

WIRELESS HILL BEACON

Delaware Valley Radio Association



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Meeting – November 12th 2013

The regular monthly meeting will be held at 7:30 PM on Wednesday, November 12th, at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, on Upper Ferry Road at Wilburtha Road in West Trenton. The site is easy to reach from I-95 or NJ-29. Talk-in is available on the 146.67 (PL 131.8) and 442.65 repeaters. The directors meeting takes place 1 hour earlier at 6:30 PM.

DVRA Nets

2-meter & 70-cm nets on the club repeaters 146.670 pl 131.8, 442.650 pl 131.8

2-Meter Nets:

The Pepper Net 10:00 PM Daily

Mercer Co. Emergency Net 7:30 PM Tuesdays KB2EGI, coordinator.

Training & Upgrade Classes

Don Wright, AA2F, periodically holds Technician and General classes.

Classes are held at various locations. Call Don at 609-737-1723 to register.

Exam Schedule

For 2014 exams will be held on Jan 18, March 15, May 10, July 19, Sept 13 and Nov 15. All Exams will be at 12:15 on the listed Saturdays at the Hopewell (Twp) Branch of the Mercer County Library, 245 Pennington-Titusville Road, next door to the Hopewell Valley Central High School. Bring \$15, cash or check, and 2 forms of identification, at least one being a photo ID. For further information, contact Don/AA2F at 609-737-1723 or aa2f@arrl.net.

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Fame and Fortune Await

Want to become rich & famous – write an article for the DVRA Beacon. Fame among local hams almost guaranteed – fortune is up to you (and your luck in Powerball). Deadline for submission is one week before the monthly meeting (that would make the deadline the first Wednesday of the month). For details contact Alex / AB2RC – ab2rc@ab2rc.net

Help Wanted

Our club treasurer, Ron KC2PQC, is looking for a club member to help with the treasurer's duties. If you are interested, please contact him at 609-695-5990 or email ronk@snip.net.

Website

Our website has been updated, and looks better than ever. Take a look at it <http://www.w2zq.com>

Are knobs and buttons toast?

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

In a recent column on EETimes (http://www.eetimes.com/author.asp?doc_id=1324283), an old colleague of mine, Martin Rowe, says, "Knobs and buttons are slowly on their way out. Get used to it." He's referring to the controls on oscilloscopes, but if he were a ham, he might just as well be talking about amateur radio transceivers, too.

We already see this happening in amateur radio. FlexRadio, and a couple of other companies, already make transceivers with no front panel controls. You must have a computer to use them.

Might we even start to see this with handheld and portable equipment? For example, how much cheaper could they make a Baofeng if to use it, you had to also have an Android or iPhone app to act as the human interface?

To be honest, I haven't really thought about this much myself. I'm enough of a dinosaur to still prefer buttons and knobs, but having to use on-screen controls certainly doesn't turn me off. Rowe claims, however, that "as the old-timers retire (or in our case as older hams become SKs), younger engineers (or young hams) will expect every user interface to function like a phone or tablet. Don't believe me? Just wait."

I got several interesting replies to this idea on my blog. Bill, AD8BC says, "What would be fun would be an open-source mobile radio. I picture an RF deck with a Raspberry Pi and touch screen for control, the Pi would simply tell the RF deck where to tune and handle the interface and scanning functions, it would ship with a stock app, but you could make your own. Built in support for SDR stuff, packet, APRS, remote operation...."

Most commenters, however, even the younger guys, still seem to prefer analog controls. Lucien, DH7LM, says, "I'm a newly licensed ham and I like both – experimenting with advanced computer stuff like SDRs and the great feeling a real radio provides!" Grant, KJ6ZZD, says, "Knobs perform some tasks better than a screen can. Knobs provide some tactile feedback that a screen just can't."

So, what do you think? Are knobs and buttons toast, or do you think there's still some life left in analog controls?

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When not twiddling the knobs on his HF transceiver or relatively ancient Tek 2213 analog oscilloscope, you'll find KB6NU working on updates to his "No Nonsense" study guides or blogging about amateur radio at www.kb6nu.com.

Logbook of The World

On October 25, 2014, Mike AB2IO reported the latest QSLs for W2ZQ logbook of the world were:

EA3DUM	2006-10-29	16:15:14	15M	SSB	21.35200	SPAIN
EA4DAT	2007-10-28	16:53:38	15M	SSB	21.26840	SPAIN
N1FD	2009-06-28	01:07:47	40M	CW	7.00450	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
N1FD	2008-06-29	14:34:22	40M	SSB	7.26012	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

5439 matches out of 16557 QSLs submitted, so 32.9% matched to date.

Product Review:

Chicago Electric Twelve Interval Heat Gun with LED Temperature Settings By Ronald T. Kubinski

After I purchased the Chicago Electric twelve interval heat gun for a specific project a friend said it was overkill for occasional hobby use. But, the knowledge that there was a setting below the melting point of 60/40 solder was comforting. My initial project involved putting shrink sleeving on some very fine solder-spliced wire. I purchased the heat gun on sale for \$30 in August of 2012. It has high and low fan settings with overlapping heat ranges and an 80 second cool down timer after each use (product box). I should mention that the yellow targets for +, - and on/off are misaligned, which cause the user to fumble when operating the touch buttons.

So, I had purchased the gun and had purchased some shrink sleeving, but put these aside until I was ready to assemble my custom packet radio cable. I tinned the fine wires and soldered them together by holding them side-by-side and going over them with the soldering iron tip. Once the cable was tested I then

shrank the shrink sleeving. I slid the piece of shrink sleeving over the splice and shrank it using the lowest temperature setting. This is where the interval heat gun paid off. However, I noticed that my desk lamp was flickering while the heat gun was heating and thought it might be because the lamp bulb was of the compact fluorescent lamp type.

Further opportunities came to use the heat gun to apply shrink sleeving. This led to the discovery that it wasn't just some interaction with a CFL that caused the flickering, but any circuit shared with the heat gun was affected. However, I now have a nice packet radio cable. And, the heat gun was handy to have for two other situations where shrink sleeving was necessary and appropriate.

Specifications - Amps: (High)10.0 ,(Low)4.6 , Max Watts: 1500W, Output:5127 BTU/hour (product box)

October Meeting Minutes & Notes
DVRA MEETING NOTES
(not received in time for publication)

N2HX – SK

H. Robert Schroeder EWING TOWNSHIP H. Robert Schroeder, 62, of Ewing Township passed away Wednesday, Oct. 22, 2014, at Lourdes Specialty Hospital of Southern New Jersey. Born in Trenton, he was a lifelong area resident. He retired from the New Jersey State Police. Bob, N2HX, was the current president of the Delaware Valley Radio Association (W2ZQ) and was currently serving as its repeater director. He also held an FCC lifetime (formerly First Phone) commercial radiotelephone license. He was a member of the ARRL and IEEE. His technical column, *Balanced Lines*, appeared in the DVRA newsletter continuously since 1998. In addition to being a professional photographer, he was also an avid Corvette owner and member of the Liberty Region Corvette Club. Bob retired as communications and warning officer for New Jersey Office of Emergency Management in West Trenton and as trustee of the NJ2EM 224.32 MHz repeater. He was also an NRA member and belonged to the Citizens Rifle and Revolver Club in West Windsor. Bob formerly worked for NJN Channel 52 as an audio engineer. He was a past advisory board member for Mary Ellen Assembly of Rainbow for Girls, Capital Chapter Demolay for Boys, past member of Ashlar Chapter OES, a past member of the Ewing school board, past EMT, current member of Pennington Road Fire and First Aid Company, president of the W2ZQ Ham Radio Club and past president of the Trenton Kiwanis Club. He was a past master of Trenton-Cyrus Lodge, past grand organist for the Grand Masonic Lodge, State of NJ, and a member of the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite Valley of Central Jersey. Bob was a valued member of Eaglevision Productions Board of Trustees as their treasurer and will be dearly missed. - See more at: <http://obits.nj.com/obituaries/trenton/obituary.aspx?pid=172948217>