

The Signal Report

A Publication of the Greenwood Amateur Radio Society (GARS)

VOLUME 17 ISSUE 3

MARCH 2020

[HTTP://WWW.W4GWD.ORG](http://www.w4gwd.org)

W4GWD@ARRL.NET

2020 CLUB

OFFICERS

President

David Russ, K4DWR

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Treasurer

Tedd Davison, AI4WN

Repeater Trustee

Buddy Willis, W4DEW

Activities Manager

Andy Bagwell, KN4DYV

Editor in Chief

Michael Wills, KA4CSM

The W4GWD Repeater Network

147.165+ t107.2

Echolink: 584003

443.900+ t107.2

W4GWM/R

145.420- DV

W4DEW/R

146.910- t123.0

WJ4X/R

442.600+ t107.2 / DV

Infrastructure Update

Analog Repeaters are up.

DMR and D-Star are up.

Fusion is up.

Echolink is still down, undergoing technical evaluation.

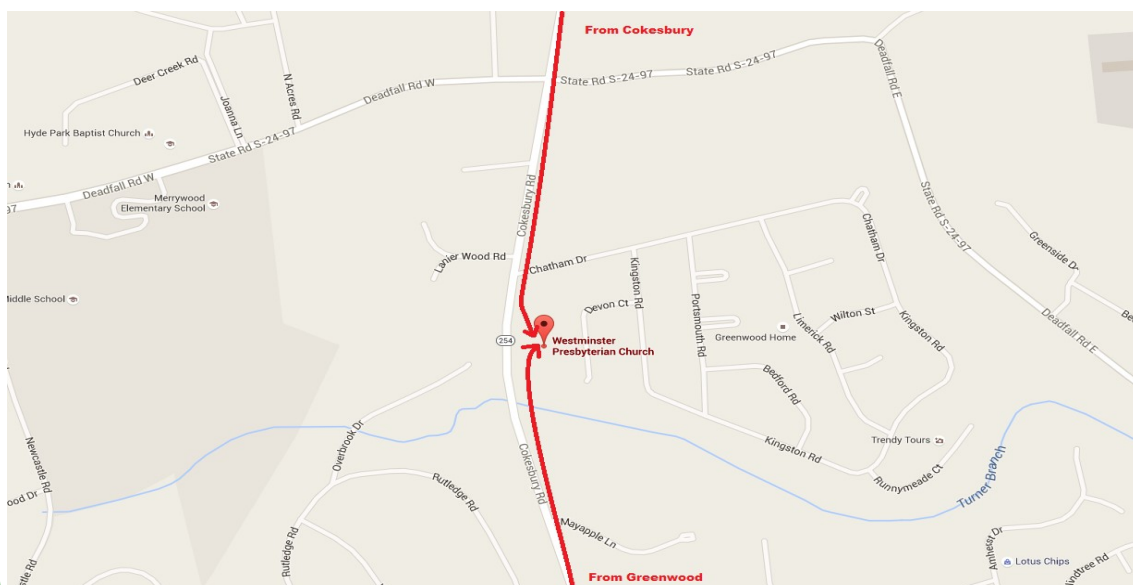
APRS iGate is up.

Packet Node is down, when up it is connected to the Carolinas Packet System at 145.010

Downtown Digi is up and operational

March 2020 Meeting

Our Club meets at the Westminster Presbyterian Church, located at 2330 Cokesbury Rd, Greenwood, SC. We normally meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month making our February meeting on the 11th



Greenwood Amateur Society Recurring Events:



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Chat 'N' Chew

Every Friday at 11:30am the members of the Greenwood Amateur Radio society meet at a local restaurant. Please check in to our Monday or Thursday radio net weekly, as locations change. Everyone is welcome to have lunch or sip your favorite beverage and chat for a while. **Dutch treat.**

Weekly Nets

Each Thursday night at 9pm on the 147.165+ machine,
The Greenwood Amateur Radio Society holds our weekly 2 meter net.
Our UHF net on 443.900+ is held Mondays at 8pm

Help spread the word for everyone to check-in to our net. If you would like to fill in or be a backup net control please contact Tedd Davison AI4WN@arrl.net

VE Exam Session

The GARS ARRL Volunteer Examiners (VE) Team will have an exam session 7:00pm Tuesday, April 7, 2020 at the Westminster Presbyterian Church. The address is 2330 Cokesbury Rd Greenwood SC 29649-9515 We hope to see you there. Please contact Buddy Willis W4DEW w4dew@arrl.net

If you have any ideas for books you'd like to see in the GARS Library, Contact Mitch KJ4JGP

Congratulations

Happy Birthday!

Ken Trapnell	KQ4RB	April 4
Betsy Russ	Fam. Member	April 5
Tedd Davison	AI4WN	April 26
Mike Willis	KN4SIJ	April 28

Happy Anniversary!

Teddy (AE4TJ) & Ashley Johnson	April 1
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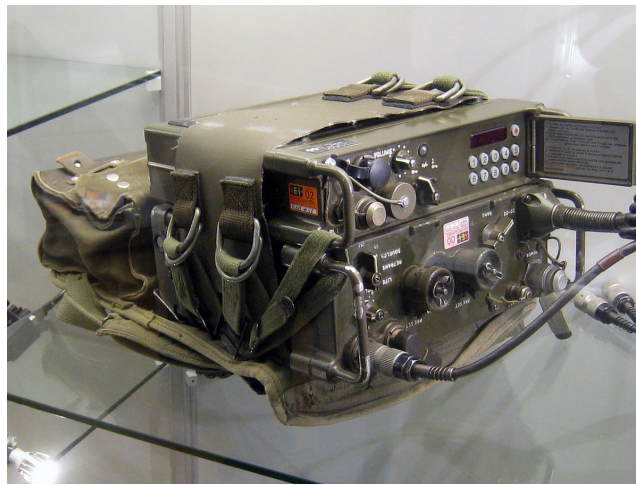
Are you an ARRL Member? Joining ARRL helps protect our rights as Amateur Radio Operators as well as providing education, QSL Bureau, technical advise, and the ARRL VEC. <http://www.arrl.org>





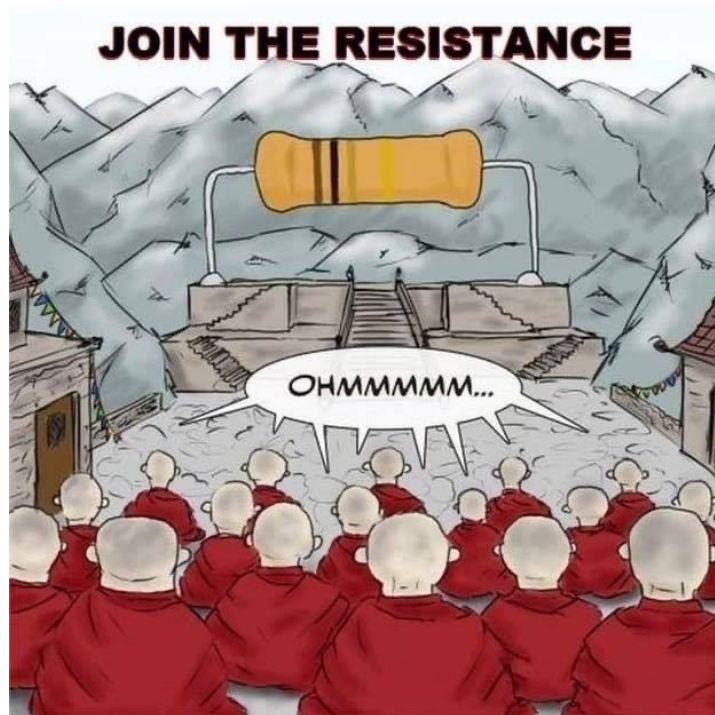
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If you know what this is then the below article is for you.

[https://www.wearethemighty.com/history/how-vietnam-era-commo-guys-talked-through-the-jungles?](https://www.wearethemighty.com/history/how-vietnam-era-commo-guys-talked-through-the-jungles?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=Evergreen&utm_term=History&utm_content=how-vietnam-era-commo-guys-talked-through-the-jungles)
[utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=Evergreen&utm_term=History&utm_content=how-vietnam-era-commo-guys-talked-through-the-jungles](https://www.wearethemighty.com/history/how-vietnam-era-commo-guys-talked-through-the-jungles?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=Evergreen&utm_term=History&utm_content=how-vietnam-era-commo-guys-talked-through-the-jungles)



1929—Radio News

<https://www.americanradiohistory.com/.../Radio-News-1001-Radi...>

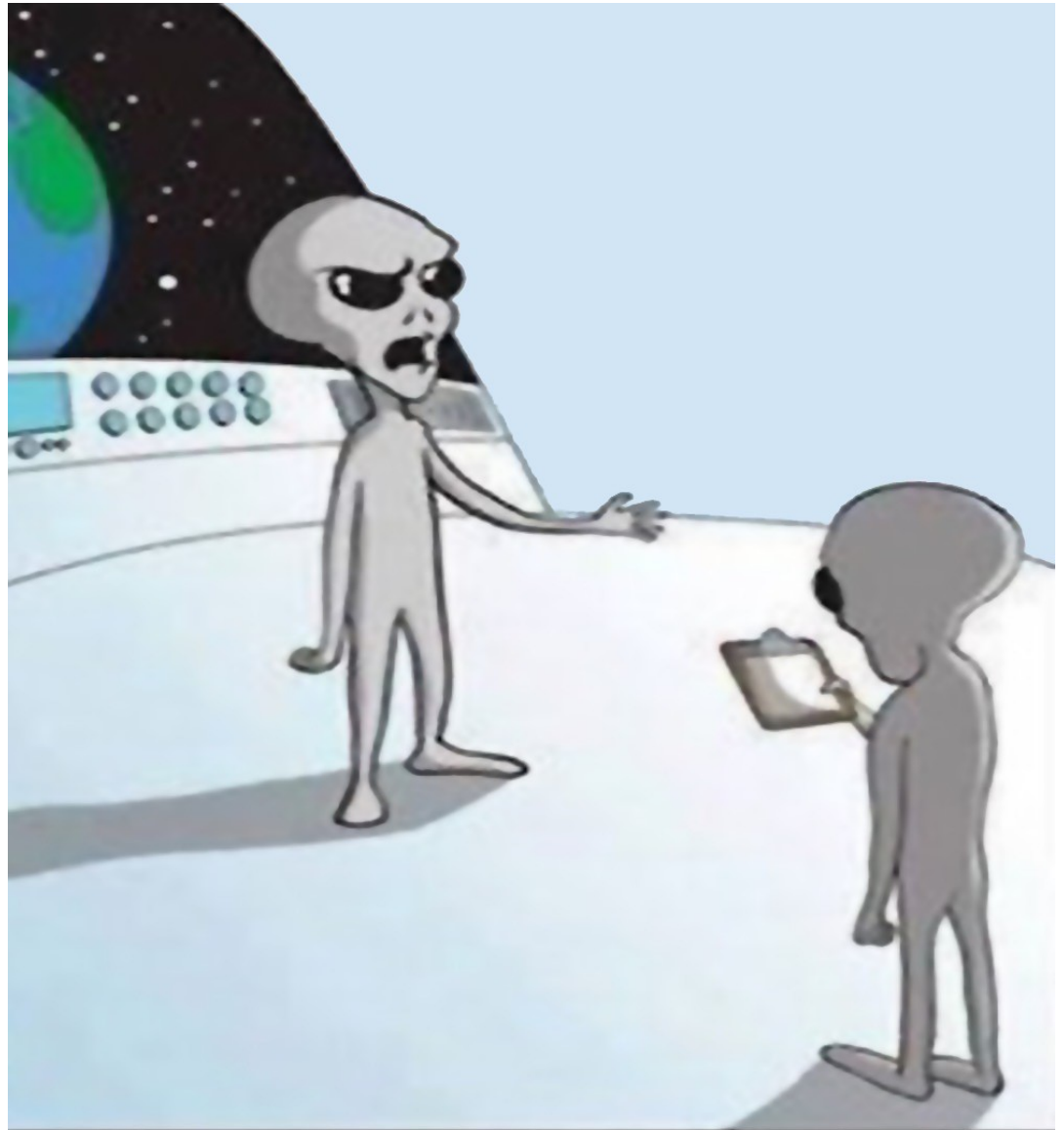


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I spent 2-3 hours with Kevan Nason, N4XL recently. One of the biggest things I took away from this was the importance of having a good antenna, tuned properly, oriented correctly and at the correct height. Using just 100 watts on 40 meters he talked with Barbados, California and many other states with amazing clarity.

Mike KA4CSM



And then he said I should "Get off his frequency because the 'Net' starts in 10 minutes!"

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Radio Brands, AF5NP

A ham new or old has many choices for radios and radio gear available. We don't want to tell radio amateurs what to buy or not to buy but will give some guidance here.

The modern natural progression is to start with a [handheld](#) VHF / UHF transceiver, then a mobile VHF /UHF unit, then a base HF rig. These have different characteristics which must be considered so the first question is what type of radio are we buying?

Beyond the basic type there are several factors in selecting a radio brand. It usually comes down to the buyer's top three or four priorities from this list of characteristics:

- Functionality
- Features
- Performance
- Quality
- Reliability
- Durability
- Ease of use/programmability
- Memory capacity
- Familiarity
- Style/Appearance
- Portability
- Price

Unless you are looking for a specialty radio (i.e., low-power portable CW operation), size isn't much of a factor these days as within a general family all radios have similar weights and dimensions.

Radio Brands (Cont'd)

From this list the top consideration should be functionality (what it does, exactly) as that is most relevant. Say you want a dual-band FM HT to work the local repeaters or for EmComm deployment. You have more than a dozen choices available.

Refining further by features for things like APRS, power levels, battery type, weather resistance, and whatnot will narrow your selection but you still have many to choose from. At this point you're likely to think about price and here is where things get fuzzy. You could choose the nice name brand \$350 radio but there's one that does mostly the same thing for \$50.

Sounds like a slam dunk decision to go with the cheaper one, but you should carefully consider this. Beyond functionality and features, important characteristics suffer. With that low price you get questionable performance, low quality, poor reliability, and lack of durability, not to mention fewer features. As the saying goes, you get what you pay for.

Now that doesn't mean you should never buy a cheap radio, but you should really think about doing so. Some HTs are so inexpensive they can be considered disposable. If you lose or break one, you're out only \$30-50. This may be a good candidate for backup or one you might take boating or on a camping trip or loan to a prospective ham to listen on. You can find favorable reviews on some of these cheap radios (mainly HTs and mobile rigs). But you will also find many negative reviews on the same radios, mainly for reliability and durability. Some of the cheap Chinese radios also have poor RF characteristics, lack FCC certification, and are not strictly legal for use in the USA. So it's a crap shoot if you do want to buy a cheap radio.



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Radio Brands (Cont'd)

There are three well-known name brands that have reputations for high quality and reliability: [Icom](#), [Kenwood](#), and [Yaesu](#) for hand-held, mobile and base station radio equipment. These will cost more but will give many years of service and are worth repairing should one fail or be broken. All originate in Japan but have strong presence in the USA and other countries. American companies [Elecraft](#) and [FlexRadio](#) make awesome premium HF rigs but they are not competing for hand-helds or mobile units.

Alinco was another Japanese manufacturer with a good reputation, arguably up there with the Big 3 but is now developed and built in China.

Pre-owned equipment will be less expensive than new, of course, but the price between used reputable brands vs un reputable will be proportional. With used radios you also can find older HF brands with excellent reputations.

The author's own sad experience with an off-brand mobile radio has led him to this topic and a determination to never again buy a cheap non-disposable radio. He purchased a Tytera cross-band mobile rig that worked for several months. Suddenly people could not hear him when he was talking into the mic. Watt meter said full 50W output and the repeater was keying reliably. Supposing it to be a microphone failure, he replaced the mic but the problem persisted. Evidently something failed in the modulation circuitry so that it barely deviates (how FM works); if he screams into the mic a little sound comes through the radio.

Radio Brands, (cont'd)



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The factory in China would repair it but they require a very specific shipping method that costs almost what the radio is worth. No repair facilities for this brand outside of China and no schematics available for troubleshooting; it's now a paper-weight.

Our recommendation is to buy one of the Big 3, or thoroughly check reviews before buying low-cost radios. If you go off-brand, make sure that domestic repair is available.

Do your own research on radio brands. Here is an interesting forum on the Big 3 where other brands are discussed: [QRZ poll](#)

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Congratulations to Paul Anderzunas, **KO4ALK** the newest member of our club. He tested for and passed the General Class License at our last VE session.

Anyone ever experience this? Lucky man!!

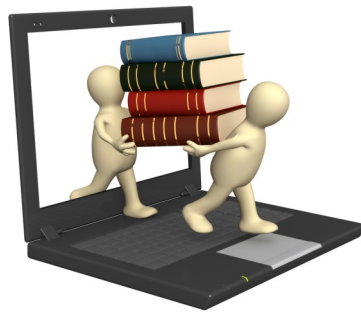
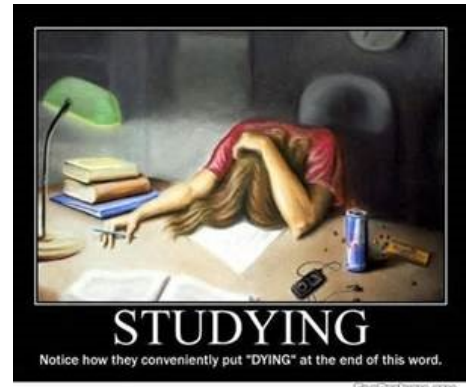


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If you are studying to take the Amateur Extra Exam (Element 4) be aware that the new pool of questions will take effect on 1 July 2020. It will remain valid until June 2024.



My favorite free website to study is HamExams.org. The flashcards are excellent.



Please don't get one of these stamps. Mark your calendars. Annual **dues** for the Greenwood Amateur Radio Society (GARS) **are due** to Tedd Davison AI4WN, by April 1., \$25.00 per individual membership, plus \$2.00 for spouse, plus \$2.00 more per student.

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HAMFESTS & EVENTS

[Charlotte Hamfest](#), March 13-14, 2020

[Raleigh Hamfest](#), April 11, 2020

[Dayton Hamvention](#), May 15-17, 2020

Greenwood Amateur Radio Society (GARS) Field Day, June 27, 2020,
details to follow

Greenwood Amateur Radio Society Hamfest (GARS) January 8, 2021

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- * The American Radio Relay League protects our rights as Amateur Radio Operators <http://www.arrl.org>
 - * Support for SERA supports proper coordination! <http://www.sera.org>
 - * Remember your local and regional interest clubs!
 - * Southeast DX Club <http://www.sedxc.org>
 - * Spread the word GARS weekly nets: 147.165 2m Net Thursdays 9 p.m.
443.900 70cm Net Mondays 8 p.m.
 - * Callsign info <http://www.ae7q.com>*
 - * Track us on APRS: <http://aprs.fi>
 - * Swamp Fox Contest Group <http://swampfoxcontestgroup.com>
-

Classifieds:

Classifieds will be run for 3 consecutive months then removed. They may be may be posted again after a 3 month period. 3 on then 3 off.

2m/440 antenna with channel master telescopic mast. Less than a year old, buyer must take down. Sale includes antenna, mast, approx. 50' coax, picture available on request. Make offer. 864-554-6005 or [Wayne, K4KF](#).

I hope you have enjoyed reading our newsletter. Please contact me at Mike31406@gmail.com with any ideas/comments/suggestions etc.

Mike