

The Triple Play: The Ham Radio Wedding, The Honeymoon & More, & Ham For The Holidays
Written By Daryl Stout, WX1DER, Webmaster, Cabot Nightflyers Net – Updated Oct. 8, 2017.
Please email me at wx1der@gmail.com with questions, comments, corrections, etc.

This file is a combination of 3 presentations in one.

The first one was “The Ham Radio Wedding”, which united Ham and Radio in Holy Telephony, which was done on Valentine's Day Weekend, 2012. Nine months later (for obvious reasons), we had, from a trusted group of Official Observers (hi hi), “The Honeymoon And More”...which detailed the honeymoon, and the harmonics early years. The last one, planned for July, 2013, along the line of a “Christmas in July” theme, we have “Ham For The Holidays”. Based on the melody of “The 12 Days Of Christmas”, it was modified for “The 12 Days Of Hamming”, detailing 12 items in the ham radio hobby.

Unfortunately, due to equipment failure and other issues, the combination “Triple Play” for the Cabot Nightflyers Net, did not occur. With a lack of recordings, plus changing of my callsign, the removal of a YouTube video of a wedding at a ham radio club, and changes in the issuance of a paper copy of ham radio licenses (among other things), the script has been redone into one file.

If these are done on the air, you will need to give pauses to reset the repeaters, Echolink Nodes, etc. – and I ask that yours truly, Daryl Stout, WX1DER, be given credit for the material. I have made the file available for all to download and use, to bring a little humor into ones day, as there's so little to laugh at in the world today. You may wish to edit the “personal comments” that I have made...and for the net name...but keeping the comments may add a bit of “extra flavor” to the presentation. This is especially true for those who are Volunteer Examiners, who have had similar experiences at license exam sessions that I have noted in “Ham For The Holidays”.

Those who are not ham radio operators may not understand all the pun humor; but those who are hams, will likely bust out laughing. So, before doing these on the air, you might want to advise people to make a quick restroom trip, not be eating or drinking, or pull off to the side of the road. Otherwise, they may have a mess on their hands...or worse, wreck their vehicle.

Besides the 3 segments, there are 4 digital mode sound files...CW, PSK31, RTTY, and Packet. And, there are also short Third party traffic segments...all these as part of “The Ham Radio Wedding”. The For The Holidays. The Third Party Traffic is courtesy of fellow computer bulletin board system operator, Tim Cornett...who is not a licensed ham radio operator. You may download these from the Cabot Nightflyers website at <http://www.thecabotnightflyers.net> – click on the Navigation tab “The Nightflyers Net”, and scroll down to the link with “The Triple Play – MP3 sound files”. You'll obviously need a compatible MP3 player to hear them. Note that the URL has CHANGED, due to my switching webhosting providers due to cost and transfers.

While ham radio is a hobby, some of us joke as if it is an obsession!! So, with credit and glory to The Lord Jesus Christ for the inspiration; and with extensive research in the “creative juices department”, I've determined what a “ham radio wedding”...plus a “ham radio honeymoon”, and “Ham For The Holidays” might be like. Please note that these are “fun skits”, done “tongue in cheek”, as it were. The skits are NOT actual weddings, honeymoons, or holiday events; although the “Ham For The Holidays” segment comes close.

This is because in real life, a bona fide wedding requires an Ordained Minister, Justice Of The Peace, etc. to officiate the ceremony...and, the couple has to have a marriage license, among other things. I know that myself, having been originally married in 2003, but I've been a widower since 2007. As an aside, when my bride to be and I went to get our marriage license, the county clerk made a mistake, entering her birth year as 1658, instead of 1958. I quipped "she sure looks good for 345 years of age", and she added "Well, I do sell Avon"!! Amidst the raucous laughter...the blushing, embarrassed clerk had to tear up the license she was typing, and start over. People in the Pulaski County Courthouse in downtown Little Rock, Arkansas, had to enter the County Clerks office to ask "what is going on in there??", for all the laughter!! (hi hi).

While there is a "ham radio license" noted in the skit, it's rather bizarre to consider the context that someone would actually marry a piece of electronic equipment!! Besides, think of all the issues surrounding "consummation of the relationship"...and that will be covered in "The Honeymoon And More" (hi hi). As noted, the humor has quite a bit of ham radio puns, also known as "a play on words"...and the beauty of the pun is in the groan of the recipient!! An example of a pun is that "The idea of a ham radio traders net might have gotten started when a pig was sold by a farmer to a Country Pawn Shop, and the transaction became known as the first Ham Hock".

These skits were designed for a little levity, and a little bit of fun...as there is so little in the world to laugh at nowadays. There are several in central Arkansas, including yours truly, who fondly remember the "fertilizer nets", done by the late J.M. Jolly, W5ZXS (SK)...and I think he would've done something like this on that net.

And now, the Cabot Nightflyers Net is proud to present tonight's training presentations...starting with The Ham Radio Wedding...enjoy.

The Ham Radio Wedding – Uniting Ham And Radio In Holy Telephony

With "pun" in mind, we are privileged to welcome you to the marriage ceremony of "ham" and "radio". After a short engagement...because concerning Radio, Ham could not resistor...wanting to inductor into being a part of his family, and start a new one. So, they've decided to do more than just "shack up".

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today for this special net for the joyous occasion to join ham and radio in Holy Telephony. Ham has just passed his amateur radio license exams, so he will be Third Party Traffic, as he waits on his callsign from the FCC.

The general format of this RF, or Real Fine, ceremony, will be participatory in nature...and for the bride and groom, it is a big deal...and the atmosphere is rather electric, to say the least.

If anyone here feels that ham and radio should not be united in Marriage of Holy Telephony, let them key up now, or never pound their brass. However, you likely will be subjected to the wrath of the Wouff Hong, Rettysnitch, and Ugerumph by both families if you object (hi hi).

Does the father of the bride, Ken Wood, give his consent for this special occasion??

[Sound of "YES, I do", 20 wpm CW]

Do you ham, take radio, to be your lawfully wedded spouse?? To love, honor, and cherish?? In DXCC and WAS?? In QRM and QRN?? With Rohn 25 and G5RV?? With coaxial cable and various connectors?? With logbooks and manuals?? With Solder and Testing Equipment?? Respecting The Wouff Hong, Rettysnitch, and Ugerumph, Your License, and Privileges. Forsaking all others, as long as you both shall transmit and receive, during your relationship, until Silent Key, do you part??

[Sound of male voice "QSL. I Certainly Do."(Tim Cornett)]

Do you radio, take ham, to be your lawfully wedded spouse?? To love, honor, and cherish?? In DXCC and WAS?? In QRM and QRN?? With Rohn 25 and G5RV?? With coaxial cable and various connectors?? With logbooks and manuals?? With Solder and Testing Equipment?? Respecting The Wouff Hong, Rettysnitch, and Ugerumph, Your License, and Privileges. Forsaking all others, as long as you both shall transmit and receive, during your relationship, until Silent Key, do you part??

[Sound of PSK31]

In lieu of a prayer and Bible reading, I feel that The Amateur's Code, written in 1928, by the late Paul M. Segal, W9EEA, is appropriate for this ceremony. As such, I would expect that both of you, "ham" and "radio" would follow these traits as you both transmit and receive throughout your relationship. You are to be:

CONSIDERATE: Never knowingly operating in such a way as to lessen the pleasure of others.

LOYAL: Offering loyalty, encouragement and support to other amateurs, local clubs, and the American Radio Relay League, through which Amateur Radio in the United States is represented nationally, and internationally.

PROGRESSIVE: With knowledge abreast of science, a well built and efficient station, and operation beyond reproach.

FRIENDLY: With slow and patient operation when requested, friendly advice and counsel to the beginner, kindly assistance, co-operation and consideration for the interests of others. These are the hallmarks of the amateur spirit.

BALANCED: Radio is an avocation, never interfering with duties owed to family, job, school or community.

PATRIOTIC: With station and skill always ready for service to country and community.

Please stand by while I get the special marriage connectors.

With these specially prepared BNC, SMA, and PL259 connectors, along with LED lights...each of you are to present them to each other, and either say or transmit "With This Connector, I thee, LED". These special combination connectors and LED's...light emitting diodes...will show that

you will light up with excitement each time you transmit throughout your relationship.

[Sound of male voice "With This Connector, I Thee, LED"]. (Tim Cornett)

[Sound Of RTTY]

In as much as you two have promised your devotion, and lifelong commitment to each other; before Net Control, and all these witnesses on the net...by the power that has been invested in me, by the Cabot Nightflyers Net, as Net Control and Webmaster, I now pronounce you "ham" and "radio". You may now kiss the mic.

[Sound of packet burst]

[Male Voice "My bride just told me to packet. The honeymoon will be at Dayton Hamvention in May...and we will have music of The Ham Band at the reception."](Tim Cornett)

At net time, few details were available on the reception, but we assume it was excellent. As for the food that was served, we understand everyone got a charge out of an electrically delicious salad concoction that was prepared...known as Ohm Slaw. And, let's definitely not forget the delightfully D-Layer rich dessert of P Times I Equals E.

We have no word on the wedding cake that was served...the removal of the garter...the bridal bouquet...what everyone was wearing...how many guests were in attendance, who got the garter and bouquet, etc. However, we understand the wedding gifts consisted of several nice electronic, and ornamental, items and accessories for the ham radio shack, among other things...which were much appreciated by the bride and groom.

The Honeymoon And More – Including The Early Years Of The Harmonics

And now, by special arrangement, from (dare we say it??!!) a trusted group of Official Observers, the Cabot Nightflyers Net is proud to present The Honeymoon And More.

The first night together, they said that their love for each other was more solid than a soldered coaxial connector, and that it'd withstand the test of time, more surely than gasfield hardline. After all, they wanted to zero beat their frequencies, to only pull each others signal out of the pileup, as when the band opened up, they would be each others first and only contact. Their devotion to each other was to be more powerful than all of their combined signals.

And, they wanted to be sure that they resonated together, as they planned to be together, to not go on separate beam headings; with only being silent keys, would they part. After all, concerning Radio, Ham could not resistor...wanting to inductor into being a part of his family, and start a new one. And, that's why they decided to get married, and do more than just "shack up".

And so, in the honeymoon suite...after turning down the lights, and putting on some soft JT-65 music, ham and radio assumed positions of horizontal and vertical polarization, as they got to intimately know each other. He would run his hands over the dials and knobs, caressing them, pushing the buttons, turning the knobs, trying to find the contacts that felt so good...to ensure

that they did it with frequency...mainly because he wanted to work up her sideband. But, they took care not to spread out the wide assortment of wedding gifts...especially the many Morse Code keyers...on where they would sleep, because they didn't want to become infested with bed bugs. Otherwise, that would be a real pain in the brass.

And, even though it would involve CW Continuous Writing, they did want to spend time filling out the numerous QSL Thank You Cards to all who attended the wedding ceremony. They would then be sorted out on the DX Bureau there in the Honeymoon Suite, right next to the Amateur Television setup, where they planned to watch special ham radio videos and DVD's that evening.

Another thing that attracted Ham to Radio, was the out of band receive capabilities. This way, they could listen to non-ham radio communications, when they wanted to just "relax", or when band conditions were lousy. It turns out that both of them were ardent golfing fans. Radio had 18 holes for her ventilation slots, and that made it possible for them to keep cool during fore play. But, they were not caddy in their relationship.

During anger or otherwise...they pledged not to beat each other with the antennas from their vehicle, as they realized that was the quickest way to come down with "van aerial disease". But, considering the atmosphere, I doubt either was served a "Notice Of Violation"; and all newly married couples are entitled to some privacy.

But, to celebrate their joyous union in Holy Telephony, they planned to work the station from the Newfane DX Association out of Ransomville, New York...with the callsign of N2SEX...November Two Sierra Echo Ex-Ray. We understand this is one of the best CW stations that one can work, especially during Field Day. But, for the honeymoon setting, I guess it could be said that CW stood for "Continuous Whoopee" (hi hi).

Unfortunately, we understand that the time after the honeymoon apparently wasn't all bliss. As for cravings, it wasn't for pickles and ice cream, as you might think. Ham had to give up eating food, and having 807's around Radio. This was because he invariably would share the food with her, and the particles would drop into the ventilation slots, causing Radio to become rather distorted in her speaking...and quite ill at times. That usually led to morning sickness, which was a common occurrence...but not what you would think.

It always happened between midnight and midday...but was more so concentrated between just shortly after midnight and just before sunrise. Every time just as the overnight, juicy, elusive, high priority DX, or prized Dxpediton contact was about to be made and logged, the bands would fail...or Ham would bump Radio with excitement, and go off of frequency, losing the contact. Even worse, he'd hit the power switch, and Radio would give him the Silent Treatment in anger. Both were subject to band and mood changes at the discretion of the propagationist relatives, which they felt were trying to hurt their relationship.

Radio was also jealous of the 807's, because of their tubular nature; but also because Ham had his drink mugs propped up with Beverage Antennas. Radio threatened to short out the relationship if one of those got poured on her, because she got too hot, with the excitors.

Exams, and RF safety evaluations, had to be constantly conducted, due to expansion of each others capabilities, and radio was constantly being poked, probed, and prodded with antenna analyzers, ammeters, watt meters, and other such devices.

While waiting for the harmonics to be born, there were some tense moments. Radio would groan "DX, DX, DX!! That's all you ever think about!! You probably don't even remember the wedding night"!!

Ham replied "Not so, my dear. That was Feb. 12, 2012, when you helped me work X-Ray Tango One, The Charlie Romeo Zero, The Alpha Charlie Six, and the rare DXpeditions". Radio had to admit that Ham was right.

After the birth of the harmonics, which was amazingly on a clear frequency, in room 5-9-9, the harmonics were wrapped in dipoles, to protect the fragile antennas and knobs. Connectors had to be used to hold the dipoles in place, otherwise the harmonics would be naturally exposed.

While they had a extended warranty, they had to be sure that the harmonics were properly immunized, and to protect the family from infection by parasitic elements. After all, the RF cough and sneeze noise splatter was considered both messy, and unsanitary.

No word on the intensity or length of the labor process, how many harmonics there were, their genders, names, or birth weights. That was unavailable at net time, due to HIPPA regulations...in this case, Harmonic Information Personal Protection Agreement.

As time passed, the harmonics would be instructed...digitally first...then in voice. It turned out that Aunt Enna, with her son, Ray Dee Oh, and his XYL, Olivia, would become trusted babysitters. Olivia was also very attractive, and a cat lover...which made her purr-RTTY.

Ham and Radio were always having to packet...that is, the case with all the supplies for the harmonics, whenever they went somewhere. They also had to be sure that they didn't watch too much slow scan TV...as it was bad for their displays. However, they learned to speak the frequencies, by number, and name, rather quickly.

Also, they would have to give the harmonics a QSO party, as the harmonics aged a year. Many contacts were made, from many modes, with QSL cards of birthday wishes. Everyone seemed to have a Field Day with these parties. Entertainment was provided by the digital ensembles of RTTY, JT-65, CW, PSK31, Packet, and other Open Band Groups. With such a large crowd, the events were usually outdoors, with participants having to use logs to sit on. As the event usually went on into the evening hours, illumination of the activities was brought by several satel lights, which had a wide coverage area. But, caution had to be used with the evidence of certain outdoor insects, so everyone was given a timely tick talk.

While the harmonics did learn early on how to be submersible in bathing, care had to be taken with the dispensing of AC and DC brand juice, so the parents and harmonics wouldn't float away, or be too emotionally charged afterwards. Steps were also taken to prevent overheating, due to extensive transmissions.

Cooking for all of their meals was done in a Digi-pan, so the family was well nourished, to say the least. No word on the exact cuisine, but they did avoid eating ham. And, that was not because of kosher reasons, but they didn't want to be thought of as cannibalistic. And, no word on if any of the family had any digestive tract issues to deal with. But, with rapidly changing technology, the gaseous tubes of their ancestors were removed via electric surgery long ago.

To keep the family comfortable, all wore telegraphy outfits, the Mores Coat brand. This also kept the harmonics keyed in to their parents commands, and their parents were keyed into what the harmonics were doing. This also kept the family from getting bugs, and becoming ill. The harmonics were also taught, as their parents were, to constantly greet their friends, with a CW continuous wave. At night, the shack bedrooms were illuminated by a soft satel light, with soft JT-65 music helping everyone rest easier.

Next, the harmonics would learn at 5, 13, and 20 words per week. Then, they would be graded through five levels of education, Novice, Technician, General, Advanced, and Amateur Extra. They had to learn good operating habits, and to avoid being lids...as there were already enough for their AC and DC brand juice glasses. They also had to listen to Radio, so she wouldn't have to repeater self on what she said.

For the sake of privacy, there was no word on the amount of needing changing of the dipoles, and switching to regular outfits. However, as noted earlier, they preferred to go natural...especially on outdoor events. Rumor has it they did learn to QRP rather quickly...probably from all the AC and DC brand juice that they had been consuming over the years, to keep from overheating.

As time passed, the family got bonded and grounded to each other. Thoughts turned to as the harmonics got older, it'd be time to get their licenses, so they too, could enjoy what their parents had. Every 10 years, ham, radio, and the harmonics would go in to have their licenses renewed, even though they wouldn't have to be re-examined in such great detail, as they were initially.

Unfortunately, medical and other issues would show up every so often, and they had to go to the AES or HRO clinics for treatment. And, wouldn't you know it, there was a long wait before they were seen by the staff. However, the care at the facilities was excellent, as those who worked at the facilities were very knowledgeable about their work, and they were back at their QTH's in record time. Thankfully, the need for major surgical procedures was extremely rare.

No word on the need or extent of prescriptions, except for those to various amateur radio publications (such as QST and CQ), clubs and organizations (such as the American Radio Relay League and Courage Kenny Handi-Hams), or nets (such as the National Traffic System Nets). The Ham Radio Equipment Insurance sure made paying the medical bills a lot easier.

However, they each had to constantly review Part 97, to be sure they were in the spirit of amateur radio. But, when harmonic violations did occur, the Official Observers were diligent in letting their parents know of them...and the continuous whipping CW paddles were definitely in use on the harmonics backsides.

It's rumored that the battery fanny packs were removed before the discipline was administered with the Wouff Hong, Rettysnitch, and Ugerumph. And, while the harmonics may have felt that the discipline stung like 10 50 hertz, their parents knew that the warnings before discipline were always the SAME, and they made sure that the harmonics wouldn't become tone deaf. And it seemed like the most likely time for the discipline was to be needed was between 11am and 12 Noon on Wednesdays.

But, the discipline was not rough enough to the point of making their signals bleed. And, the noise level of the harmonics in response to the discipline was not known; and it's none of our business.

The more serious violations required the harmonics to go to court in west, wearing their Mores Coat outfits. This was because the pink slips were too skimpy for the sake of decency for the females...not to mention they especially looked even worse on the males!! One also had to be careful not to rile E. Hollingsworth, the Enforcement Judge. He had a reputation of sending scofflaws to Hellschriber as punishment. No word on how long they had to be there, or if the Wouff Hong, Rettysnitch, and Ugerumph were in use by the bandwidth demons on the miscreants.

In time, it was time for the harmonics to date and marry...and for them to follow in the footsteps of their parents. And so, with ham and radio saying seven three (best wishes) to their harmonics, and eighty eight (love and kisses) to each other...that is a look at the lives of ham and radio, and their harmonics.

Ham For The Holidays – The 12 Days Of Hamming

And now...with a Christmas In July theme...never mind longing for cooler weather in summer (especially in August in Arkansas), the Cabot Nightflyers Net is proud to present Ham For The Holidays.

Using the melody of the song “The Twelve Days Of Christmas”, I've created a new tune, as it were...”The Twelve Days Of Hamming”. Instead of more ham radio pun humor, it's now a gift giving scene, with Radio providing gifts for Ham, and the harmonics...and I'm sure that some may be glad that the majority of the dry humor is over...at least for now (hi hi).

However, while metrically correct in what will be noted...since any singing on the airwaves is defined as music...no matter how badly one sings...and since music is prohibited on the amateur radio frequencies, as per FCC rules, I obviously can not sing these lyrics on the air, or with this recording. That even means not even tenor solo...which is ten or eleven miles away, and so low that no one can hear it (hi hi).

Anyway, each of these are different items that are experienced in the hobby, and it's by no means an all inclusive list...because there is just too much in amateur radio to just cover 12 categories. For each one listed, though...I have included a brief explanation of each one. This could be for the ham radio operator who has, or wants everything (hi hi).

On the 1st day of Hamming, my radio gave to me:

A license, callsign, from the FCC.

This is obviously needed for one getting on the air in the first place. Today, the Technician Class license is the entry level license into amateur radio. Morse Code is no longer required for a ham radio license...but you can still learn and use the original digital mode, CW...and many amateur radio operators do just that. But, you no longer have to prove that you know Morse Code at the license exam session.

There are several options for studying for a ham radio license exam...which are multiple choice,

and can be with, or without schematic diagrams. If you pass an exam, congratulations. Unlike years ago, when you had to have the paper copy of your license “in hand” before you transmitted for the first time...you now can get on the air as soon as your callsign appears in the FCC ULS database, which can be anywhere from 5 days to 2 weeks or more after the exam session. You're the ONLY one in the world with that specific callsign.

Depending on the workload of the FCC, you may have your callsign in as little as 5 days after the exam. But, if it has been more than 2 weeks since your exam, and you still don't see the callsign, you can call the Exam Team Leader (Liaison), who can contact the Volunteer Examiner Coordinator, to find out what the delay is, and get back to you.

Also, as of Feb. 17, 2015, the FCC is NO LONGER ISSUING PAPER LICENSES to amateur radio operators. However, one will be able to logon to the FCC ULS website on the internet at <http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls> with their Federal Registration Number and password, and either print an “official copy” for ones shack (and ones wallet), or an “unofficial reference copy”, to show at a future license exam session, if you decide to upgrade your license, so you can get proper credit. The default will be an “electronic copy”, but if you must have a “paper copy” mailed to you, you can request such from the FCC ULS website. For more information on how to get this done, go to <http://www.arrl.org/obtain-license-copy>

You won't have a choice in the first callsign that you get...but you can apply for a new sequential callsign, or choose your own vanity callsign. The format of the callsign is limited by both the current license class that you hold, and if such a callsign is available. As of Sept. 3, 2015, there is no longer a fee required for a vanity callsign, but there is an 18 to 21 day waiting period (sometimes longer) once you apply for the vanity callsign, and to when it is issued. Once the new vanity callsign is issued, your former callsign is no longer valid for use on the air. So, before you apply for a vanity callsign, be sure that you want to CHANGE your current callsign. Note that once you're issued your first callsign by the FCC, it will NOT change, UNLESS you request such.

Unfortunately, not every amateur radio operator has passed a license exam on the first try...and for some, it takes a large amount of tries to pass their exam. However, it must be stressed that there is NO DISGRACE if you fail an exam. But, once you do pass the exam (even if just barely), as far as anyone else is concerned...once you have your callsign, you made a perfect score on the test(s) the first time...and it's no one else's business on what your score was, how many times it took you to pass the exam, etc.

Examinees who are disabled in some way, or who may have learning disabilities, or other issues... can request special exam accommodations at the exam session. However, they must contact the Exam Session Leader as far in advance of the exam session as possible, so proper arrangements can be made...such as large print exam books, or reading of the exams to them, with the examinee telling the examiner which answers to mark on the answer sheet, or even giving a test at the examinees home. Medical documentation may be required, if the disability is not obvious.

On the 2nd day of Hamming, my radio gave to me:

Two license upgrades, and a license, callsign from the FCC.

Starting with the Technician Class license, the other two licenses available are General...the one that most hams hold, and the Amateur Extra Class license. While Novice and Advanced Class

operators are still around, no new licenses for these are being issued...but holders of these licenses may renew them at the appropriate time.

Also, once you have your license and callsign, if you pass a higher license class exam at a test session, you can use your new privileges immediately, with special suffix identifiers, when you are on the upgraded bands...until your upgrade shows up in the FCC ULS. Once the upgrade shows up in the FCC ULS, you no longer have to use the special suffix identifiers.

Plus, General, Advanced, and Amateur Extra Class licensees can also apply to become Volunteer Examiners, who give and grade the exams...as long as their license is valid and unexpired, it has never been suspended or revoked, and they are at least 18 years of age. Once they've passed the accreditation process by the particular Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (VEC), they can serve at any license session done by that VEC, providing the Test Session Liaison OK's them to serve. The VE's license class determines which exams they can give, and grade.

As a side note, being a Volunteer Examiner is the most rewarding thing that I've ever done in amateur radio...because you are giving back to the hobby, and getting new hams licensed. If you remember how thrilled you were when you got your first license, you can imagine how thrilled the Volunteer Examiners are, when you do pass the exam.

On the 3rd day of Hamming, my radio gave to me:

Three different radios, two license upgrades, and a license, callsign from the FCC.

The “main bands” in ham radio are now HF (which has 160, 80, 75, 60, 40, 30, 20, 17, 15, 12, and 10 meters)...VHF (6, 2, and 1.25 meters), and UHF (70, 33, and 23 centimeters). There are other bands as well; but these are the main ones, on frequency charts of various license class privileges.

Many Ham Radio Transceivers, whether base station, handi-talkie, or mobile, are transmitting in just a single band. However, others now can have transmitting capabilities via dual band, tri-band, or even quad-band. And, the way that technology is advancing, in the not too distant future, more transmitting bands in a radio may be covered. Some radios even have “out of band receive”, where you can listen to such things as aircraft, railroads, NOAA Weather Radio, regular broadcast stations, and more.

On the 4th day of Hamming, my radio gave to me:

Four sets of antennas, three different radios, two license upgrades, and a license, callsign from the FCC.

G5RV's, J-Poles, Cubical Quads, and Magmounts, are among the many types of antennas available to work the various bands. Some are small and simple to build, set up, and work with; while others are on huge towers of stations that literally “work the world” with amateur radio.

On the 5th day of Hamming, my radio gave to me:

5 Band DXCC. Four sets of antennas, three different radios, two license upgrades, and a license, callsign from the FCC.

One of the most prized awards in amateur radio...and one of the most difficult to obtain...it's gained by making contacts in at least 100 different countries around the world, on 5 different amateur radio bands, using the desired mode...voice or digital.

On the 6th day of Hamming, my radio gave to me:

6 Meter Clean Sweep, 5 Band DXCC. Four sets of antennas, three different radios, two license upgrades, and a license, callsign from the FCC.

Called “the magic band”, the area just above HF, and at the low end of the VHF spectrum...when tropospheric ducting occurs, inducing skip; one can literally work coast to coast, or even across the ocean, on 6 meters. Technician Class licensees and above have full access to this band.

On the 7th day of Hamming, my radio gave to me:

7 Nights Of Net Logs, 6 Meter Clean Sweep, 5 Band DXCC. Four sets of antennas, three different radios, two license upgrades, and a license, callsign from the FCC.

There are literally nets on every night of the week, on various bands and modes...whether HF, VHF, UHF, D-Star, or VoIP (Echolink, CQ100, HamSphere, etc.); and can be phone or digital. The nets can be for formal written traffic, traders nets (where ham radio operators can list ham radio equipment that they want to buy, sell, or trade)...on a special topic (such as trains, weather, cooking, ham radio technology, or even Bible Study)...or just a general ragchew or roundtable net...the format of each is determined by Net Control.

With very few exceptions, all nets are DIRECTED, and all stations will contact Net Control before attempting to contact another station on the net. Plus, all stations checking in are required to follow the instructions of Net Control, as well as the protocol and format of the net. Stations failing to do risk being muted or blocked from the net.

As a side note, on D-Star, the callsign of the transmitting station is automatically sent when they key up...whether to speak, or for what's known as a “quick key checkin to a net”...done either into a D-Star repeater, or a D-Star Reflector, if these are connected into an internet gateway. So, there basically is “no way to hide ones identity” on D-Star...whether one is transmitting via a DV Dongle, using a DVAP with their radio, or on a D-Star repeater via their rig.

It's affectionately known as “Echolink On Steroids”, and I personally use it more than Echolink for nets during the week. Several nets also meet on D-Rats during the net, on various Ratreflectors, where they can chat, exchange files and messages in real time, and find other hams with the Maps Feature. There are several files in my D-Rats Shared Folder on getting started with D-Rats, mostly in PDF format...and other files are in the D-Star Users Yahoo Group.

On the 8th day of Hamming, my radio gave to me:

8 the Hamfest Start Time, 7 Nights Of Net Logs, 6 Meter Clean Sweep, 5 Band DXCC. Four sets of antennas, three different radios, two license upgrades, and a license, callsign from the FCC.

Most hamfests are just half day events for a few hours...usually on a Saturday...although some can be as much as 3 days, such as the Dayton Hamvention TM, held in mid-May each year in Ohio.

Venues of where the activities are held, the availability of license exam sessions, the number of forums, dealers, and flea market vendors, etc.; plus costs for transportation, lodging and meals in the area, event admission, prize tickets, prizes offered, and tables for vendors, among other things, vary by event.

In most cases, the start time for these events is 8am local time. And, for many, that means an “early wake up call”...so, they can make the long drive, to get there when the hamfest opens, to either get good deals at the flea market, or from dealers; or taking part in a forum, a license exam session, and more. Some 2 day events may start on a Friday afternoon, and then continue for much of the day on Saturday. With these hamfests, you must be a licensed amateur radio operator to win the radio prizes. Everyone must be present to win any of the prizes awarded...the exception is the grand prize, awarded at the end of the hamfest...when the crowd then usually “parts like the Red Sea” (hi hi).

On the 9th day of Hamming, my radio gave to me:

9 modes on digital, 8 the Hamfest Start Time, 7 Nights Of Net Logs, 6 Meter Clean Sweep, 5 Band DXCC. Four sets of antennas, three different radios, two license upgrades, and a license, callsign from the FCC.

Operating digital is the beauty of ham radio, as you can go farther on that mode than with voice, although many hams refer to voice as “phone”. Nine such modes are CW (also known as Morse Code), Packet, APRS, radioteletype (also known as RTTY or “ritty”...there are at least 2 big RTTY contests each year), PSK31, JT65, Amateur Television, MT63, and Amtor (Amateur Teleprinting Over Radio). There are many more modes in the hobby...digital and otherwise...but for now, this will do. And, the digital modes can be used on the “digital portions” of nearly all amateur radio bands available to your license class...digital modes are not just for HF.

As a side note, when I was still able to have an HF setup and indoor antennas at my residence; one day, on 20 meters, using an indoor antenna, with just 15 watts of power, inside my apartment with the windows closed, I worked a station in Utah, 1000 miles away, on JT-65!! Plus, I was seeing other stations on the other side of the world!! And, one time, I saw a demo of PSK31, where you had around 10 QSO's in a narrow bandwidth space. Various software programs, freeware and shareware, are available, for these digital modes.

For those who don't want to “talk” on ham radio, digital is the mode for you!! Depending on the mode of operation, and the software used...the computer will do the logging, and identify your station for you. You just type in what you want to say. Awhile back, I heard of 2 amateur radio operators in the Hawaiian Islands, who could not get a decent voice QSO. So, they went up into the digital portion of the 70 centimeter band, fired up their computers, software, and went to PSK31 mode. They reportedly “never had such a good QSO”. While PSK31 is not “error free”, as packet radio is, you can still get a good idea as to the conversation, with what is being typed.

On the 10th day of Hamming, my radio gave to me:

10 Different Wouff Hongs, 9 modes on digital, 8 the Hamfest Start Time, 7 Nights Of Net Logs, 6 Meter Clean Sweep, 5 Band DXCC. Four sets of antennas, three different radios, two license upgrades, and a license, callsign from the FCC.

Founded by T.O.M. (“The Old Man”, W1AW, Hiram Percy Maxim himself), The Royal Order Of The Wouff Hong is a “secret society”, with the “device” to be used as a mode of discipline and correction on “lids” (ham radio operators with poor on the air operating habits). No explanation or details are known on how the discipline, or the mode of discipline, is to be administered to the miscreant amateur radio operator.

You must be a paid up ARRL member...either for the current year, or an ARRL Life Member...to participate; and the initiation ceremony is done only at ARRL Division or National Conventions. There are no dues, no officers, and no politics in The Royal Order Of The Wouff Hong. And, there's nothing degrading or vulgar during the ceremony. You will do a lot of laughing...plus, all of the participants get a very nice certificate afterwards. I personally have gone through it twice, and look forward to doing so again. As for the laughter; for both the Wouff Hong Ceremony, as was for this net...you better “have an empty bladder”, as it were, before the ceremony starts. While that wasn't my problem, I laughed until I hurt, and thought I was going to cry!!

A picture of The Wouff Hong...plus the Rettysnitch, and the Ugerumph...and a history of each can be found at <http://www.rettysnitch.org> – again that's <http://www.rettysnitch.org>

On the 11th day of Hamming, my radio gave to me:

11 New Harmonics, 10 Different Wouff Hongs, 9 modes on digital, 8 the Hamfest Start Time, 7 Nights Of Net Logs, 6 Meter Clean Sweep, 5 Band DXCC. Four sets of antennas, three different radios, two license upgrades, and a license, callsign from the FCC.

While not all ham radio operators will get married and have a family...especially a large one...and the total of harmonics may be more like one or two, instead of eleven; the bottom line is that we need to get new blood into the hobby...to replace those who are leaving the hobby by either letting their licenses lapse...or they die (becoming Silent Keys).

I've personally been at license exam sessions, as a VE Session Liaison, as well as an administering VE, where the entire family (father, mother, and children) have all gotten their Technician Class license in the same day...talk about spreading the happiness around of the new licensees!! It was truly a joy to sign the CSCE's of the newly licensed family of hams!! Basically, the youth of today are the amateur radio operators of tomorrow. In short, if we don't replace these operators that are no longer in the hobby, attrition will kill ham radio...no pun intended.

On the 12th day of Hamming, my radio gave to me:

12 Hours at Field Day, 11 New Harmonics, 10 Different Wouff Hongs, 9 modes on digital, 8 the Hamfest Start Time, 7 Nights Of Net Logs, 6 Meter Clean Sweep, 5 Band DXCC. Four sets of antennas, three different radios, two license upgrades, and a license, callsign from the FCC. Always held on the 4th full weekend of June each year, ARRL Field Day is a chance for ham radio operators to set up portable operations in a wide variety of locations, running on emergency power for 24 hours, and to show the public, that truly...”when all else fails, ham radio is there”.

A similar event, known as Winter Field Day, is held during the latter part of January...usually the last full weekend of the month. Further details are available at <http://www.winterfieldday.com>, and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/winterfieldday/>