Sidebands

The Newsletter of the EAST GREENBUSH AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

www.egara.org

November 2026

President Emeritus - Patrick Negus, W2PMN President - Bryan Jackson, W2RBJ Vice-President - Matt Saplin, W2SAP
Secretary - David Jaeger, Jr. - K2DEJ Treasurer - Pete Brickman, KD2YLG
Board Members: Walt Snyder, N2WJR - Chris D'Allaird, AK2CD - Don Mayotte, KB2CDX | Engineering Consultant: Bob Isby, K2RHI

Club Gets a New Board Member and a Mission

EGARA's Board of Directors gained a new member when Chris D'Allaird, AK2CD was voted by the membership to fill the position vacated by club President Bryan Jackson, W2RBJ. Jackson resigned from the Board at the October meeting, citing the need to diversify the club's leadership since he already held the position of President. D'Allaird will serve out the remainder of Jackson's unexpired term.



New Board Member
Chris D'Allaird, AK2CD

President Jackson also tasked the Board with three projects. They included:

- A review of the club's finances and to make suggestions as to any improvements which should be considered. Assisting with the review will be club Treasurer Pete Brickman, KD2YLG.
- A review and update of the club's membership roster to determine those who no longer appear active and have not kept their dues current. Those identified as not being active will be contacted to ask if they wish to continue their membership before being deleted from the roster.
- A review of the club's by-laws to determine what revisions, if any, should be considered. Club members will also be canvased for any suggestions they may have. Any proposed changes will be presented to the members for approval.

The Board will work with the club's officers to create a time line for completion of these assignments and provide updates at the monthly membership meetings.

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Annual Holiday Party Set for December 12th

The Schodack Diner will once again host EGARA's annual Christmas Holiday Party on Thursday, December 12th. Members will gather at 6 pm for evening of fun and friendship.

Santa will also make an appearance and distribute gifts to those who attend. This year, Santa's bag will include a $50 gift certificate from DX Engineering that has been donated by Steve VanSickle, WB2HPR.

Members will order off the menu and separate checks will be provided.

Members must RSVP by Monday, December 9th so the restaurant will know how many will be served.

Membership Meeting - November 12, 2026 - Topic: ARES Update

Repeater Upgrades Continue

Several upgrades have been made to the club's VHF and UHF repeaters located on the Helderberg Mountains.

Receive Tone Added to 444.850 UHF Repeater

Improvements at the repeater site include the addition of placing a receive tone of 123.0 to the UHF machine operating on 444.850 mhz to reduce Radio Frequency Interference (RFI) from "dirty" signals generated by the growing use of electronics in motor vehicles, consumer products and security systems. These stray signals have been demonstrated to open the squelch on radios, resulting in noise being received even though no signal is being transmitted by the repeater.

The UHF repeater also requires a Transmit Tone of 123.0 in order to access it. These tones are known as CTCSS - which stands for Continuous Tone Coded Squelch System. This is the same as a "PL Tone" -- which is short for Private Line, a term created by Motorola many years ago to describe its tone system for accessing its two-way radio equipment. The PL acronym was soon adopted by the Amateur Radio community.

The newly added Receive Tone is designed to open the squelch on a radio only when a transmission is received with the tone. If it does not it "hear" the 123.0 tone, the radio will normally stay silent and ignore any incoming RFI. If the receive tone is not added, a transceiver should still hear the repeater, but it will also receive any stray signals from "dirty" sources.

Adding the tone should be possible on most modern radios by opening the menu and finding the item labeled as one of the following: RX-CTCSS, R-CTCS, or R-CDC. Older radios may show it as PL Tone (Motorola), CG (Channel Guard – General Electric). or QT (Quiet Tone). If a radio supports software programming such as CHIRP, a column will be shown where the receive tone can be added. If you are not familiar with entering a Receive CTCSS Tone on your radio, consult the user manual, or do a quick Google or YouTube search, as online guides for many radios are usually available.

It's important to realize some radios do not offer transmit and receive tones separately. For instance, the popular Yaesu FT-8900R only allows a single tone to be used for both. That particular radio also needs to be set for "ENC/DEC" to make it use the tone for both transmitting and receiving. Again, check the radio's user manual if in doubt.

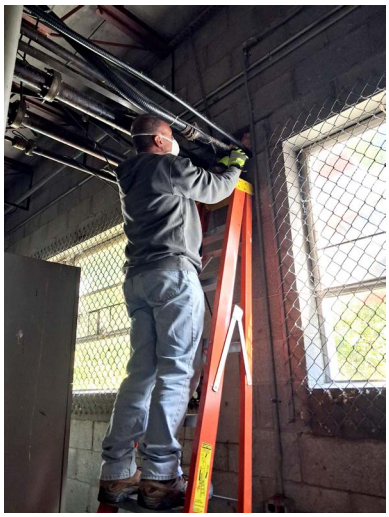
Remember, without the receive tone your radio should still work, but it may pick up those annoying stray signals. However, you MUST have the 123.0 Transmit Tone enabled to access the 444.850 repeater. Meanwhile, the club's VHF repeater on 147.270 mhz uses a tone of 94.8, as does the club's second UHF repeater on 444.700 mhz.

Repeater Firmware Update

The club's UHF Yaesu DR-2X repeater has a known issue which can lock up the machine when it is accessed by a radio using a C4FM digital signal. The repeater is designed to automatically switch between analog and digital transmissions, but it can lock up and remain in digital-only mode. Yaesu issued a firmware update to resolve the issue and it has now been installed. In addition, the club's technical consultant, Bob Isby, K2RHI, installed external filtering to reduce spurious emissions from the repeater which could potentially interfere with other repeater systems. The Yaesu machine is also equipped with a battery backup system designed to keep it operating during a power failure.

Other Improvements

In preparation for the coming winter, the club installed insulation at the repeater building to tighten up where coax lines pass through the wall to the tower. In addition to limiting exposure to inclement weather, blocking up the entry point, the insulation will hopefully control access to the building by wildlife. New security cameras were also installed, improving the ability to monitor the building and property, with four cameras now on site, replacing three older units. Lawn maintenance equipment kept at the site was also winterized and had batteries placed on trickle charges. Lastly, a dual-band HT radio has been permanently placed at the site to make testing of the repeaters easier and more convenient.



Vice President Matt Saplin, W2SAP, installs insulation to keep winter weather and wildlife from entering the repeater building.

What Does 'Roger That' Mean? And Why Do We Say It?



What does it mean when someone says, "Roger that"? You may think to yourself, "Who's Roger and why is he so important?" But "roger that" isn't referring to a person named Roger at all.

The answer is in the alphabet -- specifically a reference to the NATO phonetic alphabet and old-school radio communications.

You may have heard "roger" is an acronym for "received order given, expect results," but that's a myth, and the actual meaning is far simpler. "Roger that" dates back to the early 1940s, when "Roger" was used in place of the letter "R" in the Joint Army/Navy Phonetic Alphabet. And, it was nicknamed the "Able Baker" alphabet after its first code words.

In radio communications, using the code word "Roger" indicated a message had been received loud and clear. While "Roger" was replaced by "Romeo" in the NATO phonetic alphabet that was adopted in 1956, many Amateur operators and two-way radio users still say "Roger" for the same reason that it's always been used.

According to Dictionary.com, "Roger" became widely used after public broadcasts of NASA's Apollo missions of the 1960s, when the term was used during radio communications between mission control and the astronauts. The term caught on and people began using "Roger" as a verb, a noun, and an interjection, all of which meant that something was understood. So, when someone says "roger that," you know that they've heard the message clearly and concisely.

Meanwhile, "Wilco" is a standard procedure word that stands for "will comply." It means the speaker has received the message, understands the instructions, and will carry them out. So "Roger" only means a message was heard and understood. "Wilco" means it was heard, understood, and the person will follow the order. And saying "Roger, Wilco" together is technically redundant because "Wilco" already includes the receipt confirmation of "Roger" -- a tautological waste of time.

Then there's the word "OVER" -- which ends one station's transmission to the other and indicates a response is necessary. It is essentially saying "I've finished talking, so now it is your turn to go ahead and transmit your reply." Put simply, "OVER" allows a conversation to be passed back and forth between stations.

Unsurprisingly, ending a two-way radio call has its own set of procedures.

Generally, the station that originated the call is the station that should terminate the call. To end a call all stations indicate their last transmission of a particular communication exchange by using "OUT" -- meaning "This is the end of my transmission to you and no answer is required or expected". A variation is "OUT TO YOU" -- which translates to: "I am ending my communication with you and calling another station".

It should now be understood that if you send the transmission "OVER and OUT", you are effectively saying "it's your turn to talk, but I'm not listening", which is a bit rude really, so don't do it.

On the Beam
News & Notes

Former MFJ Brands Making a Comeback

Legendary ham radio brands associated with MFJ Enterprises are making a comeback under new ownership by ITU Corporation.

The Indiana-based company has acquired four lines from MFJ and the included acquisitions are:

- Hy-Gain Antennas
- Cushcraft Antennas
- Ameritron HF Power Amplifiers
- Mirage: VHF & UHF RF amplifiers



Martin Jue (L) of MFJ and Dave Carpenter (R), President of ITU Corporation shake on the acquisition deal.

ITU will relocate production from MFJ's facilities in Starkville, Mississippi, to a 15-acre facility at the former National Guard Armory in Linton, Indiana. Equipment transfer and factory setup are now underway, with full manufacturing rollout and product availability under the new ownership targeted to start by the end of this year.

Annual Pumpkin Patrol Uses Club Repeater This Year

EGARA supported this year's 47th annual "Pumpkin Patrol" on October 30th and 31st by offering use of its 147.270 VHF repeater located on the Helderberg Mountains from 6 pm to 10 pm for net traffic.



Pumpkin Patrol is a partnership with Amateur Radio and the State Police that has amateurs monitor overpasses along the New York Thruway to report suspicious behavior that might endanger vehicles traveling on the highway. The program began in 1976 after a truck driver was seriously injured when someone threw an object off an overpass which shattered his vehicle's windshield.

Karen Smith, KS2O, who has managed the program locally for 30 years, reached out to EGARA to ask if its VHF repeater could be used for communications during the Pumpkin Patrol. Club President Bryan Jackson, W2RBJ, immediately approved the request, noting that several EGARA members also participate in the program.



Karen Smith, KS2O, has been manging the annual Pumpkin Patrol in the Capital Region for three decades

Smith has coordinated Pumpkin Patrol activities with the New York State Police on the behalf of Rensselaer and Albany county officials. The program is conducted annually on October 30th and October 31st -- Halloween night and the night before -- and is designed to be visible at the overpasses with volunteer Amateur operators on hand to deter pranksters. Suspicious activity is reported by the Amateur operators to law enforcement for response.

This year, This year, over 200 volunteers from a multitude of organizations spanning 20 counties in New York State will join forces for the Pumpkin Patrol safety initiative.

ARES Update Set for November Club Meeting

Amateur Radio Emergency Services -- better known as ARES -- will be the topic at EGARA's November membership meeting. ARES consists of licensed amateurs who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment, with their local ARES leadership, so they can assist with emergency communications duty in the public service when disaster strikes.

The presentation is set to be made by Fred Halley - W2EMS --the Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC) for ARRL's Eastern New York Section. He was appointed the Eastern New York SEC on January 1, 2024, replacing David Galletly KM2O who served as ENY SEC over a decade and requested to step down at the end of 2023.

Halley had served as Emergency Coordinator for Saratoga County and District Emergency Coordinator (DEC) for the Northern District for many years. He is ARES Level 3 qualified and completed FEMA IS- 300 and IS-400 as well as AUXCOMM training.

ARES Membership Requirements

Every licensed amateur, regardless of membership in ARRL or any other local or national organization is eligible to apply for membership in ARES. Because ARES is an Amateur Radio program, only licensed radio amateurs are eligible for membership. The possession of emergency-powered equipment is desirable, but is not a requirement to participate. Rensselaer County ARES is currently recruiting new members to bolster its ranks of responders.

ARES Activities

- ***Public Service Events:***

These include Walk-a-thons, bike-a-thons, parades, festivals and community events. Equipment is minimal; often you will only be asked to bring a hand-held radio. Responsibilities may include supporting the communications needs of the community agency such as crowd control efforts, first aid stations, parking, etc.

- ***Localized Disaster:***

Flooding, tornados, or any substantial weather event, where it might not disrupt major areas of communications, but there is still a need for communications to be set up. Search, rescue, and traffic needs during the local disaster. Typically the volunteer would be part of an organization. The organization would have a pre-planned list of expectations and roles.

- ***Major Disaster:***

Wide-spread weather events, such as hurricane, tornados, snow storms, earthquakes. A longer time commitment may be requested. Volunteers need to prepare their families for their absences. In addition to personal Go Kits, volunteers may also need to bring their long-term Deployment Kits.

How to Get Involved in ARES

During the meeting, Fred cover ARES membership and activities. Club members who are interested in joining ARES will be able to submit their applications and can save time by filling out their registration form in advance by downloading it from this link: ***http://www.arrl.org/files/file/fsd98(2).pdf.***

ARRL also offers a comprehensive set of online emergency communication training materials and they can be found at: ***http://www.arrl.org/emergency-communications-training.***

EGARA October Meeting Minutes

- The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. Introductions were made by all 13 members in attendanced and one guest.

President's Report:

- Jackson began by announcing that the 444.850MHz Repeater had its PL Trsnsmit Tone changed to 123.0Hz to avoid interference with nearby transmitters. He also reported the club now had access to the 444.700MHz repeater and was now maintaining it on behalf of member Tom Scorsone, KC2FCP. Jackson also thanked the members who helped out at the October 3rd Work Party at the repeater site to mow grass, clear tree limbs on the access road, install insulation in the coax pass-thru opening, and replace the old backup battery charger with one that would both charge and maintain the lithium batteries. Jackson added that he had a dual band HT to donate and keep at the repeater site for testing when needed. He added that he would contact Bob Isby, K2RHI for assistance in making Motorola programming software work with the VHF repeater.
- Jackson stated that Len Signoretti, N2LEN had a controller for an MSF-5000 that he was willing to donate to the club for a tax deduction and that the club hoped to obtain it before the end of the year.
- Jackson noted that member Pete Sochoki, NY2V had checked and refurbished several HTs received from the estate sale donation and estimated they would bring $500 to the club. Jackson added that member Peggy Donnolly, KD2LMU had sold $220 worth of estate sale equipment to date.
- Jackson noted that the club hoped to hold a Tech class for the local Civil Air Patrol cadets in January 2027.
- Jackson asked the club where the Christmas Party should be held. Chris D'Allaird, AK2CD, made a motion to go to the Schodack Diner and it was seconded by member Don Mayotte, KB2CDX. All members present agreed.
- Jackson closed by announcing that he would resign his additional position as a Board Member to allow for more diversity in the club;s leadership. A Special Election was held and members Chris D'Allaird, AK2CD and Dave Gillette, KC2RPU, were nominated as candidates. D'Allaird won the election.
- Jackson announced that he was tasking the board with reviewing and updating club membership lists, reviewing the club by-laws and finances, and making any recommendations for modifications.

Vice President's Report:

- Vice President Matt Saplin, W2SAP, made his report and noted that there was no update on the request to place a repeater at the former Channel 6 analog tower site. Saplin also reported there was no indication yet as to who would be replacing the Chief Engineer at Channel 10. The club has two repeaters at the station's old analog transmitter site.

Treasurer's Report:

- Treasurer Peter Brickman, KD2YLG provided an update on the club's finances. He noted dues had been received from two new members who had joined since the last meeting.

Secretary's Report:

- Secretary David Jaeger, K2DEJ had nothing to report.

Board of Directors Report:

- There were no comments from the Board of Directors.

Member Updates:

- There were no member updates.

- A presentation by Bryan Jackson about RF/Electrical Safety and the FCC/HHS RF Safety Study.

- A motion was made by Dave Gillette, KC2RPU, and seconded by Bryan Jackson, W2RBJ to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 PM. The motion was carried unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Secretary, David Jaeger, K2DEJ

EGARA Begins Preparations for Online License Testing

With FCC licensing exam processing having been moved online, EGARA has begun gearing up to offer testing using the new "ExamTools" system which has replaced printed tests. The club hopes to offer its first VE session using the system on December 12th, pending approval by Rensselaer County Research and Rescue to use its building for the test.

ExamTools is designed to make administering Amateur Radio exams a more modernized and streamlined process. Tests can be administered using a web browser on a computer or tablet, and the club has acquired several computers so it can conduct licensing

Users of ExamTools are broken into four different groups, as outlined below:

Candidate:

Candidates are people taking exams. They log in to a dedicated online portal where they are presented with the exam they will take. They do not see the session management information that Volunteer Examiners use to manage the session.

Team Lead:

Team Leads -- or "Owners" as they are called in ExamTools -- are VEs that are authorized to manage exam sessions. In the ExamTools system, they are able to create and edit session information, add and remove Volunteer Examiners from the session records, edit candidate information as needed, and export all session documents for submission to the Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (VEC) for processing of the FCC licenses. EGARA exam sessions are held in cooperation with the ARRL, which is the club's VEC.

Co-Owner:

A Co-Owner can do everything that a Owner can with the exception of creating the session. Once the session is created the Co-Owner can edit it. A VE will need to have Co-Owner permissions in order to add/remove VEs in a session and mark applicants complete. Both are simple tasks, but require a higher level of permissions.

Volunteer Examiners:

VEs are standard users in the system. They are responsible for starting and stopping exams and signing candidate exams.

The online system is designed to eliminate processing errors and to make submitting test results easier, as it is all done online without the need to physically process paperwork -- which required careful review of several forms and testing materials to ensure accuracy before being submitted.

HamStudy Helps Test Candidates Prepare --

The developers of ExamTools also created a companion program called HamStudy to help prepare test candidates. It aids in studying for upcoming tests by using intelligent flash card study and practice tests, as well as maintains a listing of upcoming exam sessions.

HamStudy can be used at no charge in an exclusively web based format, or as a mobile device application. While primarily used to study for US based Amateur Radio exams, HamStudy can also be used for many FCC commercial elements, as well as Amateur Radio exams in several other countries.

Complete information on ExamTools and HamStudy can be found at: ***https://docs.exam.tools/docs/***

eBay Restricts Listings of Radio Equipment, but Exempts Ham-Band-Only Gear

Online marketplace eBay has imposed new restrictions on listings of radio transmitting equipment in response to new FCC rules that took in October, but said that its new policy will not apply to gear that operates exclusively on amateur radio frequencies. The FCC's rules are intended to use its equipment authorization program to protect against "national security threats to the communications supply chain" and cover a wide variety of products.

In its Third Report and Order issued on July 23, 2026, the Commission made it clear that online marketplaces share in the legal responsibility to assure that unauthorized RF devices are not offered for sale on their platforms. The rules took effect on October 13. Under the new rule, equipment subject to FCC authorization must have its FCC ID number submitted to the marketplace and posted with its listing. There are exemptions for posts already online, "small sellers," and used equipment, but initial messages to sellers from eBay suggested that an FCC ID would be required in order to post a listing for any equipment that transmits RF energy.

In response to a request from ARRL for a clarification relating to amateur radio equipment that does not require FCC authorization, an eBay spokesperson provided the following statement:

"eBay allows the sale of devices capable of operating only on frequencies that the FCC has allocated for use by Amateur Radio Service licensees. As these devices do not require FCC equipment authorization, FCC IDs will not be required for these listings as an amateur licensee may use his or her license to operate such radios.

However, two-way VHF/UHF radio equipment capable of operating outside of the amateur frequency bands cannot be imported, advertised, sold, or operated within the United States, including on eBay, without an FCC equipment certification.

If eBay inadvertently takes action against listings for devices that don't require FCC IDs and are otherwise authorized, the affected seller should inform eBay and we will assess whether to remove restrictions from the listing."

It should be emphasized that the FCC did not change its underlying equipment authorization rules. Amateur radio equipment, except for commercial HF amplifiers, continues to not require FCC authorization.

eBay has posted a summary of its new listing rules and it can be found at this link:

https://www.ebay.com/sellercenter/resources/fcc-id?utm_source=ARRL&utm_campaign=085a9b5412-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2026_09_30_11_57_COPY_02&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-854576c042-443853700.

Please Support EGARA's Hamfest Sponsors and Corporate Partners!

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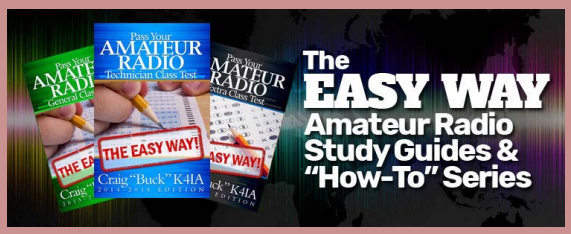
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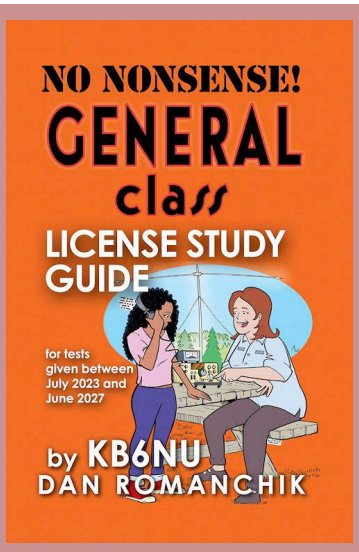
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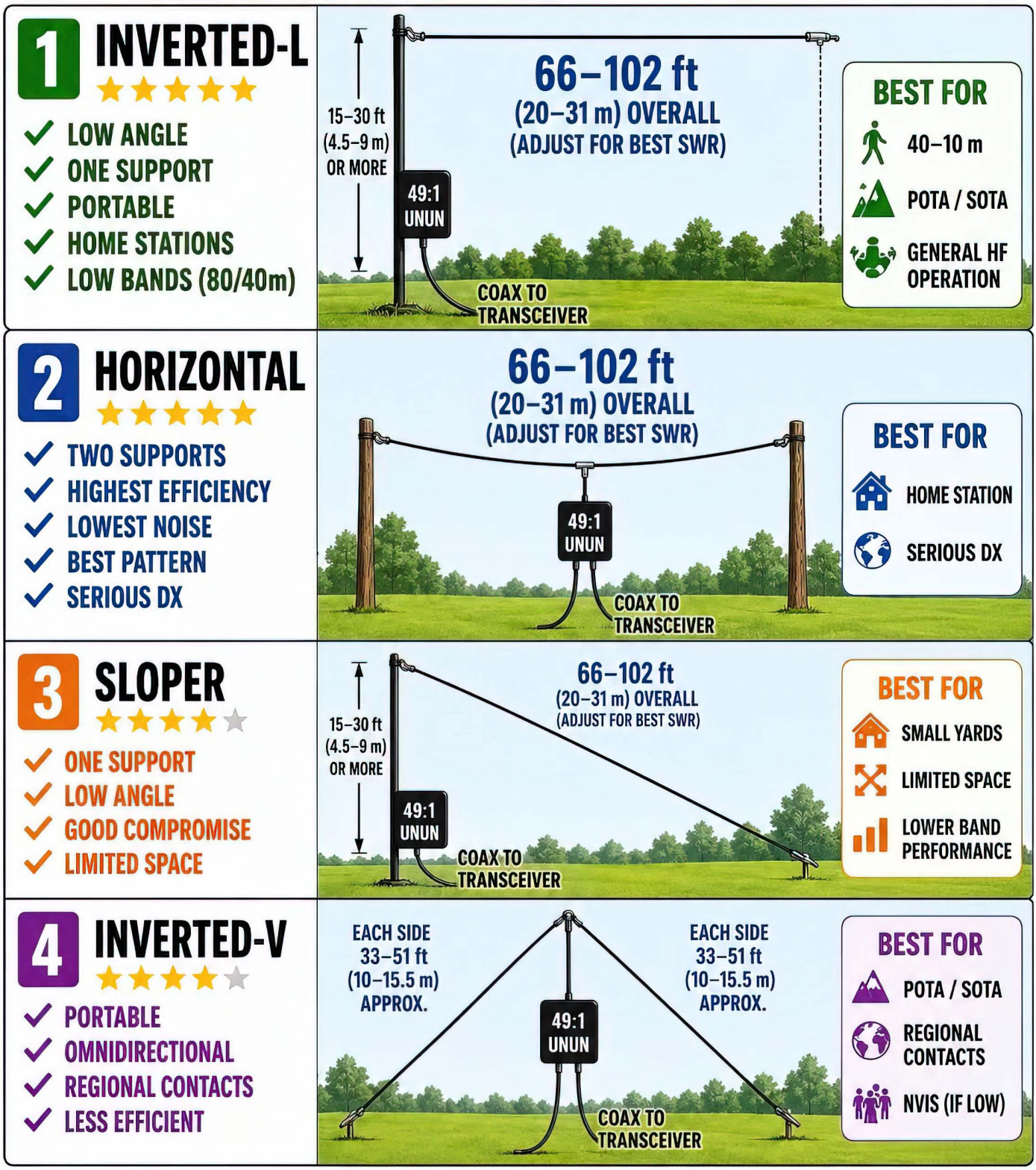
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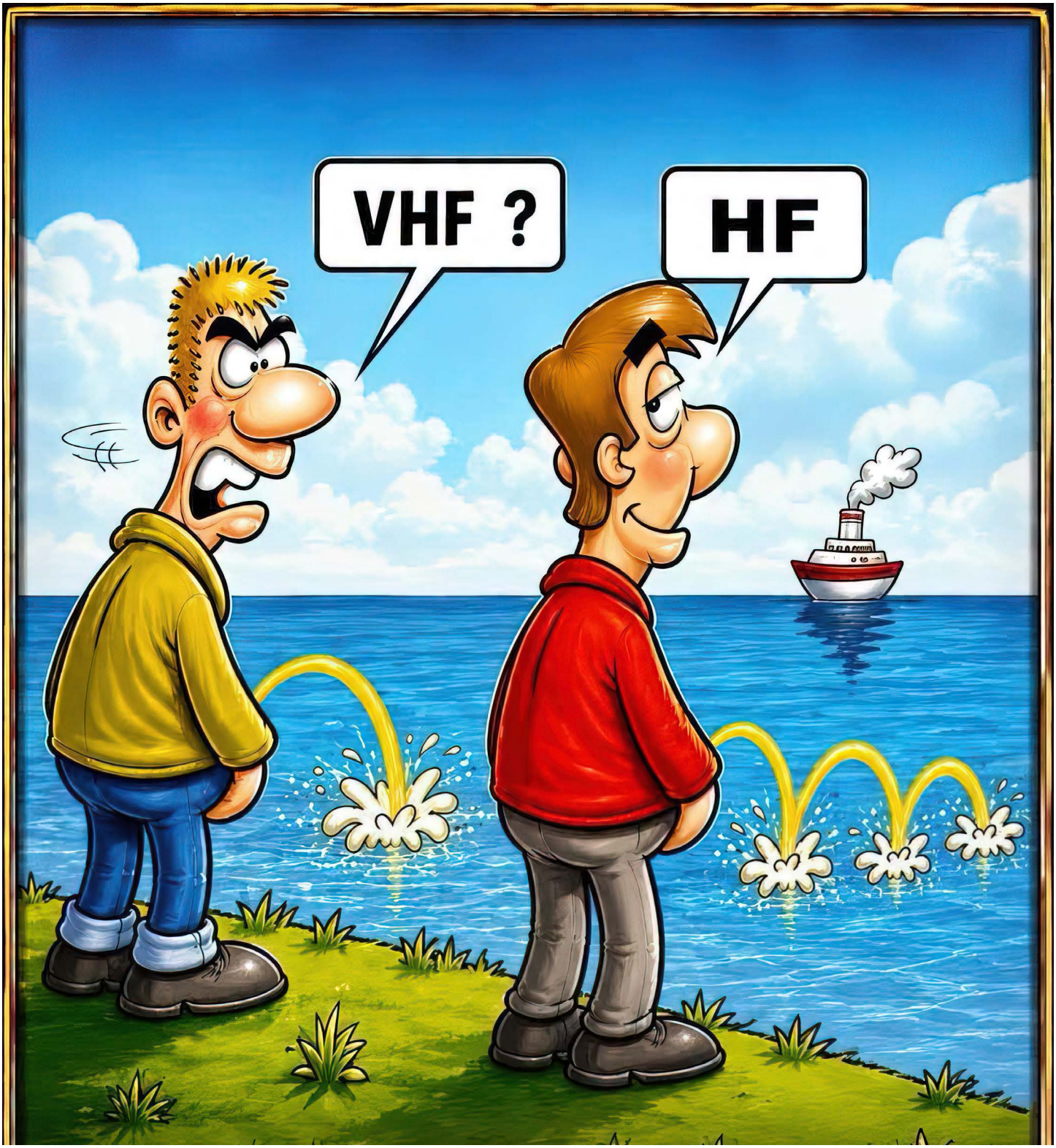
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QUICK GUIDE TO HALF WAVE ANTENNAS



A Visual Guide to Signal Propagation



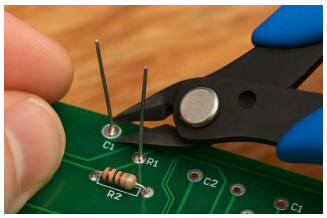
CALENDAR

November 12, 2026 @ 7 pm - Regular Monthly Club Meeting, Search & Rescue Building - ARES Update

December 10, 2026 @ 6 pm - Annual Christmas Holiday Party, Schodack Diner.

Pro Tip: Snip... then Solder

When soldering components or wires to a PC board or chassis, cut the lead before you solder the joint! If you cut it after you solder, the snip action will shatter the joint. Dissimilar metals (the solder and wire) will be exposed to oxidation and it will not be a sealed joint.



The correct method is to position the component, bend the leads that come through the board in the direction of the "pads" or "lands" and snip both before soldering.

This makes a good physical connection before you seal it with solder.

Place the hot iron tip at the hole for a second or two to heat the joint. With your other hand, touch the solder to the tip and turn the tip very slightly as the solder melts over the joint. Use just enough solder to fill the PC board hole without making a bead of solder apparent.

Similarly, when you are working on a chassis, wrap the wire around the terminal strip or post to make a solid physical connection and snip it to fit. Then seal the exposed wire to the post with just enough solder to make a good joint. Cut first, then solder!

The East Greenbush Amateur Radio Association

Organized in 1998, by Bert Bruins, N2FPJ, (SK) and Chris Linck, N2NEH, the East Greenbush Amateur Radio Association, an ARRL affiliate, is committed to providing emergency services, educational programs, and operating resources to amateur radio operators and residents of the Capital Region of New York State. The club station is W2EGB. The club also has several VHF and UHF repeaters open to club members and the public.



GEAR FOR SALE

- Wouxun KG-UVN1 Dual Band HT, DMR/ Analog, 5 w VHF, 4w UHF. With 2600 Li-ion battery, progam cable, charger, antenna & original box.
- Atlas Sound AD-12 Mounting flange - $8.00
- Atlas Sound GN-13 Gooseneck, 13 in. - $12.00
- Marshall V67g Condenser Microphone w/ shock mtg, pop filter, case - $75.00
- AKG P220 Large diaphragm condenser microphone with shock mount - $75
- Heil FS-1 Foot Switch w/ cable and phug - $ 22
- Heathkit HM-12 SWR Bridge - $35
- Timewave ANC-4 Noise Reduction - $100
- W2IHY I Box - $35

Contact Steve VanSickle, WB2HPR
email: stevewb2hpr@gmail.com

- 220Mhz j-pole antenna, $25
- Two bookshelf speakers, $10
- Pair powered amp computer speakers, $10

Contact Don Mayotte, KB2CDX at:
ddm653@gmail.com

- Yaesu FT-7900R/E dual band xcvr, RX 108 to 999 Mhz. 5W, 25W & 50W TX. Like new. $220, including shipping.
- Any Tone 5555N 10 meter Radio. AM, FM, SSB, and CW. 30 WATTS. Radio, Mic, Power Cord, mounting bracket and Manual. 28 to 29.7 MHz. Nice, clean and in factory carton. $140.00 Including shipping.

Contact: John, WB2HZT, Email at:
radiowizzz@aol.com

Sell your unused gear with a free ad in Sidebands and online! Send details to: EGARAradio@gmail.com