

# Loose Gravel

Newsletter of ROADS

Volume 3, Number 1

AB7X + KD7VLP

Editors

And here we are again....beginning a new calendar! We hope all of you had an enjoyable holiday season and that you have considered your new year's 'resolutions' seriously, and have crossed off all the ones that were just too complex to remember why you put them on your list in the first place! I resolve not to be as grumpy as I was in 2006....we'll see how *that* goes! I also resolve to exercise more civil disobedience in my life: we only get two chances to be a kid, and I'm gonna get it right this time!

On to *QRK*....

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## **QRK de KD7VLP**

It's that time again:...that time we all dread: That QRK stuff. In the absence of any input from you, the members, you will have to take what I deal out.

I am always on the look out for history stuff that has some, no matter how remote, connection to communications. This is one is pretty remote, at least in time. It is from our old friend R.B. Sturdevant, who is now AD7IL

**Q. How far back does communications law go?**

*A. I'm not exactly sure about "law," per se, but one was instituted by Queen Elizabeth I of England. In about 1560 she got worried about spies sending secret information out of England by putting messages into bottles and throwing them into the sea. She passed a law that said if anyone found a bottle with a message in it, afloat or ashore, opening the bottle and reading the message was an offense against the Realm and could result in hanging. To be in compliance with English Law you had to turn the unopened bottle over to an official known as "Opener of Sea Bottles."*

*After nearly 200 years, in 1760 Parliament finally struck down the Queen's Law and retired the title of "Opener of Sea Bottles." So if you find a message in a bottle today in the UK it's alright to open it yourself—but, just to be safe, check with local authorities.*

*The one thing my source didn't mention was how many "Opener of Sea Bottles" there had been and if their work load was very heavy. I wonder if there was a civil service test?*

(February 2007)

AD7IL also has something appropriate concerning the recent (yet to be published) decision to eliminate CW. CW still lives in the military:

**Q. Our military stopped using CW on the airwaves officially in September 1996. Who are the only military personnel in our armed forces still using Morse Code?**

*A. The sailors who work the blinker lights between ships. Their messages may be in the clear or coded, but they are always in Morse.*

(March 2007)

Reference:

THE POP'COMM TRIVIA CORNER  
Radio Fun And Going Back In Time  
Popular Communications Magazine

I came across this a while back. It does not have anything to do with radio but is interesting in its own right. You may have to print it out to read it.

Now for something completely different:

*A wagon train was lost and low on food. But the pioneers saw an old Norwegian man sitting beneath a tree. "Is there some place ahead where we can get food?" "I think so," he said. "But don't go over that hill. Someone told me there's a bacon tree over there." The lead pioneer went back and told the others what the man said. They decided to ignore the man's advice and go over the hill. Suddenly, Indians attacked them. Only the leader survived. He told the old man what happened. The man picked up an English-*

*Norwegian dictionary and thumbed through it. "Oh, I made a big mistake! It wasn't a bacon tree. It was a Ham Bush!"*

I take no responsibility for that item. It is entirely responsible for itself and is not meant to be a slur on Norwegians or Indians and has no political persuasion of any sort. It is just BAD! I am ashamed of myself for submitting it. Although Harry bears the ultimate responsibility since he is the Prez and the Editor.

Now remember, we are always looking for input to this newsletter. I am sure you know of something that needs to be told. Anything at all. You may have noticed that it does not have to strictly pertain to Radio. So submit something or I will have to do this again next month.

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Thanks to Dave, *Loose Gravel* continues to be at least one page long! If any of you have a burning (or less) desire to see your article published

**HERE**

we will see to it that you get the proper credit for it! Please consider that all of you make up the body of the club, and the organization exists only because of its members! We should make an effort to be a part of the whole...not apart from it. Just my humble opinion....

I lieu of any other takers, I submit my own version of.....*Q&A*.

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1. HOW-WHY-WHERE-WHEN did you get involved in Ham Radio?  
-In '97 I happened to be listening to a group of 'glow-in-the-dark' people on one of the Eleven Meter channels and asked who they were. One, who happened to be a Volunteer Examiner in Roseburg, told me that they were all HAMs who got together in the evenings to play AM. He, AB7JH, told me that if I was interested I should purchase a Gordon West manual at Radio Shack in Roseburg and study for the next test session, which was in February '98. I went, and passed the Novice and Technician elements on the 18<sup>th</sup> of that month. I also flunked horribly my first attempt at Element 1 CW!

2. Did you have an Elmer to get you started? Or were you a lone wolf?

Didn't have an 'official' guide to help me, but Dave Lee, AE7Q-SK, was always there if I had questions or a problem with my station. He was also a VE in Roseburg, and signed every one of my CSCE's.

3. What is your current license? Since when?

My current license class is Amateur Extra, obtained in April of '99.

4. Did you, or do you, use radio(s), in some form or another in your work life?

No.

5. Are you active in Ham Radio now? What and how?

Yes, I operate on all the HAM bands, with exception of 160M (no antenna or space to put one...) and anything above .7M (no gear...). I use any mode that I am capable of, SSB being my chosen one on HF. For general communications I use 2M, "1.25"M and .7M at home, portable and mobile.

6. What does your shack look like? Is it in your garage, the back bedroom or maybe the cab of your pickup?

I have a separate room in our house for my radio station and an outdoor station when outside doing gardening, with a TH-F6A tri-band portable switched to the Niljon antenna on the roof with power supplied by two solar panels into a gel-cel 12V battery for external power.

7. What kind of equipment and antennas...etc?

My station at home consists of: FT-847 all-band all-mode, Alinco DR-235 222Mhz mobile, Uniden SMH4000DT mobile commercial on HAM and emergency frequencies, and the TH-F6A tri-band docked on external power when in the 'shack'.

Antennas are: Diamond X500 dual-band base antenna up 10'; Cushcraft A144-20T cross-polarized beam, up 35'; Niljon tri-band mobile mag-mount, up 14' on the steel house roof, Cushcraft 'Disc-cone' on a traffic tripod on the carport roof, ¼ wave 222 antenna on a Larson magmount, up 14' on the house roof; DK-3 Don Johnson 'screwdriver' antenna, up 12' and tapped to the carport corrugated steel roof. My mobile has the capability of dual/tri-band: 5/8 wave 2M, ¼ wave 222Mhz, and ¼ wave .7M antennas.

8. Any major awards, achievements, coups or contacts that you want to brag about in order to make others feel insignificant?

No.

9. Other hobbies or past-times?

Bonsai, home gardening, reading, acoustic guitar, Native American flute, Irish penny whistle, photography, fathering...to name a few. Not necessarily in that order.

10. Unless your family has lived in Polk County since 1846, how did you end up here in, or around, Polk County?

I was born in Toledo, in Lincoln County, in 1943, and traveled to Monmouth and Independence to visit relation on holidays and other occasions when much younger. I've lived in other states and countries, but have always returned to the Willamette Valley and ever closer to places I was most fond of as a child. Both sets of my grandparents were pioneer families who traveled west by wagon, maternal from South Dakota and paternal from Nebraska.

Extra Credit:

a. In 500 words or less, tell us how you feel about something...  
Strongly.

b. We are always looking for good places to eat...any suggestions  
Any reputable Mexican or Chinese restaurant will do. 'Fast' or  
Expensive Restaurant food makes me ill.

c. Recommend a good book?  
"Atlas Shrugged" and "Anthem", both by Ayn Rand; "Earth", by David  
Brin; "Indian Givers: How Native Americans Transformed the World",  
by Jack Weatherford; and many others...

d. Best thing to happen to you?  
My children.

e. Worst thing to happen to you?  
Fell out of a tree and broke my neck? Drowned in a Fort Benning  
swimming pool? Got hit by a speeding car in Anchorage, Alaska, and  
broke my back and rib cage? Stabbed by a spear in Hawai'i? Take  
your pick.

f. Future projects?  
To make sure that my son, Shadow, is a survivor, and then explore  
other dimensions.

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That about does it from the desktop of Coyote. Any errors, suggestions, or deletions will be painfully considered and then either acted upon or unceremoniously dismissed without further ado. I accept full responsibility for any affronts of personal nature. Names have not been changed because no one is innocent.

Don't forget our monthly meeting tomorrow evening at the Polk County Courthouse at 1900 hrs, Commissioners Conference Room.

It may seem a bit early for this notice: *ROADs* will have a table at the Polk County Fairground for the Hamfair next month on 17 February. We will be asking for volunteers and it is never too early to step forward and be counted! You have a whole month to look around to see what you have to recycle to the table!

From the ARRL Newsletter, January 5, 2007....

This weekend on the radio: The ARRL RTTY Roundup, the Original QRP Contest and the EUCW 160-Meter Contest are the weekend of January 6-7. ARRL Kids Day is Sunday, January 7

<<http://www.arrl.org/FandES/ead/kd-rules.html>>.

JUST AHEAD: The North American QSO Party (CW), Hunting Lions in the Air, the 070 Club PSKFest, the Michigan QRP January CW Contest, the SPAR Winter Field Day, the Midwinter Contest (CW = January 13; SSB = January 14), the NRAU-Baltic Contest (CW = January 13; SSB = January 14) and the DARC 10-Meter Contest are the weekend of January 13-14. The NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint is January 18. See the ARRL Contest Branch page

<<http://www.arrl.org/contests/>> and the WA7BNM Contest Calendar <<http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/index.html>> for more info.

Ron, KK7LU, will be holding a VE session at the Polk County Courthouse this Saturday, 13 January, for anyone wanting to take their entry-level Technician exam and anyone wanting to upgrade to General or

Extra. Contact Ron at [kk7uu@hughes.net](mailto:kk7uu@hughes.net) for more information. You may even see him at the meeting tomorrow evening!

That's all for now, folks, and if we drew you off onto the 'soft shoulder' just consider the source, eh?

73.5 de AB7X

Coyote

Presidente de ROADS

Master Gardener ~ 2001