

What's NEW

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HamCalc

If you ask some of the students that I teach at the local college what my favorite word is, they will say, "free." And most of you are like



me: free is good. Well, my friend George Murphy, VE3ERP, continues to offer one of the best software packages for ham radio and radio

enthusiast and the selling price – free!

Murph has just released the latest version of his award winning Hamcalc software package (version 98). HAMCALC runs under WINDOWS or MS-DOS and contains over 350 "Painless Math" computer programs for radio amateurs and professionals, used worldwide as a design, reference and learning tool since its introduction in 1993.



"Math is not one of my strong points so when I got my first computer I wrote a program for every equation I had occasion to solve more than once. The collection of programs grew rapidly and in 1993 I compiled them all into one entity which I named "HAMCALC" and gave it away free to anyone who asked. It is still growing and it is still free," said Murph.

Most of the programs can be run in either Metric or Imperial/USA units of measure. This package contains a lot of information not readily found in current popular handbooks and literature. The software is easy to install, use, and understand even by non-technical hobbyists.

So what kind of calculations, operations and task can this software do? Here is a partial list:

555 timer, Antenna Impedance Calculator, Arch Calculator, ASCII Character Codes, Audio Oscillator - dual tone, Audio Oscillator (LM 324), Audio Tone Analyzer, Battery Charger/Battery Charger, Bendng

Allowance - metals, Bobtail Curtain Antenna, Breakdown Voltage, Capacitor Design Calculator, Capacitor Plate Designer, Capacitors - Trimmer, Capacitors - Variable Plate, Clamping voltage calculator, Coaxial Cable Characteristics, Coaxial Cable RF Chokes & Baluns, Coil Designer, Coil Equation Calculator, Coil Q Calculator, Coil Q Quick Estimator, Coil Tap Properties, Coil Q - True vs. Apparent, Coils - Coaxially Coupled, Coils in Tandem, Copper Wire Data, Decimal to Binary Converter, Distributed Capacitance, Equivalent Values, Fat Dipole, Folded Dipole, Gamma Match Design, Graphs (graph generator), Heat Sink Fins, High Q Antenna Traps, Humindex Calculator, J-Pole End-Fed Zepp Antenna, Ladder Network Analyzer, Link Coupled Tuners, LM317 Regulator, Masonry Estimator, Mechanics Math, Meters (Direct Current), Metronome, Miniquad Coil Shortened Antenna, Mobile Antenna Matching, Mobile / Maritime Whip Antenna, Mobile Whip Antenna Coils, OctaRing Miniature Loop Antenna, Op Amp Constant Current Circuit, Op Amp Noise Figure, Pedometer, Photography Math, Power Supply Design, Quad Antenna Dimensions, Quadratic Equation Calculator, Scale Speed Calculator, Schmidt Trigger Op Amp, Short Center-Loaded Dipole, Short Off-Center Loaded Dipole, Single Wire Antenna System, Small Transmitting Loop Antennas, Speed Time & Distance Calculator, Stopwatch, Tapped Coil Calculator, T-Match - dipole to 600 ohm line, Toroid inductors, Transmission line node locator, Tuned Circuit Design, Variable Capacitor Plate Designer, Voltage divider - Thevinin, Wall Wart Properties, Wheatstone Bridge Calculator, Wind Chill Factor, Windom Antenna, Wire Antenna Index, Yagi 3-Element Beam Design, Zepp Double Extended Antenna, and Zepp multi-band antenna.

George Murphy no longer mails HAMCALC on CD-ROM; instead, authorized copies can be downloaded free (1.2Mb zip file) from the internet at the *CQ* magazine website at www.cq-ama-teur-radio.com/HamCalcem.html.

So if you want some neat software to do a lot of neat things in the world of radio and electronics, HalmCalc is just the ticket you are looking for, and, oh yes, it is free!

The Great Radio Sitcoms

Old Time Radio author and historian Jim Cox has written another of his fascinatingly detailed works, this one covering situation comedies.

Sitcoms have been abundant

on television for many decades, but like many of television's other programming concepts, sitcoms were initially invented for radio. Persons over 65 will remember many of the programs Jim writes about in this book, but younger persons may be familiar with some of the influences of these programs on our culture without being aware of their origins. Examples: "living the life of Riley" is a phrase from the program *The Life of Riley*. The phrase may predate the radio program; if so, the program has greatly extended it. The most well-known example of age denial comes from *The Jack Benny Program*, Jack forever remaining 39.

Some of the sitcoms had



comic book or comic strip tie-ins: *Blondie* and *Archie Andrews* are examples. Some involved celebrities: *The Jack Benny Program* (Jack Benny), *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* (Ozzie, Harriet, Ricky, and David Nelson), and *The George Burns and Gracie Allen Show* (George and Gracie).

Other programs whose names are remembered fairly well in entertainment history include the controversial *The Amos 'n' Andy Show*, *The Great Gildersleeve*, and my favorite, mostly because of its outrageous puns, *Fibber McGee & Molly*. A pun example (not one of those mentioned in this book, but one of my favorites) goes like this:

Fibber: Yup, I was a baseball pitcher in my younger days.

Molly: I never knew that. *South-paw?*

Fibber: Nope, Midwest, Maw.

Also, "Fibber McGee's closet" is a phrase that came from the program, but outlasted it by many years.

Several of the programs moved to television, but most did not, as it became apparent that radio comedy did not quite fit the new medium. Most notable of the successful transfers was *My Favorite*

Husband, starring Lucille Ball who moved to TV to star in *I Love Lucy* and several of its descendants.

Like radio soap operas, radio sitcoms seem quaintly innocent compared to television mutations of the formats. Radio comedies managed also to be very funny without embarrassing the listeners.

Other radio comedies that were remembered until recent decades include *Duffy's Tavern*, *Our Miss Brooks*, *The Bickersons*, and *Lum and Abner*.

Author Cox covers the shows and personalities mentioned above, plus several others for a total of 20 major sitcoms and 13 slightly less well known programs.

Jim provides some context throughout the book about the rise and fall of radio as America's main entertainment medium for more several decades. Also, for each program covered, he delivers the details, like the directors, the writers, the orchestra leaders, the vocalists, the sound effects technicians, the announcers, the recurring casts, the supporting casts, the sponsors, the musical themes, the ratings, the actual on-air details (dates, times of day, days of week, and network), and existing archival material. For many of the stars, cast members, and support staff, he tells us some of their history before and after their times on the radio series, and about any movies in which they also acted.

The Great Radio Sitcoms (ISBN 978-0-7864-3146-5) was published late last year by McFarland, Jefferson, NC. Their website address is www.mcfarlandpub.com and their phone number is 800-253-2187. The book contains photos, appendices, notes, bibliography, and an index. It is 296 pages, in hardcover, measures 7 by 10-inches and retails for \$55.00.

– Review by Andy Ooms (oomspine@msn.com).

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