In this, the final newsletter from K5DB, we have included some very interesting articles which we hope you will enjoy. It is tough to have to cease publication with this final issue of 2014, but we still must regretfully do so. Enjoy this “go out with a bang!” issue, stay true to your ham clubs, enjoy our great hobby, and 73. --- We’ll be seeing you on down the ol’ logsheet.
**ARCUA**
The Amateur Radio Club of the University of Arkansas

*Website:* [www.wordpress.uark.edu/rsobar5ym](http://www.wordpress.uark.edu/rsobar5ym)

*Club Callsign:* W5YM

*Main Activities:* Field Day, November Sweepstakes, School Club Roundup, SEC Special Events

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**ARKAN**
The Amateur Radio Klub of the Arkansas Northwest

*Website:* [www.arkanhams.org](http://www.arkanhams.org)

*Club Callsign:* AA5AR

*Meets:* 1st Monday of each month (Except July & December)
6:30 pm
Northwest Technical Institute
Collegiate Center
709 S. Old Missouri Rd. - Springdale

*Pres – Mark Parmer, NW5AR*
*Vice-Pres – Paul Dixon, KK5II*
*Sec/Treas – Scott Anderson, K5SAA*
*Exec Bhd Mbr – Don Banta, K5DB*
*VEC – Darryl Wagoner, WA1GON*
*FD Coord – Billy Hyatt, AE5CP*
*Web/QLS Mgr – Scott Anderson, K5SAA*
*AQP Mgr/Chair – Don Banta, K5DB*

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**BCRO**
The Benton County Radio Operators

*Website:* [www.bcro.org](http://www.bcro.org)

*Club Callsign:* WX5BC

*Pres – Loren Lawrence, N5PUV*
*Vice-Pres – Mel Hagen, AF5GF*
*Sec – Lance Clark, KF5YPD*
*Treas – Mark Maddox, KL7IWT*
*Activities – Mike Guest, K5LHM*
*Benton Co RACES Coordinator*
*Loren Lawrence, N5PUV*

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**BVRG**
Bella Vista Repeater Group

*Meets:* 1st Thursday each month (2nd Thursday if holiday), 8:00 am
Duffer’s Restaurant
638 W. Lancashire Blvd. – Bella Vista

*Pres – Bob Femrite, KØSNG*
*Vice-Pre. – Vern Sidler, AA6AR*
*Treas. – Mark Whittlesey, WØKYZ*
*FD Coord – Ron Evans, K5K*

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**NBRG**
The Noise Blankers Radio Group

*Websites:* [www.noiseblankers.com](http://www.noiseblankers.com)
*[www.hamhijinks.com](http://www.hamhijinks.com)*

*Meets:* As this is an activity group, regular meeting are not scheduled.

*Club Callsign:* WR5P

*Pres – Gary Darnell, WBØRUR*
*Vice-Pres – Andy Holmes, K5PO*
*Treas/Pub Info – Kevin Thornton, K5KVN*

*Activities:* The group produces special events, participates in contests and Wreaths Across America, and produces the popular Ham Hijinks satire news website.

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**OWS**
The Ozark Wireless Society

*Club Callsign:* K5OWS

*Meets:* 4th Saturday of each month
(Except Nov. & Dec.) 10:00 am
The General Store at the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History
118 W. Johnson Ave. – Springdale

*Weekly On-Air Meeting and Chat Session:* Sundays, 4:00 pm
3712.50 KHz

*Club Coordinator*
*Charles Tillotson, W5NX*
Just a few months ago our internationally known DXpeditioner extraordinaire, San Hutson-K5YY of Springdale, made another of his historic DX treks to the country of Lesotho (pronounced “Li-SSOO-too”). This trip marked San’s 22nd DXpedition, involving 47 countries since his first voyage to Swan Island in 1970. These statistics are quite remarkable. Undoubtedly, two of the highlights of San’s DX contributions occurred when, after having become brand new DX entities on the ARRL DXCC List, he himself activated the Comoros Islands (D6) and Mayotte (FH) for the first time in amateur radio history.

San’s recent DXpeditions of the past several years include Norfolk Island-VK9NT (2013), Malpelo Island-HKÖNA DXpedition of the Year 2012), Kanton-T31A (2011), Belize-V31YY (2010), Lord Howe Island-VK9LA (2009), and the elusive Scarborough Reef-BS7H (DXpedition of the Year 2008).

Lesotho (capital city: Maseru, population approx. 2 million) is a small country in southeastern Africa that is completely landlocked by the surrounding country of South Africa. It was originally called Basutoland, but was renamed the Kingdom of Lesotho upon independence from the UK in 1966. The Basuto National Party ruled the country during its first two decades. King Moshoeshoe was exiled in 1990, but returned to the country in 1992 and was reinstated in 1993 after seven years of military rule. In 1998, violent protests and military mutiny following a contentious election, prompted a brief but bloody intervention by South African and Botswana military forces under the aegis of the Southern African Development Community. Subsequent constitutional reforms restored relative political stability. Peaceful parliamentary elections were held in 2002, but the National Assembly elections of February 2007 were hotly contested and aggrieved parties disputed how the electoral law was applied to award proportional seats in the Assembly. In May 2012, competitive elections involving 18 parties saw Prime Minister Thomas Thabane form a coalition government – the first in the country’s history – that ousted the 14-year incumbent, Pakalitha Mosisili, who peacefully transferred power the following month.

San’s exhaustive trip to Lesotho involved an 18-hour direct flight to Johannesburg. After an overnight stay in Victoria, he then endured a grueling 6½ hour drive to the lodge where the 7P operation took place. San advised that that lodge has been owned by the same family for over 100 years.
The DXpedition group for Lesotho-2014 was comprised of a 5-man team, all using their own personal callsigns being issued to them by the Lesotho government. The team consisted of radio amateurs from the United States, Switzerland, and Great Britain, and South Africa.

According to San’s details of this momentous undertaking, Roger-ZS6RJ from Pretoria, South Africa assisted tremendously in helping get the majority of the antennas up, and a nicer guy you’ll never meet.

The rig was an Icom 746-Pro with the antennas varying from an Inverted-L for 80 and 160m, a 6-element Teledyne T-10, and two hex beams.

Although this was not San’s first trip to Africa as he has been all over the continent many times with many DXpedition operations, it was his first trip to Lesotho. Needless to say, he was fascinated by visiting and experiencing a brand new country, the people, and their customs.

From time-to-time, San does speak at one of our area clubs’ meetings and if you ever see that he’s on the docket, be sure and make it a point to attend. With all his vast knowledge of the international amateur radio community, DXing, and radio in general, you certainly won’t be disappointed.
Those of you who have been kind (or gullible) enough to read some of my prior articles know that I’ve dealt with the subject of HF transceiver choice several times over the years, but it’s an issue that comes back as new hams look to become HF-active.

Since I last wrote about this, I’ve helped three hams make the selection, and so it seems as if it might be time to address the issue yet again. Let me be clear, however, that I will not be recommending specific radios in this article. The point will be to frame the more significant parameters of choice.

At the outset, a pearl of advice. The most important element of your station is not your transceiver. It’s your antenna. To newer hams, radios are sexy and antennas seem more of an ugly nuisance. Experienced hams know that antennas are just as sexy and beautiful as radios, and they’re essential. As the saying goes, “If ya can’t hear ‘em, ya can’t work ‘em.”

So, before running out and blowing big bucks on a super whoop-de-doo radio, figure out your best option for an antenna in your location and allocate your budget accordingly. A $12,000 radio won’t work much better than a $750 one if all you’ve got for an antenna is a wire coat hanger stuck in the radio’s antenna connector.

Assuming, then, that the matter of your antenna installation has been resolved, we can move on to consider transceivers. Here’s the unvarnished truth about radios. Every HF transceiver manufactured by a major company today will allow you to make contacts, whether purchased new or from a reputable seller of used gear. So, the real questions to ask yourself are these:

- What is it that I want to do with my radio? Goals and objectives vary and can include one or more of at least the following generic activities: making casual contacts to “chew the rag,” net operations with message handling, HF emergency operation, contesting, and DXing.
- How much would I need to spend to do it? The answer to this one might feed back to force an adjustment of initial goals and objectives.
- Do I have space limitations for my shack? Current transceiver sizes vary widely, from very small, lightweight units up to some rather large and heavy behemoths weighing 50 pounds or more.
- What other accessories do I need or want, and how much will they cost? Think about microphones, earphones, CW keys, paddles, electronic keyers, digital interfaces, power supplies, and antenna tuners.
- What’s my budget? Life is full of little disappointments.
- Consistent with my goals and my budget, should I buy a new radio or a used one?
The biggest difference between entry level and upper end radios lies in their interference fighting abilities. In general, the more you pay, the more capable will be the radio to reject unwanted signals near your desired operating frequency, avoid signal interactions creating annoying interference (so-called intermodulation problems), eliminate noise of various types, and change the audio characteristics of stations you want to receive to make them easier to “copy”, i.e., to hear clearly and understand.

Many radios, both entry level and advanced, come fairly stripped down but can have accessories added that will aid in interference reduction, and it’s important to know just what’s built into any base radio you might buy and what it will cost to gussie it up for better performance. Usually, that better performance is gained by adding analog filters that serve to “narrow the doorway” to pass a desired signal while excluding adjacent signals that would otherwise cause interference. Some radios rely totally upon built-in digital signal processing and do not require these filters for optimum performance. Other radios may employ both digital and analog filtering, the latter usually being optionally available at extra cost.

Most transceivers consist of a single box containing one transmitter and one receiver. The receiver may have two “VFOs”, or tuning circuits. These allow the alternate monitoring of two different frequencies, which may be useful for some types of operations, particularly those conducted by certain DX stations engaged in what is called “split” operation – a topic beyond the scope of this article.

Certain higher end radios are capable of dual simultaneous reception, i.e., the ability to listen to two frequencies at once. Without going into detail, let me just say that if your goal is the fanatically serious pursuit of DX contacts with the ability to work rarely activated locations that generate huge pileups of calling stations, a radio capable of dual receive is likely to be what you’ll eventually want. For casual contacts, casual DXing and most contesting, dual receive is not necessary. Of course, dual receive radios are, with only a couple of notable exceptions, generally more expensive than single receive radios, so the question of budget again may arise for you.

Who are the biggest manufacturers of HF radios for the U.S. market today? In no particular order, they include: Yaesu, ICOM, Kenwood, Elecraft, Ten-Tec, FlexRadio, and Alinco. All of these companies make quality products. All of their currently produced HF radios can be computer interfaced for varying degrees of radio control and logging (yes, another big topic), and all are multi-mode, enabling voice, CW, and digital mode operation.

Almost all of the HF radios from these manufacturers are capable of 100 watt output. A few have 200 watt output. I would strongly advise newcomers to HF operation to avoid QRP (5 watts or less) or near QRP (10 watts or less) radios. Making contacts with these is great fun but can be quite challenging and, for the newbie, frustrating, especially with only a modest antenna.
Every HF-active ham, and I am no exception, has opinions and preferences related to HF radios, and before you buy, whether new or used, you should solicit input and assistance in making your decision. Think about your goals and objectives, look at your post-antenna budget, and take into account the cost of accessories and necessary support gear, such as a power supply or an external antenna tuner if one is not built into your chosen transceiver. Study the ads and read the reviews in QST and CQ. If you’re a member of the ARRL (you should be!), log onto the League’s website and click to their product reviews. They’re among the most objective you’ll find anywhere.

One word of caution, however. If you choose to read the transceiver reviews on the eham.net website, read them very critically and take them with a grain of salt. There’s a lot of “flaming” that goes on there, and the degree of subjectivity in what is essentially a biased group of anecdotal accounts is high.

Good hunting and I hope to hear you on the bands.

How about a great (and in very good condition) photo of the way it was way, way, way “back in the day”?

The classy shack of amateur station 2COW, circa 1927.
DEDICATED AREA HAMS PERFORM SUPER JOB ASSISTING TOUR-DE-CURE

A beautiful fall Saturday in the Ozarks, bicycles, and ham radio made for a great successful combination for the annual Tour-de-Cure on October 4. The Start/Finish line and race headquarters were located at Arvest Ballpark, as was the Net Control Station for the many hams who volunteered their time and talents to help with communication assistance for the race staff. The ham backing for the event included manned coverage at all TDC rest stops, SAG wagon coverage, and assistance at race headquarters……and they did a spectacular job.

We were able to get quite a few of the participants in our camera lens as we meandered across a large portion of the race course (apologies to those who we were not able get their picture), and enjoyed some great fellowship as we covered the stops that we could.

Ham race coordinator and NCS Loren Lawrence – N5PUV, advised us that 25 amateurs assisted with this year’s TDC, representing various ham clubs and organizations. There were approximately 188 riders in the 100-mile race, with an additional 100 riders in the 50, 40, and 20 mile races. All-in-all, around 600 people participated in this year’s event including hams, riders, volunteers, and staff. Mark-KL7IWT was the co-Net Control Station, while Stacy-N5GXX served as the TDC’s Race Director’s HamComm Assistant.

To illustrate just how important amateur communications can be in an event of this magnitude, one of the highlights of the day occurred when one of the riders, a small girl, came up [temporarily] missing when her parents expected to meet her at Rest Stop -1, but she failed to show. She had ridden past the stop. But, thanks to ham communication and coordination, she was found within 10 minutes! “WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS – HAM RADIO.”

WE SALUTE THIS YEAR’S PARTICIPANTS:

KG5BDL – Bob
K5MDM – Terry
KB5SEZ – David
W5VAN – Van
KE5YYN – James
NW5AR – Mark
K5UNX – Wayne

KF5TQU – Vic
KF5YHU – Larry
KA5CLE – Robert
K5SAA – Scott
W5ERT – Steven
KD5OHQ – Rick
Grant Herndon

AF5GF – Mel
KF5LHM – Mike
KG5EFC – Joyce
N5CAA – Chris
KE5WEO – Cheryl
KL7IWU – Cindy
KF5RIZ – Phillip

KG5BDL directs traffic at Rest Stop - 1
2014 TDC PICS:

K5MDM and KB5SEZ converse with SAG driver at Rest Stop – 1

W5VAN and KE5YYN with SAG driver K5UNX at Rest Stop – 2

NW5AR and KF5TQU Rest Stop – 3

SAG driver Joyce-KG5EFC taking a short break at Rest Stop – 4
KF5YHN and KA5CLE man the fort at Rest Stop – 4, with SAG driver KF5RIZ

K5SAA and W5ERT at Rest Stop – 5 (Steve-W5ERT had a super portable setup)

Tour-de-Cure Net Control Station
Arvest Ballpark

Tour-de-Cure Co-Net Control
KL7IWT

Tour-de-Cure Race Director Assistant
N5GXX

THIS ISN’T ALL! – SEE PART 2 OF THIS ISSUE OF THE VOX!