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Auto-Spot, Tuning Aids, and the Arcane History of CW Pitch-Matching

Wayne Burdick, N6KR

Elecraft's auto-spot and CWT features -- available on the K3/K3S/KX2/KX3 -- are very useful tools for CW operators, especially those not experienced in pitch-matching. Here's a bit of history on where these features came from and how they work.

CW Spotting History

When a station finishes a CQ in CW mode, the operator faces the challenge of copying someone who's calling back. Callers may be weak or obscured by QRM; the op can usually deal with both problems by narrowing the filter passband. However, callers may also be off frequency. A calling station may be using a wide filter passband themselves, not attempting to carefully match their VFO frequency to that of the CQing station. The result may be no

QSO, even when propagation is excellent.

In the Days of Yore, a frequency offset between stations didn't always matter. Sometimes both stations used crystal-controlled transmitters, so operators had to patiently tune around after calling CQ.

As a 14-year-old novice I embraced this operating style for a year or so, armed with a dozen or so crusty FT-243 crystals for my Heath HW-16. I nearly wore out the socket swapping them in and out. After calling CQ, it was not unusual to find a caller 30 or more kHz away! (Away from "where" was a poorly answered question, as my Hallicrafters receiver dial wasn't exactly digital.)

Fortunately I soon acquired an outboard VFO, a life-changing addition to my station. Jealous friends doubled up on their paper routes to pay for their own. Girls suddenly paid more attention to me. [Read More](#)

Winter Field Day - This Weekend

If, like me, you feel like one field day a year is not enough, then by all means give Winter Field Day a try. This event has been going on for some time, with growing participation, and in most respects it's very similar to the annual ARRL Field Day. (It is NOT a QRP-only event.)

The exchange is the number of transmitters in your group, plus a class, and your ARRL section. Classes include indoor, outdoor, and home (I, O, and H). For example, operating outdoors with my single transmitter, I'll be signing "1O SCV" in CW, or on phone, "one oh Santa Clara Valley."

The contest period is also similar. This year it starts at 1900 UTC on Saturday and goes through 1900 UTC on Sunday (2 PM U.S. Eastern time). Specific band segments are designated to help participants find each other. Given the time of year, I'd expect the low bands to be very active.

WFD is a great opportunity to throw a wire in the tree and operate from a picnic table, tent, or RV, or operate from the comfort of home and give the shivering masses a few well-deserved QSOs.

For a complete rules, go to winterfieldday.com.

73,
Wayne
N6KR

News & Updates

Trade Show Season is Here!

We're preparing for our first trade show of the year at Hamcation in Orlando, Florida, and we're really excited. There's lots to see and learn when visiting the Elecraft booth. Check out our last trade show, Pacificon, in 2018. It's a great video by Ham Radio TV, and it covers the KPA1500, K3/0-Mini Remote, K3S, K-Line and KX-Line including our AX1 compact whip antenna.



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2019 Trade Show Schedule

Below is a list of trade shows that we'll be attending in 2019. We'll let you know if we add any more shows to our list. If you're attending any of these events, come on by and say hello!

- February 8-10 - Hamcation, Orlando, FL.
- April 12-14 - International DX Convention, Visalia, CA.
- May 17-19 - Dayton Hamvention, Xenia, OH.
- May 31-June 2 - SeaPac, Seaside, OR.
- June 21-23 - Ham Radio, Friedrichshaven, Germany

- June 7-8 - Hamcon, Plano, TX.
- August 9-10 - Pacific NW DX Convention, Everett, WA.
- Aug 17-18 - Huntsville, Huntsville, AL.
- September 6-8 - New England Division, Boxborough, MA.
- September 13-14 - W9DXCC, Schaumburg, IL.
- September 20-21 - W4DXCC, Pigeon Forge, TN.
- October 18-20 - Pacificon, San Ramon, CA.

KPA1500 Update 1500+ W Solid State Amplifier /160-6 meters



We are now shipping to Europe! We finished all CE lab testing on the KPA1500, and we shipped our first KPA1500s to Europe this month.

We are shipping new orders from stock, typically 1-5 days after order.

KPA1500 introductory pricing and free ground shipping within the continental U.S. is still in effect for a short while longer, so order soon!

Learn more about [KPA1500 here.](#)