

Correspondence

Letters from Our Members

Down Memory Lane

At age 13, I was first licensed as KN2RCH in January 1956. I didn't have much in the way of money and decided to build my first transmitter — a 6AG7 crystal-controlled transmitter made out of parts scrapped from an old TV.

I was stunned to see that rig in Bob Heil's, K9EID, article, "The Pine Board Project," from the January 2018 issue of *QST*. I think it's a credit to all of you to publish such a project. Perhaps it will fire up some young imaginations as it did mine. I was an electrical engineer before practicing law. Ham radio sparked an interest in science and engineering that has served me well for my entire life. Thanks for the trip down memory lane.

Neil Sternstein, K2RCH
Deptford, New Jersey

The Importance of the "Portable Designator"

Increasing utilization of the remote capabilities of modern equipment has led to an explosion of remote-base operation. In all cases I am aware of, the actual location of the transmitter is considered the station location for award purposes. This has led to frustration at times when I found out, only after the Logbook of The World QSL was received, that my two contacts with "California" on 160 meters were actually contacts with Pennsylvania and Tennessee.

I would like to appeal to remote operators — when your transmitter location does not match your callbook information, please use the "portable" designator. Even though it is no longer required by FCC rule, it is a courtesy to your fellow hams, who may be chasing states or counties.

Bob Craig, K8RC
Cincinnati, Ohio

Tree Interference Theory in the Real World

I thought Kai Siwiak, KE4PT, and Richard Quick, W4RG, might be interested in some field data that supports the information in their article, "Live Trees Affect Antenna Performance," from the February 2018 issue of *QST*.

Two different years, I went camping in Yosemite Valley in the heavily tree-covered campground area. I took along an HF rig and a mobile 75-meter antenna with a mag-mount.

At 6:00 PM, I mounted the antenna on the top center of our van for a good ground plane, and started monitoring 3918 kHz for the evening HF net. I had a background noise floor of S4-5 in the campground area (I suspect the power lines in the camp area were contributing to the noise) and the signals from net members down in the central valley of California were right at the noise level floor.

I decided to attempt to use near-vertical incidence skywave (NVIS) propagation by moving the antenna from vertical polarization on the top of the van, down to horizontal polarization on the side of the van. I moved the antenna mount to the side of the van, about 3 feet above the ground in horizontal polarization.

With the same noise floor around S5, the 3918 kHz network signals came up to S9+10. This was not a fluke. I moved the antenna back and forth from the side to the top and would see the signals go from S9+10 down to below the noise floor of S5.

Two years later, I returned to the same Yosemite camp area, and again I brought along the same HF radio and antenna. The results from vertical operation on the top of the van and horizontal operation on the side of the van were the same as before.

I attribute the difference in performance to two factors: the NVIS propagation out of the canyon and its deep, solid rock walls, and the antenna being 90° to the trees in the camp area.

Thanks for your article supporting my actual field findings. Great to see that theoretical and real world do match.

Bob Wiser, K6RMW
Watsonville, California

Kai Siwiak, KE4PT, responds: Thanks very much for a real-life experience with the effect of NVIS. That was a great insight to move to horizontal polarization, and I'm glad it helped! You apparently experienced firsthand the path that Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA, described in his NCJ paper — our reference [7].

Welcoming Change

The changes in my new *QST* are great. Thank you for listening and being willing to begin some change that the survey brought forth.

I also wanted to say thank you to the ARRL circulation department for having my *QST* in my mailbox on time every month since I became a ham in 1980.

Thanks also to Steve Ford, WB8IMY; Joel Hallas, W1ZR, and Becky Schoenfeld, W1BXY, for putting on the "Doctor is In" podcasts. Joel's ability to explain technical things, coupled with Steve's down-to-earth application, has helped me get through some sticky situations. I expect some change over the years, but I think you have set the bar high enough that it can only get better.

Dennis Jones, KK0DJ
Pella, Iowa

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