

*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 42.

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

This is show number 42, volume number 4 with a release date of February 16, 2011.

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.

Yes, this is the long awaited and very much anticipated episode number 42. Episode 41 was released in June of 2010 just before Field Day and I do apologize....I apologize from the very bottom of my heart for this very long hiatus. There are multiple factors which caused the delay. While some are NOT related to amateur radio....some are and I would like to discuss those issues in the hopes that the path I walked down doesn't have to happen to others.

I've said on this podcast many, many times that I love this hobby. I did love it and very importantly, I still do. I love all aspects of it. I love the fact that just about every time I sit down and do something related to this hobby....This could be getting on the air, attending a club meeting or just simply thumbing through CQ or QST Magazine....that I learn something. Learning is important to me and of course sharing my knowledge with each of you and with new hams is also very important to me. To paraphrase Randy Hall, K7AGE in one of his recent Youtube videos, a ham radio license is more than a license to get on the air....it is a license to LEARN. Of course you all know I take elmering very serious. This HAS NOT changed.

As we all know, all great meals (and just to drive you all crazy) let's think BBQ....all great BBQ recipes have many, many ingredients. Can you smell it? Anyway.....you've also heard the term a recipe for disaster right? So let's continue.....and do try to get the BBQ smell out of your mind.

Now, I've only been licensed since August 2007. Yes....only 3 and a half years. If you've listened to old episodes you know I've known about ham radio since I was child. I'm not going to re-hash all that now. But for the past three and a half years, amateur radio has been an important hobby to me. In some ways I believe in the past three plus years I've been trying to make up for over thirty years of lost time. This is ingredient number one.

Very soon after getting my license I began looking into ways I could use the hobby to give back to my community. I firmly believe in helping others when needed. I joined a small Emergency Communications group here in Denver which directly supports the Denver Police Dept. In the beginning I was spending a small 2-4 hours a month with Emcom activities. But around this time last year I was asked to take the lead role for this group and my participation soared to around 20 hours per month. Much of the time spent was doing non-radio activities and playing referee and counselor trying to get everyone to just get along. Unfortunately, I learned there can be a lot of politics and egos with SOME emcomm groups and while the group I belonged to was almost free of ego issues, many of the groups we worked with were running over with ego issues. This is what I'll call ingredient number two.

Sort of related to the making up for lost time I spoke about just a minute ago, the third ingredient I made was trying to do everything related to amateur radio I could do. A big part of this was my involvement with emcomm. In addition, I love all modes of operation from HF portable to satellite operations, D-STAR to packet ops. This ingredient is small....but it is an ingredient in the overall recipe for disaster and the second in my recipe.

When not on the air, when not spending time doing emcomm activities or reading etc. I was spending a lot of hours per month making this podcast and the website etc. I'm not a web designer so anything I do related to the web just takes me about 3-4 times longer (or more) than others. I did get sidetracked with my trials of advertising and such and really that took even more of my time. This is ingredient number four.

Field Day 2010 - Well....of my three field day events I've participated in since being licensed...this one took a lot out of me and somewhat took some of the fun out of the hobby for me as well. Basically what was going to be a very small group of about 3-4 hams and our spouses...it turned into a really small group of just myself and my wonderful and very supporting wife. Of course, I didn't know it was just going to be just me until the day of Field Day. Needless to say with this and the rain and a few other things taking place that weekend....it became a fairly major ingredient....ingredient number 5 in my burnout recipe.

Back to the topic of elmering. I made a very serious mistake which is ingredient number six. I allowed myself to get too involved in the lives of a few new hams I had been elmering. This involvement basically consumed me and I believe I viewed it as wanting to push them so they would not make the same mistake I did when I was their age. When I began viewing their dislike towards the hobby, I took it personal and felt it was my fault...I felt perhaps I did something wrong. In the end, I realized I had actually done nothing wrong. All we can do is offer our help, answer the questions and hope the interest in the hobby will keep them engaged.

Ingredient number seven has been my relentless attempt of earning my amateur extra ticket. For the past several years this has been a goal for me to accomplish and each year I have failed to meet that goal. Just last Spring I even helped startup a virtual study group with several other general class operators. We would meet weekly to discuss the topics. My severe case of burnout for the hobby along with some health issues I was working to overcome through acupuncture on Sunday afternoons basically punctured (no pun intended) my 2010 goal of making this happen. So is upgrading to amateur extra a gold for 2011? No...I don't think so. However....it is my hope to accomplish this prior to July 1, 2012 as that is when the study material will change.

Finally, there are many other ingredients like my job, my life and others which add to some of the problems experienced over these 8 months or so. My work schedule really went crazy over the summer. I won't go into a lot of detail, but I've been working on many key projects and it was a very, very productive summer, fall and winter.

Now let me shift gears for a moment. I know many of you may be saying to yourself "But I work a full-time job, I have a family, I work multiple modes, I elmer, I'm involved in my club and various emcomm groups and even some of you are fellow podcasters. I'm not making excuses by explaining the issues which occurred to me this past summer and fall. But I also know that I'm not the only amateur to have developed severe burnout for the hobby. I've received emails from many of you who shared in my experiences. Some of these emails even have discussed some who have fallen completely out of the hobby, given up on it and basically no longer participate at all. This my friends is sad and what I am wanting to try to avoid.

What I would like to suggest is my experiences can be used as a learning experience to others that....perhaps they will not follow in the same path as I did.

For example, if you are just starting out in the hobby (and regardless of age), certainly do pace yourself. Don't try to do everything the hobby has to offer all at the same time. The only advice that perhaps I'll

offer and this will surely contradict pacing yourself is if you have just recently earned your technician ticket, don't stop there. Get the general study material and continue the study/learning process. Trust me. It will be a lot easier to keep the routine of reading, learning and studying and the general ticket really opens up a lot of the amateur radio world to you.

Now whether you continue pushing to extra class is up to you. This is after all an item I've carried on my new years resolution and goals list for many years.

Next, Do volunteer with your club emcomm or join ARES or RACES if that is something you desire. I'm very proud of the over two years I spent working with the city and county of Denver. I'm not totally turned off from emcomm and hope to one day get back involved. However, I will leave the leadership up to someone else.

Also, please don't stop elmering....I'M NOT. I'll repeat...I'm not going to stop elmering to those who want or need help. This podcast is just one of the vehicles I use to elmer and as I like to say, The Practical Amateur Radio Podcast....creating elmers one podcast at a time. Please do share what you learn with others. The lesson I've learned is once I offer the help, answer the question or whatever.....it is not my fault if the student or person being elmered uses the info or just lets it evaporate.

And by the way....I have no bad feelings towards those I have helped mentor. Each of you I still consider a friend and I'm here for you at any time you need my help. I hope to share this hobby with each of you for a long, long time.

Before I close this segment, by reflecting on the 5th element of the Amateur's Code and that is to be balanced. Radio is a hobby, never interfering with duties owed to family, job, school or community. If you're like me you have other hobbies and interest other than amateur radio. I enjoy the occasional round of golf, I enjoy nature and landscape photography, I enjoy flight simulation and I also enjoy geocaching. Yes it is easy to allow one to over power other interests in your life and I know I certainly allowed ham radio to sort of block out some of the other things I enjoy in life. Balance is a good thing.

Finally, I want to share with all of you the very final ingredient to my overall burnout. This my friends is what I'll call the Icing on the Cake. Yea I know I started out with a BBQ recipe, but I'm ending with cake and the icing on the cake and the really big ingredient is called addiction. No...I was not addicted to alcohol or drugs...or anything like that. I became addicted to social medial and I let it control my life to a point that I finally just couldn't take it anymore.

Because I'm perhaps one of the most wired individuals you will meet.....meaning I have computers, I have iPhones, iPads etc. etc. I was constantly checking Twitter, constantly checking Facebook. I had Tweetdeck and Facebook open at work, at home....it was crazy bad. It wasn't so much that I was addicted to tweeting and posting updates to facebook, the addiction was trying to follow the various streams of information which many of you were posting. It became overwhelming and the only way I knew I could control the addiction was to just quit cold turkey.

I basically all but stopped using Twitter and my facebook interaction was more towards family and reaching out to old high school friends. I did the right thing by unfriending a few individuals who were just putting way to much noise into the information stream. But I limited my interaction to pretty much a few times a day.

Now unlike drugs and alcohol, where addicts just simply can't use or they will slip back into the addiction....I'm easing back into Twitter but with ground rules and I know there is no way I can follow everything that everyone has to say and I won't even try. I still believe that both Twitter and Facebook

are excellent ways to elmer and even attract and recruit fellow enthusiasts into the hobby, but there must be control and it really just goes back to the amateur code for me.

Do I have any advice to anyone who recognizes they too have an addiction to social media? Well...if you've recognized you have the problem, then you are well on your way to controlling it. Just limit yourself or if needed, unplug all together for a while. Reflect back to the amateur's code and element five and just substitute a few words to read something like this. Balanced - Social Media is a hobby, never interfering with duties owed to family, job, school or community.

We will get back to our normal and more educational topics for future episodes. The information I shared with you I believe is educational and I shared it with you in the context of it explaining how I've been feeling over the past few months and hopefully if you can relate...then it might help you as well.

Thank you for listening and good luck.

### **Featured Website Segment**

Our featured website segment for this episode is the College ARC website at collegearc.com. College ARC is the College Amateur Radio Club Association and the website and club is operated by brothers Brenton, KB1LQD and Bryce, KB1LQC.

Allow me to read the info from their "About Page on the Collegearc.com website.

#### **What Is CollegeARC.com About?**

The College Amateur Radio Club Association (CollegeARC) provides a unique opportunity to the amateur radio hobby. CollegeARC has been established to provide a way for college, university, and all other higher education schools with a student club interested in amateur radio (ham radio) to interact with one another online. We have effectively created a community of campus stations which communicates and collaborates together. The College Amateur Radio Club Association is here to show that amateur radio is capable of growing alongside and even with other modern technical hobbies. Ham radio is capable of inspiring tomorrow's generation of communicators, engineers, and hobbyists alike through the practical application of technology.

#### **What makes CollegeARC.com Different?**

This website is not "just" another website promoting amateur radio or touting how cool it is to be a radio amateur (ham radio operator). CollegeARC.com is the community of college students, alumni, faculty, and staff with a common interest in radio communications. The CollegeARC community is not meant to tell someone why they should become involved with their campus radio club it will show them why they should take part in it. The approach taken by CollegeARC is untried and untested with amateur radio so stick around, be inspired, it's time to show the world what college students can do!

#### **Who Can Become a Member?**

- Interested College Students without an amateur radio license
    - **You do not need an amateur radio license!**
  - College Amateur Radio Operators
    - All student/staff members of college clubs
    - All college amateur radio operators (with/without a school club)
    - College club alumni
  - [Click Here To Register!](#)
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- Everyone else, don't worry you can still do a lot here at collegeARC.com

- Guests to the website are important to us to and we want to let you have a voice on CollegeARC.com as well. Whether you are just seeing what the colleges are up to, looking up a project, or would like to interact and discuss topics brought up by the article CollegeARC.com is determined to bring you high quality information.

I encourage anyone and everyone to visit the collegeARC.com website and most especially if you are a college student with or without an amateur radio license, but have an interest in ham radio....please stop by and sign up for an account. Please tell Brenton and Bryce you heard about their site from the practical amateur radio podcast.

## **Featured Gadget Segment**

Amateur Radio is all about gadgets. Some gadgets may directly relate to amateur radio and some may not. However, in most cases the featured gadget will at the very least be something that may help you in some capacity around the shack.

The featured gadget for this episode is a non-amateur related software called Dropbox. Now dropbox has been around for a while and I'm sure you've heard about the service. But if you haven't...I'd like to share with you how I use dropbox.

Basically, with a free dropbox account I can sync files online across multiple PC's and to my iPhone and iPad. With a free account you can have up to 2GB of online storage, you can sync files of any size or type, it works with Windows, Mac and Linux and it automatically syncs when new files or changes are detected.

The way I use it is I have a file called podcast notes. When I think of an idea for a show I make a note. I can do this from any of my computers or even my iPhone or iPad with add on apps like Office HD or . Then I have access to that information regardless of where I might be located.

Another way I use Dropbox with my iPhone and iPad is with .pdf files. Lets say I have a .pdf file which contains the user manual to my Yaesu FT-817. I can drop this .pdf file into my dropbox folder. It'll be available to any of my PC's, but when I access the dropbox app on my iPad I can choose to then copy that .pdf file into the iBooks App and it will always be with me.

I have also created a shared folder on my dropbox account and have given access to my mom in Texas. I can transfer photos or other types of documents without the need of sending via email. I just drop the photo into my dropbox shared folder and she has access.

Is it secure? Yes...your files are protected with military grade encryption methods in both the transfer and storage processes.

I'll post a referral link in the show notes which you can find by going to [www.myamateurradio.com](http://www.myamateurradio.com) or you can just visit the dropbox website at dropbox.com. The referral link if used and you sign up for a free account would earn me a little more storage space

<http://db.tt/srckX0p>

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## Ham Adventures Segment

Well I really don't have a lot of adventures to share with you this time. I will just say that I had a blast getting on the air in early February. While I don't voice my political ideas on this podcast, let me just say that one of my favorite presidents of my lifetime was Ronald Reagan and it was an honor to work two special event stations which were on the air to celebrate what would have been his 100th birthday. I quickly got those QSL's in the mail as I look forward to getting the certificates in return for my wall of fame.

That same weekend I also worked a friend of mine W3MLK, Martin Kirby in Millsboro Delaware. Martin and I have tried QSO's before but just couldn't hear each other. On Sunday, Feb. 6th that changed during the Delaware QSO party. I finally have Martin in my logbook.

This last weekend was the CQ WPX RTTY Contest and in addition I found several QSO parties taking place on the bands. My darling and very supporting wife suggested I spend most of Saturday in the shack (which I followed her instruction carefully) and when the weekend was finished, I had worked 96 RTTY stations and another 18 or so stations on Single Side Band...racking up a total of 114 QSOs for the weekend. I'm not sure if this activity can be described as easing back into the hobby.....but, I had so much fun.

Other than that, I'm just enjoying the hobby and getting back into podcasting about this awesome hobby. I'm looking at the calendar and all the various amateur events taking place both nearby and further away. In August, the ARRL Rocky Mountain Division Convention will be held in Taos, New Mexico. I had a lot of fun at this event two years ago when it was held in Estes Park, Colorado. Last year the event was held over Memorial Day weekend and like many other amateurs, I just couldn't pry myself away. Hopefully this was a one-off thing and they won't attempt to schedule something like this over a holiday weekend.

This years ARRL Rocky Mountain convention theme is something I can really relate to. The theme is (Re)Discovering the Thrill of Ham Radio.

Of course, I'm also looking at the calendar and looking at possibilities of attending an event east of me and yes that would be the Dayton Hamvention in May. The logistics of getting there isn't the major issue, it is just the timing of all that is going on. The wife and I are planning a trip to Belgium and England this summer. Probably June/July timeframe and with other commitments I might just not have the time to swing for a trip to Dayton. But we'll see. It is certainly something I want to do.

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## Mailbag

Mail goes here

Well this wraps another episode of The Practical Amateur Radio Podcast. We will return again with episode 43 sometime in March. Before I go, I would like to give a shout-out to my fellow hamtwits and the hamtwit echolink net which takes place on Wednesday evenings (8 PM EST). I've never done much with Echolink since the days of my tech license, but I checked into the hamtwit net last week for the first time and plan to do so again.

I'll share more about the hamtwit net in a future episode, but for now just visit their website located at [www . Hamtwit . Net](http://www.Hamtwit.Net). From their website you can learn how to find the correct Echolink Node and other information. I hope you'll check it out and checkin to the Hamtwit net. I'll speak to you there.

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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](mailto:kd0bik@arrl.net) or by visiting his website at [www.myamateurradio.com](http://www.myamateurradio.com). The practical amateur radio podcast and myamateurradio.com are protected under the Creative Commons license. Please see myamateurradio.com for details.

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