

*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 64.

Play theme music.

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

This is show number 64, volume number 6 with a release date of November 24, 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.

It's great to be back with you after just only a few weeks between episodes. In episode 63, I asked for volunteers from anyone interested in helping serve as guest host on future PARP episodes. I honestly wasn't sure if I would receive any interest, but was certainly both surprised and honestly pleased to receive emails from two incredible hams who I'll introduce you to shortly. Well...actually I'll let them introduce themselves to you in a few minutes.

In the last episode I briefly mentioned a project at work which I'm working on to remove all instances of Windows XP before the end of the year. I also suggested to those who are still running Windows XP to begin thinking and planning for the end of life of this operating system. Microsoft will cease support and most importantly will stop providing any updates after April 8th 2014. This means if you continue to run Windows XP after April 8th 2014, then you run the risk of doing so with the possibility of experiencing security vulnerabilities.

Windows XP (especially when service pack 3 is installed) has been a stable and very successful operating system. I made the move to Windows XP for my personal/home equipment from the also very stable Windows 2000 OS. Even after Windows Vista was released, I maintained XP as my primary OS for my shack computer and other personal computer equipment. At work, we never even looked at Windows Vista as a production operating system. We continued deploying Windows XP until as late as 2011.

If you are still running Windows XP, I would say you are still OK (as of the release of this episode) but as 2014 turns from winter into spring and we get closer and closer to April 8th 2014, you should begin to panic slightly and really get serious about upgrading.

Now, upgrading may not be that scary of a concept. If your computer hardware was purchased around the timeframe of Microsoft Vista (but you opted for Windows XP instead) then that hardware may run Windows 7 without issue. By the way, the minimum system requirements as published by Microsoft for Windows 7 is as follows:

- 1 gigahertz (GHz) or faster 32-bit (x86) or 64-bit (x64) processor
- 1 gigabyte (GB) RAM (32-bit) or 2 GB RAM (64-bit)
- 16 GB available hard disk space (32-bit) or 20 GB (64-bit)
- DirectX 9 graphics device with WDDM or Windows Display Driver Model 1.0 or higher driver

Pasted from <<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows7/products/system-requirements>>

Again, at a minimum...if your current hardware specs match...Windows 7 should work for you.

As I talked about in the early, early days of PARP...a computer in the ham shack does not need to be a super computer. Of course, the minimum requirements for Windows XP which I discussed in 2008 were much less than that of Windows 7.

If you are running the same lower end computer which I spoke of in 2008, consider yourself lucky that it survived this long. But understand it may be time to upgrade your hardware. It's certainly not too late to get this on your Christmas wish list.

So what makes a good shack PC? The debate of desktop versus laptop is perhaps just as controversial as PC versus Mac or Windows versus Linux.

Now before I proceed. Just let me state that the Linux operating system might truly be your best bet if you have an older PC and need to upgrade from XP. Unfortunately...the amount of knowledge I have of Linux is about equal to the amount of knowledge I have on brain surgery. I may have more knowledge of brain surgery after watching a show last night on Discovery channel. But I digress....

If you want to pursue Linux as a way to solve the Windows XP end of life situation, then I invite you to listen to the Linux in the Ham Shack podcast which is produced by Russ, K5TUX and Richard, KB5JBV. For the past several years the Linux in the Ham Shack podcast has helped many of your fellow amateurs make the transition from Windows to Linux and do it as painless as possible. You can find the Linux in the Ham Shack podcast on iTunes or via their website located at [lshpodcast.info](http://lshpodcast.info). The link is also available from my podcast website [MyAmateurRadio.com](http://MyAmateurRadio.com)

If you are like me and have almost zero knowledge of Linux, then you still have to decide between Windows and Mac. Unfortunately, my knowledge of the Mac OS is only slightly more than Linux...but I don't have any experience with using the Mac OS and amateur radio. But...if you are using Mac OS in your ham shack and would like to guest host an upcoming PARP episode on the subject of Mac OS in the ham shack...then please drop me an email.

Unfortunately, you are just stuck with an old IT guy that has known nothing but Microsoft in his 20+ year career. So let's talk about desktop versus laptop and then conclude our windows discussion.

As I said, the debate of desktop versus laptop is valid. If you are in the market for a new computer I suppose it is worth taking this debate to heart. From a strictly amateur radio perspective, either a desktop or laptop will work in the shack. However, a laptop will work both IN the shack and also importantly OUT of the shack. If you enjoy operating portable and want a computer for logging and/or digital modes, then the laptop can easily go between ham shack and picnic table portable with ease.

A few years ago it may not have been so practical to limit yourself to just a laptop in the shack, especially when talking about digital modes. After all some of the older soundcard interfaces required a serial port AND both an input and output connection to the sound card. Most laptop manufactures dropped the serial interface 5+ years ago and today the modern laptops only include a single output audio jack. Thankfully USB soundcard devices like the Signalink only require a USB connection back to the computer and you are on the air.

If a laptop is something you are seriously looking into, many will have an available docking station or port replicator. These hardware devices connect through a connector either on the bottom or back of the laptop and allow for devices such as a monitor setup or even dual monitor setup. You can plug in and leave devices such as keyboard and mouse connected. Then when you want to go portable...just eject the laptop and go.

Now I wouldn't be providing you the entire picture if I didn't discuss the popular tablet style computers. Devices like the iPad and the Android OS tables are gaining in popularity. Some suggest these tablet style computers and the every popular cloud will spell an end to the traditional PC hardware (especially the desktop PC). I'm going to go out on a limb and state my opinion and say....Not so fast.

But yes, a tablet type device like an iPad or Android device can be of benefit to us hams. There are apps to support logging and even some digital modes. But I personally don't believe the tablet devices will spell doom for laptops and desktop computers.

If you don't need the portable flexibility a laptop provides, then the big box known as a desktop computer is your friend. I upgraded my shack PC a few years ago and it provides everything I currently do from the amateur radio hobby. I run the latest version of Ham Radio Deluxe and do all my logging in the HRD logbook. I run DM780 for digital modes along with the required software for JT65 and JT9.

So there you have it, hopefully information you can use should you find yourself still running Windows XP. Remember, Microsoft will officially end support for XP on April 8th 2014. Your upgrade path has options between going with Windows 7 on existing hardware if it meets the minimum requirements. Or you could go the direction of Linux. Again, listen to Linux in the Ham Shack for great info.

Finally, while I haven't mentioned Windows 8. This has been somewhat by choice. While I don't want to speak negatively towards Windows 8, I'll just state what I said earlier and that was

Microsoft tends to produce a successful OS and a dud OS every other release. Having said that, I am hearing good things about version 8.1.

Bottom line....if you are still running Windows XP...you have many options. Good luck with whatever direction you choose to go.

### **Featured Website Segment**

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It's been a while since I provided a featured website. I stumbled upon this one somewhat selfishly as I was looking for possible amateur radio related gifts. With this episode hitting your MP3 player almost a month before Christmas, it might be worth checking out HamCrazy.com for gift ideas. These gift ideas might be for a ham you know...or perhaps you want to pull up the hamcrazy.com website on the computer and leave it up for your significant other to view.

<http://www.hamcrazy.com/>

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HamCrazy.com has a little bit of everything including buttons, keychains, cups and mugs, banners, caps, stickers, pens and gadgets and some really cool looking amateur radio license plaques. These plaques are what caught my eye. These are laser engraved replicas of your FCC issued amateur radio license. You can have them done in various finishes including black and gold on walnut, gold and black on mahogany, Copper and Black and even on Ice.

Cool stuff....again that is HamCrazy.com I'll post a link in the show notes.

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### **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.

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None

### **Upcoming Amateur Radio Happenings**

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Many of our long-time PARP listeners will know Connie - November, Romeo, Four, Charlie, Bravo. You may remember Connie's epic adventure or as she calls it "A roadtrip that started a life-long adventure".

Anyway...You also probably know that for the past two years she has organized a special "Worked All Twitter" Thanksgiving weekend QSO Party. Well this Thanksgiving she's at it again and has organized the 3rd annual Worked All Twitter QSO party.

Here's what you need to know....

- Dates: Wednesday, 27 November – Sunday, 1 December 2013

- Who: Any licensed operator, especially those who use Twitter
- Where: All bands, all modes. To let as many people as possible participate, use the portion of the band open to the most people, ie the technician class portion of 10m, the general class portion of 20m, etc.
- Exchange: your normal exchange plus your Twitter handle, especially if it's not your call sign.
- Spotting: Self-spotting is practically required. Tweet your frequency, interact with people on Twitter, set up skeds, get those states you're missing for WAS, work old friends for the first time, and make new friends.
- Hashtags on Twitter: #WATwitter and either #hamradio or #hamr. Use these hashtags in your tweets, and search for others who are using them. Interact!
- Have fun! Log your contacts, tweet your tallies to others, but there are no scores or awards. This is about enjoying our hobby and connecting with fellow hams over the long holiday weekend.

Pasted from <<http://bionic-nerd.com/>>

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I'll post a link in the show notes to Connie's blog where she has this information posted. So between the turkey and dressing, deviled eggs, pies, cakes and of course football, football and more even more football.....make some time to check out the happenings on Twitter and the HF bands. I'll meet you there.

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### **Ham Adventures Segment**

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In just a few more minutes I'll introduce you to Bill and Paul, our brand new PARP guest hosts. But before that, I just want to briefly discuss my QSO a Day goal which I'm challenging myself to accomplish in 2014.

I really enjoyed the challenge in 2012 and was successful. It got me on the radio each and every day. While some days I had just enough time for my one contact. Other days more. But it caused me to turn on the radio and spin the dial each and every day. It was a fun but also challenging year. There were a few days I worried would end with no QSO. But throughout all of 2012 I made a QSO on each of the 366 days that year and logged almost 1500 QSO's.

While my friend Keith, G6NHU took his QSO 365 project challenge back in 2011 a little further than I did. Keith sent QSL cards for each days contact. I worked Keith on day 245 and he placed a nice sticker on the back of his QSL card stating this fact. I chose not to do the QSL part in 2012, but planning it in 2014. As a matter of fact, I've had some brand new cards designed and I'm looking forward to working you and sending you my new card.

Just like I did in 2012, I also plan to write blog articles on a frequent basis on my amateur radio blog site. Just go to [kd0bik.com/blog](http://kd0bik.com/blog).

Of course, now is the time for YOU to think about challenging yourself to make at least one QSO per day in 2014. As a matter of fact, I issue the following challenge to all my PARP listeners.

Go to your ham shack on January 1st 2014 and make at least one contact. It can be on any band, any mode. Technician class hams who do not have HF privileges...make the contact on 2m simplex or even a repeater. Bottom line, just turn on your radio and make a contact.

Then...repeat this on January 2nd. Then do it again on January 3rd. Keep it up...do this each day and before long January is in the books. Then later down the road you'll find the first quarter of the year is done. So on and so forth.

Here's how I did it. I based my QSO per day on the UTC time and date. Meaning, when I arrived home in the evening from work and after zero hundred UTC, I would make my contact. Or at the very least attempt to make my contact. This way if something prevented me from doing it soon after zero hundred hours UTC, I still had much of the next day to make my attempt. This especially came in handy when I drove to Texas during the Christmas holiday of 2012.

If you do choose to attempt a QSO a day in 2014, please write to me and let me know. I'd love to work you on one of the 365 days of 2014.

OK...I've made you wait long enough. Please allow me the pleasure of introducing you to Bill Stearns, November, Echo, Four, Romeo, Delta and Paul Griffith - Kilo, Echo, Five, Whiskey, Mike, Alpha.

The three of us are still working out just how this is all going to work for future PARP episodes. As I stated last time in my call for help, I'm not looking to get out of podcasting. I truly believe in PARP and I know many of you benefit from it each and every episode.

Looking down the road, other than hearing the voice of Bill and Paul....and perhaps a more frequent release schedule, not much else will change. I still want PARP to be your source of Practical Amateur Radio content you can use....and I still want PARP to be that vehicle to create Elmers One Podcast at a time.

So without further delay....Here's Bill NE4RD to tell you a little about himself. Paul, KE5MA will follow. I'll return after Paul's introduction to close out the show.

Play Bill intro

Play Paul intro

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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 65 sometime in December.

Before I go, as we approach the US Thanksgiving Holiday...I'm reminded of just how thankful I am. I'm thankful I had an Uncle who introduced me to the greatest hobby over 40 years ago. I'm thankful to a work colleague who re-introduced me to amateur radio in 2007 which a few months later I was licensed and ready to go.

Best of all I'm thankful to all the many friends I've met along the way. While some of you I've met on the air or met you at a hamfest or club meeting. Others I've met first through social media...but of course, amateur radio was that catalyst which brought us together and provided that common foundation to build friendship upon.

Of course, I'm also thankful to have a loving wife and best friend who supports my involvement in the hobby and my efforts to produce this podcast. And naturally, I'm truly thankful to those who listen to PARP and who go out and Elmer to others.

Bottom line is I'm truly blessed.....and truly thankful...

I wish you a very safe Thanksgiving holiday weekend with safe travels and the very best DX conditions.

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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 [kdObik@arrl.net](mailto:kdObik@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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