

President's Corner

May 2010

I'm completely dismantling my station, and going off the air. But don't worry, I haven't thrown in the towel and given up! Rather, I am completely re-doing my study, where my station is located, from floor to ceiling.

When I moved in with my then wife-to-be (a consummate packrat), I crammed just about everything I owned into the one small bedroom that we cleared out for my use. I had to put my life together in a hurry, with the same cinder-block shelves and large wooden desk I'd used for decades. Eventually I started accumulating some radio equipment, and set it up in the back corner of the room. It all came together organically, without a real chance to plan things out.

Recently I've been thinking about how to organize the whole room better, so I've started taking action to dismantle every shelf, remove every item, spackle & repaint, and start over. One thing I realize is that my radio equipment needs to be adjacent to my desk. I use computer software to process digital signals on my radios, to control one of my receivers, and to filter the audio. The long leads from my computer to the radio function as antennas, picking up lots of interference (mostly from my computer and my monitor). Shortening up those leads should eliminate a lot of spurious signals! Also, when I'm transmitting from the radio, I keep running over to my desk on the other side of the room to enter callsigns into the lookup engine at QRZ.com (if you're a computer-using ham, I'm sure you know the site I'm talking about). This running back-and-forth is silly! I do have a laptop next to my radio with my electronic log, but it's not online (I don't have wireless in my home).

I've always envied the gorgeous setups I've seen in amateur radio magazines. Since I've been a working a steady job for over a decade now, I'm going to splurge a bit, and put something together that more closely resembles my dream station. I plan to acquire an L-shaped desk, and have my ham setup on one side, with my workspace on the other. It still will be a budget station, though – no expensive radios, and I'll still be operating barebones into a dipole made from Slinky toys – but at least the shelving won't be made from cinder blocks and 2x6's!

Once my new station is complete, I'll see about getting some photos into the BARA Notes (I've never submitted photos to the newsletter before, but I don't see any reason why black-and-white photos shouldn't reproduce okay). In the meantime, I'll be calling on a few hams I know, to check out their stations for ideas on how to organize & wire my own. If you have some hints I should consider, or ideas on what NOT to do when I set up my new station, please let me know!

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