

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

The Practical Amateur Radio Podcast – Episode number 63.

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

This is show number 63, volume number 6 with a release date of November , 2013.

Hello everyone. My name is Jerry Taylor; my amateur radio call sign is KDOBIK 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.

Before we dive into episode 63, I just want to briefly apologize for the delay between episode 62 and this one. I managed to get episode 62 out the door just before my wife and I headed to Europe for two wonderful weeks of much needed vacation. We returned just before the US Labor Day holiday and I managed to work most of the Colorado QSO Party. I'll discuss more about vacation and the QSO party later in this episode.

Anyway, work has been hectic. For the past few months I've been managing a project to rid my organization of Windows XP. For those who may not know, Microsoft is ending support of Windows XP in early 2014. I'm sure many of our fellow hams are still running Windows XP in the ham shack and basically what this means for you is that Microsoft will stop patching and securing any vulnerabilities in the XP operating system. By the way, the date for the Windows XP end of life is April 8th 2014.

Obviously for a large company, we have set our target dates to be much more aggressive than April. Like a speeding locomotive takes a great distance to stop, a large company takes much time to complete such an initiative. Well...at least with a main goal of not causing too much disruption to end users.

Those of you still running Windows XP, you are certainly OK for now...but you really should begin to think about how you handle the end of life of XP. You are probably OK if your XP machine is not connected to the internet. But I would consider going to Windows 7 if your hardware can run it. I've been running Windows 7 in the shack for a couple of years now and have found no issues related to the various amateur radio software I frequently run.

But again, the delay between episode 62 and this episode....episode 63 is mainly due to my work schedule.

If you happen to follow my amateur radio blog and if you've looked at the main page of MyAmateurRadio.com, then you may have seen a blog article I published titled "PARP is hiring! Well, Sort of..." While PARP is really not hiring anyone....I'm considering recruiting an individual or even

individuals who have a passion for Elmering and would like to take this passion to the amateur radio podcast listening community.

Here's the deal. I'm extremely proud of what PARP has accomplished over the years....Five years to be exact. Based on the emails, tweets and Facebook postings I receive...PARP is a podcast which matters in the amateur radio community. PARP has helped introduce the hobby and service of amateur radio to many.

So here's the deal. If you are interested in functioning as a guest host from time to time. If you have an interest in Elmering to your fellow amateurs. IF you have something to share related to the hobby and service of amateur radio, AND you have the means to record this content and send to me. Then I will be grateful and will certainly turn your knowledge into a podcast episode for all to learn from and enjoy.

If you are interested in serving as a guest host either just once or more often...please contact me via email at kd0bik@arrl.net. Thank you.

The subject of this episode is taking amateur radio abroad. Now, before we get started...let me just state that the information I'm going to provide in this episode is valid during the fall of 2013 and valid for US licensed amateurs. Those listening outside of the US or if you are listening to this episode years from now...please double-check, triple-check for accuracy.

For us hams living in the US, our amateur radio license isn't just limited to operating our radios in the United States or US Territories. This includes our neighbors to the north, Canada. Actually traveling to Canada with your ham radio is perhaps the easiest and least confusing international location.

Since 1952, Canada and the US have had a reciprocal operating agreement treaty. In terms of the agreement, visiting amateurs may operate in the host country in accordance with the rules and regulations of the host country. While US Technician class hams are excluded from operating in most countries outside the US, this is not the case in Canada. US Amateur's who hold a US Technician class license may operate within Canada under this reciprocal operating agreement.

Now before I continue, let me just quickly summarize what we as US amateur's need to have with us when visiting Canada as this information does differ with other regions. First, you need your FCC issued license, proof of US citizenship (passport) and you must identify as callsign stroke Canadian identifier. Finally, at least once during the communication you must state your geographical location.

So if I were visiting the Pacific Northwest region of British Columbia and had my radio with me. I would make sure I had my FCC issued license, my passport and I would identify as kilo, delta, zero, bravo, india, kilo stroke victor echo seven. Then at least once during the communication I would state my geographical location. 30 miles north of Vancouver.

Of course, in addition to everything I've mentioned previous....get to know the saying "When in Rome....do as the Romans do" or in our Canadian example, "When in Canada, do as the Canadians do" and understand the differences between the US and Canadian band plan. Of course, this applies to any country you plan to visit and operate in.

Let's now expand our scope beyond North America.

Outside of North America, we need to determine if the country we are visiting participates in either the CEPT or the IARP agreements.

CEPT is the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administration and includes countries like France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain and both Belgium and the United Kingdom which I just recently visited.

IARP stands for International Amateur Radio Permit and includes many Latin American countries like Argentina, Brazil, Panama etc.

For all CEPT and IARP participating countries, please double-check the ARRL website. The benefit these agreements provide to us is the ability to operate our stations on a limited stay basis without the need of requesting additional permits.

Now for a bit of fine print. One of my cardinal rules is typically to only discuss topics which I have first hand experience with. This rule sort of falls into the "Practical" category and is one of the reasons why in 5 years this topic is just now coming up for discussion. While I have traveled abroad many times since becoming licensed in 2007, this is the first time I've actually done the research required to understand the rules and requirements needed to operate in both Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom.

As I began to plan for my trip to Europe, I knew I would visit the following three countries of Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom. My research was conducted via the ARRL website. I'll include a link to the section on operating overseas in the show notes of this episode, episode 63 located on myamateurradio.com

The first major point I want to make is unlike Canada, US Technician class amateurs unfortunately do not have any privileges under CEPT. In other words, US Technician class hams may not operate. You must be a general class or above to have any operating privileges under the CEPT agreement.

Again, both the CEPT and IARP agreements allow us to operate for a limited time, without the need of requesting additional permits. In the example of Belgium, I could operate under the CEPT agreement for up to three months. Of course, my stay in Belgium was only 9 days...so this was not an issue.

The requirements for what we must have available at all times while operating in the CEPT region does slightly differ from Canada. These items are:

Our original FCC issued license

Proof of US citizenship (again the passport)

Finally, we need a copy of the FCC's Public Notice. This is a PDF document available from the ARRL website. I'll post a link to the ARRL page you can download and print. This FCC Public Notice is printed in three languages (English, French and German).

<http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Regulatory/DA-11-221A1.pdf>

Since I wasn't planning to operate HF on this trip, I only packed my Yaesu VX-8 hand-held. I placed it in my carry on luggage and made sure I had my original FCC issued license AND the FCC Public Notice readily available as I passed through the airport security and customs checkpoints.

Had I been planning to operate HF and if I needed to pack some of my equipment in my checked luggage, I would have made a photocopy of my license, along with another copy of the FCC public notice and also typed out a brief description to help identify what the item was and it's purpose just in case the suitcase was screened by TSA or screened by security in the foreign location.

I actually do this when flying domestic. I've transported a few items in checked luggage before. Typically things like my soundcard interface, cables, cords, antennas and antenna feedlines. These things "MIGHT" raise suspicion...then again...they might not. Better to be safe than sorry.

Anyway, back to my Europe trip with ham radio. Like I said, I packed the VX8 in the same carry on bag which also held my iPad. I just simply unscrewed the antenna and passed through all security screenings with no issue. Well...almost no issue. On our return trip from Heathrow back to the US, I failed to remove the antenna from the radio and my carry-on bag was flagged for secondary screening. I'm not sure if the VX8 with the antenna installed looked like a gun to the person running the x-ray, or something else. In any event, I was called over and the bag was screened. When they pulled out the VX8 they just simply asked me what it was, I replied it was a handheld amateur radio transceiver which I possessed a license to operate. They placed it back in my bag and nothing else was mentioned.

Before I discuss the little bit of operating I did while on vacation, I just want to state (and admit) that I found the information on the ARRL website a little vague in exactly how it outlines what US operators CAN and CAN'T do when operating outside the US.

One example, according to what is written on the ARRL website, there are some differences between operating privileges for US amateurs who have demonstrated a proficiency in Morse Code and those who have not. Prior to my trip I did write the ARRL for clarification and was told this language was included to cover those countries who still require Morse Code as part of their licensing process.

However, (again this is what the ARRL told me in writing) that while they can't publically state this in writing on their website, they know of no single administration that will ask about Morse Code even though their rules may still mention it. The email went on to state, The IARU eliminated code as an international requirement for HF access a few years ago and most administrations simply don't update their rules.

So just to re-cap...licensing rules and regulations. All US Amateurs (including Technician's) have privileges in Canada but only US General, Advanced and Extra class amateurs have privileges under the CEPT agreement covering part of Europe. But....keep in mind that there are band plan differences which must be followed, so please take time to print and review the band plans for the countries/regions you plan to visit.

Also, let me state just one more time. I know many new listeners of PARP will go all the way back to the beginning and either listen to or re-listen to old episodes. So in 5 years time if someone is listening to

this episode, please understand this information was valid in the Summer/Fall/Winter timeframe of 2013. Research accordingly.

As the saying goes, the best laid plans....my operating time while on vacation was always going to be limited, I just didn't realize how limited it would be. I managed to operate for about 15 minutes one day while in Belgium. Decided not to take the radio with me on our day trip to Germany and while in the UK, I was out of range of a repeater most of the trip.

But I must say while the ARRL repeater guides and software is a great tool for operating in the US. If you do any amount of travel outside of the US and want to have a quick and easy way to find local repeater frequencies...you really need Rfinder app. I've talked about this before and don't misunderstand this to be a advertisement for this product...but if you want or need one app which offers frequencies for over 175 countries....Rfinder, the Worldwide Repeater Directory is well worth the price. I'll place a link to the Rfinder website in the show notes. Check it out.

While in Belgium, I grabbed my iPad and fired up the Rfinder app. Rfinder used the built in GPS capabilities of the iPad to determine my location and within a few seconds I was ready to program my hand-held for the local repeaters near my location.

I truly enjoyed the 15 minutes or so I spent speaking to a few locals. By the way, they 100% welcomed me and most certainly adapted to my English only language. I do hope to one day be able to operate HF while in Europe, but now that I've done the research and understand what I need to do and what I need to have with me, I'll be certain to at the very least always carry my hand-held on future trips.

So if you are planning a vacation...I hope you'll consider taking amateur radio along with you.

<https://www.rac.ca/en/rac/services/bandplans/allband.php>

<http://www.arrl.org/cept>

<http://www.uba.be/en/you-plan-visit-belgium>

<http://www.arrl.org/amateur-frequencies-outside-the-us>

<http://www.rfinder.net/blog/>

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Ham Adventures Segment

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As I briefly discussed during episode 62, as I returned from Europe...I would have less than 36 hours to prepare for the 2013 Colorado QSO Party. This was my 3rd year to operate it seriously. What I mean by that is actually having the plan, time and desire to operate for most of the contest period.

Unfortunately, upon walking in the house the evening we arrived back in the US I realized our upstairs AC unit was no longer working. This really didn't impact my ability to operate during the QSO party except for possibly a lack of sleep from trying to sleep in a hot upstairs bedroom and eventually on an uncomfortable sofa downstairs.

My results from the 2013 Colorado QSO party was certainly Fun. I really enjoyed representing the Centennial State. Unfortunately, between jetlag and uncomfortable sleeping, I woke up about 3 hours before the start of the QSO party. I managed to make 258 contacts (down from 281 the year before). I just simply ran out of steam and with 2 hours to go, I decided to call it a day.

I've spent some time over the past couple of weeks inspecting my antennas and feed lines before winter sets in. You know I recommend doing this twice a year. Do it in the spring before the weather starts to heat up and once again in the fall before things start to get cold. This is far better than having to deal with an antenna or feed line issue in the cold, dead of winter. If you haven't take the time to inspect your exterior equipment, there is no better time than the present. Also, don't forget your mobile setup as well.

The weather is starting to cool down and I'm still trimming down and feeling better than ever. To date I've lost 35 pounds and have dropped below 200 pounds for the first time in over 20 years. The amount of weight I've lost is more than what my SOTA pack weighs. Speaking of SOTA, the cooler weather is making me think of trying to get a few activations in this fall. I'm looking forward to it.

Also, I just wanted to give a brief shout out to long time listener Scott from Virginia. Scott came out to the Denver area a few weeks ago on business and he and I managed to find time to have an eyeball QSO and enjoy a very nice steak, Texas Roadhouse style. Thanks again Scott.

Finally, I wanted to thank all who sent emails, tweets and Facebook comments regarding the recent Colorado flooding. 2013 just hasn't been a good year for Colorful Colorado. My QTH is on high ground and even though we did have some flooding in the Denver and Aurora area...most of the serious flooding impact was in the Boulder and Estes Park areas.

We certainly do appreciate your thoughts and prayers...these matter. The impacted areas will rebuild and in time the scars of recent forest fires and the flooding will all go away. Colorado will be more colorful than ever. So come visit Colorful Colorado sometime soon.

As I close out this episode, I'd certainly like to invite listeners to write me and provide questions or suggestions for content you might want covered in future episodes. I can't promise to answer every question or to create podcast content based on every suggested area. But if there is something you think should be covered, let me know and I'll try to work it in. You can email me at KDOBIK@arrl.net. Also if you are interested in serving as a guest host on PARP, please also contact me via email.

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Until next time, 73 to all from KDOBIK.

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.

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