

How do I?

An occasional series

This week: A look at analog HTs



Editor's Note: Personal preferences and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author . Frank Mellott, KB3PQT.

Hand-held amateur radio transceivers, sometimes known as a Handie-Talkie™, have been common in the hobby since people began repurposing WWII and Korean Conflict surplus military radios for amateur use. It is safe to say that the first radio most newly licensed amateurs buy is a HT.



Yaesu FT 60 and VX-170 HTs with add-on Diamond SR77CA antennas and Yaesu speaker/mics. Diamond SR77CA image below. The SR77 series works with all the radios mentioned here, but the actual model depends on the antenna connector you need!



Yaesu sells an extensive line of hand-held radios. The FT270R is an excellent 2 meter analog radio and the FT60 is an excellent 2m/70cm radio often used for public service and amateur satellite work.

Kenwood maybe an even better option since many of their handhelds come with everything needed for APRS operation. The TH-K20A and TH-D72A are the equals of the Yaesu FT270R and FT60 series. Equal is only in quotes because you may find them better suited to your interests.

Icom jumped on the D-Star band wagon a decade or more ago. They still produce an excellent line of analog radios. It appears the IC-V80 HD was recently dropped and the V86 is the successor. At the time this article is being written I have not yet seen a V86, but the specs are essentially identical to the V80 and V82 series.

You may know that my second hobby is train-related. I encountered railfans twice in the last two weeks using an ICOM V80 or V82 as a scanner to listen to the railroad communications on the 155-174 MHz business band and was astounded at how well they pulled stuff in, and could hear things I could not with my Yaesu radio. The antenna matters. Neither radio had a stock factory rubber duck+antenna but neither Operator could remember what after-market antenna they were using in its place.

I have a friend who is looking to buy a dual-band mobile rig. He selected an Icom since Yaesu recently discontinued its FT7900R dual bander. He may well buy an Icom V86 hand-held at the same time. The ICOM V86 is the current equal+of the Yaesu FT270R and the Kenwood T70-HD is the equivalent of the Yaesu FT60.

In short, whether you want a hand-held for providing Public Service work at events such as the Dillsburg Farmers Fair Fantastic Parade, for the various road races in the area, a rig that will just get you on-the-air via the excellent local repeater networks, or simply something better than a scanner to listen to railroad or aviation frequencies, you will find that any of the radios featured here will be more than satisfactory.

Catch ya on the air!

Editor's Note: A second article, titled ***Icom v86 First Look***, provides additional information about the Icom v86 Hand-Held Transceiver and other HT radios in general. Please look for that article in the **RESOURCES, SETTING UP YOUR STATION** area of our website.
