

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

The Practical Amateur Radio Podcast – Episode number 56.

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

This is show number 56, volume number 5 with a release date of June 14th , 2012.

Hello everyone. My name is Jerry Taylor; my amateur radio call sign is KDOBİK and welcome to the Practical Amateur Radio Podcast...Creating Elmers One Podcast at a time.

This podcast is about amateur radio, also known as ham radio. For the past 5 seasons, this podcast has helped entertain, encourage, educate and inspire many individuals to get their license and has helped countless already licensed amateurs get more from the hobby.

If you are interested in the hobby and service of amateur radio, already currently studying for your exam or have been in ham radio for years...I truly hope 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 to another episode of the practical amateur radio podcast. I'm really glad you have returned and truly.....truly thank you for listening.

With the ARRL Field Day just around the corner, I felt it fitting to discuss Field Day and provide some helpful tips on getting the most from your field day experience. As I like to do with other topics, let's break it all down into practical terms. Perhaps there are listeners who aren't sure what field day is about....so lets start there.

Field day is an annual amateur radio exercise with a focus on emergency communication preparedness among radio amateurs. Field Day is not just a US event, many amateur radio societies hold a Field Day type event with emphasis being on emergency communication preparedness. The RSGB or Radio Society of Great Britain actually conducts two separate Field Day events. One being CW during the first full weekend of June and sideband during the first full weekend of September.

For the US and Canada, Field Day is sponsored by the American Radio Relay League and Radio Amateurs of Canada and is always held the fourth full weekend in June. Dates for Field Day are June 23rd and 24th.

While the main purpose of Field Day may be centered around emergency preparedness, Field Day also serves as a wonderful community public relations event. Again, Field Day serves to demonstrate to the public what amateur radio can do in a time of need....but it can also be a powerful tool to attract new and interested members to our wonderful hobby. More about this in just a minute.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Field_Day_\(amateur_radio\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Field_Day_(amateur_radio))

The object of Field Day is to work as many stations as possible on any and all amateur bands (of course excluding the 60, 30, 17 and 12 meter bands) and in doing so, learn to operate in abnormal situations in less than optimal conditions.

Sounds sort of like a contest right? Well, Field Day can also be described as a contest that isn't a contest. Said another way, while field day has a competitive spirit to it, the bigger picture is of course the emergency preparedness aspect. I'm sure even some of the larger amateur radio clubs, gain and learn something from their field day experience. And just as importantly....at the individual amateur level...the experience from participating in field day is simply priceless.

I've often stated on this podcast and in my blog postings, that I believe a new ham (or even an older/seasoned ham) can and will learn more during Field Day weekend than they could ever learn from a book. The complete, overall experience can be extremely valuable....if you let it.

As I stated previously, the dates for Field Day this year are June 23rd and 24th. Operations begin at 1800 UTC on Saturday and continues through 2100 UTC on Sunday. That's right, that may be a full 27 hours for some stations. Depending on when you actually begin setting up, will determine just how many hours you are able to operate.

Class A and Class B stations that do not begin setting up until 1800 UTC on Saturday may operate the entire 27-hour field day period. However, stations who begin their setup prior to 1800 UTC on Saturday, may only operate 24 consecutive hours.

I'll post a link in the show notes to the 2012 ARRL Field Day packet. This packet contains all the rules and information you'll need to operate during this years Field Day weekend.

<http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Field-Day/2012/2012-FD-Packet-V2.pdf>

I have very fond memories of field day when I was a child and young teenager. While I wasn't licensed, I remember attending Field Day along with my uncle back in the late 70's and early 80's. As an adult and now licensed, the magic of Field Day is just what I remembered.

Of course, like all things ham radio....the field day experience will vary from person to person. Some will attend and participate in field day just for the operating. Others may very well attend and never touch the CW key or even key a microphone and will just simply enjoy the vast amounts of food usually found on any typical field day site and of course the comrade of seeing old friends and meeting many new ones. Regardless of your reason for attending and participating in Field Day....the important part is just doing it.

Now some of you will leverage your local field day site to escape the confines of your HOA restricted neighborhood. Or if you are a technician or general, Field Day is a wonderful opportunity to experience the entire world of HF. As an example, in the past, my local club has always made sure to have an extra class control operator present to allow the new hams to experience the full spectrum of the HF bands.

Now if you're listening and you are not yet licensed, Field Day is a great way to get your feet wet into the world of amateur radio. Stations operating a GOTA or Get On The Air station may allow non-licensed individuals (with supervision of course) get on the air and experience the excitement of Field Day. While Field Day is not really a contest...some clubs are more competitive than others. The GOTA station will be a slower paced environment without the stress of competition.

Also, many field day locations will hold VE or volunteer examiner sessions. So if you're not yet licensed, but ready for the exam...consider visiting a local field day location holding a VE session and take that exam. Likewise, if you need to upgrade...upgrade exam sessions may also be available.

Now in addition to the 2012 Field Day packet containing all the rules for 2012. It also contains other valuable information including the Field Day Entry submission form, 2012 W1AW Field Day Bulletin Schedule, an extensive FAQ section, Field Day press kit, Field Day Message/Traffic Handling Tips, the ARRL and RAC section abbreviation list and much, much more information.

While you may not be the official Field Day coordinator for your club, I feel all participating should read this packet of information. In addition, I also believe all should read, understand and follow both the radio amateur's code and the DX code of conduct.

Remember the Radio Amateur's code reads as follows:

The Radio Amateur is

Considerate... He/She never knowingly operates in such a way as to lessen the pleasure of others.

Loyal... He/She offers loyalty, encouragement and support to other amateurs, local clubs, the radio society in his/her country, through which amateur radio in his/her country is represented nationally and internationally.

Progressive... He/She keeps his/her station up to date. It is well-built and efficient. His/Her operating practice is above reproach.

Friendly... He/She operates slowly and patiently when requested; offers friendly advice and counsel to the beginner; kind assistance, cooperation and consideration for the interests of others. These are the marks of the amateur spirit.

Balanced... Radio is a hobby, never interfering with duties owed to family, job, school or community.

Patriotic... His/Her station and skills are always ready for service to country and community.

While you may not work a lot of DX during Field Day weekend, I believe the DX Code of Conduct (along with the Radio Amateur's Code) should be used and if used, will make for a much more enjoyable Field Day experience.

The DX Code of Conduct reads as follows:

- I will listen, and listen, and then listen again before calling.
- I will only call if I can copy the DX station properly.
- I will not trust the DX cluster and will be sure of the DX station's callsign before calling.
- I will not interfere with the DX station nor anyone calling and will never tune up on the DX frequency or in the QSX slot.
- I will wait for the DX station to end a contact before I call.
- I will always send my full callsign.
- I will call and then listen for a reasonable interval. I will not call continuously.
- I will not transmit when the DX operator calls another callsign, not mine.
- I will not transmit when the DX operator queries a callsign not like mine.
- I will not transmit when the DX station requests geographic areas other than mine.
- When the DX operator calls me, I will not repeat my callsign unless I think he has copied it incorrectly.
- I will be thankful if and when I do make a contact.
- I will respect my fellow hams and conduct myself so as to earn their respect.

I bring up both the Radio Amateur's Code and the DX Code of Conduct just simply as a reminder. While we refer to Field Day as the contest that isn't a contest...the on-air aspects of Field Day is just like working any other contest or DX station. There will be pile-ups and band conditions may or may not work in our favor. Staying calm on both sides of the pileup will help to make the Field Day experience more enjoyable for all.

And now my Final Field Day 2012 Thoughts....

Be Safe - Some of the hottest places on the face of the earth will become Field day locations. Wear sunscreen and drink plenty of liquids during the setup and tear down phase. Work as a team and if you get hot and tired...take a break.

Keep an eye out for things like scorpions, spiders, snakes and alligators. Yes I said alligators which was part of my very first field day experience in Texas in 2008. Of course, if you are up in my neck of the woods and up in the higher elevations escaping the heat, then look out for mountain lions, bears, snakes and any other critter that might be interested in having a snack.

Next, learn something or teach someone something. Many clubs will take advantage of the bonus points (100 I believe) and will plan an educational topic or topics. Regardless, if you are new to the hobby and have questions you need answered, ask some of the old timers. You old timers....take time to share your vast knowledge with those just starting out. Everybody wins...

Finally, above all else....have fun. Yes Field Day is called the contest that isn't a contest. As I've said, some clubs are more competitive than others. But regardless of your competitive spirit, there should still be plenty of room to have fun and enjoy this wonderful experience. After all, the ARRL Field Day only comes around once per year.

In closing, as I've asked many times before. Please tell those you see during Field Day weekend about not only the practical amateur radio podcast, but all the amateur radio related podcasts available. I have a list on MyAmateurRadio.com of all that I know about. While some may no longer be active, I keep the link up as long as they have a website available. But most in my list are actively podcasting about our wonderful hobby.

Regardless if it's Ham Nation, AmateurLogic, HQARadio, ICQ Podcast, Linux in the ham shack, Low SWR, Soldersmoke or the two new shows just starting up called Ham Radio Podcast and Youth in Amateur Radio podcast.....we are not in competition.....we are all working very hard for our fellow amateur's to share what we know and love about our shared interest via this thing called new media.

Thank you so much for listening....thank you for sharing what you learn with others. Have a safe Field Day weekend!

Featured Website Segment

Our featured website for episode 56 is Club Log. Located at Clublog.org I first heard about the Club Log website last year. I believe it was the Tango 32 Charlie Dxpediton. Anyway, the DXpediton uploaded their logs and you could validate via the Club Log website if your actual contact made it into their log book.

At the time, I figured Club Log was mainly geared towards DXpeditons and big time Dxers. While I enjoy DX'ing...and I actually enjoy it a lot...I'm a little pistol....no wait...just a pea shooter compared to some of you. Anyway, a few weeks ago I saw a Google + posting from Peter Goodhall, 2EOSQL from the UK. Again, Peter is a much more active DX'er than I am, but I decided to give Club Log a closer look. I'm glad I did.

The idea of Club Log (as posted on their website) (and I quote)

"Club Log is a web-based application that analyses log files from radio amateurs all over the world. Using the logs, Club Log offers you a wide range of reports for your own benefit, and identifies large scale trends from the sum of all activity in the database." (end quote)

Those who participate in Club Log will receive

- Personal **DXCC reports** and league tables
- **Detailed analysis** of your log, using researched DXCC information
- **Zone charts** for your log, again based on detailed research
- A **personal timeline** of your activity (DXCCs per year, band and mode info)

- Your own **log search tool**, eg. to link from your web page or QRZ profile
- A filtered **DX Cluster** which only tells you about DX you still 'need'
- A say in the Club Log **most wanted report**: your log is part of the trend data
- Access to **propagation and activity predictions**, using everyone's logs
- **QSL suggestions** to help you send out just the cards you need
- Satisfaction from taking part in and improving a free DXing resource.

Again, as stated on the Club Log website

Club Log Needs Your Input

One of the driving principles of Club Log is to store *as many QSOs as possible*, as this makes the reports and statistics more meaningful and representative. Everything in Club Log depends upon analysing real QSOs, and for this reason I am very grateful to everyone who participates.

If you have not joined yet, I warmly invite you to [sign up](#) and join the action! It is completely free. Club Log needs more participants from North America at the moment, in particular.

If you're mounting a large or small scale DXpedition, or a big time DX'er or even a small pea shooter DX'er like me, Club Log can really help you. I'll post a link in the show notes to the club log website or just visit clublog.org

<https://secure.clublog.org/loginform.php>

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.

Our featured gadget for this episode is called a pigtail. Most of you know I ordered and received my Elecraft KX3. I've had it for a few weeks now and truly love this little radio. I'm truly itching to get back on another SOTA activation, but have just been super busy.

The Pigtail is a small dongle that attaches to the serial port of various radios to gather information for logging contacts in an iOS/android app called HamLog. So I suppose technically this featured gadget segment is both about a hardware device (the pigtail) and software (the iOS/android app).

However, pigtail certainly does more. Along with HamLog, you can control the supported rig it's plugged into. Pigtail currently works with the following radios:

Elecraft: K3 / KX3 / K2
Yaesu: FT-817 / FT-857 / FT-897

Support for Icom and Kenwood radios will come soon.

If you own an iOS device (preferably the iPad due to screen size) and one of the supported radios and also enjoy portable or SOTA operations...then the Pigtail might help you.

Now if you own or plan to own the Elecraft KX3, the Pigtail along with the HamLog app will do so much more.

Remember the Youtube videos I made just a few weeks ago demonstrating how I interfaced my KX3, iPad and the PSKer iOS app all together so that I could operate PSK-31? Well...I've discovered a completed different and in my opinion easier way to operate PSK-31 and RTTY, via the KX3, Pigtail and iPad.

I'll post a link in the show notes to a new Youtube video I made which demonstrates this new setup. It's made possible by the ability of the KX3 to both send and receive PSK-31 and RTTY via CW. While the KX3 is doing all the heavy lifting and decoding of the PSK or RTTY signals, the combination of the KX3, Pigtail, iPad and HamLog app ties it all together and with no audio cables connected to the iPad.

Watch the video and see for yourself how this works.

Before I close this segment out. Let me just briefly say a few more words about the HamLog app. Yes, it is available for both iPhone, iPod touch and iPad. Due to the advantage of the larger screen, I feel all the features and functionality is best viewed on an iPad. But most work just fine on the iPhone screen as well. Also, Hamlog is also available for the Android OS.

Basically HamLog is a mobile logging app, but much, much more as I've already discussed. The HamLog app is available in the iTunes App Store for .99 cents US.

However, let me just quickly run down the list and tell you what you get for 99 cents. For less than a cup of good coffee, you get a UTC Clock, You get Pigtail support which I've just talked about, you get multiple ways to look up call signs, IARU Prefixes list, US Band Plan, GPS enabled Grid Square locator, Grid Calculator, Grid to Map functionality, Azimuth Calculation, WWV Propagation Report, Solar Data, DX Cluster, DX Spots, Voice Macros, Audio Recording, Wavelength Calculator, Temperature Conversion, Contest Calendar, DXpedition Calendar, HF Net List, Q Signals list, PSKReporter, DXCC Entities listing, ITU Phonetic Alphabet, DTMF Tone Generator, CW Helper, Part 97 rules, Ring the phone , RST Explained, Weather, Dupe Finder, Field Day, Cloud Synch and Export Logbook and import logbook.

Whew....what a list. That's over 35 different features and functionality all crammed into one 99 cent app. Even if you don't use it for logging purposes, the other features make this a must have app on your iPhone, iPod touch, iPad and Android device.

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Ham Adventures Segment

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I must admit, Field Day weekend snuck up on me this year. Last year I missed Field Day as my wife and I were in Europe. This year with all the work taking place on the basement (more about that in a minute)...the 4th weekend of June just all of a sudden appeared. It truly feels like it should still be March or April.

I realize Field Day is just around the corner, but I haven't decided what I'm going to do. I have plenty of options available...but I'm leaning towards a low key weekend where perhaps I operate as a single class B station for Saturday for a few hours up in the cooler, cleaner air under a pine tree. Or I may go visit my old club site and spend a few hours there. Again....I'm not fully committed to any one plan at this stage.

The basement ham shack is really starting to come together. Please visit my blog site located at kd0bik.com/blog to see some pictures.

Just before the long Memorial Day weekend I managed to get all the sheetrock work done. This included hanging the drywall, joint work, sanding and texturing. The messy phase as I've referred to it is 100% complete.

To celebrate, I went to Home Depot over Memorial Day weekend and purchased the paint and primer for the next phase. The sale was just too good to pass up. Anyway, we have started painting and it's really looking good. I would like to be finished with the painting phase prior to the end of June and this would include taking the weekend of Field Day off from the project.

Once I'm north of the painting phase, it will be time to finish the floor. We are going to go with a tile solution of some kind. Exact type, pattern etc. has not yet been determined. But we are very close.

After the tile is down, it will be time to do all the finish trim work. This includes baseboards, door trim and perhaps some type of crown molding.

Sort of at the same time I'm doing the finish trim work, I also need to install what will be my desk and cabinets. My wife will be the first to tell you that Jerry is a messy boy. However, much of my current mess around my current desk is simply due to the fact that I have no cabinets or drawers of any kind.

We're correcting this with my new hamshack, home office and man cave. I'll try to describe in words what my shack setup will look like.

Visualize a 16 foot wall, joining an 8 foot wall. Forms an L shape right? I'll have an "L" shape desk measuring roughly 16 foot by 8 foot. In the corner where the 16 foot wall meets the 8 foot wall, will be my primary operating position. My shack today is basically two 8 foot tables in a corner. I like having my LCD screens and keyboard in the corner of the desk with my FT-950 on my right and my FT-897 for digital modes on my left.

Above the 16 by 8 foot "L" shaped desk will be above counter cabinets with lots of storage. I'll also have below counter storage cabinets and drawers. Further down the 16 foot wall will be another desk position for my home office setup.

I'm not 100% sure where the podcast studio setup will end up. Today I have my mixer and microphone next to my shack operating position. It does get cramped...but as I stated I have no drawers or cabinets. So everything just sort of ends up on the desk surface or underneath. I've made a promise to myself to keep my new shack as neat and organized as possible...I'm not talking clean and tidy like a hospital surgical operating room. But just neater and better organized.

So where was I? Oh...yes, so the trim work and the desk all sort of goes in at the same time. That leaves just a few odds and ends to wrap up. Oh...and yes moving into the new space.

Moving into the new space will probably be a multi day process. I really want to take time to move my radio gear and organize things as I go. Of course, I'll have to think about my QSO a Day 2012 project. This will mean I'll need to move and setup at least one HF rig so I have time to test and get a QSO in for that day. But I'm probably over complicating all this.

While I'm not trying to stress myself, I did place a countdown clock on my kd0bik.com website. This countdown marks the time remaining before the start of the Colorado QSO party. As I've said for the past several months, I wanted to be in the new ham shack in time to operate in the Colorado QSO party. I think this will happen with plenty of time to spare.

Speaking of QSO a day. This truly has been such a pleasant and fun experience for me. While I haven't worked a lot of QSO's this year, I've managed to have at least one each and every day. Between this effort and some awesome band conditions, I've also managed to add at least one new DX entity to my list each month as well. Some months more. So far I've managed to add 14 new DXCC's to make my total DXCC count of 62 with 57 total confirmed.

I still have a ways to go to reach 100 and I'll get there when I get there. After all, I only just late last year reach Worked All States. I'm in no hurry....just having a ton of fun along the way.

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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 57 sometime in July. In the mean time, want more amateur radio audio and video content? Of course, every practical amateur radio podcast from episode 1 through this episode, episode 56 are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on MyAmateurRadio.com. But don't forget about all the other wonderful amateur radio podcasts available. You'll find a list of all that I know about on MyAmateurRadio.com. Just look on the right hand side, for My Favorite Amateur Radio Podcasts. Enjoy!

Until next time, 73 to all from KDOBİK.

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.