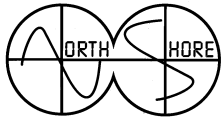


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Meanderings on putting up a dipole

From Guest Contributor: Peter VE3GY

Peter is plowing, anyone with set of weights for the front of a Case is welcome to give him a call. Try ONTARS or CW on 30M.

I was looking for a center insulator, but more than that, I needed something with some structural strength as well. Now, this obvious need will soon become clear as you learn of my foiled attempts at raising a recent dipole, (and No, I'm not talking aluminium).

At the last QTH, I had used the following technique. With the use of glue gun I slathered copious amounts of the goop across the centre 6 inches of leg-twin lead-leg. This lasted years. It could still be up, for all I know.

Anyway, getting back to the near present.

At the new QTH, (near Bailieboro), my first attempt to jimmy up, (sorry James), a dipole used no insulator, per say, other than the 300 ohm twin-lead, (no heat gun goop). The legs of the dipole merely soldered to the twin-lead. I never even got a chance to operate this rendition of the dipole. Not having any "Tension Management System", (no spring, or pulley), it came down in shorted order, with the first bit of wind. The dipole leg had divorced itself from the twin-lead! So, my dipole was down, and not loading up very well, to say the most.

So stringing it up again, I was puzzling about a center insulator. As a kid I had used the necks from broken pop bottles as end insulator, as long wires were the only antennas employed. I'm not sure if this reminiscing brought me to thinking of using a 2 litre plastic pop bottle cap as an insulator. I drilled 2 holes to snugly accept the legs of the dipoles. I pushed/cajoled/convined the wires through the holes and tied a simple hitch to prevent their escape, leaving about an inch to strip and solder. I then hoisted this 2nd rendition of the dipole up. (see

"Hoisting" below). Well there is/are no gods. Or, maybe there is/are. What I'm getting at is this, the 2nd rendition came down almost as fast as the first! The twin-lead had mechanically weakened and failed at the solder joint to the dipole leg.

OK, I'm still not giving up on the pop bottle lid. It's still too handy and cheap to not give it another try. The next enhancement is to melt a slot through the cap to accept the twin lead thus providing some support to it and avoid the stress on the solder joint. I used the soldering iron to melt the slot, in between the two holes for the dipole legs. I avoided making the slot too loose for the twin lead. I did all this while on a ladder, because that's where the bottle cap was hanging. I feed the twin lead through the cap, and soldered up the dipole legs, and hoisted the dipole up (see "Hoisting" below). I would suggest "potting" the bottle cap with glue gun goop. I didn't. The dipole is still up and has sustained some wind. I also have a Tension Management system now. The end of the polyprop is tied to a springy fence wire that can that can be pulled a foot or two.

Note: As of April 5, after a very windy weekend the dipole is still up!

I put the twin lead into a tuner/matcher and it loads up on all bands.

Important Note / N.B. (for the Latin cognisant): If you have trouble getting the dipole to load up on a band, add a few feet to the twin lead feed line. I haven't needed to do this, but I've heard it works. You can even make a tuner out of just twin lead by building a switching arrangement that can add 1, 2, 4, 8, and 16 feet of twin lead. this switching mechanism enables the addition of all lengths of twin lead from 1 to 31 feet of feed line, in one foot increments. I have not tried this out, but again I've heard it works. I intend to give it a go myself.

Hoisting:

I simply tied about 80 feet of polyprop twine to the end of the dipole and a broken claw hammer to the other end. I then spooled the twine in large loose loops on the ground to facilitate the twine spooling out when I toss the hammer as high as I can into the tree. I use a sweeping underhand swing that, if I'm lucky, puts the hammer through the top of the tree

and the hammer near the ground on the other side of it. This rarely works on the first attempt, although my success on the first throw is increasing with practice/age. I then just hoist the dipole up.

72, 73, and gud DX
Peter
VE3GY

++++
Keep this in Mind:

Few of us like to admit to mortality or even face for that matter. We do have an obligation to our spouses, heirs and beneficiaries to provide guidance and direction when it comes to dealing with our estate. Here is some important information that should go into your will or final instructions to assist those who carry on after us with realizing the fair value of our HAM equipment.

Peace of mind for your family

From Walter VE3FJC – (905) 429-2498

Walter says he will purchase complete estates or assist in the sales of estates for people who don't want 100 hams ringing their door bell. "I will get fair prices for the customer - widow, or ham leaving the hobby. Having said that, I don't want to clean out someone's basement with items that are of no value. I did an estate in Bowmanville with such items like short pieces of coax and wire. I had it sitting in my house for months".

Walter has been a ham for 42 years, retired 19 years, so he says he has some time to spare.

++++
From The Chair in the Shack:

As we wend our way into warmer weather I find that I have less to say than usual. First I encourage all members to play some active role in Camp X this year since it has been confirmed. Our job will be more than just special event station. Last year we had a couple of explanatory jobs like explaining the code and showing other modes than SSB plus a slide show on Camp X later in its life. This year the Historical Society are hoping for more interpretive stuff. What we need to do is to relate amateur radio as it is today to the radio practices and jobs of "Hydra". Please make an effort to be there, especially during the hours in which the public visit.

I've included a thoughtful article from eham on ARES that, I think, everyone should read and absorb. Yup, I know, You'd be there in an

emergency. The question is, would you be any use? Read on and think it through.

73 de Pete

What is 'Good Enough'?

Pat Lambert (W0IPL)
<<http://www.eham.net/user/profile/W0IPL>> on May 4, 2006
View comments about this article!
<<http://www.eham.net/articles/13709#comments>>

As we look at the extensive knowledge, skill and equipment requirements for providing effective Emergency Communications (ECom), we find many operators with significant experience gained years, or even decades, ago. We ask "What types of emergencies were encountered?" and "How much of that expertise is still applicable to current situations and needs?"

Floods, forest fires, earthquakes, tornadoes and hurricanes haven't changed much over the years, and previous experience from those events can be invaluable today. On the other hand, is there anyone amongst us, who in their wildest dreams, could have envisioned New York City on September 11, 2001? I doubt it, but this new category of disaster (terrorism) painfully demonstrates the new challenges, requirements and issues that we, as emergency communicators, will need to be ready to deal with. Other issues involve significant changes in equipment, ECom techniques and served agency expectations.

While some of the equipment and ECom practices used years ago are good, 70s techniques and equipment are probably not adequate to handle the ECom requirements today. Equipment, modes and techniques have advanced far beyond what we could ever have dreamt of in 1970. Our served agencies now reasonably expect us to adapt and evolve to accommodate and overcome new challenges. Served agency expectations have expanded far beyond what "got the job done" in 1970. We need to understand and conform to the Incident Command System (ICS) and the follow-on National Incident Management System (NIMS). They reasonably expect our communication capabilities and techniques to have evolved. They presume our people are accustomed to functioning well with law enforcement, fire, Forest Service, FEMA and disaster relief organizations.

Simply put, what was "good enough" and "got the job done" in 1970 is now less than adequate to support ECom today.

BASIC TRAINING

Back in the 70's there were many Emergency Coordinators (ECs) that used the teaching techniques like "dump them in the deep end so they will learn to swim". I really believe that many of those who learned ECom techniques then, tend to not be as ready share their knowledge. Fortunately for all of us, those who learned the hard way, and are still active, really appreciate the expedience of well documented process and procedures.

What do you actually learn from these processes and procedures? The basics of true communication

(SUMMARIZE) and how to interact successfully with the Amateur Radio team and even more importantly, how to interact with the Served Agency. One radio operator has no one to talk to! It is only when you learn to successfully work with your team that you become part of a communications unit. This unit then learns to work with the Served Agency in a productive manner. Gee! Sounds like ICS / NIMS doesn't it?

One of the more notable examples of training material is the ARRL's Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Course (ARECC). Developed largely by sixteen volunteers and then reformatted and embellished by the ARRL's staff, it has grown into an education vehicle for both newcomers and more seasoned veterans alike.

ARECC

With ARECC available then, how is it that virtually everyone is not an accomplished Emergency Communicator? First, having completed the course does not qualify you as an ECom guru. "What!?" you say, "What else do I need to do?" "What does this card in my wallet mean?" Simple, you need to learn to apply the principles presented by the ARECC course. Once you have acquired those skills, you will need to practice, practice and practice to hone those skills into something that you do "by instinct" rather than have to think about doing.

The easiest analogy is riding a bicycle. If you learn to ride your bike when you are five years old and ride it every day for two years, and then don't ride it again until you are fifty, are you really qualified to safely ride your bike in rush hour traffic? Obviously not. It is only with ongoing training that you fully acquire and maintain skills. ARECC simply provides you the foundation to build those skills upon.

ON-GOING TRAINING

On-going training is the easiest and least painful way to hone the skills you have and allow you to build new ones. How much training are you going to require? That depends on how much previous training you have had and how often you have reinforced that training. This is one place where more is better.

Many people believe that checking into a weekly net is sufficient, I do not. Think about how many weekly nets require you to do more than give your call, name and indicate if you have comments or an announcement. Very few! How does that provide actual training? It does not. It is only when you are required to convey the maximum information, using the fewest words, consistently, that your communication skills are expanded.

Hams, in general, tend to talk rather than communicate. It is only when you force yourself to summarize your thoughts and present that summary in a clear and efficient manner that you actually progress as a communicator.

"WE ALWAYS GOT THE JOB DONE":

While "we always got the job done" MAY be true, let's look at two versions of how that can happen. Scenario: You have a brain tumor that multiple doctors agree completely will kill within three months if it is not removed very soon. Doctor A removes the tumor and after the recovery time you live but have constant pain, need help to move around

the house, have trouble forming words, and are constantly confused. Compare that with Doctor B who removes the tumor and after minimal recovery time you have no pain, think more clearly than you have in years, move about better than you have since you were a teen, and generally feel better than ever.

In both cases the doctor could easily say "we got the job done" because you lived, but which doctor would you want to have doing the operation? Clearly the second example, but why? Simply because he provided the service that produced the best possible results, not the minimum acceptable, but rather the maximum positive results.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS:

We can no longer take the attitude of "I'll be there when I'm needed" paired with "been there done that" because anyone that does, short changes not only the emergency services within Amateur Radio (ARES, RACES and SkyWarn, to name but three) but the needs of our served agencies. We need to foster attitudes more in tune with "I'll keep my training current, expand my knowledge AND have fun!" Then, we serve every one's needs.

How do we go beyond "good enough"? Simply by taking the attitude of Emergency Communication as a job we would get paid for, rather than something we do to fill time. Like the doctors in the above example, good enough is not really good enough. It is only when we consistently exceed served agency expectations that we become "unpaid professionals" and guess what? THAT is where the real fun is!

Remember: Amateur Radio is the hobby, Emergency Communications is a commitment! Are you willing to make a commitment?

Pat Lambert, W0IPL
Colorado Section ARES
Training Manager

P.S. How many of you think we will keep the electromagnetic spectrum allocated to us and not have the FCC sell it, if we do not "produce" something they find useful?

73 de Pete

+++++

Well the mast is up that extra 2 feet. How many of you thought you'd never see this in print. I've got a little bit of work to do steadying it, but all that remains is putting together my 80M dipole. Good DX or not my station is perilously close to being back on the air.

Hope still springs eternal.

Your humble scribe
Ken
VE3RMK

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