# Loose Gravel

**Newsletter of ROADs**
**Volume 2, Number 3**
AB7X~Editor

Spring is not too far off now, and we are still getting some of the usual Winter weather here in the Valley. There are reports of white-out conditions in the Cascade passes, with snow levels dropping to 500' in the Valley. Batten down the hatches!

Don't forget tomorrow's meeting…it will be at Murphy's Bar & Grill in Dallas at 6:00 PM. Shadow and I will not be attending, but wish you all a good time at dinner. There will also be a VE session this Saturday in Dallas. Contact Bob, QXG, or Bob, LOU for directions.

This edition has a few contributions from some of our members, and I'll begin with one from our associate editor, Dave, KD7VLP.

## QRK…de KD7VLP

### THE POP'COMM
### TRIVIA CORNER
**Radio Fun And Going Back In Time**
**by R.B. Sturtevant, KD7KTS**

**Q.** What did hams and other electrical experimenters do before the invention of radio?
**A.** Many set up their own telegraph systems. In 1892, Electrical Review reported on a story that first appeared in The New York Evening Post. The town of Cranford, New Jersey, was consolidating all its privately owned telegraph systems. After the merger there were 30 stations with three and a half miles of circuits. It was to be run by an executive committee of the users. They set up alarm procedures for fire, burglary, and emergency situations. Sounds kind of like a local radio club.

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Amorous Ram Blamed for Mysterious Signals

Tue Nov 4, 7:45 AM ET

LONDON - A mysterious transmission that baffled British intelligence analysts for days was caused by a ram rubbing up against an aerial mast, a government agency said Tuesday.

Scientists at Government Communications Headquarters in Cheltenham, western England, an intelligence-gathering station, were baffled by strange high-frequency noises coming from Scarborough signal station in Yorkshire, northeastern England.

GCHQ's in-house paper, the Daily Observer, said the noises were unlike anything staff had encountered before and an investigating team initially thought they were coming from spies or aliens.

Their investigation found the signal only happened in the day time, went across all the high-frequency bands and only Scarborough aerials could pick it up.

Eventually, investigators discovered that a ram was rubbing its horns against the aerial masts "in between servicing some local ewes," the paper said. "It's possible the ram was attracted to the mast which may have given off some kind of tingling sensation, but it was probably just a post to rub against," said GCHQ spokesman Bob McNally.

(Source unknown—I got it off the net so it must be true!)
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Thank you Dave, I always look forward to your input and background research!
Next, we have an offering from Fred Morgan himself, W6KXA, who still ponders about his move to Falls City…..

# FRED (W6KXA) MOVES TO DALLAS

For 9 years my H F rig sat in my sometimes frigid shop in Falls City. It's now on my desk in a comfortable office. in our new home. We have restrictions, "antenna can't be seen". What to do?

Did lots of thinking. Received many suggestions from guys at the usual 8 AM Monday morning Klatch at the Washington Street Steak House. I wanted "all band". Again, what to do?

Well, here's what I have done:

With help from Jim Campbell, N7WWH, Falls City, I've laid 104 feet of insulated brown line on my 20 foot high roof. It sort of matches the shingles. It's configured into a dipole open loop. I'm feeding it with some 15 feet of 300 ohm TV twin line directly into the coax connection on the back of my Kenwood TS-520S transceiver. No balun. No antenna tuner. No coax. No critical lengths - anywhere. The Kenwood has "bottles", i. e. tubes, for "finals". They "tank' into a Pi network. I can dip the plate current on every band at rated power. Good match? ( Hey, Guys, don't try this with solid state finals!).

Does it work? First, its pretty dang hard to see from the street. Dudley and Feryl have observed this. I've got a low pitched roof.

Second, I've had no trouble checking into the 40 Meter "Noon Time Net" into Tacoma and a couple of other good reports. Been too busy calibrating in order to counter my lousy vision, so have not tried much else. However, have noted the computer comes to life and screws up when I tool the 10 Meter band; my wife's electric blanket control goes screwy; her capacity controlled nite-light comes on plus the bed room TV gets hiccups.

Now, I can either move out, try some ferrite beads, install a separate low pass filter in my antenna feed (the Pi network *is* already low pass), try something else --- or give up Ham Radio!

Send your suggestions.

My e-mail address is: fmorg1@juno.com

Keep tuned, 73, Fred

PS. I *know* I can use a balun, 50 ohm coax, install an "antenna" tuner, go to 135 feet of flat top and/or so-on. Will it work? I dunno. I am likely at high efficiency now. If ya have a question about my tuning method, let me know. We can discuss: Finals are at *resonance, dissipation normal*. No inefficient claptrap hanging outboard. F.

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Thank you, Fred, we appreciate hearing from you and want you to know that the first time is always the most anxious. Now that we know your style, feel free to send in more articles any time you want! Anyone who has a suggestion may email Fred at his above address.

Next up is Steve, KW7DSP, from Arizona?

Hello to all in R.O.A.D.S.,

Arizona is great and the weather is mild and DRY (123 days not a drop of rain), but I have found something really cool. Here in the "Valley of the Sun" with so many out of towners, Simplex 146.52 is really hot. Hot as in Popular and well (properly I might add) used.

It seems in these days of one repeater for every two, or three amateurs, we tend to forget the Simplex button. Why do so many driving down the road with 50 Watts call a repeater 30 miles away to picket fence with a guy less then five miles away? Why do so many Fixed Station operators use the repeater at least an hours drive from them, to talk to another base a five minute walk down the road?

I overheard a couple of VRC members chatting (face to face) about how they meet. The one was in shock the other was driving around with MON 146.52mHz on the back of his camper and just couldn't resist calling him. They are good friends now.

Even with the best of plans a major event can take a repeater down in a day or maybe two. Generators run out of fuel and batteries die. Now is the time to dust off the Simplex frequency and see how far and with whom, you can really talk. And are they a competent relay to the next simplex station? Can Jay KD7MRI in Canyonville get a message Simplex to Harley inVancouver, and have it arrive correctly Simplex?

I monitor Simplex Calling 146.52 when I am home in Independence and about once or twice a week I hear a Simplex chat, and even a few roundtables with a good old chin wagging ragchew, but nothing

like 146.52 Simplex here in Phoenix. Anytime night or day you can key the national calling channel here and get an answer.

73 and good DX to everyone.

KW7DSP 146.52 Simplex Gilbert Arizona

Thank you Steve.

Now…what you've all been waiting so patiently for, from our VEC and Good Sam correspondent Bob, K7QXG, a challenge!

## When Radios Glowed In The Dark
## And
## A Quiz.

By: bp K7QXG

I received my first license before some of you were born. Old timers refer to that era as the time "when radios glowed in the dark" because our equipment used tubes, not transistors and chips.

Each tube had a filament - not unlike a filament in a light bulb - and it gave off a pretty orangish yellow glow when it was turned on. The filament was used to heat the tube's cathode to a temperature that would permit the flow of electrons to the tube's plate (anode). At night you could turn off the room lights and operate by the glowing light from your transmitter and receiver! Yes, in those days you had a separate transmitter and receiver - transceivers were not on the scene just yet.
My first rig was the Heathkit DX-40, which used a 6146 tube in the final. If you got careless, you would "flatten" the tube and would need to replace it. Sometimes, after replacement, it was necessary to "neutralize" the final by adjusting a small capacitor in the "tank" circuit.

One day, after putting in a new 6146, I proceeded to do just that. The cover was left on the DX-40 a small fiber wand was inserted through a designated opening on the rear of the cover and used to adjust the neutralizing capacitor. Well folks, this one time my insulated tuning wand was not nearby, so I used a small screwdriver. That was a big mistake!

There was 710 volts on the plate of the 6146, and when the screwdriver missed the capacitor and hit a "hot" wire, my fingers slipped forward onto the shaft of the screwdriver. What a shocking experience that was! It even burned a small round hole in the tip end of my finger. Needless to say, I never made that mistake again.

Now, here is a quiz for all the old timers:

1. A pentode has _____ elements.
2. A triode has _____ elements.
3. A 12BN6 has _____ volts on the filament.
4. A tetrode has _____ elements.
5. Typical output power for a 6146 was _____ watts.

Now, for the new hams, try this quiz:

1. True or False: A yagi is a guy who leads a yoga class.
2. True or False: A repeater is a lever action deer rifle.
3. True or False: A tube is what toilet paper comes on.
4. True or False: A long wire is a lengthy telegram.
5. True or False: A beverage antenna is one you buy at Starbucks.

There you are folks! Next time there will be a 25 question quiz on DX prefixes and a tip on how to get those DX QSL cards.

De bp k7qxg

We thank you so much Bob, it is always a delight to hear from you! I trust that your ambulatory status is improving with the passing of each day.

The closing of each newsletter is somehow difficult for me, and I question why, with such good input how could it be? I'm just not used to having the 'last word' I guess, and it has always been difficult for me to be at the 'podium', whether in front of a live audience or wrapped within the anonymity of an electronic letter or the invisible business-end of a transmitter. My mentor told me that it usually gets better, but if it doesn't don't sweat it! Easy for him to say, being a Silent Key and all!

I wish you a good evening, a good morning, and a good day whenever it passes your way. Take the time to stop and have a good look at a flower, and ponder how much consideration it took to make it the way it is. Then, have a good look at the person in the mirror….

"We only have two chances to be a kid.  Gotta get it right this time."
-- N7NET, Scott Laughlin, TX

AB7X
Alive and well in Coyóteville, Oregon