

How do I?

An occasional series

This week: Maximizing play value!

Today's world is fast paced and for many of us filled with work, school, household chores, errands, *ad finitem*. Many traditional hobbies require a lot of time, equipment, money, etc. Sports such as golf, tennis, and bowling have had had some lean years with declining participation. Some of those are making a comeback because they made changes. Some examples are "Golf games" where you do more than try to just get a ball in a hole with as few strokes as possible. One combines archery with golf! Bowling alleys may feature nights with DJ's or bands as well as bowling. Other hobbies like wood working and model railroading have evolved. The model railroad segment used to be about building highly detailed, sometimes museum quality models. That still happens but for thousands of devotees, "modeling" means operating a train made of "ready to run" cars in as realistic a manner as possible. Wood working magazines often feature small, "done in a weekend" projects. That doesn't mean no one ever spends years crafting a set of dining room furniture, it just means that many folks who may not participate at all can find things to make in a short amount of time.,

What does this have to do with radio? Radio is what you make of it. Some people enjoy devoting a weekend to a contest such as the ARRL International DX Phone Contest. For others a shorter state QSO party or a "Sprint" is equally satisfying and doesn't cause them to miss other activities.

Some other examples: You may enjoy camping. Take a portable radio, perhaps a QRP rig and a simple antenna along. You will be amazed at what a simple setup can do in a quiet, mostly QRM free environment! Satellite operation using a simple dual band hand held such a Yaesu FT60 and a handheld Arrow Yagi, may require less equipment than a QRP HF rig and may be even more satisfying! In the attached photo we are using an Arrow mounted on a camera tripod. The radio is a mobile (permanently installed in a car) Kenwood TS480. The owner can operate on at least 40m to 2m from the car. These transceivers and the similar Yaesu 857D and 897D and Icom 706 series radios as well as the Icom 7000 and 7200 and 7300 transceivers are very popular with RV'ers as well. Many articles have been written about the joys of mobile or portable operation from a motor home.



Doug Good KC3AB and Frank Mellott KB3PQT on Satellite QSO Duty

credit CARC photo collection

This writer is also a railfan. My train chasing companions and I can spend 600 or 800 miles in a long weekend covering several states. While a scanner is really useful to listen to the railroad radio frequencies in the 160-161 megahertz land commercial band, a common two meter or dual band 2m/70cm transceiver does a much better job. In addition 146.490 and some other frequencies are commonly used by railfan hams to communicate. If it is a slow time, I can generally find someone on 146.520 (the 2m calling frequency) or even a local repeater to talk to.

Got a HT? Have an HF radio? Nice evening and don't want to be cooped up in the shack? Some HF rigs (especially some Kenwood's) have built in or add on features where you can control them remotely. The oldest method is to use cross band repeat. You set one side of the HF rig to a 75m or 40m, for example, HF frequency and the other side to an unused 2m frequency. You can set the HT to its lowest power level and transmit to the HF rig. The HF rig will transmit whatever it receives back to the HT so you can check into a favorite HF net on a 2m HT from the porch! Newer systems may allow you do do the same from an Ipad or other tablet via a WiFi connection or the internet.

Catch ya on the air!

