

Loose Gravel

Newsletter of ROADS

Volume 2, Number 6

AB7X~Editor

Greetings to all! I trust that your Spring is evolving the way you envision it to be, ours has been wonderfully normal: wet and breezy with proper spacing of clouds. This is the kind of Spring that keeps our state carpeted in green for the enjoyment of all.

Tomorrow evening at the Polk County Courthouse we will enjoy hearing about reasonable insurance on HAM gear from a representative with American Family Insurance. One never knows from one moment to the next when the ground is going to open up, the volcano is going to blow, or the dam is going to break, and it would be nice to know that our gear is covered in any catastrophic event.

Our new Section Manager, Bonnie Altus, is going to be present at tomorrow evening's meeting, so if any of you haven't had the opportunity to meet this fine lady, this is your chance! She will be taking over the control levers of Oregon SM on July 1st. Lets welcome her!

Many of you will probably be overjoyed to hear that I am no longer an 'Official Observer'. I submitted my resignation last week after an unfortunate series of events that drew out the true character of a 'Coordinator' here in Oregon. Even though OO's fill an important vacuum in HAM Radio, I could no longer justify working under him with any conscience. Thank you for putting up with me for this long!

(I now return you to the normally scheduled program...)

Dave, KD7VLP, has offered this fine tidbit for us...

QRK de KD7VLP

I was hoping for another "WHO WE ARE..." Q and A for this month, the four or five members that I asked to contribute did not choose to return the questions. Maybe next month. Any volunteers?

Anyway...here's another reprint from Popular Communications

Q. How important is communications procedure for the military in a combat situation? Is it really as important as they say it is?

A. Well, the enemy is always listening. The North Vietnamese People's Liberation Army had an interception program going from 1924 until 1975 and probably after that. But it really paid off for one soldier who kept his cool.

Armored Cavalry units often left soldiers on lookout posts at night around their area of encampment, particularly in the field. Because of radio security there would not be any "Outpost 1 reporting". No traffic foolishness. The radioman at the main camp would call the outpost number and the lookout would reply with one click on his mic if he was OK, twice if he wasn't. One night a lookout answered with two clicks. When asked if it was safe to transmit by voice, he again answered with two clicks. Through a process of clicks on the mic he let Command know that he was in the same place he had been left, was not wounded or injured, could not see the enemy, was in grave danger and needed immediate relief. Fearing an ambush, several tanks, armored vehicles and heavily armed troops were sent out to rescue their endangered comrade. Upon arrival the rescue column found a very frightened lookout still up a tree with large tiger licking his boots.

The POP'COMM TRIVIA CORNER

By R.B. Sturtevant KD7KTS

Now for something different: For your consideration here is an editorial from the March 1929 issue of Radio News, a publication began by Hugo Gernsback (1884 – 1967) who is considered a pioneer in amateur radio. He began the modern genre of science fiction by founding the first magazine dedicated to it, *Amazing Stories*, in 1926. The Science Fiction Achievement award of the World Science Fiction Society, is named the "Hugo" after him. Before creating a literary genre, Gernsback was an entrepreneur in the electronics industry, importing radio parts from Europe to the United States and helping to popularize amateur "wireless." In 1909, he founded the Wireless Association of America, which had 10,000 members within a year. In 1912, Gernsback said that he estimated 400,000 people in the U.S. were involved in amateur radio.

Radio News

Hugo Gernsback

Editor & Publisher

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Whither Radio?

By HUGO GERNSBACK

THE remarkable thing about radio is not this new art itself, but rather the human element connected with it. Strange to say, those who are intimately associated with it seem to be least certain whither radio is drifting and what is in store for it during the years to come. There is nothing new in this condition, because it has ever been thus with radio since the days of Heinrich Hertz.

Indeed, when Hertz first discovered "wireless waves," no one took the new discovery very seriously; not even the scientists themselves, who thought of it as only a pretty lot of laboratory experiments, to which there could not be attached any practical future. It took almost two decades to yank Hertz's experiments out of the laboratory and, even after Marconi brought "wireless" out into the open, there was another long period of development when few took the new art seriously, and even the most far-sighted scientists could not see much of a future for it.

When the first book devoted to this subject, one entitled "The Wireless Telephone," was written by me in 1910, there was no such thing as practical radio telephony. Though, by that time, it was conceded that "wireless telegraphy," at some time in the future, would have an adjunct in the form of radio telephony, no one dreamt of such a thing as radio broadcasting. Indeed, even at that time, in the preface to that book, I ventured the opinion that within ten years everyone (particularly farmers) would have a "wireless" telephone whereby they could communicate with each other, instead of using the wire telephone. The prophecy was to some extent fulfilled in time, but not at all in the way I had imagined. Everyone now has his "wireless telephone"; but it is not used to talk to the neighbors. It is only a *one-way* instrument, whereby we now receive what is put out by the broadcast stations; but we do not use it to talk with our friends.

In view of the past history of the radio art, he would be a rash prophet who undertook to foretell just what is in store for radio itself.

Thus, for instance, we are now talking glibly about radio television, radiovision and the like; but, at this time, most of us imagine that television will parallel broadcasting. It is freely predicted by everyone who is seemingly "in the know," that the large broadcast stations will sooner or later put on television broadcasts; so that anyone who has a set can see what is going on in the distant studio or at a remote point where the television program would be picked up—at the night club, or on the Metropolitan Opera stage, or at a baseball game, or a prize fight, or any other scene of visual broadcasting. Other wisacres say that nothing of the kind will happen and that what we really will get will be "radio movies" broadcast from some studio; in other words, the latest Hollywood production will be run through a projecting machine at the transmitting station and the result will appear on the screen in your own home.

But it is quite possible that both these schools of prophets are wrong, and that television will play an entirely different part, which we do not even dimly discern today. One thing is sure; that the young art of television will take on a most surprising form, once it becomes established. How television and "aural" broadcasting will finally be amalgamated, even the most daring prophet does not venture to say.

The art of broadcasting as we have it today is yet in its first stage. In Europe it is thought necessary to tax listeners with a definite fee every month, in order that the stations may derive sufficient revenue to keep going. In this country, such an idea seems un-American, and a proposal to tax the public directly would excite their violent opposition; therefore the taxation is *indirectly* maintained, through the advertising appropriations for programs put on the air by big corporations who thus seek publicity.

No one can foretell, at the present time, whether the "advertising tie-up" broadcasting scheme of today is the final one, or that something entirely new may not be evolved in the future.

The entire broadcasting industry is in constant flux and there is really nothing very much settled about it today; it is too young and too new for that. It is also to be doubted that, ten years from now, broadcasting will be done in the channels between 200 to 545 meters now used. It is frequently predicted that, sooner or later, there will be a stampede down to the lower wavelengths, where there are more channels and other advantages, as well as certain disadvantages.

So far, large radio manufacturers have turned out no radio set, which can be sold to the public, capable of being tuned as readily on the short waves as it can be on the high waves. But it is safe to say, that most of the large manufacturers are keeping a weather eye on the short-wave situation and, if one or more break the ice and a good set that makes tuning on the short waves easy is developed, we will have another silent revolution in radio. Then the old prevailing sets will be scrapped in favor of new models, just as the battery sets are now being scrapped for A.C. electric sets.

The good thing about all of these radio revolutions is that they are orderly and that they do not come over night. Indeed, it has been found that sets built even as far back as 1923 still give good service in 1928. The same will probably be found the case with the present-day alternating-current sets, when the broadcast stations take to lower wavelengths. Most probably, in that case, attachments for present-day sets will be available to make possible tuning them to the short-wave bands.

The objection has been frequently raised, what will happen when all the stations abandon the present wave channels and move downwards? It is well known that, because of the "skip-distance" effect, a local short-wave station will, in most cases, become almost inaudible at a short distance; in other words, it will be found that a broadcast station located in New York or Chicago cannot be heard at all or, at best, poorly in the very city where the broadcasting is done; though strong enough further away.

This, however, will not frighten the broadcast engineers, and it will be found that this will work out to the advantage of the chain stations. Suppose that all of the stations were to move tomorrow to the lower waveband; and suppose that you live in Chicago and find yourself unable to tune in your local station. The easy thing to do will then be to tune in the same program from a New York station which, it will probably be found, though 800 miles away, comes in just as a local station does today. Thus—unless some new scheme is developed whereby it will be possible to get short-wave stations just as well locally as you get the high-wave stations now—we will then listen, not to our local stations at all, but to DX stations exclusively in their stead.

Mr. Hugo Gernsback speaks every Tuesday at 9.30 P. M. from Stations WRNY (297 meters) and W2XAL (30.91 meters) on various radio and scientific subjects.

Thank you, Dave, we can count you for interesting material. You'd make a good club President!!!

As Dave reminds us, this newsletter, and our club, depends on you the members to keep it alive and functioning well. Let's have some input from you. It could be anything at all, from your younger days building boards and amps and ladder-line, to the most exotic thing that ever happened to you while you were on the air, to the most unusual event in you whole radio experience. Let's just keep it simple: no politics, religion, race or sex. I know, "That's boring!", so we'll allow drugs if necessary!

Next up is Bob, K7QXG...

Towers Are Hazardous To Your Health and other observations

by K7QXG Licensed 1961 Extra Class

Read the entire article before you come unglued and begin sending me hate email.

Over the many years since 1963 I have owned several towers, all of the guyed variety, and mostly in the "short" category. I have used a wide variety of yagi antennas, ranging from the tepid Mosley TA33 JR tribander to a big 2 element 40 meter beam. In between were a variety of monobanders... 4 elements on 20; 4 elements on 15; and 3 elements on 10. My last installation in Aloha, which was a permanent fixture for 10 years, was a guyed tower with two stacked monobanders - a 3 element on 10 and a 4 element on 15.

With that background and experience I offer the following insights:

1. More hams are killed by tower falls than by electrocution. (See QRZ data).
2. NEVER climb a tower when it is wet, icy, or when strong winds blow.

3. Never install any antenna on the tower without sufficient help on the tower and on the ground.
4. Never tighten the tower guys until they are taut! Leave them with some flex. If the guys are too taut, the downward windload in a windstorm increases and causes the tower to buckle in the center (happened to me once).
5. Maximize the base installation. Use rebar freely.
6. Don't put a big antenna on a small tower...make sure the tower meets the wind load specs of the yagi antenna, and then add 10% for a safety factor.
7. ALWAYS use a climbing belt, even for a minimal repair or adjustment.
8. ALWAYS wear a tool belt... don't lower tools on a rope by hand.

Now a few personal observations that are sure to be challenged by some of our big time DXer members. Flame me direct please!

First, any antenna, whether wire, vertical, or yagi, will work at any given time if propagation conditions are favorable to you and you are patient. Been there, done that.

Second, why the obsession with towers that are 100 feet high and higher? The difference in measurable gain between a 70 foot tower and a 100 foot tower is so minimal it cannot be detected by human ear! Only a sophisticated measuring device can detect the difference. Now some will argue that the 100 foot tower gives them a different radiation angle, and therefore is more effective for DX. Read the antenna manuals friends, because this isn't always true.

So why do the big DXers want a 100 or 150 foot tower? Ego, ego, ego. Pure and simple. Look at the fine accomplishments of W7LOU with his 60 foot tower. He does a great job, and with a triband beam. Higher does not always guarantee better.

I no longer have room at my current QTH for another tower, or I would use one of the new lightweight aluminum towers with a good yagi at the top. Instead, I am forced to use wire and vertical ground plane antennas, but even with the current poor propagation, at the bottom of the sunspot cycle, I still manage to snag a good DX contact from time to time...including the 3Y0 on CW.

If you are thinking of putting up a tower, spend a little time visiting the hams who already have towers and get some first hand knowledge of what is involved.

K7QXG, Bob
Dallas

Still looking for cards from countries 298, 299 and 300.

Thank you, Bob. The above observations bear reading and taking to heart. Some of our 'hobby' is not to be taken for granted or underestimated for its hazardous nature.

Irene, K7IJK, has come thru once again with this report...

DALLAS C.E.R.T.

The Dallas C.E.R.T.'s April maintenance meeting was quite informative on the advanced medical training regarding triage and sustaining victims for up to 72-hours. At the meeting in May we had a simulated 72-hour medical drill to follow up with what was learned in April. The next C.E.R.T. meeting, which is scheduled for June 22nd, will involve a walk through downtown Dallas to observe the possible problem structures and possible scenarios that may occur. This will be an enlightening adventure for all. July's meeting will also be interesting our guest speaker will be Charlie Tate from Pacific Power & Light. Mr. Tate will discuss how to turn off utilities safely.

Also, in May and June the C.E.R.T. trainers, Ron & Mary Jacobs, Joseph Koubek and I along with the Dallas Fire and Emergency Medical Services staff, are training a new group of C.E.R.T. members. These members will be graduating on June 20th after participating in a mock disaster drill at the Dallas Fire Department.

Next month I will have more information about the Dallas Community Emergency Response Team so keep reading the newsletter. (Hopefully, if I don't forget)

Irene Koubek, K7IJK

Thank you, Irene, you are there when we need you!

That about does 'it' for this edition of Loose Gravel. I would add on some other ideas I've had rumbling around in my head, but I'll save them for another time.

It has been an interesting year as Vice President of ROADS this year, and a pleasure serving with LOU-Bob. He will no longer be our Prez, but will continue to be there with all of his tenacious character, as usual. Who will become his successor only tomorrow evening's meeting will determine, so PLEASE don't miss this one. This one is about membership and new officers for the coming fiscal year. We need you to be present for your important votes!!!

Very 73 to all...

Coyote Marten
AB7X