



to the editors

editor@monitoringtimes.com

This column is open to your considered comments. Opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of Monitoring Times. Your letters may be edited or shortened for clarity and length. Please mail to Letters to the Editor, 7540 Hwy 64 West, Brasstown, NC 28902 or email editor@monitoringtimes.com
Happy monitoring!
Rachel Baughn, Editor

Fred Maia W5YI

As noted in this month's *Communications* column, Fred Maia W5YI died on March 28. Besides having been an *MT* columnist for a brief stint, his life had a special meaning to assistant editor Larry Van Horn, who knew him the longest of us all:



"In the early days of my second time as a licensed ham when we lived in DFW Metroplex (early 1980s), Fred Maia was one of my mentors in amateur radio. My fondest memory of Fred was his weekly voice report on one of the local VHF repeaters – 'the W5YI Report by Fred Maia, W5YI.' It was quite obvious that Fred was doing his best to brand his call sign and name as both were prominently mentioned many, many times during each one of his W5YI reports on the local repeater. Of course, it was a honor to have him on the *MT* staff many years later and we had many a phone conversation regarding various issues of concern to the amateur radio community that emanated out of Washington, DC. I will truly miss Fred. He was a real ham's ham and good friend."

Larry Van Horn, N5FPW,
Brasstown, NC USA

ISS Packet

Dave (Granoff), First let me thank you for your article in the February *MT*; it got me to try International Space Station (ISS) packet. I dug out my FT-857 and hooked it up to my Disccone that was connected to my scanner. Didn't think it would work at all, but I've at least been able to hear signals and get some good decodes. Tonight, I got it to digi my APRS location, and I even saw your callsign.

I set up UISS and have been trying to see

if I could get a transmission from me to be received, and tonight, finally I got two responses from W9HT and W8KRF. I've no idea yet how to respond to them, and give them a 59 or anything, but at least I'm there. Next step is to build or buy an eggbeater antenna.

Thanks again, I think I'm hooked.

73, Fraser Bonnett, W3UTD

Hi Fraser, That's really *fantastic* that you got your station set up. You are getting through as you will see from a screenshot of your Rx on my UISS screen tonite.

To respond and send a reply is really easy – just highlight the "Tx test data" box with your mouse and you can type in any response; say for example you get a reply from me, you would then type in 'K3AS: GE AND TNX UR 59 DE W3UTD FRASER in HARRISBURG, PA' or something like that. The dropdown arrows at the end of the line will 'save' your typed lines so you can easily retrieve and modify them by changing calls, etc. easily. Then, click the Text/data green button above to 'send' your message.

Go to my website at www.k3as.com for more info about working the ISS if you want.

Regards, GL, and 73, Dave Granoff K3AS

MT Express on Kindle Fire

Having gotten a Kindle Fire for Christmas I decided to try reading MT Express on it rather than the laptop I have been using. After downloading the February issue I copied the .pdf for both the January (which I hadn't finished reading) and February via USB to the Kindle Fire.

It is a lot more convenient to read on a handheld tablet than on the laptop. However, I'm not going to strain my eyes trying to read from a full page view on the 7" diagonal screen. No problem: just pinch zoom to show one column width and scroll up and down to read the whole column, then move over to the next column. Works wonderfully on the three column arrangement of most pages.

However, there are a few pages formatted as two columns. If I zoom to show the whole column width, the font size is too small for comfortable reading for old eyes. So I have to endure it, or zoom in more and scroll left-right on each line, or rotate the tablet to landscape. This brings me to suggest that an effort be made to use the three column format on all pages. Scrolling to see all of a picture that is 2 or 3 columns wide is not a big problem and the resolution from being zoomed in shows more detail, which is a plus.

Thanks for continuing to produce a quality magazine in a great format!

Ron Biddle

Thanks for your feedback, Ron. You'll be interested to know *Monitoring Times* is continuing to evolve and is beginning to offer a Kindle version of the magazine. It helps to resolve the issue of scrolling left-right when type is enlarged, as the text adjusts to fit your screen as you enlarge the font. Navigation is also a bit more convenient than in the pdf format, though you cannot see the whole page at one time as you can in the pdf.

At the current time illustrations are not included in the Kindle version, which can be critical to a construction article, for example. We're working on it! But the contents are still a real bargain at \$1.99 per issue! (Single issue PDFs are now only \$2.99.) Just go to www.monitoringtimes.com and follow the links to subscribe or go directly to the Grove online catalog at www.grove-ent.com/MT.html.

Note from Art Director:

The purpose of the two column layout is due to either the table being too wide for a normal three-column layout or we have a 1/4 page ad that needs to be placed. I, as well, prefer the 3-column layout, but there are times that it simply doesn't work.

As for the Kindle, I'm very happy that you're able to use the PDF for that format. Amazon does offer a way for us to do a Kindle version specifically for the Kindle Fire, but it's still further down on my list. I'm trying to do graphics for the regular Kindle at this point, and that's ending up to be quite a daunting task! We are always pursuing new avenues and new formats for *Monitoring Times*, so who knows where you'll see it next! Thank you for trying the different versions. We sure appreciate the continued support from all of our wonderful customers!

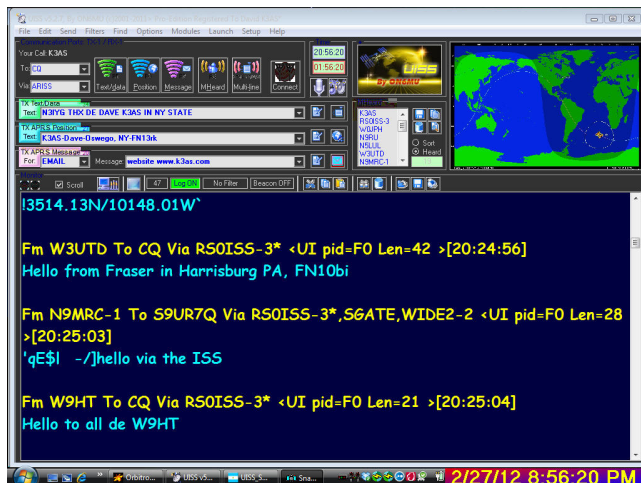
Bill Grove

The Changing Scene in AM

Ken Reitz's article in January's *MT* (*Who is Killing AM Radio?*) was dead (pun intended) accurate regarding the many forces at play that are orchestrating the slow downfall of AM radio. Some of these forces are fast-acting and deliberate, while others are slow and subtle.

What especially hit home was the section on car radios. Six months ago I purchased a new automobile that was outfitted with an AM/FM/Satellite radio and a complimentary six month subscription to Sirius XM. Satellite radio was great: lots of channels to choose from, no annoying commercials, excellent audio quality, etc. At the end of the six month trial period I had to cancel due to fiscal belt-tightening.

So, being a dyed-in-the-wool AM radio enthusiast, I pressed the AM button on my console for the first time since the car keys were turned over to me by the saleswoman, and culture shock set in. In short, the AM radio



reception was the worst of any car I have ever owned. At that moment my thoughts focused back to Ken's article.

My AM car radio does not pick any radio station without an accompanying amount of white noise, fade, and a cacophony of internally generated interference from the many electronic control systems in the vehicle. At first I was in a denial phase, figuring that it was probably due to my becoming accustomed to satellite radio's clear signal. As the old World War I song went "How can you keep 'em down on the farm, after they've seen Paree?"

Then I looked around for the car antenna, and it appears that all three services (AM, FM, and satellite) are fed by one aerodynamically, aesthetically pleasing, banana sized skyhook. Looks like my AM radio is playing second (more like third) fiddle to FM and satellite.

But I'll not give up, AM in my car will live again, even if I have to plug an external AM radio into the auxiliary port of the car's audio system. Maybe a bent coat hanger attached to that poor excuse for an antenna might help.

Thanks Ken for an excellent article and hopefully AM radio will live ad infinitum.

Mario Filippi, N2HUN

My wife and I were sightseeing in the Chattanooga area and I was surprised to find that the number of AM stations that could be heard was very limited during the daylight hours. Those of us in the Great Lakes states are quite spoiled. I counted 5 entertainment quality AM signals on my Buick's radio.

Today, in a similarly populated area near Fort Wayne, I counted 42 using the same radio and reception criteria. My count on the FM broadcast band was 49 stations.

I did not count the FM stations in the Chattanooga area; however, they seemed plentiful. I can understand why some of your readers believe that AM broadcasting is a thing of the past. It is certainly alive and well in this part of the country.

Larry Wheeler, W9QR

ABLE RADIOS for 1962



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2 IF STAGES located just ahead of the detector stage actually double the signal strength as compared with single IF stage chassis.
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Earphone, optional extra • Size: 8" x 5" x 3" • Colors: X31A-1, Grey; X31N-1, Ginger; X31B-1, Blue
Padded Leather cover protects front controls

I was very surprised to see the old Motorola AM radio on page 74 of the March issue. Back in July of 1962, I paid \$33.29 for mine.

I am enclosing some information on the X31A, along with a portion of the 'catalog' back then. [Like Doug Robertson's], my radio has not been repaired as well.

Love your magazine,

John Ebeling

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The **Kenwood TH-D72A Data Communicator** has an integrated GPS receiver and built-in TNC to provide superior APRS® operation. Other features include: 1000 alpha memories, 9 scan modes, CTCSS/DCS, cross-tone, waypoint export, DX cluster tune, clock, band mask, call channel, monitor, auto power-off, MHz mode, shift, VOX, auto repeater offset, simplex checker and ten DTMF memories.

TM-281A



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