Ozark QRP Banner

The Official Newsletter of the Four State QRP Group

WQ5RP

February 2026 Edition

In This Edition: QRP Dummy Load Lamp, Flexibility in Station Design, Westward Ho POTA, SLQS 38 Years, NFØR-SK, LOG Receive Antenna, Winter POTA Activation - Observations & Tips, A simple Battery Pack for Portable Operations, For the POTA folks

Four States QRP Group Presents OzarkCon 2026

OzarkCon will be live, in-person, on Thursday March 26th thru Saturday March 28th, 2026 - We hope to see you there! http://ozarkcon.com/index.php
Registration: http://www.ozarkcon.com/Registration/index.php

Thanks to all who contributed to this issue. Also thanks to those who sent in comments on Straight Key Night.

A video about the beginning of Single Sideband
Nick Tusa Talking about Wes Shrum and SSB: https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=4tPlWNzNllA

Applied Electromagnetic Field Theory Chapter 29 -- Electromagnetic Radiation and Infinitesimal Dipole Antennas - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTZ_n1UDE-0 *Good video on antennas.*

Ham Radio 101: The Origins and Evolution of Q-Codes An interesting story from DX Engineering! Ham Radio 101: The Origins and Evolution of Q-Codes

Applied Electromagnetic Field Theory Chapter 29 -- Electromagnetic Radiation and Infinitesimal Dipole Antennas - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTZ_n1UDE-0 *Good video on antennas.*

David Gauding – NFØR, SK

1942 - 2025

Dave has now left this world for a better place. His illness of the past few years and recent Cancer took his life on December 7, 2025.

He had a love for Ham Radio, Bluegrass music and yes, a good Pork Steak. Dave would often say Sandra (his XYL) would be out with friends so he would go to Schnucks and pick up a nice thick Pork Steak to grill for dinner.

Dave's interest in radio was for the simpler things. Simple radios running QRP, small transmitters and receivers, wire antennas, etc. He had more enjoyment with QRP especially milliwatting than if he had a kilowatt station. Do more with less, pushing the limit.

Dave was instrumental (along with KCØPP) starting the St. Louis QRP Society in 1987, the first known independent local QRP club in the country. The goal was to keep it local so not to compete with ARCI and the Michigan QRP Clubs. He worked diligently behind the scenes. He found engineers to design circuits for our kits, others to procure the parts and some folks to put the kits together that helped make the club a success.

He made friends throughout the world, from England to Australia that he corresponded with regularly. Trading ideas, projects, antenna designs and newsletters. From time to time he would be contacted by other Hams interested in QRP and having a desire to start a club of their own. Dave would give them ideas and hints on how to make a club successful. When we had extra parts left over from one of our kit projects, Dave would send parts to them so they could produce their own kits and projects. He helped others in Iowa, Arkansas, Colorado and who knows where else. Dave was also an active member of the QRP-ARCI, Michigan QRP Club, G-QRP Club, Four State QRP Group, NorCal QRP Group and a few others, especially in the 1990's and early 2000's.

Dave was a Hams Ham. Always working on a project or kit. He loved to play with antenna designs. His famous Aluminum Cloud antenna that he installed in the attic of his townhouse. He unrolled aluminum foil horizontally, hung it in the attic, fed it like a dipole with two paralleled RG-6 coax cables using the center conductors as a shielded balanced feedline all the way to the basement. And how about his "Nose Hair Special"? A 43-foot aluminum vertical that was used on a few Field Days. The nickname came from those standing under the antenna looking up amazed at the 43-foot height. Aside from Field Day, one of Dave's favorite operating activities was going into the field and operating portable. Long before POTA was ever thought of.

One year at the Four State QRP Convention in Joplin, Mo. he discovered the Magnetic Loop antenna and was so impressed that when he got home, he began a search for some type of loop material. Dave did not have a lot of tools or a machine shop, so he went to a local bike shop and talked the owner into giving him an old aluminum bicycle rim. He attached it to a board with screws, added a variable capacitor and used a piece of wire for the coupling loop. As he would say, *The Damned Thing Worked*.

While sitting at the dining room table one evening working CW at 1 watt, he managed to work France on the loop. This had become his go to portable antenna.

There are so many stories and memories that could go on forever. We will miss Dave's monthly column in the Peanut Whistle. He will be deeply missed by all.

Rest in peace Dear friend!

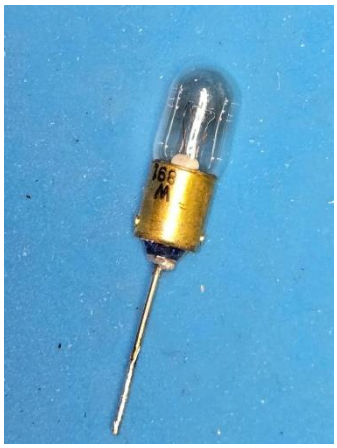
Dave Pickin at Field Day

A little rain at Field Day would not stop Dave!

Dummy Load Lamp

While rummaging through an old inventory box of parts, I discovered a tool from the past. Back in the day, as us Old Timers would say, we used a light bulb dummy load when working on our CB radios. *Sorry, I did say CB.* This was in the 1960's to early 1970's.

The lamp is inserted into a PL-259. A wire is soldered to the center pin of the lamp. A small file is required to file down the pins on each side of the bayonet lamp. Leave enough so that the lamp screws into the threads of the PL-259. Once the lamp fits tightly, solder the wire in the pin of the PL-259.



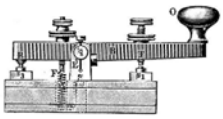
Note: Early Amateurs used incandescent light bulbs as dummy loads when tuning a transmitter. But the impedance would change as the filament heated up.

So how does it work on HF. Well as you can see, at 5 watts the light glows brightly and the SWR is 1.2 on 20 meters. Testing on the other bands gave an SWR of 1.1 up to 2.1. Very reasonable for testing output of a QRP radio.

So this is a simple QRP Dummy Load that takes just a couple of minutes to build. The lamp used is a #1891 – 14 volt, .24 amp, 3.36 watts.

de KCØPP

Straight Key Night



Paul Wussow – WA9GMW
I was trying to make contacts with my BJ while I could hear Larry, he could not hear me. I used the built in key. 7.122MHZ

KCØPP: Had a fun time, made a few contacts on 40 meters. Used the NØSA straight key, TS-830S at 125 watts out and the SLQS End Fed 40/20/10 Antenna in the attic. Also worked quite a few POTA stations with the straight key.

Dave WØDCX: I made 6 SKN QSOs, all on 40M. I would have liked more. It's always fun to get back to the straight key. I was using my beloved Begali Blade.

Herbert, AF4JF: I made only 8 QSOs during the SKN activity, mostly because I didn't have the patience to wait while listening to two stations finish their conversation before giving me a chance to call. This was especially frustrating when someone else called with more power and made me wait even longer.

One of my eight QSOs was particularly interesting — W4YE. The operator, Buddy near Roanoke, VA, told me he was licensed in 1952, which is 74 years ago (for comparison, I was born in 1961 and licensed in 1976 — "only" 49 years ago). His original callsign was WN6QPC, and the callsign W4YE had belonged to his father. We talked about our equipment and discovered that we had both used the HW-7 at some point in our ham careers. It was a nice QSO that lasted about 20 minutes. Buddy switched between a mechanical bug and a straight key during the QSO, while I used only my straight key — something I'm no longer very accustomed to.

Buddy was running 100 W into a dipole. My next contact, Mike AD5A in Texas, was using a Flex 6600 with 500 W into a two-element Yagi 75 feet up. He was 599 on my LoG receive antenna, compared to 589 on my EFHW. He gave me 579 for my 100 W and EFHW. I have been using 7MHz.

I was using an FT-2000 and an old Speed-X straight key.

Steve WD4CFN: I worked Bryan, WØESE, in MO Bayou Jumper to Bayou Jumper on 7.122Mhz crystal. I was using a 140' Doublet up about 45'. I was using a Navy flameproof straight key. Very fun stuff!

Larry W7DGP: I made 3 SKN contacts with my Bayou Jumper on 7122. Big DX from the Seattle area: eastern OR, Ogden UT and N. CA. I got to use my recently restored McElroy bug: "McElroy Standard Key", 1938. Antenna was the 40M rotatable dipole part of my 2-EL SteppIR. 40M was fairly active that evening with EU coming in at around local midnight. That's big here in the Pacific NW on 40M. I also tried 7030, 33 and 40 but no contacts.
73,

Tom Sevart N2UHC: I only made one SKN contact, and that was QRO.

Mike – ADØYM: I had a lot going on with my family so took a brief opportunity to participate. Took the easy route using my home station ... a Yaesu FT-450D, OCF Dipole and Navy Flameproof key. Operated at 5 watts. Searched and pounced for some SKN callers and got one response. It was a bit more than a contest exchange, but not by much. I also had a local contact with another station using his Bayou Jumper. He was challenged by wide and busy band reception. That QSO ended abruptly as apparently he lost my signal.
72,

Karl Schwab, KO8S: I participated in SKN this year, made 5 QSO's (using the straight key is brutal), enough to get me in the pages of QST. As a Novice years ago, I worked All States with a straight key and a handful of crystals, 75 watts and a dipole. I was really good with a straight key back then.

After upgrading from Novice to Advance, I went to using a keyer which helped me greatly improve my code speed, and I never looked back. And now, that transceivers have built in keyers, my straight keys go on a shelf with my vacuum tubes.

ARRL sent me an email a few days ago with the pix below encouraging me to be a participant in SKN and I love it! When I sent my SKN log in to ARRL, I suggested that I would like to see the pix below be made available to all SKN entries in the form of an eCertificate.

Equipment used: Xiegu G90, 20 watts, Speed-X straight key on 30, 40, 80 meters, antenna, a dipole with open wire feeders.

Also note; For the entire month of January (see January QST page 93) the Straight Century Club ran a special event station, K3Y offering a QSL card and certificate for stations that participate; I used my straight key to make some contacts with them to collect some of their "wallpaper". I am not a member of this group as I don't normally use a straight key anymore.
72/73, 4SQRP member 1772, ARRL Life Member

Bryan, WØESE: I had a wonderful experience during Straight Key Night 2026. I used various radios and keys during the event.

I started SKN by getting Bayou Jumper on the air. I started with my 7122 KHz crystal first. Connected an EFHW antenna and my Begali Intrepid bug. My CQ was answered by Steve, WD4CFN in TN. Steve was on the air with his Bayou Jumper as well. This was my first Bayou Jumper to Bayou Jumper QSO!

After our QSO Steve took to calling CQ and I moved down the dial to call CQ with my 7114 KHz crystal. I had some more great contacts.

73,
Bryan
WØESE

Four State QRP Kit Updates:

The Hilltopper Upgrade Kit will be released soon. It will add the following:

- A display
- Many other added features

The long-awaited Power/SWR Meter about ready to release.

The mento Morse keyer will release at Ozarkcon

Flexibility in Station Design

By Wes Spence, AC5K

Having been licensed over 53 years, one of the absolute truths I have learned in amateur radio is that that there is no such thing as the ultimate station design. First of all, there are so many different operating styles and ways to enjoy the hobby that each specialty requires its own design. My specialty is CW. Also, over the years, most amateurs will find their specific interests within the hobby will drift around. I firmly believe the only way to go in station design is by incorporating in as much flexibility as possible.

The photo shows my current station as of this writing. It was different a year ago, and it will probably be different a year from now. This radio desk began life about 46 years ago, when I traded another piece of furniture for a VERY robustly built two drawer file cabinet. It may literally be war surplus, considering the "Army OD" color of it. I knew I wanted the base of my station to be as strong as possible, and that cabinet filled the bill. All I initially did was start by adding a sheet of 3/4" plywood on top and build strong legs from 2x4s to hold it up. I used the station for some years with just this simple home brewed desk top. It is also important to note that the three main pieces of the desk are assembled using carriage bolts that make a strong construction but also allows the station to be easily broken down and transported to a new location. I also eventually added felt on the desktop with quarter inch glass with rounded edges over it. That not only protects the wood, but also allows me to put various papers under the glass to use as references while operating.

As I collected more equipment, I found I needed a second shelf, which is the next layer of the station going vertically. Sometime after that, I added the sub shelf where the 24 hour clock is located. I built all of my shelves for maximum strength using 3/4" plywood with dado

and rabbit joints assembled using wood glue and ample screws. Since it is unlikely your station will get lighter over time, it is best to build everything as strongly as possible. The additional cost is not that significant, and always cheaper that a potential "cave in"!

The photo shows two more shelves on top of the second shelf. None of the shelfs are attached to the desk top or to each other. The dead weight is plenty to hold them in place, and each shelf has some felt on the bottom to prevent scratching the surface below. This way, it is easy to slide a shelf in to a new position without major trouble. Years ago, I had trouble arranging things so that I could incorporate a computer in to my station. Back when I first started designing this desk, if you mentioned using a computer with your radio equipment, you would have been laughed off the planet! Now it is almost required.

My design is augmented, because I also built a home office desk using the same modular design mindset. My office also has separate shelf units. Over the years, I have exchanged various shelf modules between my office and radio desks. Of course I can always build yet another shelf module if that is needed in the future.

I made one addition in the last few months. That is the wing shelf on the right side holding a monitor for a panoramic adaptor and an up cycled commercial radio for two meters that I mostly just use to monitor NOAA weather radio. My station is currently placed across the corner of the room for easier access to the innumerable wires in the back of the station. That wing shelf was built in such a way that it folds down under the desktop, so if needed I can still place the desk flat against a wall on that side. A secondary advantage of the way my desk is oriented is that I can enjoy the wildlife out of the window on the left side of the desk while operating.

Another thing to consider in station design is comfort and fun. You want to enjoy your station beyond just its functional purpose. In my case, I have added some artistic doodles wood burned in the drawer fronts that are stained with my favorite color (green). The old Hallicrafter's W9TO Keyer box between the radios was up cycled to house a modern keyer, a de-bouncing circuit for the bug, and switching to switch the paddle between various keyers and the other radio while adding some nostalgia to the station. Knick knacks and house plants also add to the vibe of the station.

Everyone will have their specific needs in designing their own stations. I do suggest that flexibility and comfort are strongly considered in any design.

Wes

Westward Ho! POTA

By Dave Corbin, WØDCX

A road trip is an opportunity for POTA activations far afield from one's usual area of radio operation. In November I made a weekend trip west on I-70 from St. Louis to Kansas City. There are several POTA parks a few minutes off I-70, and I activated two of them; Whetstone Creek SCA and Maple Leaf Lake SCA.

My most memorable activation of the trip, however, was in Kansas City, Missouri at Minor Park. Minor is a city park way out on the south end of town, a short two miles from my boyhood home in an area called Red Bridge. The park is situated along the Blue River and has a feel of nature and solitude. While Minor is not a POTA park, it does encompass a convergence of three famous National Historic Trails that are all in the POTA registry: the **Santa Fe Trail**, the **Oregon Trail**, and the **California Trail**. This place fires up the imagination with thoughts of epic adventures from the pioneer days. What's especially awe inspiring here are the remains of an historic "swale", a depression in the ground that measures about 15 feet wide and 2 feet deep that was carved by the westward passage of thousands of wagon wheels and animal hooves. There is a stone monument near the swale, and one can stand on the Trail itself and gaze down its length towards where the pioneers crossed the Blue River at a distinctive snake-like bend.

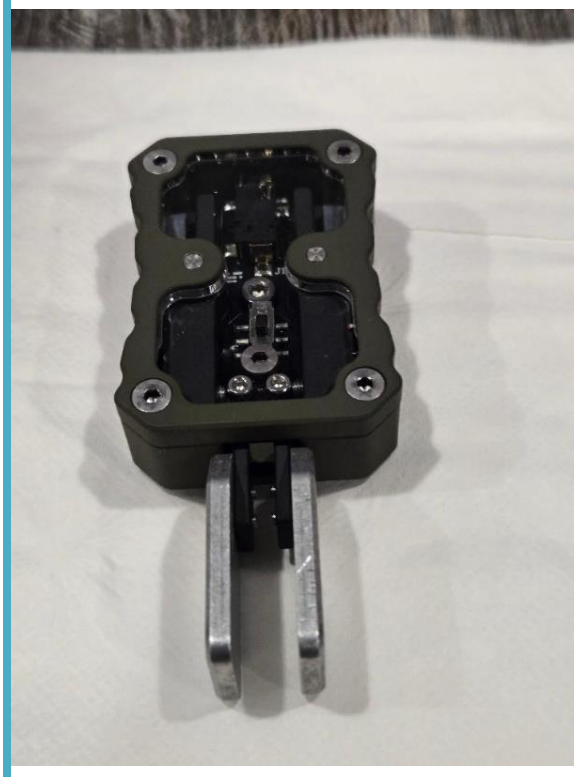
During my activation early Sunday morning, I had 40-meter QSOs with fellow SLQS members Jim KKØU and Jeff NØMII who always seem to be listening for POTA CQs from other club members.

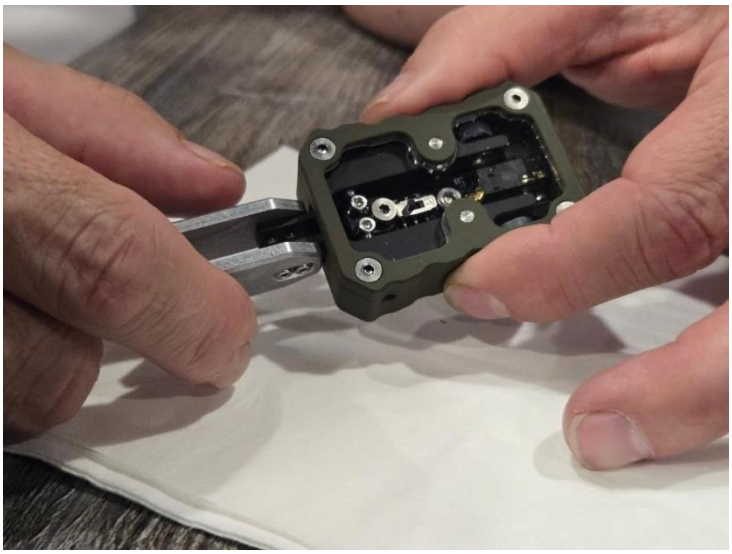
I suggest doing some map study ahead of time and reading the posted signage when you get there to find a suitable spot for your activation. And remember, although the online POTA map shows a locator pin for only the Santa Fe Trail at Minor Park, three historic trails overlap here, so it is indeed a POTA 3-fer.

St. Louis QRP Society Celebrates the 38th Anniversary of their First Meeting

Great anniversary dinner! Everyone had a great time. A lot of good conversation. There were discussions on Winter Field Day, Winterfest, The Bike-In Pota Event and much more. Winter FD will again be held at Stacy Park. KB5YZY has contacted the city for a permit. NØWL has ordered a table for Winterfest 2026. There were some discussions for a group to attend the Big Brutus Bash Event in 2026, so stayed tuned to this frequency.

Aaron, AEØLZ walked around the room with a tape measure. He had everyone pull out the tape to what they thought was 6 inches without looking at it as sort of a contest. Everyone wondered what he was up to. It turned out that Tony, KTØAA was the winner with the tape out to exactly 6 inches. At that point Aaron presented him with a new portable paddle from Modern Morse.





November 18, 2025

The 38th Anniversary of our first meeting in 1987.

Heading into our 38th year and going strong.

28 members attended.

There were good conversations and fellowship at every table.

Straight Key Night

POTA Edition!

US-7851

Every December 31st, the ARRL sponsors Straight Key Night (SKN) and it's a great event. Though I'm not a fan of sending with a hand key, the rules allow the use of any mechanical sending device which includes semi-automatic Bugs and Sideswipers. As many in the club know, I have been collecting "Bugs" for over 35 years and enjoy using them on the air and the telegraph wire.
Because I have constant S7 noise at my QTH, I rarely operate from home. I wanted to operate SKN this year but knew it would be a struggle at my QTH. Many SKN operators pair their hand keys with QRP rigs which doesn't bode well for me. Any signal below S7 would be below the noise floor at my house.

Since I am an avid Parks on the Air (POTA) operator, I thought about trying to activate a park and use a bug instead of the Vibroplex single lever paddle I usually use. In this way, I could find a park with a low noise level (many are S0) and still participate in SKN. The only hitch was that the weather would be on the chilly side with temps in the mid-30s.

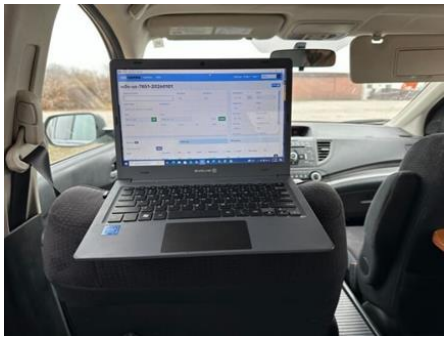
In the past, I have activated parks sitting outside in chilly weather but, as each year goes by, it gets a little less fun. If I was going to do this, I wanted to figure out a way to operate from my car so that my hands would not be too cold to operate the bug. I had operated from inside my car a year to two ago but it was cramped and not easy to have all the equipment within easy reach. My car is a mini-SUV without a lot of room so I needed a better way.

Before solving the ergonomics of operating inside my small car, I first had to address the issue of my non-bug friendly callsign, WBØTUA. A 2x3 call is a "load" on any telegraph instrument and even worse in the zero call district. I reserved 1x1 W0S since it was short and would take advantage of the bug's automatic dots for the letter "S". I had not recalled a "bug" POTA activation in the past so I posted my plans on the Facebook POTA page to stimulate interest. The responses I received were encouraging.

The day before the event, I decided to plan in earnest. Instead of trying to find space in the car for everything I usually pack for a POTA activation, I decided to leave at home anything that I didn't absolutely need to operate. That included not bringing all my spare equipment and just trusting that what I had would work (or I would just cancel). It was hard for me to leave my duplicate equipment at home as I had frequently used it to salvage a park activation when something had failed. However, it was important to minimize clutter.

Once I had narrowed down my equipment, I planned out and set up everything at home to figure out where things would fit best and be accessible. I tried different configurations of where to locate the battery, laptop, bug, radio, etc. When I finalized the layout, I took a picture and then packed it back up in the usual transit cases to ensure it wasn't damaged on the way to the park.

To minimize setup time, I pre-placed items in the approximate location where they would be during the activation. For example, equipment that would be accessed from the back seat was placed in the back seat before I left home. Similarly, equipment that could be located in the front seat was put there before I pulled out of the driveway.



I also stole good ideas from other experienced POTA operators. In the past, someone had recommended using a TV tray from the back seat so I tested it out and home and then copied that good idea when I found it would work for me.

I did not plan on running the engine while activating, mostly to avoid any RFI from the vehicle electronics. I expected the warmth generated by the car heater enroute to the park would be sufficient to keep me comfortable during the activation. During set up, I minimized opening the car doors/car windows to keep any residual heat in the vehicle. This mostly worked. If the activation goes on for an hour or two, the car interior can still get cold if the engine is not running. Having another heating option (e.g. "hot hands" chemical hand warmers, tent safe catalytic heater, etc.) would have been helpful.

I didn't have any sort of permanent mobile installation in my car so I had to figure out a way to get the coax feedline into the vehicle without letting all the heat out. I took a pool noodle and cut a slit along its length and used it as a seal on one of the windows to allow the coax to enter without letting all the cold air in.

When I had everything setup, I spotted myself on the POTA spotters page and crossed my fingers. SKN had brought out a lot of CW ops and I immediately started getting calls. Over the ninety minutes I was QRV, I logged 112 CW QSOs. It was the most CW QSOs I've had in a POTA activation when I wasn't operating a contest such as Field Day or a state QSO party.

As expected, the park noise level was so low that I could easily hear low power stations. Many of them were obviously QRP since they signed off with "72" and one station even noted he was using 1W. Of course, the highlight is always working SLQS club members. In the log for this activation were Keith, KCØPP, Herb, AJ4JF, Mike, WBØSND, and Tony, KTØAA.

I'm so glad I decided to revisit operating inside the car as it gave me the opportunity to participate in SKN when I otherwise would not have been able to do so. I benefitted from trying something unusual, a bug activation, and pairing it with ARRL's SKN which ensured lots of CW activity. I hope some others can benefit from what I learned and build on it with their own good ideas.

73 de WBØTUA

Summarizing my Observations & Tips - WBØTUA

Some observations I made from the recent activation:
I needed to figure out how to operate from the inside of my car since the weather has gotten colder. In past years, I just set up outside and toughed it out with a heavy jacket, hat, thick socks, etc. I have a mini-SUV (Honda CR-V) so not a ton of room inside. Today, I activated in my car and learned a few things that will make my next "in car" activation easier.

1) Leave anything at home that I didn't absolutely need. That included not bringing all my spare equipment and just trusting that what I had would work (or I would just cancel). When space is at a premium, try to keep clutter to a minimum.

2) Plan out and set up everything at home to figure out where things would fit best and be accessible (and then pack it up for safe transit).

3) Pre-place items in the approximate location where they will be during the activation. For example, equipment would be accessed from the back seat was placed in the back seat before I left home.

4) Steal good ideas from other people. Someone in the past said a TV tray could work well in a back seat so I shamelessly copied that good idea.

5) When setting up, minimize opening car doors/car windows to keep any residual heat from the car heater in the vehicle.

6) A pool noodle with slit can be an effective seal for coax fed through a window

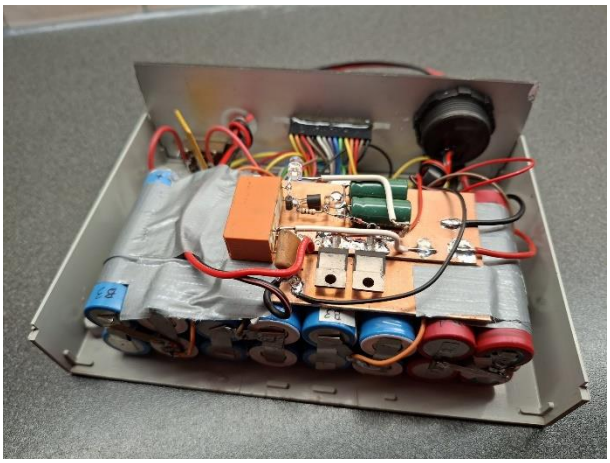
7) The car interior still gets cold if you're not running the engine and the activation goes for an hour or two. Another heating option (e.g. "hot hands" chemical hand warmers, tent safe catalytic heater, etc.) can be helpful.

A simple Battery Pack for Portable Operations

For the Windcamp bag for the IC-705, the next step was to make a smaller and lighter battery for this pack, to replace the 7Ah SLAB.

This reduces the weight, and makes some room for a simple wire antenna.

This time I started by looking for a suitable box, rather than make one myself from pieces of PCB.
I found an old TV UHF Convertor in my Junk Box.



The room inside looked big enough to add **not one, but two** battery packs of **8 Li-Ion cells** of the 18650 type, in a 4S2P configuration. That makes it a battery pack with a built-in backup battery!

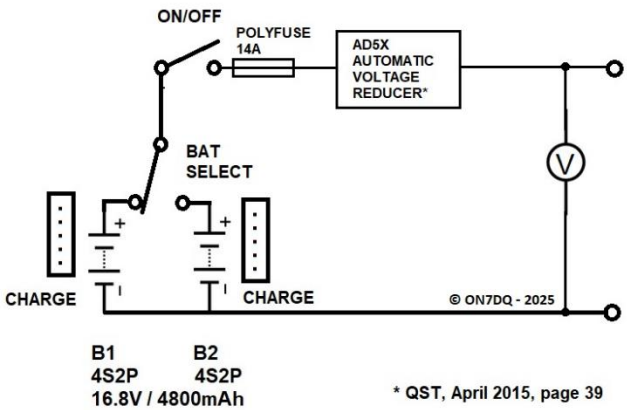
I preferred not to put 4 cells in parallel into one pack, if one cell goes bad in such a pack, you could loose all of your power.

Why not make a 3S2P pack that gives 12.6V?
As I measured, an IC-705 will only produce something like 8W with 12V, only with 13.8V or more you will get the full 10W out of the rig.

So I selected 16 good cells from my stash of old laptop batteries. Each of those cells has a capacity of 2400 mAh when new, so in theory my pack would have a total capacity of 9.6 Ah (two times 4.8Ah).

Being used cells, this capacity will probably be less than this figure, but should still be useful for powering the IC-705, time will tell ...

Here is an attempt to show a schematic of what is inside the box.



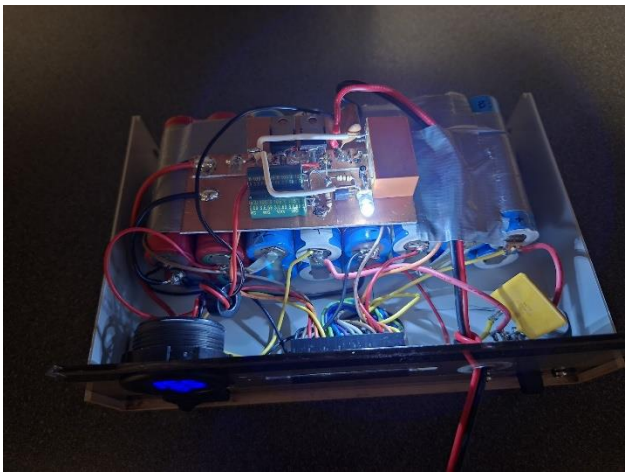
Each pack has its' own charging contact for a balanced charger (the 5 pin blocks in the diagram).
Two switches follow: one for selecting which pack to use, and an ON/OFF switch.
A 14A polyfuse protects the pack when a short circuit or overload happens.

The batteries, when fully charged, can deliver 16.8V, which is just too much for the IC-705. Maximum voltage is 13.8 + 15%, which makes 15.87V.
So I included an **Automatic Voltage Reducer** in line with the output, after an idea by Phil Salas, AD5X (his article about that can be found **here**).

Finally, a Chinese voltmeter is connected at the output terminals.

I connected one output with PowerPoles, but one could also add a second output to power an extra piece of equipment: an autotuner, an amplifier, a fan, ...

This is the (ugly) inside of the box .... doesn't it look like a bomb package?
I don't think I would dare to take it on an airplane trip, hi.



I made a small "quick connect" adapter for the balanced charger.
The standard **JST XH** connectors that are used on these chargers are difficult to unplug, and a little fragile. So I just used some pins and pinheaders for a simple and quick connection. The adapter can remain connected to the charger. The user only has to remember where to put the "red" wire on the battery pack connector (see front/center on the top picture). It's not foolproof, but what fool would want to use this battery pack anyway? 😊

How much weight is saved ?
The whole box weighs **exactly 1 kg**.
Compare this to the **2.5 kg** for a 7 Ah SLAB !

So we have now room for a 1.5 kg of antennas or other accessories!

73 de Luc, ON7DQ (KFØCR)

For the POTA folks... Dec. 4, 2025

Hey POTA folks—your friendly Virginia Map Guy checking in.
Unfortunately, I'm here with some disappointing news. As of today, all *Wildlife Management Areas* (WMAs) and *State Fishing Lakes* in Virginia have been set to **inactive** in pota.app. These locations are no longer valid for activation. This decision was not taken lightly, nor was it made by me alone.

WHY THIS HAPPENED

Over the past year, there has been a growing pattern of activators being approached by conservation officers at several WMAs—and nearly every State Fishing Lake—and told to leave due to not having a required *Special Use Permit* (SUP). After personally looking into the SUP process and attempting to obtain one for my own planned activation, the request was denied. The reason: amateur radio activity is considered outside the intended purpose of these areas.

Further conversations confirmed that **future SUP requests for amateur radio would also be denied**, making it clear that there was no viable path forward to keep these parks active. With no workable compromise and no indication this restriction will be temporary, the decision was made to deactivate them statewide.

ADDRESSING THE EXPECTED QUESTIONS

Some WMAs never experienced issues. Some individual activators had entirely positive interactions. Unfortunately, we can't selectively keep a few parks active while others are closed. Eventually, even the "quiet" WMAs would face the same SUP denials, and continuing activations could lead to fines and—more importantly—damage the reputation of amateur radio.
This change is meant to prevent that kind of fallout before it spreads further.

A FEW REMINDERS FOR RESPONSIBLE ACTIVATION ELSEWHERE

These points aren't new, but they're worth keeping in mind to minimize our footprint and maintain good relationships with land managers:

- **Keep your footprint small.** Avoid large antenna fields or big setups. Vehicle-based stations (hamsticks, mag-mounts, etc.) are ideal.
- **Be mindful of timing and impact.** Consider seasons, sensitive habitats, and the primary purpose of the land you're operating on.
- **Stay respectful during interactions.** Most officials aren't familiar with amateur radio. A positive encounter helps all of us.
- **If asked to pack up, don't argue.** Show any permits or documentation you have, but don't escalate. A bad interaction can have long-term consequences.
- **Report issues to your state mapping representative.** We rely on your feedback. If we don't know about recurring problems at a park, we can't work to address them.

I'll keep comments open as long as the discussion remains constructive.

73,
W4BKR

https://www.reddit.com/r/amateurradio/comments/1ph1mj7/approx_50_parks_removed_from_virginia_pota_map/

My experience with the LOG

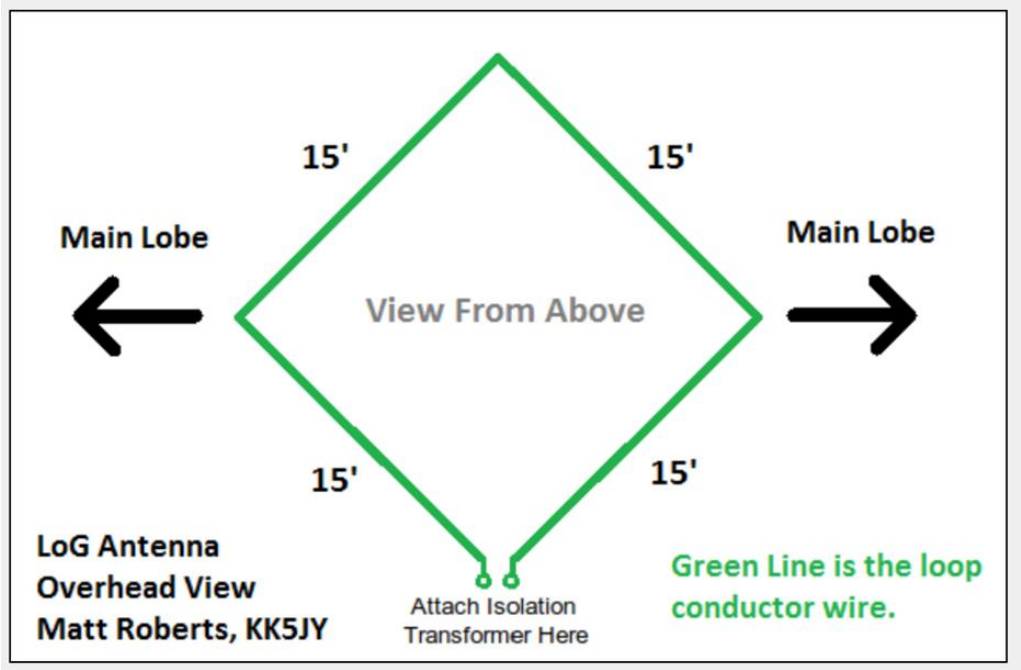
Receive Antenna

(by Herbert Ullmann, AF4JF)

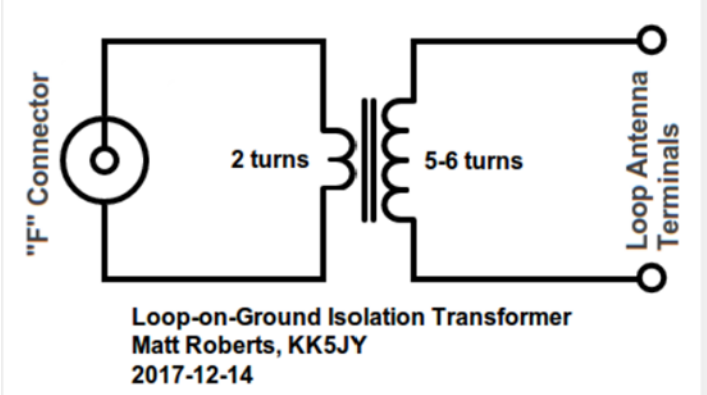
LOG stands for " **L**oop **O**n the **G**round" – a receive only antenna made from a small loop of wire and an isolation transformer. I have built one based on information from ***this web site*** (which is also the source of the pictures used in this article): https://www.kk5jy.net/LoG

I enjoy operating on the 160m and 80m bands, but my backyard is not large enough for full-size antennas. I can generate a signal that occasionally reaches even the DX stations, but I often cannot hear them, even when other U.S. hams are working them.

So, I tried this:



The picture mentions an Isolation Transformer. Here it is:



First, I have tested the antenna in the ARRL 160m CW contest by switching between the 147-ft. EFHW I normally use and the LOG. Here is what I observed:

- It works, but do not expect dramatic improvements. Maybe in stormy weather, but not under normal circumstances.
- A preamp isn't required, but I would recommend one (unless your radio has a built-in preamp you can activate).
- Signals from the LOG were cleaner but slightly weaker than on my EFHW. This means that extremely weak stations (almost ESP-level) won't be detectable from the LOG.
- The band is much cleaner with the LOG, which makes operating more convenient.
- A cleaner band lets you use narrower bandwidth (I went as low as 200Hz using DSP filtering) to eliminate QRM while working weak stations.
- Narrower bandwidth increases sensitivity.
- It is directional, just like my EFHW. Signals from certain directions were stronger on the LOG than on my EFHW.

I was running about 600W (sorry, not QRP). The PA was in transmit the whole time, and I was still able to listen between my dots (QSK) even though the PA uses relays and isn't designed for true QSK.

I was surprised how well this small loop on the ground performed. It is easy to integrate into my setup, so I plan to install a permanent one in my backyard. Note that two antennas rarely experience QSB at the same moment, even when they are only 3ft. apart (diversity). So, if the other station is responding but fading, you just switch antennas.

Second, I have made some DX QSOs on 40m. TO9W and SP50KRF were one "S" unit stronger on the LOG, while HA9RE came in with the same strength on both antennas. This makes me think I should build a larger loop to improve performance on 160m. I will try that in the next contest (CQ WW 160 in January).

HillTopper TallBoy

https://www.4sqrp.com/Hilltopper_TallBoy.php

CW-VOX

https://www.4sqrp.com/CW-VOX.php

4S Cootie Single-Lever Key

https://www.4sqrp.com/cootieKey.php

Four State QRP Comfortable Nets

Meet each Wednesday night beginning at 20:00 Central Time. Add anything to the exchange that you wish, temp, rig, ant, etc.
Checking into all sessions is encouraged. We call it the "Clean Sweep".

CW - 8:00 pm Central time - 40 Meter Net on 7.122 +/- QRM ACØBQ/NCS

CW - 8:30 PM Central time - 80 Meter Net on 3.564 +- QRM ACØBQ/NCS

DMR - 9:00 pm Central time - DMR Net on Talk Group 31654 NØYJ/NCS

JS8 Net - 1700 UTC until 0030 UTC, NYØJ

Currently there is no PSK31 Net

Everyone is welcome to join in!

DMR Voice Net

Wednesday evening DMR Voice Net will be at (Thursday) 0300 UTC (9:00PM Central Time Wednesday/) Four States QRP has a Brandmeister DMR Talk Group (TG31654). Join us to discuss QRP, ask questions, or just ragchew. The Wednesday net is a directed net but any other time you may use the Talk Group to chat with other QRPers. Net Control operator is Bert NØYJ.

For information and help, check out the DMR subgoup on 4sqrp.groups.io

Second Sunday Sprint

Occurs on the second Sunday of each month, 7 to 9 PM Central
Any mode, any band (except WARC & 60 mtrs) -

- **Suggested frequencies: standard calling freq. plus 7122 and 3564 (CW), and 3985, 7285, and 14285 (SSB).**
  as well as the usual QRP watering holes.

QSO's with the same station on different bands are allowed. CW and SSB portions of a band count as two bands.

- **Calling CQ is suggested to be "CQ 4S"**
- **Exchange is "RST, SPC, member number (power if non-member)"**
- **5 Watts max CW, 10 Watts PEP max SSB.**

The station with the most contacts each month will be emailed a certificate. Furthermore, the top three stations with the most SSS contacts during the year will also receive certificates via email.
Scores are submitted via the grpcontest.com/4sqrp website (compliments of W8DIZ).
For full details, please download the complete rules (PDF) here.
For questions, please contact Walter (K5EST):
SecondSundaySprint@4sqrp.com

Thursday Morning

The Four State morning CW Net has been convened for members who like to start the day on the air.
We meet each Thursday morning at 8:00 AM Central on 7122 kc.

7122 has become the Four State 40M hangout frequency, and often members can be found there on any morning.

Editor's Note:

Articles are needed to make every Banner issue successful. If you have something of interest, please send it to the editor at the email address below. You do not need to send a finished article. You can send some comments, notes, etc. and I can put it all together for you. Pictures are always of interest. I prefer articles in ***Word*** format, that works the best, but I will try to work with what you have as I can. Some of the items of interest would be outings and/or operating events by yourself or a group, construction projects, radios, antennas, accessories, QRP Field Day, POTA, SOTA, etc. *Anything QRP is welcome.*

de KCØPP

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