

Letters from Our Members

A Field Day Compromise

The San Fernando Valley Amateur Radio Club in Southern California, W6SD, opted for a new operational technique during Field Day last year. Most of our members are pushing the other side of 80. We operate 3A every year, but messing with towers, push-ups, and Yagis has become a problem for us, and safety is an issue we take seriously.

In 2015, we decided to purchase a couple of LNR's EF-Quads to supplement our normal array. We knew that these would be a compromise to our Yagis, but we were more concerned about the well-being of members. The end-fed quads operated well on the HF bands and never got above a 2:1 SWR on their operational bands.

It's true that we didn't burn up the airwaves and we didn't win our division, but we had fun, and everyone went home with all their appendages intact. Field Day is an exercise in compromise — whether deciding on power sources, antennas, or transceivers. I'm proud of our club and their willingness to man their stations for the duration.

L. John Campeau, AD6KT
Reseda, California

Taking Action Against Interference

I enjoyed David Sumner's, K1ZZ, editorial in the December 2015 issue of *QST*.

I hadn't gotten to read the issue before I'd complained to an LED Bluetooth bulb manufacturer about the EMI of their updated bulb.

I told them the serial numbers of the bulbs, told them my testing method, noted that the bulb interfered so badly with a nearby weather radio as to render the weather radio useless, and noted that such interference likely impacted the distance that the Bluetooth in their bulb could "hear."

I told them that I had returned the bulbs for a refund because the EMI was so bad.

I also asked the manufacturer to update me as to when the interference problem was solved, because I'd like to buy their bulbs.

Hopefully, they now understand that the bulb design is adversely affecting its own operation, and will adversely impact their customers.

Thanks again for the article. I hope other hams will give LED bulb manufacturers similar direct feedback!

Craig Paul, KO0US
Lawrence, Kansas

CW and Speed

Any international DX CW contest is exciting for CW operators, whether they are seasoned veterans or hams who are beginning their exploration of CW. I think most of our members would agree that when the FCC eliminated the license requirement for demonstrating the ability to listen and understand Morse code, the number of CW operators on all the bands started declining.

I got my Amateur Extra class ticket when CW was still required, but I have been away from ham radio for almost a decade. I find it exciting yet frustrating to try to get my CW speed up again. I was predominantly an SSB operator, but now find CW very challenging and fun. CW requires a special skill that is not easy to learn, but that any ham can be proud of when they build their proficiency in that mode.

I was recently listening to an international CW contest. What struck me was how many stations were hammering away, calling CQ at 35 – 40 WPM, with no one answering them. I found it extremely frustrating to sit and listen for several minutes and never be able to understand call signs. I finally moved on. I am sure there were others listening who were frustrated as well. No one benefits from that situation.

I also found it interesting listening to a ham sending CQ at maybe 15 WPM and being answered again by someone going 35 – 40 WPM, probably sending a preprogrammed sequence. Those hams were never answered because the slower operator could not copy them. No one benefits from that situation.

It might be more productive for veteran contesters to slow down their memory keyers to get more contacts, and a lot more fun for so many of us who want to participate in a CW contest as a casual contesteer.

Terry Brown, N7TB
Corvallis, Oregon
Life Member

Taking an Active Role in the Hobby

I've been re-reading some of the earlier issues of *QST* (and other publications as well) and was struck by how frequently there are comments regarding the poor quality of the "current batch" of Amateur Radio operators.

My brother has been licensed since the early '70s. Over the years, he has frequently commented on projects he was working on, times he helped others learn the hobby, and how he appreciated the self-policing aspect of the amateur community.

It was his enthusiasm that attracted me to the hobby, and I was finally licensed in 2006. All skilled endeavors are learned and are well served by having experienced practitioners help the newcomers. As with any such endeavor, if we want things to improve, then we need to take an active role by mentoring, teaching, and correcting those whose work is not up to acceptable standards.

As a licensed engineer for 30 years, I have taken an active role in teaching new graduates how things are really done and helping all my associates maintain quality in their work. It has made a difference in every office in which I have worked.

So, I ask each and every Amateur Radio operator out there: When was the last time you took a moment to offer encouragement, advice, or gentle correction to another operator? In my opinion, if you have not taken the time to help someone else, then you have no right to complain about the status of the hobby.

Ralph Phillips, KE5HDF
Houston, Texas