30M-AP Power Supply

These will be in addition to our other
Main Prizes and our Door Prizes

Put August 24, 2025 on your calendar now !!

August

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Skyview VE Sessions

Skyview provides VE Testing at the Skyview
Clubhouse each month (Details provided
later, near the end of this newsletter)

Here are some of the recent success stories

February 2025

[Della Kohlman](#) [KD3AQP](#) passed the Technician exam

March 2025

— NONE —

de Bill - N3WMC

Adventures of a New Ham – Part I

de Anees - KD3ANT

My interest in becoming a new Ham started in December of 2024. As I was hanging out with my 5 year old daughter, during the Christmas break, I had sadly come to the realization that Smart phones would take over her life if I could not divert her attention towards another hobby. At home we had plenty of board games and books to keep her engaged. However, her curiosity would always wander towards the “screen,” maybe it be the phone, television, or the computer.

So as I sitting there towards the end of my winter break, I thought what if my daughter and I, both tried to learn and become licensed as new Hams. As a mechanical engineer at Westinghouse, I had some understanding of the basic concepts of circuits and electronics. So, for the remaining part of December 2024, I studied the “ARRL Ham Radio License Manual” and the “No Nonsense Technician Class License Study Guide” by KB6BU. At the same, I reached out to several amateur radio clubs in the Pittsburgh, and I was pleasantly surprised that Pittsburgh had a vibrant and active Ham community.

While I was studying for the technician exam in January, I decided to buy a couple of 5W handhelds to listen to the local nets with my daughter. She was very eager to click on the PTT button to reach out and start talking to others on the nets and the repeaters, so it only made me push myself harder and study faster.

I really wanted to take the Technician exam at Skyview Club in mid-January, but I was still not ready. And due to schedule conflicts, I decided to take the test online proctored by the GLAARG (Greater Lost Angeles Amateur Radio Group). The remote testing was held on Zoom on Jan 24, 2025 - Friday night (8 PM EST). Taking the test online was convenient and the test organizers were very genial. After passing the test on that Friday, I immediate got the FCC payment email for \$35 the same night. Shortly in the middle of the following week, I got my call sign.

Over the past few weeks, my daughter and I have had excellent QSOs with many local Hams on the repeaters in Allegheny and surrounding counties on the 2 meters. She has had a few 3rd party conversations, and always eager to connect with people over the radio. Couple

weeks ago, I was able to purchase and upgrade to ICOM T-281H (50W), and it made a world of difference compared to the 5 W handheld. The roll-up Slim Jim N9TAX antenna in my attic has allowed me to talk with Hams on the repeaters down in Morgantown, West Virginia.

My very first Hamfest at WASHFest in Feb 23 was amazing. With the help of a fellow HAM, I was able to buy a splendid Astron RS-20A power supply for my mobile radio. The comradery and friendliness of everyone at the hamfest is extraordinary. I can't wait to go to some of the other Hamfest around the area.

This week, I become a member of the Skyview Radio Club, and they have welcomed me (and my daughter) with open arms. The expertise at the club is astounding and diverse, but above all I appreciate the hospitality and genialness that they have extended towards me. I hope to continue learning from them as I explore the Ham radio hobby into the future.

Until next time, 73 Anees - KD3ANT



New Mobile Radio Setup – Update

de Dan - NM3A

ED: A photo was missing from the February article. The related portion of that article, along with the related photos, is being republished here.

A few days later, we had our Odyssey sold and a new Honda Ridgeline pickup bought. Hopefully, we'll have many more years of camping with this tow vehicle and, of course, more years of POTA and SOTA activations and general mobile activity. And that meant all the work of re-installing all that equipment and wiring!



Figuring out where to put the IC-7100 was the first challenge. Turns out the head fits very nicely in the forward alcove of the center console.

Only compromise there was giving up the wireless phone charger in that location. Minor, as I don't use wireless chargers, anyway. A couple of strips of 3M Dual Lock

strips easily hold it securely in place.

Some well placed slots between the console and the dash allowed the cabling to the main radio body to be well hidden. They were tucked up under the console and routed back to under the passenger seat, where the 7100 main body is located. As in my old setup, I reused a wooden board to mount the radio. This board was zip tied to the HVAC vents under the seat to keep it from moving.



A wire connection from the seat anchor bolt to the radio provides a local RF ground. Notice the small, 2 Ahr AGM battery mounted on the right side of the radio and the power wiring. More about that later. Also to the right of the unit is the VHF/UHF antenna cable.

The IC-7100 does not have an internal antenna tuner, so I use an LDG 100A. This allows for semi-automatic tuning directly from the 7100's head unit and remote placement of the tuner. The LDG 100A fits very nicely under the driver's seat on a similar wooden platform as the 7100 uses.



The cabling between the 100A and the 7100 is then tucked up under the rear of the console to make a nearly invisible installation. (To make the installation visible for these pictures, the seats were in their most forward position.) The power cable also runs in this same area. The 100A only needs power to tune and uses latching relays to hold that setting between tunes. What little power it needs comes directly from the 7100. Note the bright blue Victron battery isolator (secured to the rear seat support) just to the right of the 100A. More about that later. Left of the 100A is the HF antenna cable.

de Dan - NM3A

A Backup Rotor Control Box

de Cooky - WC3O

First, a little backstory:

Back in the day - Hams used beam antennas. As time went on those beam antennas became larger and larger, prompting the need for antenna rotors that were able to handle this larger mass swinging in the relentless wind.

A company named Cornell Dubilier Electric (CDE) came up with an antenna rotor that was in a housing shaped like a bell. Their rotors became the darling of the ham community.

As antennas became larger and larger, CDE upgraded this basic design to accommodate the increased loads. This included a tougher ring gear and a mechanical brake.

The earlier control boxes had a signal lever that operated the rotor. These were later replaced by a three button control box and sported a meter that indicated the antenna direction.

There is a direction potentiometer located inside the rotor bell. The meter on the control box was really nothing more than an ohm meter. There is a calibration knob on the box to set the full clockwise south direction to make the meter accurate.

CDE eventually sold their rotor design to Hygain, who continued to manufacture these VERY popular rotors. Hygain saw the need to further increase rotor capacity and made what was known as the TailTwister (TT). The TT was basically the same as previous rotors (Known as the HAM-M, HAM-2, HAM-3, ...) except it had a heavier housing with beefier hardware and an additional ball bearing ring for support. But the insides basically remained the same.

Hygain eventually gave up the ghost and MFJ bought the line, continuing the Hygain name.

Between CDE, Hygain and MFJ, they have sold a bajillion of these rotors worldwide in one form or another, dating back to the 1950s.

The nature of the three button box: (Nice snap-action switches) Center button is the brake release. The two outer buttons are CCW and CW direction controls. To move the antenna you first depress the brake release,

then one of the two direction buttons and hold both of them until you reach your desired direction. Then release the direction button until the antenna comes to a stop, then release the brake button to hold the antenna in place.

With a larger antenna, if you release the brake button too soon (While the antenna is still moving) you stand a good chance to damage the ring gear in the rotor.

So let's say you want to go from full south, CCW to northeast (Europe) :

You need to hold the CCW direction and brake buttons down for around 30 seconds. You're stuck there for 30 seconds while the antenna is turning. You release the CCW direction button, then after waiting a few seconds, you release the brake button. This is a lot of time in your life that you'll never get back.

Enter a company called Idiom Press:

Some very smart engineer noted the popularity of these rotors and decided to make an upgrade that would allow automatic brake release delay, automated direction control and even computer automated direction control via RS232. It's called the Rotor-EZ. Idiom Press sold the design to Ham Supply and they are still available today.

The kit is all on one circuit board that was designed to mount onto the studs on the back of the meter movement. Any old circuit boards in the original control box are discarded and everything is handled by the new board.

The Rotor-EZ was once available in kit form, where you needed to populate the circuit board, but now it is available only as a pre-assembled board. You just need to install the board and wire it in. I bought this kit for my own rotor control box

YEARS ago. I liked it so much that I installed this system into the two Hygain rotor control boxes at the clubhouse. They work great. The only problems that we've ever had with them were lightning induced. You really can't blame them for that happening.

Now, the rest of the story...

The problem:

If we do have an issue with one of the two controllers, we do have an old school control box, unmodified. The problem is that many people use the station at the clubhouse and I don't want anyone breaking the rotors due to applying the brake before the antenna has come to a full stop. The antenna on the crank-up tower is very large and it takes a while for it to come to rest. I wanted another fully operational, automated control box as a hot back-up. I'll keep the other unmodified box for rotor testing.

Picture it:

Dayton Hamvention! I was out in the flea market and noted a CDE control box for sale in what looked to be in good condition. I said hmmm. I waited until the end of the event and gave them the old Uncle Bob Lowball offer. They went for it. I think it was \$20. That's a great deal.

This box sat on the fabled Skyview workbench at the club until mid February. (You know, the workbench that you can't work on because there are too many treasures on it) I purchased the Rotor-EZ kit from Ham Supply and it too, sat on the workbench.



Well, I finally got around to installing the Rotor-EZ kit, which also included an updated LED light kit for the meter movement. THIS is where this turns into another nothing's easy story...

Not knowing if this unmodified control box was good in the first place, I tested it with a known good rotor. It works!



Good. Now for the modification.

As I said, I've installed a number of these kits before and they are not difficult. Until now...

So the board mounts on the back of the meter to the terminal studs. Due to the very long production life of these rotor control boxes, there are any number of variations in components, including the meter movement.

They came with 10-32 studs and 1/4-20 studs, with two different spacings. The new board is designed to accommodate this with double holes that kinda looks like a binocular view.

After removing the original control board I went to slide the new board onto the meter studs.

What???? No way!

For one thing, the studs were too long.

Secondly, they were too large. THIRDLY they were spaced too far apart! They are 3/8 inch studs and LONG.

Crap! Now what do I do?

Well, the latest crop of MFJ built rotor controller meters have solder tabs on the back of the meter rather than studs. Idiom Press/Ham Supply developed a plan B where the board can be easily mounted on the bottom of the control box using two supplied plastic screw studs.

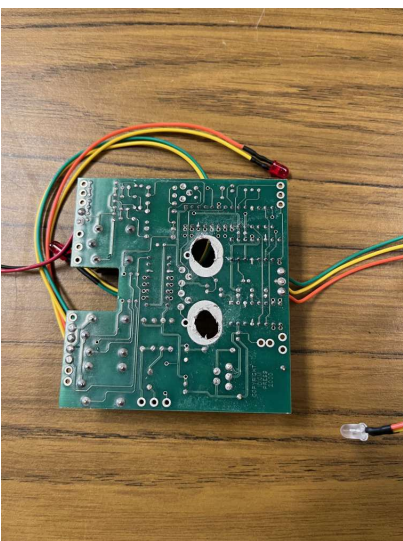
BINGO! I'll just do that!

No I won't...

This is an older unit. The hole in the chassis where all of the wires traversed from the top to the bottom half of the chassis was perfectly in a very bad location to mount the board on the underside... CRAP!



I landed up going a very ugly route. I really didn't want to do this but... I removed the meter movement and took a hacksaw to the studs. I was as gentle as I knew how. The meter survived. I cleaned up the treads.



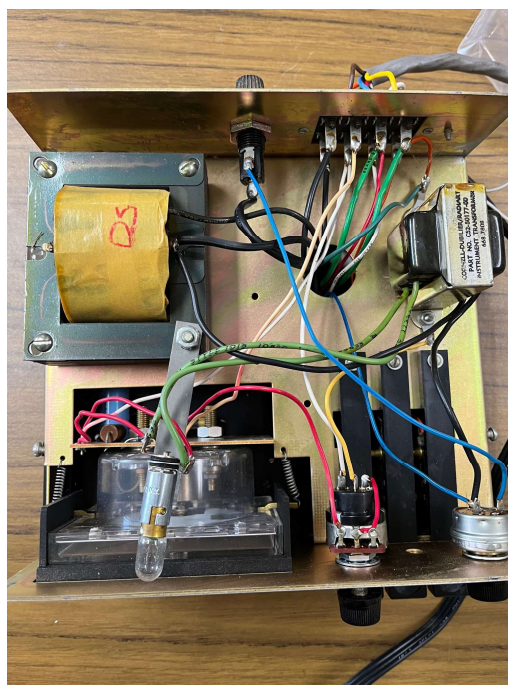
Now, the two studs are spaced too far apart, and are larger than life. The only thing I could do was to drill out the circuit board.

Again, I REALLY didn't want to do this. The drill bit kept grabbing the board and things really got ugly. Because of the existing double holes the drill bit had no good reason

to want to go straight.

The resulting holes are embarrassing. Then, I had to "pull" the holes outward to accommodate the wider stud spacing. It made a real mess out of the contact pads.

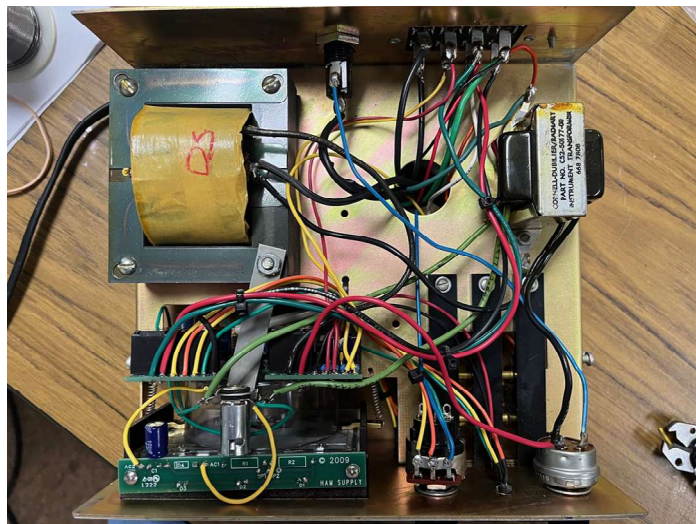
Oooof



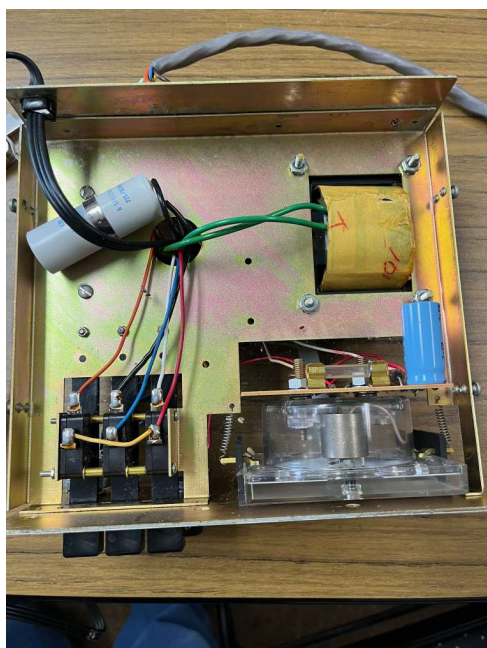
BEFORE

I re-installed the meter movement and installed the board. The much larger nuts barely fit in between the components on the board. There was no easy way to tighten the two nuts other than with needle nose pliers.

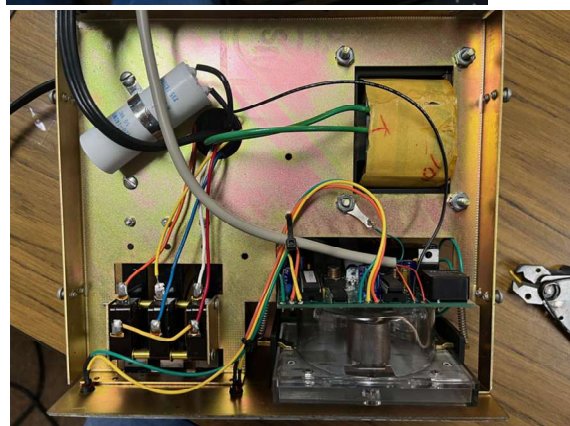
They are as good as it gets.



AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER

After some initial wiring it was time to do the pre-test that shows if the unit is working. I plugged it in. I turned the box on. It works! I really thought it was going to be junk after all of that trauma.

There were some other holes that needed drilled in the controller box to accommodate the LED indicators and the serial cable exiting the rear panel. All went well there. Amen.

I finished up the wiring, assembled the LED meter lighting kit and got everything back together. Brady, W3BRL helped me with calibration and all was right with the world.

Oh my that was stomach churning. But now we have a hot back-up should we need it.

Life with the now modified rotor control box:

First off, the Calibrate knob is no longer the calibrate knob. Let's go back to our scenario where we wanted to go from full south CCW to northeast (Europe) .

Now, rather than holding two buttons down for what feels like forever, you simply turn the old calibrate knob and the meter will start moving related to the direction that you turned the knob.

So, turn the knob so that the meter indicates 45 degrees (Europe) and then simply "tap" the Brake button. The new controller will automatically take your beam to 45 degrees with no further intervention from you!

Whenever it reaches 45 degrees, it removes power to the rotor and keeps the brake released for 5 more seconds, then it applies the brake. Oh my.

You want to go west? Turn the calibrate knob until the meter indicates west, then "tap" the brake button and off she goes to the west! All you have to do is watch.

Some other built-in features of these rotor controllers that now have the Rotor-EZ modification :

There were some common inherent problems with these rotors that the Rotor-EZ modification now handles.

One is that the brake wedge could get stuck in the ring gear due to wind pushing on the antenna. Now, if you pick a direction that is CCW - the rotor will first release the brake and then will momentarily rotate the antenna CW for about 1 second - then it will go to the requested CCW direction. Same happens for the reverse direction. This automatically allows the brake to become unstuck.

Another common issue is that the pot in the rotor becomes dirty/erratic which makes the meter move erratically. The Rotor-EZ processor is programmed to ignore this erratic input and continue with its operation.

Another feature is that if you have multiple antennas on a common mast, it is not uncommon to have interaction between the antennas. One solution to this interaction is to mount the second antenna 90 degrees off of the main antenna. There is a feature in the controller to allow for this and will indicate the correct bearing for the antenna that is 90 degrees out! Slick!

Computer control:

In N1MM logging software (and other software) the program knows where you are located. It knows where countries/DXCC entities are located related to your location. It knows what band you are on.

There is a program built into N1MM called N1MM Rotor. With a little set up you can control the rotor directly from N1MM!

Let's say you are aimed west. Europe opens up and you work a German station. With the German call sign in the logging window, hit Alt-J and the beam will automatically rotate to Germany!

You're on 40 meters, it will turn the 40 meter beam.

You're on 15 meters, it will turn either the quad or the KT-34XA on the crank-up tower!

There are other keyboard commands to turn to the rotor to a given bearing or stop rotation. Read N1MM docs for more details.

For further information go to the Ham Supply web site. They are good folks and have been VERY responsive whenever I've needed help or parts.

<https://www.hamsupply.com/rotor-ez-hy-gain-rotor-control/>

In the end I am really glad I didn't screw up that new board and/or the rotor box. I'm glad we now have a good hot swap controller if/when we need it.

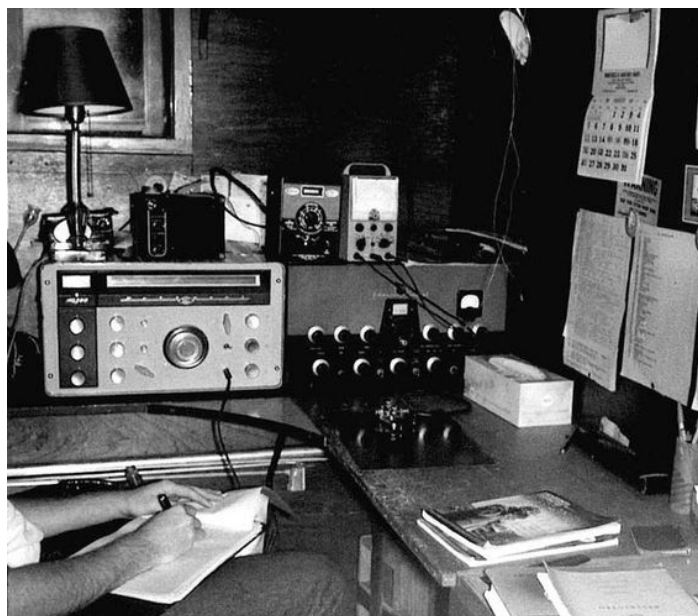
All I know for sure, nothing's easy...

Some other good links:

<https://www.qsl.net/ve3xap/rotor.htm>

<https://rotorservice.com/faqs.htm>

de Cooky - WC3O
Skyview Radio Officer



WA4MCM SWR Bridge & Wattmeter

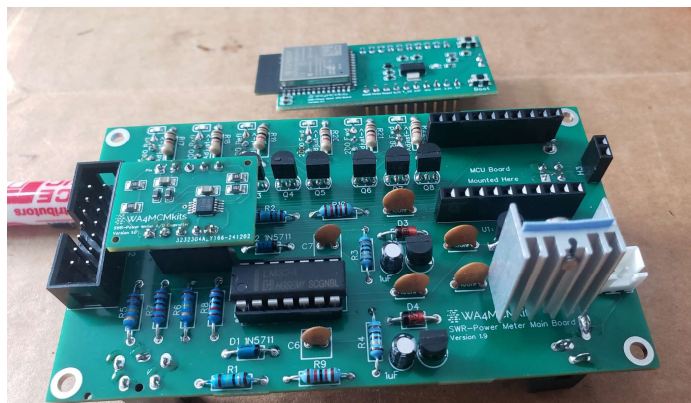
de Jody - K3JZD

I built the WA4MCM GM102 Graphical SWR Bridge and Wattmeter kit that was tackled by others as a Skyview Smoke & Solder project. <https://wa4mcmkits.com/> Since I have experience with building kits, and have a decent setup at home for building stuff, I chose to take my kit home and build it there rather than with the group.

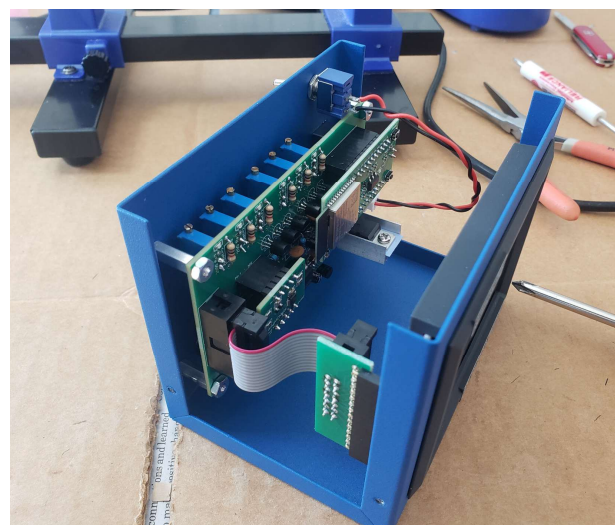
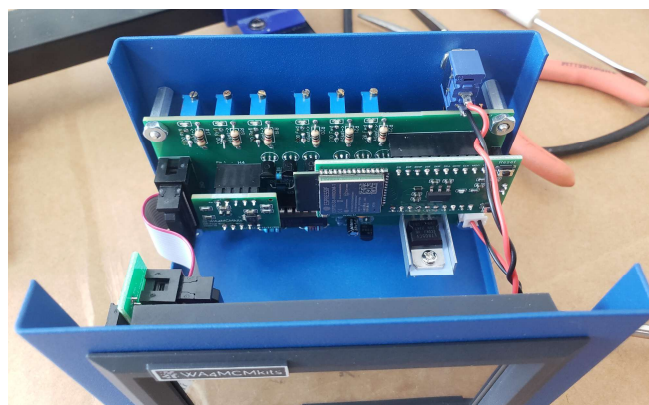


I now have it in service. It replaced an analog MFJ cross needle SWR Bridge and Wattmeter. That self-powered MFJ unit has served me well for many years. But it consumed a small portion of the transmitted RF power to run the circuitry and the dual analog meters. Since I like to run QRP CW using 5 watts, and will often run QRPP using 1 Watt or less, having some of that minuscule power consumed by that MFJ unit always annoyed me.

The WA4MCM unit uses an external 12vdc source to run the circuitry and display. The RF passes through a toroid which senses the Forward and Reverse RF current, but that is not 'stealing' much, if any, of my Forward RF Power. So, I like to believe that I am now getting more of my typically tiny RF signal out to my antenna.



The kit is not a difficult build. It uses circuit boards with all through hole parts. A few SMD parts are used, but they were already soldered onto the circuit boards. The build instructions are first class – almost HeathKit quality. There are some close connections where solder bridges are possible, so a good magnifying glass inspection of all of the soldered connections is called for.



There is a toroid, which is not difficult to wind. But with any toroid, getting the insulation properly scraped off of the wire ends is critical for getting a good solder connection. Where this toroid is located would make it quite difficult to go back and fix an open connection that was not discovered until doing unit testing. I suggested to Dan (WA4MCM) that some continuity testing using an ohmmeter right after soldering in this toroid would be a good addition to make to his manual.



I used my K4 transceiver that has an adjustable power output feature and a dummy load to calibrate the Wattmeter ranges. I did not feel that a precise Wattmeter calibration was necessary. I have found that what my K4 says for output power is pretty honest. On each scale, I simply adjusted the Wattmeter to agree with what my K4 said. I only have a maximum of 100 watts available, so I just calibrated the high-power scale using that same 100 watts.

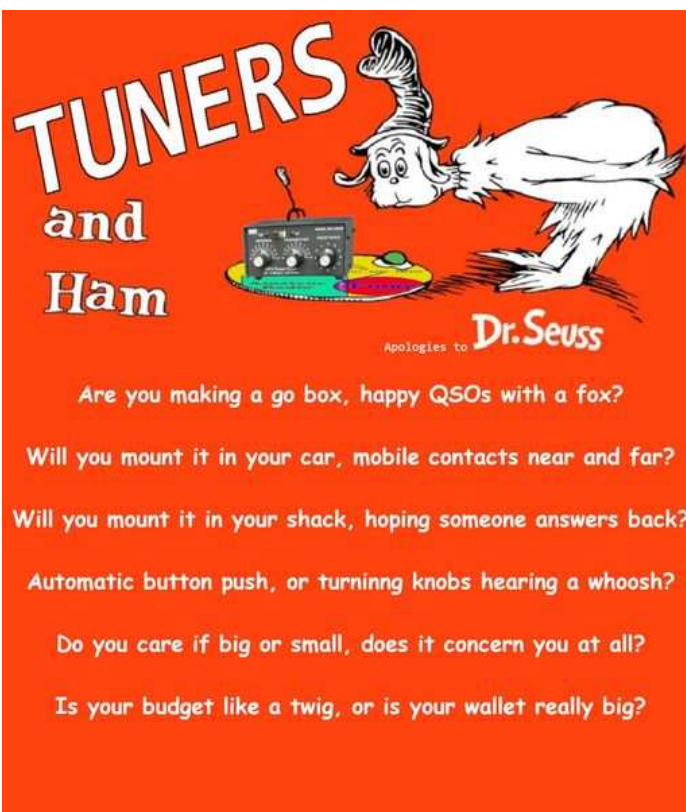
I also suggested to Dan that having the screen go blank at the end of each screen saver timeout period, and then having it repainted by the next incoming RF, was distracting. Especially when running CW. His latest firmware update fixes that – he now restarts his screen saver timeout clock every time that he sees new incoming RF.

The firmware update process is somewhat different in that it uses a remote tool to accomplish it. It sounds complex, but if you follow his detailed instructions step-

by-step, it is not really that difficult to do.

This Graphical SWR Bridge and Wattmeter was a nice modern addition to my shack. It is much faster to just glance at the digitally displayed SWR information than it was to study the cross needles on my MFJ analog meter to determine the SWR value.

de Jody - K3JZD



Recycling Aluminum

TWO RIVERS AMATEUR RADIO CLUB 53rd ANNUAL AMATEUR RADIO / COMPUTER SHOW

**SUNDAY APRIL 6th, 2025 - 8am to Noon Lincoln Borough VFD No. 184 Social Hall 4312 Liberty Way,
Elizabeth 15037**

**Directions and Mobile Check-in: 147.12 Repeater (PL Tone 131.8) (Mobile Check-In prize will be
awarded. Must be present to win)**

**Main Prizes: Xiegu G90 HF 20W Transceiver + Battery (or \$550 Cash!) Yaesu FTM-500D 144/430
C4FM/FM Transceiver (or \$550 Cash!) Yaesu FT-70DR Dual Band Digital Handheld (or \$180 Cash!)
Portable Generator**

**Advanced ticket sales are available to the public and club members at significant savings. Advanced
ticket sales form is available the TRARC website <http://www.trarc.org>.**

Admission \$5.00

**Tables Rentals: \$15 for a single table \$12 each for 2 or more tables Outdoor Tailgating \$10 (bring your
own table) Table/Tailgate Reservations: Please fill out the Exhibitors Application form on the TRARC
website at <http://www.trarc.org> Information: Contact John Moskala K3CRO (Hamfest Chairman) at
412-951-1332 Or Bill Powers KB3WP (Assistant Hamfest Chairman) at 412-260-5699 Or email:
hamfest@trarc.org Overnight parking is available Amateur Radio Exam Testing is Available Exam
Registration: 412-751-9657 email: KV3L@yahoo.com**

Breakfast Available. This is an ARRL sanctioned hamfest.

New Paddle

de Dan - NM3A

I've recently been playing with my sideswiper, also known as cootie key. The cootie is basically a double horizontal straight key. So instead of pushing the handle down on a straight key, one moves the handle to the side. In addition to moving it to one side, one can also move the key the opposite direction and close the circuit as well.

This makes the motion easier on the hand and probably allows for faster sending than the usual straight key. There is nothing really special about this over any usual paddle key, as any paddle can be made into a cootie by connecting both side contacts together.

When I joined SKCC a few years ago, I took advantage of an offer to purchase a sideswiper work of art from Steve, W1SFR.



It's a gorgeous brass torsion bar unit with a beautiful Vermont green marble base and walnut hand pieces. It gave me the impetus to learn this technique and this is what I was practicing on.

Learning to use the cootie is a big challenge. The muscle memory is far different than straight key or iambic paddle keying. As I've always used my left hand for iambic paddles, I decided to only use my right hand for the cootie, so I wouldn't get muscle memory confusion. It has been a slow process.

My goal is to be able to send with the cootie and have automatic Morse decoders actually read what I am sending. It's been a long, uphill road. While other hams can usually decode my slow, sloppy sending pretty well, the computer decoders have a much more difficult time of it. I'm still working on it.

Generally hams want their contact spacing on their straight keys and especially on their paddles to be as close as possible to make speedy sending as effortless and smooth as possible. Cooties are a different animal. You want the spacing very wide as tight spacing results in very 'heavy' sending.

Ideal spacing is considered to be the same length as a 'dit'. Tight spacing on a cootie results in the inter-element spacing to be a small fraction of a 'dit': 'heavy' sending.

So typically, contact spacing is rather wide and one usually keeps their fingers widely spaced as well. This results in a slapping motion of the paddle. Done well, it can create just as good code as any other technique.

This past week, I've been holed up at home with a nasty cold. Although I wasn't too ill, the runny nose and hacking cough kept me inside. So I got a lot of things done on my to-do list. One of them was to build a hacksaw cootie. Now this is something that many hams have built over the years. With the advent of electronic iambic keyers, the cootie has fallen out of use over the past few decades.

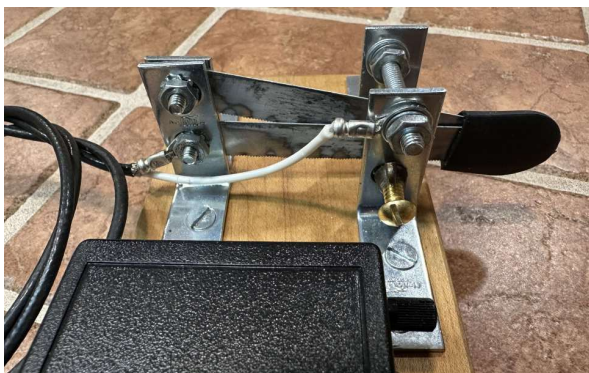
Majik Mike, K4ICY, has a neat web site with all kinds of good info on it. One of them is on cootie keys.

http://www.k4icy.com/weekend_radio_depot_cootie.html

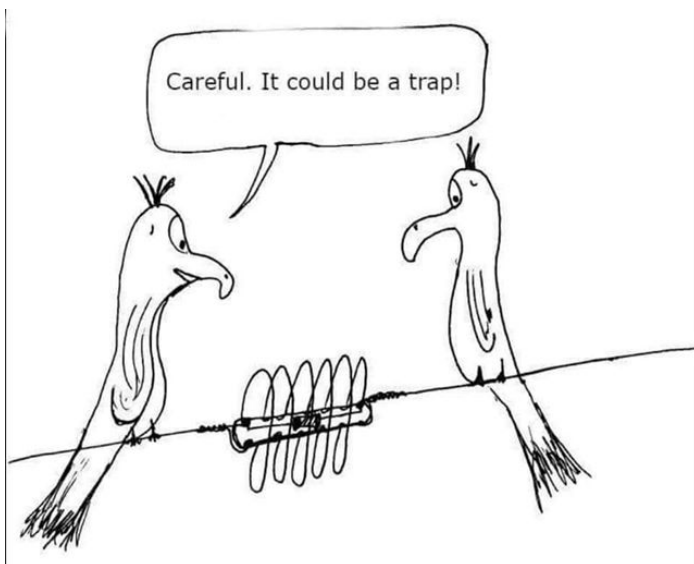
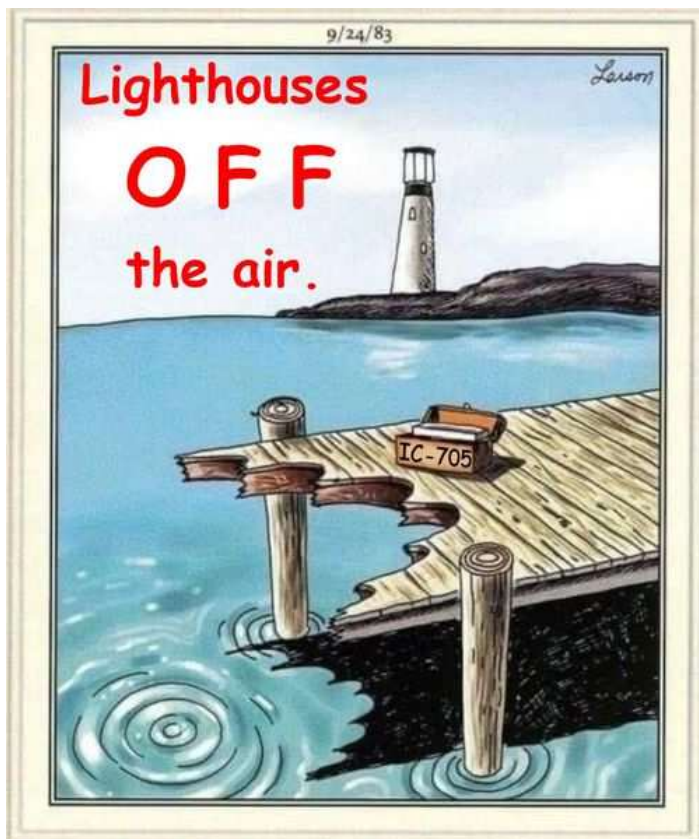
Mike shows lots of examples of home brewed versions of this, along with diagrams of how to build one. Well, I have some old hacksaw blades that really needed replacing, so this was the perfect time to build one. Most of the rest of my build was also from parts on hand with a few brass screws purchased from the local hardware store. I'll bet many of you Old Timers have built a similar setup at some time in your ham career.

I'm having fun with this and using it for SKCC contacts. I'm finally getting to where I'm comfortable using it on the air. I may even start to use it for my POTA and SOTA QSOs!

I'd be happy to have a sked with you and see if you can copy my fist. Here's my version of the cootie. Interestingly, my homebrew one is actually easier to use for me than the beautiful one Steve and SKCC made.



de Dan - NM3A



Roger Rabbit Would Be Proud

Anyone familiar with CW knows that at the end of a QSO it is very common that each of the two stations send a final "dit dit".

That dit dit is actually from the old "shave and a haircut" - TWO BITS! or DIT DIT.

This reminds me of the 1988 movie named Who Framed Roger Rabbit. It's a cartoon made for adults. No, not THAT kind of adult... I highly recommend that you check it out. Great movie.

But in that movie we learned that no "toon" (Cartoon) can resist - shave and a haircut. They HAVE to reply TWO BITS!

Along this line, for years Cil (My wife) and I would go to restaurants. Eventually it was time to hit the bathrooms. Me in the men's room, Cil in the women's room. Usually, the two restrooms share a common wall because they share common plumbing. So, while I'm standing at the urinal I'll tap "shave and a haircut" on the wall and surely Cil would reply with the Two Bits.

For my birthday this year we went to Olives and Peppers located in the old Greensburg train station. Good eatin! Eventually it was time for me to hit the bathroom. However, Cil stayed at our table. So there I was at the urinal. I just couldn't help myself.

- Shave and a haircut... No answer.
- Shave and a haircut...
- Shave and a haircut
- Sure as Shinola I got back TWO BITS! I have no idea who it was that replied!

So what the hell is the purpose of this article?

Good question.

It's twofold:

- The next time you are having a CW QSO final out with "ESE", shave and a haircut. Let them reply with the Two Bits.

de Cooky - WC3O

- Next time you're in the bathroom at a busy restaurant, give it a try.

(This works for the ladies too!)

You'll laugh until you pee yourself, again.

No toon can resist shave and a haircut

de Cooky - WC3O



Welcome New Members !!

Welcome the following Skyview Radio Society Members who have joined us since publishing the **February 2025** newsletter:

KB3YT – David Simon - Lower Burrell

K3AEB - Adam Bezilla - Youngstown PA

KD3ANT - Anees Udaware - Pittsburgh 15235

Remember that something is going on up at 'the joint' every Tuesday. Sign up for the K3MJW Groups.io Reflector to get the latest news and event announcements by email.

If you are a reader who is interested in becoming a Skyview member, then go to: <http://www.skyviewradio.net/> for information.

If you are a reader who is not yet a ham, and you are interested in becoming a ham, , then go to: <http://www.skyviewradio.net/> for information.



Skyview Radio Society Roster as of **31 MAR 25**

NM3A	AB3GY	N3MRU	WV8TG
K3AEB	KC3GZW	KS3N	N3TIN
KD3AET	NY9H	AC3NA	N3TIR
N3AFS	WB3HFP	G4NFS	W3TLN
KD3ANT	WA3HGW	KB3NSH	KK3TM
KB3APD	KB3HPC	AJ3O	N3TTE
NA0B	K3HSE	WC3O	KC3TTK
N3BAH	AK4HZ	WO3O	AG3U
W3BRL	AG3I	KC3OCA	NS3U
W3BUW	AC3IE	KC3OCB	WU3U
KF3C	KE3IF	KC3OCC	KB3UIO
KA3CBA	KC3IIO	K3OGN	N3UIW
KC3CBQ	AB3IK	N3OIF	KC3UNP
W3CDW	WB3INB	KB3OMB	W3UY
K2CI	W3IU	K4PDF	KX3V
K3CLT	K3JAS	KC3PIM	KC3VCX
K3CWE	WB3JHC	K2PMD	KC3VNB
N5DB	N3JLR	KE3PO	K3VRU
K3DCG	KA3JOU	W3PRL	KC3VYK
N3DL	ND9JR	KC3PSQ	W3VYK
N3DRB	K3JZD	KC3PXQ	N3WAV
KB3DVD	WA3KFS	AC3Q	W3WC
KC2EGL	AC3KI	NU3Q	KC3WCJ
KC3EJC	AC0KK	KC3QAA	K3WM
AB3ER	K3KR	NJ3R	N3WMC
WA3ERT	KC3KXZ	K3RAW	KA3WVU
N3ERW	WE3L	K3RMB	K3WWP
K3ES	WA3LCY	W3RRK	N3XF
KG3F	AC3LD	I2RTF	W3XOX
WB3FAE	KC3LHW	KI2RTF	KC3YEZ
K3FAZ	WB3LJQ	K3RWN	N3YJN
KC3FEI	WB5LLI	KQ3S	W3YNI
K3FH	K3LR	K3SBE	KB3YRU
K3FKI	KC3LRT	WA3SCM	W3YS
KC3FWD	AB3LS	KC3SDJ	KB3YT
AC3GB	N2MA	KC3SNZ	KB3YYC
N2GBR	KC3MBM	KB3SOU	KE3Z
AC3GE	N3MHZ	K3STL	K3ZAU
K3GIR	KC3MIQ	KC3STV	KB3ZFC
KB3GKX	K3MJ	KB3SVJ	KC3ZIM
KC3GPM	W1MP	W3SW	KC3ZOH
K3GT	K3MRN	KC3TEX	W3ZVX

Notes: Only Call Signs are being published. Refer to QRZ.COM for more information. (Unable to publish those without Call Signs.)

Kul - Links

Jody - K3JZD

There is lots of stuff out on the Internet... Some of it can brighten your day. Some of it can educate you. I can't really copy and past it all in here. But, I can point you at some of it

Steer by Wire, Brake by Wire . . .
I guess it is the future . . .
But it makes me nervous . . .

<https://tinyurl.com/y3ck7x5b>

I'll consider any Kul - Links that you find.
Email then to me at: K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET
They might just end up in the next issue

Previous Issues

Previous Issues of the Q5er are available at

<http://www.nelis.net>

Next Newsletter will be **June 1, 2025**
Closing Date For Submissions : **May 15, 2025**
K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET

Become Well Known Publish in the Q5er

The Q5er goes to other clubs and is available to all on our web site.

Submissions to : **K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET**

>>>>> **WARNING** <<<<<<

An Alarm System has been installed up at the joint. Do Not go in there on your own until you learn how to disarm and rearm it.

**** Skyview VE Testing ****

For Testing Dates, See :

<http://www.arrl.org/find-an-amateur-radio-license-exam-session>

Time: Usually 8:15 AM

Location: Skyview Clubhouse Meeting Room
2335 Turkey Ridge Rd
New Kensington PA 15068-1936

Contact: Bill Dillen - N3WMC
(724) 882-9612

Email: bdillen@comcast.net
<http://www.skyviewradio.net/ve-tests/>

Please E-Mail or call to register!!!

While walk-ins are accepted, the exam session may be cancelled if no candidates are scheduled.



Q5er Editor & Publisher: Jody Nelis - K3JZD

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email your comments and article submissions to: [K3JZD AT ARRL DOT NET](mailto:K3JZD@ARRL.NET)



That's Easy

Come up to the Skyview Clubhouse on any Tuesday and ask !!!

And See : <https://tinyurl.com/y79tqsr8>

All General Information about the Skyview Radio Society is at <http://www.skyviewradio.net>

Subscribe to K3MJW [groups.io](https://groups.io/g/K3MJW) reflector for All Current News & Activities : <https://groups.io/g/K3MJW>
If you want to keep up with what is going on NOW, that is the place - have it forward msgs to your email



Is this how your dining room looks ??

Send in pictures of your Ham Shack