

THE "CENTURION"

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE 3905 CENTURY CLUB

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The 160 meter challenge by K060P George

For several months Phyllis (K6WPK) had ask why we couldn't expand our station to include a capability to work the 160 meter band. At first I wasn't to enthused about adding another task to my growing workload. Never-the-less, I couldn't let this challenge go unanswered.

The first step in this process was to dig up available information from others that had met this 160 meter challenge. Strangely enough, there are numerous accounts of frustration and disappointment within the Ham community. Yet there were some success stories to consider. Theoretically, a quarterwave vertical with a good radial system is the recommended approach. Practically speaking, this was not the answer. There is just no way that most people (including myself) can erect a 117-130ft. vertical antaenna along with a vast radial system at ground level. A compromise was in order.

I decided on an inverted L antenna wire about 160 ft. long. The antenna wire ties-in to a tuner box at the base of our tower, rises vertically to an insulated device at the top, makes a 90 degree turn and extends horizontally to a nearby pine tree. Sound simple, huh? Yes and No! The idea is simple, but the implementation can be a bit more involved.

1. It is a given that the vertical portion of the L should be as high as possible to achieve good performance. Since my tower is only 40ft. high., I chose to

extend the mast by 10 feet. This was achieved by adding a section of PVC that would be slipped inside the existing hollow mast pole. By the way, if PVC is going to be exposed to the sun, be sure to use grey-PVC. Now all I had to do was climb the tower and insert the PVC. Unfortunately, I don't like heights (more than 3ft. above ground). I was able to plead my case successfully to a young friend of mine who climbed the tower and added the PVC in about 5 minutes.

2. Next, I called on another friend to demonstrate his archery skill by shooting a line over the selected tree branch. After quieting his fear about snakes and finding a clearing among rocks and wild brush, the first arrow was fired. It never came down! It just disappeared! Fearlessly, he loaded up for the second shot and we were more fortunate this time. Even so it didn't find its way over the branch of my choice. I wanted it higher, but my friend insisted that we avoid the tangle near the higher branches. I knew it would be useless to convince him to climb that tree. Hi-Hi.

3. The wire was strung with insulators at the ends and a pulley scheme at the top of the mast that would make "Rube Goldberg" envious. Keep in mind that there are several things that could potentially give this arrangement trouble. Using the tree as a support imposes the problem of swaying in the wind, and a long wire has a natural

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FAREWELL



It is time to say so long and thank you to Frank Taylor, AA0ZP (president for the past two years) and Dave Czerniak, KE9OI (vice-president for the past two years). We thank you for your help and the job. Now you can go back and radio for fun for awhile.

The elections were held Jan. 30th 1999 and the winners are:

President	AA1ME George VT.	
Vice/Pres	N5SV Steve TX. (Hi I am Steve and I am from Texas and that's the name of that tune)	
1st area	WQ1H	Dave NH
3rd area	AA3FC	Walt PA.
5th area	N5UJB	Jim OK.
7th area	N7OKM	Hugh OR.
9th area	WM9H	Gene WI
DX	VE4ROY	Roy BC

(160 Meter challenge)

Letters to the editor

sag that must not come in contact with other large Yagi's nearby. Gee, I wished that we had shot that arrow over a higher tree branch. Oh well.

4. This antenna requires a simple tuner that consists of a variable capacitor mounted in a rain-proof box at the base of the tower. My reference info also recommended the addition of variable inductance to match the 50 ohm transceiver output with the antenna impedance. Sounds reasonable to stay with the good reference info, right? WRONG! I added the coil as stated but it incorrectly showed where to make the circuit connection. The 1st smoke test resulted in a high SWR and the transceiver shut-off. I removed the coil and things went along great.

5. Although I knew that the L antenna must have a good radial system, there was an irresistible urge to proceed with smoke test #2 with only a simple radial. Result : The 160 RF crept into the house wiring and set-off the alarm in Phyllis's oxygen concentrator. This was clearly not a game for the faint of heart. The solution was simple. Just connect the radials according to my original plan and plow ahead. With everything in place I powered-on and tuned-in the 160 net. The relay (KM7TM, Tom) was in Nv. and I felt that he would pickup my signal even if it proved to be marginal. Yes, he heard me at "20 over S9". Several other States also confirmed my strong signal. I never had any doubt, (heh-heh). Lord, it's hard to be humble. On the other hand, I think that conditions were good that time. I later found that there are a lot of bad days that I must work around.

6. After working the 3905 net for a few weeks, I became a little more humble, but not discouraged. My barefoot signal only receives 22 from East coast States (e.g. Maine). I added a small vertical loop to serve as a receive-only antenna.. It performs much better than the inverted L, as a receive antenna. Also I connected a radial to the house copper plumbing.

Oh did I mention that the 160 meter band is known as the "Gentleman's Band"? Phyllis (K6WPK) is filing a protest about this sexist statement

Ok, Phyllis, you opened the can of worms and asked for other opinions, so here I go. Ditto on your QSL comment in the last Centurion newsletter. I have been with the 3905 CC for about four years now and yes you are right in saying that there are some deadbeat QSLers out there. But not to worry, they are not unique to just the 3905 CC. I work about six different nets on a regular basis and they each have their share of slackers who simply won't give up a QSL card.

Let me tell you my view of the QSL problem. I hold the distinct honor of QSLing more than ANY OTHER ham in the world. I am very proud of that fact and no one can ever top me in this achievement. Now I don't send out more QSL cards than some stations, but what I mean when I say I QSL more than any other station,, is per contact. If I have talked with a station either by HF, packet, CW, two meter, 440, or in some cases just by eyeball, then that station has gotten a QSL card from me. Even for a 30 second QSO on 2 meters just asking for direction in a strange town, I make sure to copy down the call sign and send that ham a QSL card when I get back to my home Qth. My QSL cards have a box that is marked "QSL pls" and I often check the box in hopes of getting a return card from a new station or operator. What happens when I never receive a QSL card from a station that I have worked?

Well....nothing! I will still check into the net when that station may be the net control or even strike up a QSO before net time and chat the minutes away. I do keep track of which stations never QSL, but that is for my own records in future operations.

You see working for Uncle Sam. in the Military, and now having a HF rig that I can take with me portable, I will get around to some pretty interesting spots. Given the chance, I will set up my HF station. No matter how strong a signal may be, you can bet that when I get set up somewhere pretty rare, and hear a station calling me that doesn't return QSLs, I will somehow never hear that station even if he

or she offers to send me a QSL card first. The way I see it, if a station is too cheap to QSL only several states away, then they will miss out on the times that I am aeronautical mobile or bouncing around the globe at distance locations. I was in Guam two years ago and got to work 20 meters one afternoon with several stations that are just super about QSLing back to me from three other nets, including the 3905CC. When I got back home, that non-QSLing station had a fresh QSL card made out for me, in hopes that I would respond back to him just because he had the right date and time on his QSL card that I was operating in. Well no such luck! I had 35 full color QSL cards made up, just for my King Henry operation at a cost of about \$2.70 each. Price is not my concern and never will be I have gotten custom made QSL cards from many stations and also handmade cards from young ham operators that came from the heart made only from crayons and construction paper. My advice to the QSL problem would be simple, just ignore them. Sooner or later the word gets around who QSLs and who doesn't, and I often take note of that fact when I hear someone mention the problem on the net. Bottom line is, If you have worked me, then you will get a QSL card from me. If you never got my card, then let me know. I will check the records and confirm our contact and then get another QSL card out to you by certified mail to if need be. I know that QSL bureaus are not perfect (except for Wil's) and the U.S. mail has it's fair share of damaged or lost mail to contend with. QSLs are just a nice way of showing that a contact took place and I care enough about the event to document the occasion with a paper record.

Whether a station is too cheap, don't need my card, or just plain can't follow club rules and requirements, the non-QSL station are always going to be out there. When I don't get a card through the bureaus, I wait several months and then QSL to a station by direct. This means that I have now sent that station two QSL cards and my intent to get his or her should be pretty evident. Cont. page 3

