

The content which follows is a transcript of the Practical Amateur Radio Podcast hosted by Jerry Taylor, KD0BIK. This monthly version of PARP is typically released the last week of each month.

The Practical Amateur Radio Podcast – Episode number 41.

From the ham shack of KD0BIK, located in Colorful Colorado, this is the Practical Amateur Radio Podcast.

This is show number 41, volume number 3 with a release date of June 20, 2010.

Hello everyone. My name is Jerry Taylor; my amateur radio call sign is KD0BIK and welcome to the Practical Amateur Radio Podcast...Creating Elmers One Podcast at a time. Amateur radio or ham radio is what this podcast is all about. If you are currently studying for your exam or have been in ham radio for years....I'm hopeful this podcast will help you. If it has helped you, I hope you will continue to listen and I also hope you'll tell others. Also, in keeping with our Creating Elmers one podcast at a time philosophy, if you learn something from our podcasts....please share that knowledge with others.

Welcome back to another episode of The Practical Amateur Radio Podcast, I'm so glad you've returned. The Practical Amateur Radio Podcast, a proud member of the Tech Podcast Network. If it's tech, it's here.

Very quickly before we get started, I want to share with you a new amateur radio podcast that has just hit the internet. It is nothing like anything that exists today and this podcast is THE ONE amateur radio podcast which has been missing from the catalog of amateur radio podcasts currently available. Jeff Davis, KE9V an Amateur Extra living in Muncie, Indiana is the creator. If you've listened to amateur radio podcasts over the years, Jeff should be no stranger to you. Jeff created the Long Delayed Echoes Podcast.

Jeff's new podcast is called Cornbread Road and he refers to it as "A different kind of podcast" and he is absolutely right. Cornbread Road is a ham radio mystery delivered in tiny audio giblets. I hope you'll make room on your MP3 player and your podcast listening schedule for Cornbread Road. Jeff released episode 1 titled "Finding Paradise". You can learn more about Jeff's new Cornbread Road podcast by visiting ke9v.net. That's Kilo, Echo, Nine, Victor . Net. I can't wait for episode two.

The topic of this episode is going to be contest operating method. For over two months, the poll question on MyAmateurRadio.com has asked the question, What is your contest operating method? The choices are Search and Pounce, Run, I don't know the difference, please explain in a future episode and I don't do contests.

I'll get to the results in just a minute. But first, please allow me to explain the differences between the Search and Pounce Method and the Run Method.

First let's tackle Search and Pounce. While I have no scientific data to prove my theory (other than the non-scientific poll on MyAmateurRadio.com), but my theory is most new hams and perhaps the more casual contester will use the Search and Pounce method.

In very practical terms, Search and Pounce is simply tuning up and down the band listening for a station calling CQ Contest, CQ Field Day or CQ Special Event Station.....then quickly verifying you haven't already worked them.....and then Pounce. By Pounce we mean you answer their CQ and provide the contest exchange. Then you repeat the process over and over and over again. There is absolutely nothing wrong with this method and this method and the operators who use this method is very much needed for successful contest operation.

To Run....again in practical terms means to find a clear frequency. Remember proper ettiquete and the Radio Amateur's Code.... listen first, then ask if the frequency is in use. If you hear nothing....then you begin calling CQ Contest and you run the pileup. Those that use this method are also a very important part of the contest operation.

Which method will produce you more contacts and points? Well...again....I have no scientific data to support this...but I would say if band conditions are good, then the Run method will get you more contacts. Think of it this way.....Field of Dreams...If you build it....they will come. If you establish the frequency, the operators will come and the pile up begins.

Which method is more difficult? For the seasoned contester they might answer neither....but for someone just staring out in radio sport, the run method is more difficult. It is certainly faster paced, requires exceptional listening skills, patience and control. Remember....if you are using the run method and you are running the particular frequency....YOU are in control.

Now what I'm going to tell you next might not be text book, but it works for me. When I run a frequency and a pile up starts....if I can hear a full call sign in the pileup I'll choose them. I work the easier ones first. Next if I hear anyone mobile or QRP, I'll call them next. If I can't copy their entire callsign, I try to listen for as much of it as possible.

An example: Huge pileup and band conditions are not so good. I've already worked the easy to hear stations. Everything else is just one massive knot. But I listen, if I don't hear anything I can pull out I call QRZ, and listen. In the pileup I hear a call sign ending in Papa Uniform. I will then ask for the station ending in Papa Uniform to try again. I suppose it is possible there will be more than one answer back, but if you have 100 in your pileup, you certainly will only have a couple return. Well...you will have those guys who wouldn't know what the word etiquette meant if it slapped them in the face, but you ignore them.

The station returns Alpha, Foxtrot, Six, Papa, Uniform. Bingo....

Now...it is possible band conditions over the contest weekend will be poor at best. You will have all sorts of obstacles to deal with on the bands. You will have to deal with the famous "Q" sisters....you know. QRM and QRN. Do you know the difference?

Let me share how I tell them apart. QRM - I think of the "M" as malicious and for QRN - I think of the "N" as natural noise. I've learned in my short few years...you really can't control either one. Well...of course I mean if you have QRN from poor station design or something like that, then yes....you can and should resolve that. But I'm talking more of the natural noise (technically static).

Back to the QRM sister,remember "M" malicious. This is an operator who is either intentionally causing havoc on the bands or they just posses such poor operating skills that some of their practices are creating the QRM on the bands. The latter is more common. Operators who tune up over an existing pileup are the most common and you will hear this.

But remember this. Two wrongs do not make a right. If you experience QRM while working a pileup just stay calm, stay in control. Keep the Radio Amateur's Code in mind. Do not try to be the band police. If the QRM is from a operator with extremely poor etiquette, they will eventually move on down the line.

If the QRM is from someone intentionally causing problems....if ignored, generally they will also move on down the line.

Now I wanted to work this in because Field Day is just around the corner. You more than likely will see both methods in operation over the weekend. Which method you use may depend on what is taking place at the time your shift begins.

If you are relieving an operator and that operator has a good, healthy pileup going....be prepared to continue running that frequency. In a contest, a small slice of the band is like property on the Vegas strip. It's valuable and someone either wants it from you or will try to take it away from you. Regardless....stay in control, stay patient...You'll do fine.

Now a few weeks ago in episode 40, I provided a link for you to download the 2010 ARRL Field Day packet. I hope you did that and I hope you've read through it.

I want you to print something else as well. Please go to MyAmateurRadio.com and on the left hand side click the link for Radio Amateur's Code. Click the little printer icon....it will open in a smaller window and you'll need to print the printer icon in that smaller window. But print off and take with you to Field Day the Radio Amateur's Code.

Now I'm not asking you to print dozens of copies and make sure there is one or two at every station....nor am I asking you to hand them out to all the operators. I'm asking for you to print one copy and print that copy for yourself. Keep it with you and if you start to lose sight of the plot.....read through it.

Featured Website Segment

Our friend Andrew Herron, W8FI has been busy creating a new website for amateurs. This new website is called BaconFrying.com. BaconFrying.com is a question and answer website designed to help the amateur radio community.

While similar in respect to other amateur radio forums, the site is geared towards questions and answers. When visiting the site you'll see a few questions right on the front page. You can also click the "Unanswered" button to see only those questions which have not been answered.

If you have an amateur radio question, consider visiting BaconFrying.com....post the question and get an answer. Of course, this is also a great way for you to Elmer to others. Consider visiting BaconFrying.com and see what questions are unanswered and provide some answers to those with questions.

Again, the website is BaconFrying.com. I'd like to thank Andrew for using his web skills and his time to put the site together.

Featured Gadget Segment

Amateur Radio is all about gadgets. The gadget I'm going to share with you today is unlike any other gadget I've featured or perhaps will ever feature again on this podcast. At least for another year.

One thing most Field Day sites will have in common...and I'm not talking about food, fun, radios etc...I'm talking about bugs...creepy crawlies...insects etc. This is why I want to remind all of you to make sure you pack in your Field Day go-kit, some sort of insect repellent.

These days it's more than just trying to prevent the insect bites that itch...there are serious diseases such as West Nile and Lyme Disease. Insect repellents containing at least 7% DEET can help repel ticks and mosquitoes which carry these diseases.

For years my family has used the protection provided by the Off brand of insect repellants. Whatever brand you use, just make sure you take it with you to Field Day 2010.

Before we leave the topic of featured gadgets, also make sure you use sunscreen. Yea you may think "Oh I'll be operating under a canopy of some sort" and this may be true. But the sun can still get to you. Also it's pretty difficult to erect antennas under the cover of a canopy. Put it on prior to leaving the house on Saturday morning and re-apply as necessary. You'll thank me later.

Ham Adventures Segment

I believe I updated everyone on my SWR Watt Meter experience. That was a fun little kit and I must admit that I'm impressed with myself that I was able to complete it and it actually work. If you are interested in a QRP SWR Wattmeter, please check out OHR.com. OHR.com is the Oak Hills Research website and where I purchased the kit.

We're just days away from Field Day and I'm so excited. I truly hope you are as well. Ham radio is different things to different people, but I do hope you'll consider attending a Field Day site near you...just go. Even if it is only for a few hours...go. I think you'll have fun.

If you're relatively new to the hobby...I hope your schedule works out for you to attend. I really believe it will be an awesome experience for you. Especially for you tech operators who don't have a lot of HF privileges.

For me...I'm participating in my 3rd Field Day since being licensed. Remember I was licensed in August 2007 and 2008 was my first FD and I of course participated last year in 2009. This year the operating will be somewhat done on a smaller scale.

A few friends of mine are planning on meeting up in the foothills to operate for most of Saturday. We're still working out the details, but I believe there will be three of us at this point. We're all looking to #1 have fun and #2 do it in some cooler temperatures. We plan to meet on Saturday morning and setup the buddipole and perhaps also string a 20m dipole. We will operate for most of Saturday and again our objective is to have fun. The wives are coming along...it will be a great time.

Once we begin getting tired and/or run out of food and gas for the generator, we'll probably call it quits just before sunset and head back home. Like last year, I have a project at work that will need my attention starting on Sunday morning. It is what it is.

I'd love to hear from you who attend Field Day this year. If you would care to call my Google Voice line and provide a 1-2 minute update on all that is happening I will make sure I feature it on an upcoming episode. The Google voice phone number is 307-200-PARP. I especially would like to hear from those of you who are attending Field Day for the very first time. To help encourage you to call and provide an update, those who call and leave a Field Day update will be entered in a drawing to win a few prizes I have available. The top prize will be the ARRL's HF Digital Handbook and a few caps donated by DX Engineering.

The ARRL HF Digital Handbook covers information on all the HF digital modes, all the various tools necessary to get started in the exciting mode of digital operations. Again, to be entered in the drawing...just call the Google voicemail line 307-200-PARP and provide a Field Day update. The winners will be selected and notified sometime the week after Field Day. Good luck.

Mailbag

Mail goes here

Until next time, 73 to all from KD0BIK.

This has been The Practical Amateur Radio Podcast. The Practical Amateur Radio Podcast is written and produced by Jerry Taylor. You may contact Jerry by email at kd0bik@arrl.net or by visiting his website at www.myamateurradio.com. The practical amateur radio podcast and myamateurradio.com are protected under the Creative Commons license. Please see myamateurradio.com for details.