

Dixie Ham Radio Newsletter September 2018



Amateur Radio works...
...when all else fails!

We are an ARRL Affiliated Club

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Notice: Articles, statements and opinions are those of the authors. The Club is not responsible for accuracy of the information contained herein.

Ham Radio Special events:

The Dixie Amateur Radio Club meets on the 3rd Wednesday at 7 PM at the St. George Community Building. It is found at the Southwest corner of Washington County's Gayle M. & Mary Aldred Senior Citizens Center property, which is located at 245 North 200 West, St. George, Utah.

Learn more or how to join Washington County ARES at <http://ares-wc.org/blog/>.

Dixie Amateur Radio Club tries to support as many local bike, runner and race events as possible. We plan to put details on our web site for event coordinators so we can make sure we get **adequate information and lead time**. Stay tuned.

General Articles

City Accepts Club's Proposal By Lyn Kendrick

Exciting news!!!

A couple of weeks ago, the Board of Directors submitted a Proposal to St. George City requesting support for a Solar/Battery back-up system for our three repeaters.

We received a call last Friday telling us our Proposal was accepted. We will receive a check in a couple of weeks for \$3000.



The Club has worked with the City for about 30 years to make the St. George Marathon and other local events to be more safe.

Repeater Purchased by Washington County Edited by Lyn Kendrick

The County has purchased the Seegmiller Mountain repeater--both VHF and UHF for use in an emergency. A new BridgeCom System repeater was installed (see photo below).

Seegmiller Mountain has been a popular "back up" repeater for Club events and has been available to not only Club members but also to the public. It is a solar and battery operated repeater although AC power is now available to the mountain area.

Ham Radio Practices and Lingo By Mac Harmer

Welcome! Welcome to the great hobby of Amateur Radio or in the lingo; “ham radio.” This welcome is extended to new and current ham radio operators. As time has marched on, I have come to realize that there is much to learn about this hobby. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to share some of what has been learn about our “practices and lingo.”

Like most activities, there is a “best practices” way of conducting ourselves while engaged in the activity. Consider, we don’t use “work language” at church activities. We attempt to “fit in” by adapting our behavior according to the “norm” of the group. Ham radio is no different.

Let’s start at the beginning. When a repeater is engaged (keyed up or Ker chunked) we are required to identify ourselves by giving our FCC call sign or “ID.” Now the polite thing is to ID as we key up the repeater. Yes old timers (that is a ham with several years of experience), the FCC rule states ID is required every 10 minutes and at the end of a series of transmissions. The key here is **Polite**. If you don’t ID, an illegal transmission has occurred, therefore rather than split hairs, just key your transmitter (rig or HT) and state your call sign. The best practice here is to key up your HT, (HandieTalkie) wait one or two seconds for all the repeaters on the system to engage, then state your hard earned FCC call sign followed by the term “listening” or “monitoring.” What this tells all of us who are listing and scanning is that you are willing to engage in a conversation.

Pete Kuhlmann, County Emergency Services Director, and ham volunteers will see how this site performs and then others are likely to be put up on Utah Hill and Flat top. Eventually these will be microwave linked. They are planned to be co-located in public safety repeater sites.



Ah, conversation that is part of the reason a lot of us got into this hobby. We like to talk to new folks and learn about them while sharing our experiences. Not sure about you, but I did not go through all the work and expense of getting into ham radio just to "ker chunk" a repeater... I want to engage folks.

Someone answers you, now what? Exchange calls (that means your call sign) and your preferred first name. Hams sometimes use the term "handle" as an indication that is how they wish to be addressed. However, in ham radio lingo we generally say; "Name here is ..."

Hams generally talk in plain language to enhance understanding. Having said that, over the years short cuts have been developed that allow for rapid communications. This is especially useful in emergency communications and during "contests."

Contests are like track meets; you get together with liked minded folks and attempt to outperform them in various events. Many of you have experienced this during our annual Field Day event at the end of June. The point here is that most of the ham radio communications use plain everyday language. A lingo terms may be sprinkled in here and there but as time passes this practice is fading away.

Ok, now back to the "contact" (a conversation between two or more licensed ham operators) the next piece of information generally exchanged is your location. Ham lingo for location is QTH. Now "Q signals" were developed for CW or Morse code operation, you know the dits and dots that most of us don't understand. The reason for them is to speed up the exchange so rather than spell out each work, a "Q signal" was used. It might go something like this; "K7AAA, Dick, QTH St George, rig Baofeng UV82 back to you."

Actually, "back to you" is AR", now we don't say AR but in Morse code it is simply ".- .-." which when sent at 25 or 30 "wpm" or words

per minute, is very quick. So it is not hard to understand that some of the CW lingo has carried over to "phone" conversations. Phone is this case in lingo for voice transmissions.

So, what's next? How about a general conversation like you might engage in with the person in the seat next to you on an airplane? "I work for the school district what do you do?" Ham radio contacts do not have to be confined to ham radio topics although it is an opportune time to ask radio related questions. Be sure to speak "normal" plain language. It should produce a rewarding contact.

The question is often asked about things hams generally do not do. You may have noticed that in general ham radio is quite polite. Yes, the OT will say; "What about 7.255Mhz or 3.870Mhz where some really nasty characters hang out?" First let's remember the fellow on 14.313 who was really nasty on a band (that means a certain frequency span we are allowed to operate on, in this case it is 20 meters). He could be heard all over the world with his foul talk and put downs. I had one conversation with him about 15 years ago. Even with all my counseling skills I was only able to calm him down for part of the contact.

This year the FCC took his license away and fined him \$18,000. So, there are "bad apples" in every bushel so let's just be part of the "good apple bunch."

Generally, hams do not use what is politely referred to as "CB talk" like; "good buddy", "on the side", or "threes to ya". This brings up the term "73", originally used by the CW ops to say; "best regards". Note the term is already plural so the term "73s" is redundant, another sorta bad practice we hear frequently.

Let's talk a minute about proper use of the "mic" or microphone. Because our Dixie Link System (145.45, 145.49, 146.64) is a "linked" system with three repeaters that need to all

come on line through various link transceivers, it takes almost 2 full seconds for the system to be ready. The 146.82 Snow Bird Linked repeaters may take 3 full seconds for the system to be ready. Our job as operators on these systems is to PAUSE after we key the mic. Key the mic means to press on the push to talk lever or button generally located on the side of the mic. That pause is facilitated, by taking a breath in as you key the mic. This “best practice” will allow those you are in contact with to hear every word you are saying.

Just to assure you all that this is not some OT complaining about New comers let me relate a work story. Sometime ago I was asked to “teach” about 600 maintenance men and women how to use the “new two way radios” the company had gotten to improve “up time”. Starting with a core group of ‘leaders’ I experimented with different instructional methods to achieve the quickest satisfactory results. The “classes” progressed well and soon the 600 were communicating and up time was greatly improved. This was followed by a two week shut down for the Christmas holiday. Upon returning to work the maintenance folks apparently all came down with a case of “hurry ups” as they all would start talking into their mics before keying the mic. As a result, communication was greatly slowed. This led to the practice of shouting into the mic which caused further miscommunications. That is when the core group was called together and instructed to practice with each of their groups the following; “Squeeze, breathe, talk. If asked to repeat hold the mic further away and speak slower”. This practice solved our communication problem. May I suggest to our ham radio community that you all “Squeeze, breathe, talk” as an everyday practice. And, when asked to repeat, slow down and speak a little farther from the mic.

We have discovered in our various emergency drills that the practice of speaking softer and

slower greatly improves our ability to communicate. The mic you are speaking into is connected to an amplifier that greatly increases your “volume” into the radio transmitter therefore, shouting into the mic only produces “distortion” which translates into “please repeat”.

Since most of us are using an HT to contact the repeater, a word on the capabilities of the HT is in order. Repeaters are generally located high and clear of the major population area to enhance “coverage”. The repeater thus has a strong signal into our HT. Our job is to remember that just because we can hear the repeater does not guarantee that the repeater hears us. The HT signal going out is very small and we are using a compromise antenna to make it portable. This combination of low power and short antenna makes for a weak signal. In general, if we can actually see the repeater, we can work it. Therefore, sitting in our easy chair, in the center of a stucco house, means we are going to be noisy into the repeater and others may not hear us very well.

A note on stucco houses; I live in one and am only 4 miles from the Web hill 146.64 repeater. Now, I am sitting at the desk and am typing this document, it takes a full 18” whip and 4 watts from my UV-82 Baofeng HT to be understood. If I step 15 feet away, from my desk, to the sliding glass door, and don’t have the screen pulled over it, I am looking right at the repeater and it only takes 1 watt into the standard rubber duck antenna to be understood. If I step out into the yard I am understood with my PT-7 HT at 1/10 watt. Screens make a difference and a stucco house is covered with screen material.

The lesson to be learned is to experiment with a fellow ham from various locations around your house and yard so you are aware of the good spots and the noisy spots. The same is true driving Bluff Street. If you are on 145.49

having a nice QSO (Q signal lingo for “contact”) and you drive to St George Blvd you are not going to be heard while on Bluff. Our repeater folks understand that and give you the choice of switching to 146.64 to continue your QSO. The beauty of a linked system is that it affords you the opportunity to maintain contact in our hilly environment. The secret is to program the Dixie Link Repeaters in your memory system next to each other so you can easily switch between them.

The great thing about using the local repeaters is that it trains you for the next step, HF or long distance communications that encompass the entire world. Best practices on HF are similar, with a few additional ones to help bridge the language barrier and the interference, which in ham lingo is QRM, the factor that changes communication from that lovely repeater contact to attempting to talk across a crowded room. It is a skill that gets into your blood as you want to make the contact with a special place that may only come on the band every 20 years. Granted, this type of operation is not for everyone, but even everyday contacts on HF are enhanced by knowing and using ham radio best practices.

Hopefully, this short discourse has given each of you some ideas on how to enhance your enjoyment of this great hobby. By the way, we all need to remember this is a hobby and thus should not take the place of family, church, civic, work, or volunteer activities.

Please feel free to ask questions of all of us who have been hams for some time. We do not have all the answers, but most of us can get you started on the path to discovering the answer you seek.

73, Mac, K8NG



"Now Charging" By Justin Grenier

A question that I am certain many of us have asked ourselves over the years as we look at all of our various handheld radios is something along the line of “how will I be able to power this radio for an extended amount of time when (not if) the power goes out?”. Recently, while perusing EBay I happen to stumble upon an option that I thought may be of use to many of us in regard to this very question. In summary, the answer is a “USB cable charger for handheld radio”.

By way of example, one of the radios that I have told my wife is absolutely necessary to our lives is my Yaesu VX-8Dr (sorry Mac). An extra battery for this radio is going to cost around \$30 to \$50 depending upon the MAH (Ed: milliamp hours) and brand. While I would certainly agree that carrying around extra radio batteries is important, I would also suggest that being able to charge a radio battery in as many locations as possible is also extremely helpful. Finally, with regard to availability of “charging ports”, it seems that 12 volt outlets are becoming rare, even in vehicles, while USB ports seem to be everywhere in our society. Finally, and in my estimation most importantly, I carry around with me a small 5000 MAH battery to recharge my cell phone in case of emergencies that cost \$20. With a USB charging cable I can recharge my 1800 MAH

battery 2.7 times with just the items I carry every day.

Additionally, I want to mention the cost of these cables, and of course mention that after just a brief search on EBay I was able to locate USB charging cables for most of the popular radios including our ever popular Baofeng. The cost for the Baofeng USB charging cable is \$2.00 and the cost for my Yaesu USB charging cable was \$5.00. I should also add that these ship from overseas, specifically Hong Kong, so mine did take nearly 5 weeks to arrive, but at this price and considering the functionality it offered, it was hard to say now.

In summary, if you are concerned about the long term powering of your handheld radio, consider adding a USB charging cable to your radio “go-kit” and of course an battery or two. It is a cheap and efficient way to keep yourself on the air!

Below are some references...

Justin – KE7JJF

<https://www.ebay.com/itm/10V-USB-Charger-Cable-Cord-for-BAOFENG-UV-5R-UV-5RA-UV-82-UV-6R-8D-Radio-CA/311716015857?hash=item4893b8eef1%3Ag%3AhSEAAOSwmLIX-wFw& sacat=0& nkw=baofeng+usb+charger& from=R40&rt=nc& trksid=p2047675.m570.l1312.R1.TR10.TRC2.A0.H0.Xbao.TRS2.TSS0>

<https://www.ebay.com/itm/USB-Cable-Charging-for-Yaesu-VX-8DR-VX-8GR-FT1DR-FT2DR-FT1XDR-FT-817-Radios/163086657490?hash=item25f8b8e7d2%3Ag%3APysAAOSwrCZbGVjY& sacat=0& nkw=VX-8dr+usb+& from=R40&rt=nc& trksid=m570.l1313>



A License Plate Contest for Hams By Mac Harmer

August 28, 2018 was just a normal day in St George. Having just returned from a two week Alaskan cruise and land tour, the Ram needed some fuel. I like to fuel up at Costco because with my Costco Card I get money back for buying their fuel.

Even with all the lanes and pumps, I got stuck behind a fellow who needed 5000 gallons. Finally, it was my turn at the middle pump. I had just started putting fuel in when a SUV pulls in ahead of me.

What is this? The fellow had a Utah license plate with the tag reading...”NG”. Now we all know there is only ONE “NG” so who is this fellow? Boldly approaching the man I asked; “What does the “NG” on your plate stand for? “No Good, came his reply. “And further more my wife’s plate is “DG” for Damn Good!

I pointed out to him that the plate on my truck was a Ham plate with “NG” on it. He simple shrugged and went about pumping his fuel.

Reading license plates is a fun hobby. What with the new Utah plates you have to look a couple of times to make sure that the plate is not a Ham call plate. I would like to suggest that at the November Club meeting we take a minute or two to present those interesting license plates we have seen around town.



How about I donate everyone's favorite prize... the Harbor Freight VOM for the most observations presented?

Rules:

1. Plate must be observed in Washington County.
2. Plate must be observed starting today.
3. More than one observation of the same plate permitted.(I see it, you see it, and someone else sees it.)
4. A picture of the plate would be great but we believe you.
5. Let folks know over the Dixie Link what you have just seen.

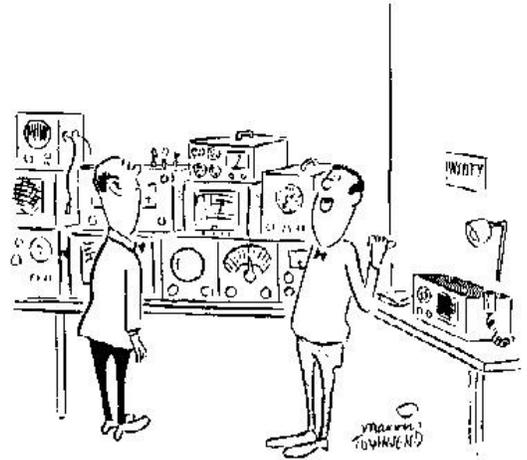
73, Mac K8NG



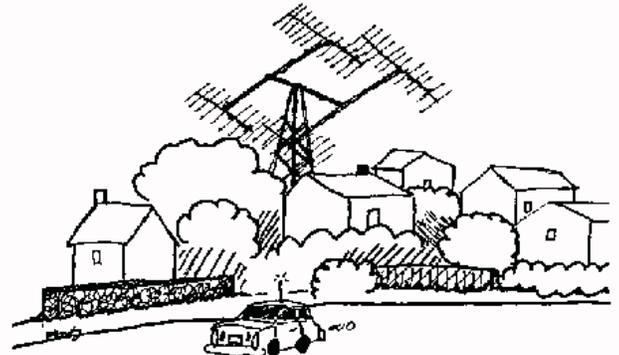
HERMAN®



"You never heard of a ham operator before?"



"My transceiver is over here. That's just my testing equipment."



OK, FRED. I'M ON MAPLE STREET. NOW, WHICH ONE IS YOUR HOUSE?

What a Ham!

Amateur radio operators (a.k.a. ham radio operators) enjoy communicating with people all over the world. Many of them use Morse code when they transmit messages. Other operators use a microphone. They can send messages during natural disasters when phones, computers, and cell phones do not work.

Find and circle the amateur radio related words in the puzzle. Words may be forwards, backwards, up, down, or diagonal.

Word Box				
frequency	megahertz	call sign	voltmeter	QSL card
radio	hobby	worldwide	transmitter	receiver
antenna	Morse code	keyer	power supply	filter
repeater	modulation	microphone	signal	operator
station	tuner	ham		

