

2023-08-01 Hamlet Net - Preparing for the Afterlife

Announcements:

- Test Session Info
 - Next VE session is Saturday, August 26th in the Clover Building at the Boulder County Fairgrounds, and starts at 10 am. It is an ARRL VEC exam session, so there will be a \$15 fee to take the exam. For more info, see the Licensing/Testing page on the club web site, <https://w0eno.org/>, under the Education menu.
- LARC is providing radio support for the Boulder County Fair Parade in Longmont this weekend. Steve Robbino, N0FTI, is looking for volunteers. All you need is an amateur license and an HT. Volunteers will gather at 8am to prepare for the parade at 10am. The parade should be done by noon. If you can help out, please email Steve at sprobbiano@gmail.com or give him a call at 518-466-9101

Not only do we help out with communications, but we also are able to show off amateur radio to the general public and help give back to the community.

- Last week, Steve, WØPPC, mentioned he used a Spectral IsoPole antenna, and that it looked like a lance for jousting. With that introduction, I had to check them out. Their web site is <https://www.isopole.com/> and the homepage shows their three IsoPole antennas, which do indeed look like a vertical antenna with one or two cones at the bottom - just like a jousting lance.

They do appear to be single band antennas (either 2m, 1.25m, or 70cm), and are rated for 1000 watts and advertise a gain of 1.8 dBd for the 2m IsoPole Jr. and 3.85 dBd for the full-size antennas.

The antennas are priced from \$149 to \$279, depending on the model.

- Chuck is putting together a special event to celebrate the 105th anniversary of the Peak-to-Peak highway involving multiple area radio clubs on September 30th. They're currently looking for volunteers to work this special event. They will be operating HF SSB voice, CW, and FT8 stations from 8am to 4pm with three operators at each station. There is a signup link on the club web page at <https://w0eno.org/>, or contact him for more information!
- We have some volunteer opportunities available where you can help out LARC:
 - Photographer / videographer - record team activities and upload to web site / YouTube
 - LARC Fest Coordinator -

- Newsletter Editor - put together the monthly Splatter newsletter
- Activities Chairperson - member of the Board of Directors
- Our sister club up in Nederland is looking for some help with events they are running. They have a weekly Monday night net with no predetermined agenda, so you can lead it however you want. They are also planning a Field Day site at Golden Gate State Park and are welcoming anyone who wants to participate. Finally, they are looking for operators for the Ned Gravel run on July 8th. They have signup links for all these events, so head over to their web site <https://w0ned.org/> for more information!
- You can start earning your 2023 membership or future renewal by acting as NCS for at least 5 nets this year. You can run either this Tuesday night net or the Thursday night net (or both). We have scripts available for both, so all you need is a good connection into the repeater, and somewhere to keep track of names and call signs as people check in. If you're going to be on the net anyway, why not save some dough at the same time! There are four free memberships available for 2023, so don't wait to get started!
- Chuck has set a goal for the Club of running at least one activity a month. This can be a hands-on construction activity, an operating activity like Field Day, a fox hunt, or a special event station. The goal is to get people together to have fun with amateur radio! We have multiple locations at our disposal, as well as lots of Club equipment, so if you have an idea for something you think others hams would like to do, please let us know, and if you're willing to run it, even better!
- The Club is also looking for presentation topics for 2023. If you have any ideas, or better yet, would like to present, please let Chuck know and we'll get you on the schedule!
- All club activities are open to anyone - members and non-members. ~~If you have questions, ask them on a net or~~ **send email to elmer@w0eno.org**

Presenter: Bryan, AF0W

Topic: Preparing for the Afterlife

- If you happen to be Egyptian royalty, then when you die, you'd likely be entombed with various everyday objects for use in the afterlife.
 - a. Your spouse or children would most likely toss in all your ham radio gear, as well as all your boxes of cables, AC wall adapters, and other miscellaneous "stuff."
- For the rest of us, regardless of your religious beliefs, something will have to be done with all your ham treasures.

- In most cases, this responsibility will fall to non-ham members of your family, and unless you really dislike them, you'll want to make this as easy on them as possible
- One thing to keep in mind is that there are a couple of diametrically-opposed goals that may come into play
 - a. The first is to get as much money as possible for everything - perhaps to pay off medical bills or burial or other expenses
 - b. The second is just to get rid of everything as quick as possible - perhaps to get the house ready to sell, for example
- This effort may also benefit you while you're still alive - say when you decide you need to downsize or move into an assisted-living facility
- The reason I'm presenting this issue is that this weekend, Kat and I attended the estate sale of a recently-deceased ham (also referred to as a "silent key")
- This was conducted in his home and ham shack - the sale included everything in the house, not just the ham radio equipment
- Most items had tape or stickers on them with the item's price
- Other hams had volunteered to inventory and test most of the major amateur gear
- This is no small task - Chuck, KOITP, has organized a few of these activities for local hams who have passed away. I've participated in a few of them, and have seen first-hand some of the issues they involve.

What can you do?

- So what can you do to help your next-of-kin with handling your amateur radio estate?
- When I helped Chuck out with one estate, the first thing we did was go through all the radio equipment and make a list
 - a. I started doing this with my own equipment back when I first became a ham, and I can state that it's a lot easier for you to make the list as you acquire equipment rather than you (or someone else) going through your stuff after you pass away
 - b. Unfortunately, I've also succumbed to laziness - when I checked my inventory list while preparing this presentation, I found that the last entry was back in 2020
- Anyway, I used Google Sheets to make and store the spreadsheet, so I had access to it wherever I had Internet access - sometimes, it can be helpful to pull up information if someone asks you a question about your equipment during a club meeting or event, for example

- The columns of information in my spreadsheet are:
 - a. Manufacturer, Model Number, Description, Cost, Category, Serial #, Seller (including name, callsign and address), shipping (or other) additional costs, date of purchase, condition (new or used), and a comment field
 - b. As an example, I purchased a linear amplifier at a hamfest and recorded the following info:
 - Manufacturer: Yaesu
 - Model: FL-2100B
 - Description: Linear amplifier
 - Cost: \$445
 - Serial #: 7 200074
 - Seller: Daniel "Radio Dan" Margo
 - Callsign: W7RF
 - Address: his email address
 - Cost breakdown: not applicable (no shipping/handling paid)
 - Date of Purchase: 7/11/2015
 - Condition: Used
 - Comments: 500-600 watts, pair of 572B tubes
 - c. The reason I have a column for shipping or additional charges is because I've purchased a lot of equipment off eBay, and wanted to keep track of the actual cost of the item itself as well as the total cost of the transaction
 - For example, I've purchased multiple Kenwood TM-D710A mobile radios
 - One was purchased for \$450 from a Craigslist ad
 - Another was purchased from eBay also for \$450, but that included a \$17 shipping fee, so the radio itself was a bit cheaper than the local one
 - d. The values I use in the category field are things like "radio," "antenna," "tools," etc. The idea was that I could use this to see how much I've invested in the various areas, as well as make it easier to filter the list by different item types.
- One thing about amateur radio equipment is that many radios and other devices have optional equipment such as cables or filters that may add value to the item
 - a. I use the comments column to record this information
 - b. For example, the eBay D710 was an even better deal than the local one as it included an external GPS module and an internal voice module

- c. Items like the internal voice module (or filters, an built-in antenna tuner, or a CTCSS board for an older radio) are not obvious from the outside of the radio, but may affect the price greatly
 - For example, a new VGS-1 voice module recently sold on eBay for \$180 - a radio with one of these modules installed can command a premium price over one without
 - For older radios, most of these items are no longer available on the retail market, and sites like eBay can be hit or miss for these items
 - Another possibility is to remove the item and sell it separately. Obviously, this requires more time, expertise, and effort than selling as a set
- The comments field is also useful for keeping track of information on the seller. Some examples from my spreadsheet include:
 - a. "Smelled like smoke - not mentioned in ad"
 - b. "Listing said included cable, but not in pictures, and not in box. Seller didn't do anything to compensate."
 - c. Since I logged the seller info, I know not to purchase from them again.
- Including the cost is also helpful for whoever is selling your estate, but I've also seen web sites that recommend searching eBay periodically for matching sold items and keeping track of those prices, in case items go up (or down) in value over time
 - a. Many of the items at the estate this weekend were pretty old (suppose they could be called "vintage")
 - b. I picked up a number of items simply because I thought they were interesting, or may be useful when teaching radio classes, but they are probably not things most amateurs would ever use, such as a capacitance substitution box
 - c. Most of these items were "priced to go" for just a few dollars
- One other thing I noticed (and have run into) is that some items were missing parts - there were a couple of TNC (terminal node controllers) that are used for packet radio that were missing their power adapters
 - a. In my own shack, I've got a bunch of chargers for different HTs as well as accessories like additional batteries and speaker microphones for different radios

- b. The chargers were a hassle, as it was not always obvious which one went to which radio, so I used a label maker to label them with the radio model they charged
 - c. Going a step further, labeling all the detachable parts for various pieces of equipment will help whoever has to go through and organize all your stuff for sale will help immensely
 - I also labeled the wall wart power supplies for the chargers, both so that I'd know what I was unplugging from the power strip end, as well as to make sure I could easily reassociate them with the chargers if I ever pulled out everything to reorganize my shack
 - In one of the estates we handled, there were a few power supplies that were not obviously attached to or stored with the equipment they were used with
 - The ham in question was a big Yaesu guy, so the manufacturer on the power supply didn't really help
 - The power supplies were identified with a model number, but it was the model number of the supply, not the radio it was for, necessitating some research on the Internet to find the match
- Don't forget any manuals, programming cables and software, and anything else that may be stored away from your radio
 - Another thing that would be good to include in your documentation is any information on issues with the equipment. While all the radio equipment at the SK sale was listed as "tested," it's very likely that they did not exercise all the features of the gear
 - a. In my own case, the first radio I purchased had an issue with one of the HF bands it supported. There is a filter board inside the radio that uses relays to switch capacitors and inductors in and out of the signal path for different bands.

The person I purchased the radio from told me about this up front, and even had the replacement parts, but said he was unable to do any soldering anymore.
 - b. Had he passed away and I had been dealing with his spouse or children, I'm sure this would not have been mentioned. Even a well-meaning ham could have tested the radio and pronounced it working - it's likely they would not take the time to go through all the bands.
 - c. I've also got an ICOM 706 that I purchased off of eBay advertised as "fully working." Everything was fine on it until I later tried to attach an external antenna tuner. The tuner is powered and controlled via a four-prong jack on the back of

the radio, but I found that the 12v pin was not supplying any power, rendering the tuner inoperative.

I've not been successful at troubleshooting the root cause, but I was able to construct a power cable for running the tuner, so it is usable.

- One thing that would be useful to add to my spreadsheet would be links to online user and service manuals for each item
- I saw a YouTube video that showed an interesting solution for tracking information on your devices.
 - a. The person making the video used QR codes for tracking equipment information
 - b. QR codes are "quick response" codes that are a type of two-dimensional barcode
 - c. They were invented in Japan for labeling automotive parts, but have expanded to many other purposes
 - d. The codes contain information - typically some sort of locator or identifier
 - e. Some uses for these codes are storing web site addresses or URLs, WiFi credentials, and contact information
 - f. The codes used in the video were for web site URLs
 - g. Some devices had a code for the user guide for the device - you would simply scan the QR code with your cell phone and be directed to the appropriate web site
 - h. The user also created documents containing more info on the device in question, including manual links, notes, and images (one example was storing the SWR plot for an antenna so that if there were any suspected issues with the antenna later on, they could be compared to the initial graph)
 - i. He then converted these documents to PDF files, added them to his personal web site, and then attached QR codes to the devices pointing to these documents
 - j. You can also link to publicly-accessible documents on a service such as DropBox or Google Docs
 - k. I've included a few links to sites you can use to create QR codes, as well as the video I saw

- This presentation is getting a bit long, so I'm going to cut it off here, and continue on a future net.

Questions:

- **The question for the week is:** Do you have an inventory of your equipment, or a plan on what to do with it when you pass away?
- **In my case,** I've just got the slightly-out-of-date spreadsheet and some equipment labeled. I've certainly got some more work I need to do. I do have the benefit of having an licensed amateur for a spouse, but there's no guarantee that I'll go first, and in any case, I want to save her or our kids as much hassle as I could.

More Info:

- A Different Kind of Amateur Code: QR:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZ2D6CjGbQs>
 - The QR Code Generator: <https://www.the-qr-code-generator.com/>
 - QR Code Monkey: <https://www.qrcode-monkey.com/>
 - Wikipedia - QR Codes: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/QR_code
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- If you have ideas for net topics or general meeting topics / presenters, please let us know! Tell us on a net, or send email to k0itp@w0eno.org

Email to elmer@w0eno.org

1. K0ITP - Chuck - Firestone
2. KM6SJA - Steve - Longmont
3. NA0A - John - Boulder
4. AF0W - Bryan - Longmont
5. KF0MXH - Art - Longmont
6. W0DRZ - Chris - Lyons
7. KA8TNA - John - Erie