

# Northwest Indiana DX CLUB

Volume 9, Issue 3

March 2021

## President's Corner

It is with great sadness that I inform you that John Gianotti-W9WY became a silent key on Jan 31,2021.

John created the Club's website and maintained it for us.

He is greatly missed by all friends and family.

**Work some DX!**

**Please be safe and stay well.**

73

John W3ML

Good DXing!

## "Working the World from the Black Hole"

**NWI DX Club Website**

<http://nwidxclub.weebly.com/>



**Don't forget Steve is our QSL Card Checker.**

DXCC Card Checking is available by appointment and may be available at meetings. E-Mail [kd9hl@arrl.net](mailto:kd9hl@arrl.net) for an appointment or to make other arrangements.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 President Speaks
- 2- Member News/DX News

**Reminder, the NWIDX Club has a club call W9NWI.**

The call is available to members for use during contests, special events, Field Day, etc. To schedule dates for its use, contact the trustee, Steve Mollman – KD9HL. [kd9hl@arrl.net](mailto:kd9hl@arrl.net)

QSL cards are available.

## **Notice:**

**Articles in the Northwest Indiana DX Club Newsletter (except for those separately copyrighted) may be reprinted, provided proper credit is given.**

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## ***Help Wanted***

## ***Webmaster***

The club is in urgent need of a Webmaster to manage our website:  
<http://nwidxclub.weebly.com>.

Normal workload is less than five minutes per month.

If you have the skills needed, please contact the club president, John Poindexter-W3ML at his e-mail address: [w3ml.john@gmail.com](mailto:w3ml.john@gmail.com)



# State QSO Parties

QSO parties are popular events appealing to a wide spectrum of amateurs, from the most casual operators to those out to "win it all" in their category. There are [state QSO parties for nearly every state](#), with California's [CQP](#) proclaiming itself the largest. In addition to, or sometimes instead of their own state-specific events, some states team up for a regional event: the [New England QSO Party](#) covers Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, and the [7QP](#) covers the traditional geographic area of the seventh call area. Some state QSO parties don't even call themselves the state QSO party: [Washington's Salmon Run](#) is a state QSO party in all but the name.

For most QSO parties, stations *inside* the state give out a signal report and county. Stations *outside* the state supply signal report, and their state. QSO party rules specify what is and is not a multiplier, and there may be special "bonus" stations, and special multiplier stations. Make sure both you and your logging program are up to date with the current QSO party rules if you're at all serious about this.

Participants that are beyond casual usually have the list of the state's counties printed out, because counties will be logged using abbreviations. For example, for those who don't live in Washington State, it's a common mistake to mix-up WAH and WHA for Wahkiakum and Whatcom counties. Having a county list at hand makes it much easier.

CQ'ing: The call district number in a US call sign doesn't mean the station is actually located in that area, so there's a general "protocol" for calling CQ that's different for in-state versus out-of-state stations. In-state stations calling CQ in a QSO party usually use a message including the event, like "CQ Vermont QSO Party" (CW: "CQ VQP"), while out-of-state stations in a QSO party use a directed message including the state, e.g. "CQ Vermont" (CQ: "CQ VT"). A specific QSO party's rules may have specific suggestions for CQing.

For those that enter multiple QSO parties over the year, there's the [State QSO Party Challenge](#) in which "each call sign's cumulative score is calculated by totaling up his/her number of reported contacts and multiplying by the number of State QSO Parties (SQP) entered year-to-date. The use of the number of SQPs entered as a multiplier is to encourage radio amateurs to enter more state/province QSO parties.

Sponsored by the Hoosier DX and Contest Club, the Indiana QSO Party for 2021 takes place May 1-2-(the first Saturday in May). The contest runs for 12 hours, starting at 1500 UTC Saturday and ends at 0300 UTC Sunday (10:00 AM CDT to 10:00 PM CDT Saturday)

If you are going to participate in this year's Indiana QSO party, the suggested frequencies are:

- **CW:** 1.805 MHz and 30 kHz up from the band edge on 80-10 meters. A window for only mobiles to call CQ should be observed from 35 to 40 KHz up.
- **SSB:** 1.845, 3.820, 7.190, 14.250, 21.300 and 28.400 MHz.
- Try 160 meters after 0200 UTC (sunset).



### **The N9FN Van Operating in the 2018 Indiana QSO Party**

In addition to being a fun “low pressure” event the QSO Parties are an excellent way to pick up states if you are working toward a Worked All States Award or its multi-band derivatives such as the 5-Band WAS Award. If you are a county hunter the QSO Parties bring out many of the rare ones.

For more information check out the Indiana QSO Party web site: <http://www.hdxcc.org/inqp/>

[\(Portions of this article were derived from the ARRL “Contest Update” of February 3, 2021\)](#)



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### **ARRL DX LISTINGS**

**2/2721**

Jerry Hess, W9KTP

**UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, A6.** A number of special event stations are QRV to celebrate Kuwait National and Liberation Day. Look for stations A60KWT, and A60KWT/0 to /13 to be active until February 28.

QSL via operators' instructions.

**FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, DA.** Special event stations DQ100JL and DR100JL will be QRV from March 1 to May 31 to commemorate the founding 100 years ago of Junkers Luftverkehr, an early airline in Germany. QSL via bureau.

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**MARTINIQUE, FM.** Romanic, W7ROM is QRV as FM4WDM from Le Morne-Vert. Activity is on 15 meters using FT8. QSL via operator's instructions.

**REPUBLIC OF KOREA, HL.** Special event station D90EXPO will be QRV from March 1 to October 17 to promote the 2021 World Military Culture Expo that will take place in the city of Gyeryong in October. QSL via DS3BBC.

**SARDINIA, IS0.** Special event station II0QSE will be QRV from Quartu Sant'Elena, IOTA EU-024, from February 28 to June 30 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the local branch of the ARI. QSL via IS0AGY.

**ST. LUCIA, J6.** Operators K9HZ, W0CN and WA4PGM will be QRV as J68HZ, J68CN, and J68PG, respectively, from March 2 to 11. This includes being active as J68HZ as a Multi/Single/High Power entry in the upcoming ARRL International SSB DX contest. QSL via operators' instructions.

**WAKE ISLAND, KH9.** Thomas, NL7RR is QRV as KH9/NL7RR until April 2. Activity is in his spare time on 40 and 20 meters using SSB. QSL direct to AL7JX.

**ARGENTINA, LU.** Members of the Radio Club QRM Belgrano are QRV as LU4AAO, LU4AAO/A and LU4AAO/D until March 1 to commemorate the club's 53rd anniversary. Activity is on the HF and V/UHF bands using CW, SSB, SSTV and FT8. QSL direct to LU4AAO.

**CURACAO, PJ2.** Operators N1ZZ, AF4Z, WB5ZGA and K4JC will be QRV as PJ2/home calls from March 1 to 9. Activity will be on 160 to 10 meters using CW, SSB, RTTY and possibly FT8. They plan to be active as PJ2T in the upcoming ARRL International SSB DX contest. QSL to home calls and PJ2T via W3HMK.

**ST. MAARTEN, PJ7.** Thomas, AA9A will be QRV as PJ7AA from February 27 to March 28. Activity will be on 80 to 10 meters using CW, SSB and FT8. QSL direct to home call.

**GREECE, SV.** Members of the Radio Amateur Association of Western Peloponnese will be QRV with special call signs SZ21AD, SZ21GK, SZ21LB, SZ21PF, SZ21TK and SZ1821P from March 1 to 31 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Revolution of 1821. QSL via LoTW.

**AUSTRALIA, VK.** Special event stations VI100AF and VK100AF will be QRV from March 1 to May 29, and March 1 to August 31, respectively, to commemorate the founding of the Royal Australian Air Force 100 years ago. QSL via M0URX.

**CAMBODIA, XU.** Tad, JA1DFK is QRV as XU7AKU. Activity is on the HF bands, and possibly 6 meters, using CW. QSL via JA1DXA.

**INDONESIA, YB.** Heru, YG8VAS is now QRV from Ternate Island, IOTA OC-145. Activity of late has been on 80 and 40 meters using SSB.

QSL to home call.

**SOUTH SUDAN, Z8.** Massimo, IZ0EGB is QRV as Z81B from Juba while working here. Activity is generally in his spare time on 20 meters using SSB. His length of stay is unknown. QSL to home call.

**THIS WEEKEND ON THE RADIO.** The CQ 160-Meter SSB Contest, North American RTTY Party, North American Collegiate RTTY Championship, NCCC RTTY Sprint, QRP 80-Meter CW Fox Hunt, NCCC CW Sprint, K1USN Slow Speed CW Test, REF SSB Contest, FT4 DX Contest, UBA DX CW test, South Carolina QSO Party, Classic CW Exchange, High Speed Club CW Contest and North Carolina QSO Party are all on tap for this upcoming weekend.

The RSGB 80-Meter Club Data Championship, K1USN Slow Speed CW Test and OK1WC CW Memorial are scheduled for March 1.

The RTTYOPS Weeksprint, ARS Spartan CW Sprint and Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest are scheduled for March 2.

The UKEICC 80-Meter SSB Contest, VHF-UHF FT8 Activity Contest, CWops Mini-CWT Test, Phone Fray, and the 40-Meter QRP CW Fox Hunt are scheduled for March 3.

**SPECIAL NOTE: The ARRL Phone DX Contest will be March 6-7, 2021. A good time to pick some new ones.**

**73's and great DX,**

**Jerry**

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## ***Tree Care Staves Off Rope Wear, Keeps Antennas on Air***

**by**

**Matt Shelburne, W4GO**

When it comes to Amateur Radio, things that I think I'm building or installing for temporary use sometimes end up becoming a permanent fixture of my station. What was intended as a "kludge" gets used longer than it should have.

This was the case for the rope-and-pulley system that supported my first HF antenna, an 80 m off-center-fed (OCF) wire dipole, which I put up in the trees not quite 8 years ago. (The OCF dipole was replaced a few years later by a center-fed 80 m dipole, also suspended by the same rigging and still in use as of this writing.)



## Illegal Choke Hold

I had installed the 80 m OCF, and later the center-fed, in an inverted vee, with its feedpoint at a height of 50 ft, and the ends about 20 ft high. The feedpoint was supported by a long rope that ran through pulleys in two trees, one on either side of the dipole. I had climbed the trees to install each pulley about 53 ft high.

At the time, fastening a pulley with a loop of rope tied around the trunk seemed like the strongest, cheapest, and easiest approach to secure it to the tree. I left about 6 inches of slack in the rope, giving little thought to what would happen as the trunk grew. Like any new ham, I just wanted to get the antenna up and get on the air. Fast-forward seven and a half years. Here is one of those pulleys as I found it, just prior to removing and re-attaching it.



***Figure 1. Original attachment rope girdling tree.***

I had seen from ground level that the original slack had been completely taken up by the growth of the trunk and the rope loop was now choking or “girdling” the tree. Girdling poses a risk of damaging the tree by constraining the live tissue just under the bark. This is the vital part of the tree that transports nutrients and water.

In this case, there was also a risk of the rope breaking under the extreme tensile force imposed by the trunk as it expands — slowly but mightily.

I wanted to continue using this rigging to hold up my antenna, and felt it was worth some effort to keep this tree as sound as possible going forward. So I climbed the tree.



**Figure 2.** The author climbing one of his

**80 meter antenna trees.**

### **I Only Have Lag Screw Eyes for You**

Once in the tree canopy, I found the rope loop taugt as a banjo string (see figure 1 above). It sprung forcefully off the trunk when I cut it. I had brought up a new pulley, but found the original one (Ronstan part no. HRF30101) in good condition. I re-attached the pulley with what I now consider a more durable and tree-friendly method for the long term, using a lag screw eye.





***Figure 3.*** The pulley re-installed on a screw eye.

This particular screw eye (part no. 30455T63 at McMaster-Carr) is stainless steel with a 2-3/4 inch shank length and 5/16 inch diameter. Before climbing I confirmed that the stainless steel quick link I planned to use would fit through the screw eye and pulley. I used a cordless drill to bore a pilot hole for the screw. Once the new hardware was in place, I snugged the quick link shut with a wrench.

A lag screw eye of this size is strong, and sunk at least two inches into sound wood, it is very unlikely to pull out under the forces involved in supporting a wire antenna.



***Figure 4.*** The re-installed pulley seen from ground.

I estimate that the screw eye installation shown above will last at least another three to five years before the trunk starts to subsume the eye. If not backed out of the wood by that point, it could be another five years or more before the tree starts to engulf the pulley as well. You can buy more time by using a screw eye having a longer shank and leaving more shank exposed between the bark and the eye.

The following photos show a similar re-installation; this pulley is about 10 ft high and supports one end of the 80 m dipole.



***Figure 5.*** Another pulley attached by a rope tightly girdling the tree.



***Figure 6.*** Sinking the new screw eye.



***Figure 7.*** Completed re-installation.

### **Go Ahead, Be a Block Head**

If passing a rope, wire or cable around a tree trunk is unavoidable, I advise protecting both the rope and tree with wood or plastic blocks placed around the trunk.





***Figure 8. Force spreader blocks.***

The above photo shows one end of a zip line which I built from 3/8 inch steel cable. The force on the cable exceeds what I want to entrust to a screw eye in wood — hence the wrap-around anchoring method.

The treated wood blocks, 2 x 4 x 8 inch, distribute the force of the cable over a large area of bark, greatly reducing the pressure exerted on the vital growth layers beneath. As this tree grows, the section of cable around the trunk will eventually need to be lengthened, but the tree won't be damaged, nor will the cable be subsumed into the trunk.

### **Put Your Cleats On**

I usually tie off the tail end of my antenna support ropes to a cleat installed on a tree at chest height. Trunk growth must be dealt with here as well. Roughly every three years, I remove the cleat and re-install it on a fresh spot on the bark.



***Figure 9.*** Rope cleat moved before being

**engulfed.**

Obviously this practice prevents the tree from engulfing the cleat, but it mitigates a more subtle problem which I have experienced: the expanding wood of the trunk can break the horns off a rope cleat of this type. The wood gradually pushes the horn out, breaking it off at the screw. Naturally, the broken cleat no longer retains the rope and allows the antenna to fall. Hence, as a back-up measure, I install a screw eye to which the tail of rope is hitched after it is tied off on the cleat.

The style of rope cleat shown above (part no. 33805T53 from McMaster-Carr) isn't the most robust, but they're inexpensive, easily installed and removed, and grab the rope better than other types I've tried.

### **Stick It in a Fork**

For most hams, pulley installation at significant height isn't feasible. Instead, slingshots, air cannons, and bows and arrows are commonly used to shoot a light string over or into the canopy of a tree. The string is then used to haul up the antenna support rope, which then rests directly on small branches, limbs or in a fork.

In my experience, small branches don't usually grow around a rope and freeze it in place. Perhaps this is due to swaying motion relative to the rope. The rope shown here, which holds up the author's 40 m dipole, "floats" on numerous small branches.





**Figure 10. Rope resting on crown branches.**

Larger limbs and forks, however, readily subsume a rope, preventing the antenna from being lowered. One can sometimes keep the rope running free by allowing it to slide through the fork or limb approximately every six months (this is also a good time to inspect the rope for damage – more on this below).

Another option is to pass the rope through a tubular object variously known as a cambium saver or rope sleeve. These can be homebrewed from flexible conduit or pipe, or purchased from arborist supply stores.



**Figure 11. Rope sleeve.** (Image credit: user “moss” on treeclimbing.com)

The rope sleeve can be installed from ground level by threading the rope through it, tying a slippery overhand knot (or larger stopper knot if necessary) behind the sleeve so that the rope pushes it up and into place as the rope is hauled over the fork. Once the sleeve is in place, the rope is tugged from both sides, causing the slippery knot to spill.

The inside diameter of the sleeve should be large enough that the rope can pass through it freely once the fork inevitably grows around and captures the sleeve. Replacing the rope after this happens can be done by joining the new rope to the old with a knot — if the knot will fit through the tube — or by temporarily “butt-splicing” the ropes with several wraps of electrical tape and hauling the new rope gently into place.

### **Are You A-Frayed of This Rope?**

Ropes that are supported by direct contact with a tree (as opposed to running through a pulley) are subject to abrasion damage as a result of the tree moving in the wind relative to the rope. The only direct-on-tree cases where I have found abrasion minimal to non-existent are where a rope passes over a fork or stout limb of only one tree, and the tail of the rope is tied off to the trunk of the same tree. In such cases, the tree and the rope sway in unison, minimizing friction.

Ropes at risk of abrasion should be lowered periodically for inspection. In my experience, every six months is a good interval to perform this check. The rope below was close to failure when I pulled it down for inspection. A couple more weeks of friction, or a good pull in a heavy wind would have broken it and brought the attached dipole down.



**Figure 12. Abrasion-damaged 3/16 inch polyester rope.**

The most suitable type of rope for antenna support is black, braided polyester (trade name Dacron). It is strong, resists abrasion as well as can be expected, and is nearly impervious to UV degradation and moisture damage.

I usually use 3/16 inch diameter, single-braid rope in applications supported by a pulley. I generally try to use 1/4 inch single-braid when the rope is subject to abrasion against the tree, as the larger diameter lasts a bit longer. Double-braid polyester rope would offer better still abrasion resistance, but it's significantly more expensive than single-braid.

Regardless of the diameter and construction of the rope, if it rubs against the tree that holds it up, it should be considered a consumable material and will have to be replaced eventually.

*Matt Shelburne-W4GO, was first licensed in 2012, He enjoys chasing DX and contesting on the 160 m through 70 cm bands. His home station's HF antenna farm consists entirely of tree-supported wire antennas. He resides in Midland, VA.*





## Hang Some Wallpaper

The Greek War of Independence, also known as the Greek Revolution, referred to by Greeks in the 19th century as simply the "Struggle", was a successful war of independence waged by Greek revolutionaries against the Ottoman Empire between 1821 and 1830.



On March 25, 2021, the Greek world will celebrate the bicentennial since the outbreak of the Greek War of independence. Greek amateur radio operators have launched, or plan to launch, three events to celebrate this major event in history:

1. [200 YEARS AWARD \(sv2rck.gr\)](http://sv2rck.gr) which is open on all bands and modes. Operators from all over the world are welcomed to seek QSOs with the following stations: [SV2RCK](#), [SY2DCF](#), [SV2CJB](#), [SY2DKZ](#), [SV2RCS](#), [SY2DCI](#), [SV2KGA](#), [SV2SQC](#), [SV1PMQ](#), [SV1CIF](#), [SV1DPJ](#), [SV1AZL](#), [SV1PMR](#), [SV7SDS](#), [SV1DPI](#), [SV1JMC](#), [SV2HJW](#), [SV1AJO](#) and [M0IUR](#). This event ends on December 31, 2021.
2. [Special Event Station to commemorate 200 years since the Hellenic war of independence in 1821.](#) Seek for the following callsigns on bands and modes ranging from 2m to 160m: SX9A, SX8A,

SX7A, SX6A, SX5A, SX4A, SX3A, SX2A and SX1A. A special event log is available [here](#). This event ends on March 25, 2021.

3. [SZ1821R Greek Revolution 1821 by the Radio Amateur Society of the Peloponnese](#). This event will take place throughout March 2021 only, with the following callsigns: [SZ1821R](#), [SZ21TK](#), [SZ21PF](#), [SZ21GK](#), [SZ21AD](#) and [SZ21LB](#).



Tom W8FIB was busy this past month and sent in several links to some good articles.

Mac Key Serial Numbers

<https://www.tronico.fi/OH6NT/keydocs/McELROY%20MAC-keys.pdf>

Bunker

<https://www.gb0snb.com/>

Digital modes by sound matrix

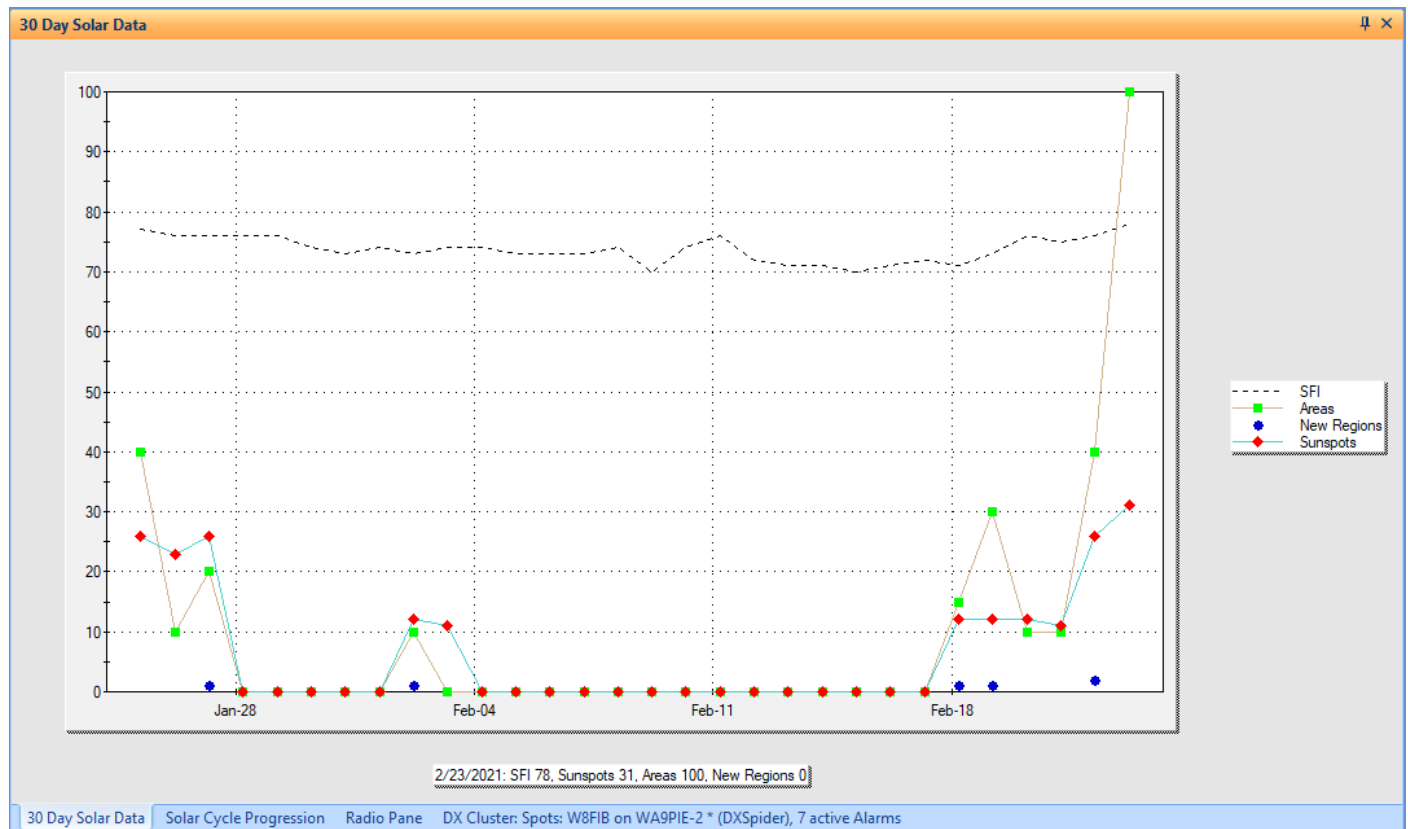
[High Frequency \(HF\) - Signal Identification Wiki](#)

OM7M contest station Slovak Republic





## Solar activity



# Fry's Electronics shutting down all stores

[https://www.geekwire.com/2021/frys-electronics-shutting-stores-ending-36-years-big-box-stop-tech-enthusiasts/?utm\\_source=GeekWire+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=12da26cbf1-daily-digest-email&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_4e93fc7dfd-12da26cbf1-233774429&mc\\_cid=12da26cbf1&mc\\_eid=dc834740f3](https://www.geekwire.com/2021/frys-electronics-shutting-stores-ending-36-years-big-box-stop-tech-enthusiasts/?utm_source=GeekWire+Newsletters&utm_campaign=12da26cbf1-daily-digest-email&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4e93fc7dfd-12da26cbf1-233774429&mc_cid=12da26cbf1&mc_eid=dc834740f3)

**That is all from Tom, W8FIB for this month.  
Thanks, Tom for the great submissions.**

**One last link from me:**

<https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/new-phishing-attack-uses-morse-code-to-hide-malicious-urls/>

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From Steve KD9HL



**"On FT8, no one knows you're a dog."**

From Dave – K9FN

I have decided to sell my remote antenna tuner. This is NOT an automatic tuner. It currently sits at the base of my vertical controlled by a box sitting on my desk.

The tuner is a Model AT-615U, made by Hamware.de in Germany. I bought mine from Array Solutions in 2016. My total investment is about \$2800, including 125 feet of control cable.

Here is a link to the manual:

<http://www.hamware.de/hardware/tuner615U/short%20form%20manual%20615U-E.pdf>

As an unbalanced tuner, this can be used to feed a long wire, a vertical, inverted L etc. It could be used to feed an open wire fed loop or dipole with a balun at the output of the tuner. The tuner has both a coax output, and a single wire output.

I confirmed more than 85 countries on 160 meters, with just a 30' vertical after putting this tuner into service.

I would prefer to not ship the unit but can do so at additional cost. My guess is that packing and shipping will total \$50 to \$75.

I will gladly answer any questions I can and would be very happy to demonstrate the unit here at my home in West Lafayette.

I am asking \$1200 and, being a ham, will certainly entertain SERIOUS offers.

Thanks, de Dave – K9FN  
765-714-7618

You may call, but if I don't recognize your number I may not answer. If interested email first and we can arrange to talk on the phone if appropriate.

Please email me directly: [dpbunte@gmail.com](mailto:dpbunte@gmail.com)

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**If you have ham items for sale, email me a list along with prices and contact information. I will put it in the next newsletter.**

**I want to thank those that have been sending in articles for the newsletter. All items are appreciated.**



Until Next Time,  
73

*John*  
W3ML

<http://nwidclub.weebly.com/>



**DX**

**THANKS**  
*Thanks for visiting!*

