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Ham Radio and FRS as Cell/Land-Line Alternatives During Regional Disasters: Do Your Neighbors Know?

by Wayne Burdick, N6KR

In California, we're stuck with fires, power outages, and earthquakes. Other states have their own list.

A local newspaper article reminded me this morning that regional disasters can also take out communications. Our local power provider recently cut power ahead of high winds as a precaution, and it came as a shock to many that neither their cell phones nor landlines were working. This can be a life-or-death problem for those who need medical care or evacuation.

There are alternatives that don't depend on the power grid or cell phone network, of course. But most people -- probably including your neighbors -- don't know about them.

For distances of up to a few miles, families can stay in touch using FRS (Family Radio Service) radios. In case you haven't heard of these: they're unlicensed, inexpensive VHF or UHF hand-helds. A certain number of channels are allocated; you just need to agree ahead of time which channel to use. You can get these on Amazon, etc.



For longer distances there's amateur radio. We have our own repeater networks, some of which are solar powered. We can also provide direct communications over hundreds or thousands of miles without repeaters, often the only way for those in affected areas to get messages to family or emergency services. For example, hams have always stepped up during major earthquake, floods, and hurricanes. Amateur radio is also ideal for those living in areas that are off the grid and out of touch. These are sometimes the most vulnerable and the most in need of alternative comms.

After I read the article about problems with our power grid, I got on nextdoor.com and posted information on FRS and amateur radio, offering information to those interested. (Nextdoor is a fairly new way to keep in touch with everyone in a neighborhood or local area. There are other services, including Patch.com, etc.)

As hams we can provide education on em-comm for our communities. We can also let them know we're ready and willing to help.

News & Updates

Elecraft Proudly Sponsors...

South Orkney 2020 VP8/VP8DXU

Feb. 20 - Mar 5, 2020

Elecraft is a proud sponsor of the South Orkney 2020 VP8/VP8DXU. The team will be operating seven K3S transceivers and KPA500 amplifiers.

[Check out their website for updates!](#)



KX2 & KX3 Morse-Audio Feedback Feature

At Pacificon, I discovered that some long-time KX2 and KX3 users were not aware of the Morse-audio feedback feature. This was provided for blind operators, but it's also useful for mobile, as well as too-tired-to-look-at-the-panel mode (e.g., halfway through Field Day).

To turn on Morse control feedback, set MENU:SW TONE to one of the "CODE nn" settings (nn is the code speed).

When this is in effect:

- Tapping switches or rotating controls emits their setting in Morse. For switch functions, a low tone indicates OFF and a high tone indicates ON.
- Morse feedback of the current VFO frequency can be obtained by tapping DISP.
- SWR and power output are also reported following TUNE or ATU TUNE.

Note for blind operators: We have plain-text versions of the KX2 and KX3 manuals available that physically describe all of the control locations.

73,
Wayne
N6KR

Attention Elecraft Newsletter Readers!

Up to \$125 additional discount on a K3S or K3S Package!

While K3S Transceivers are still in stock!



If you've been thinking about purchasing a K3S, now is the time! Purchase your K3S before Oct 31, and you'll receive both the October Special pricing plus an additional discount up to \$125.

Elecraft has a limited number of K3S transceivers in stock...when the last one is sold, the K3S will be discontinued. Like any of our discontinued products, Elecraft will continue to provide support to K3S owners.

Enjoy an Additional Discount!

Besides the package saving and October Special, you can get **up to \$125 additional discount** on a K3S. Use the following Discount codes at check-out.

- K3S Save add'l \$50 (Total savings: \$150) Discount Code: **K3S50Disc**
- K3 Casual User Package save add'l \$50 (Total savings \$306) Discount Code: **K3SCasual50Disc**

- K3S DX'er Package save add'l \$75 (Total savings \$397) Discount Code: **K3SDX75Disc**
- K3S DX'er/Contestor Package save add'l \$125 (Total savings \$552) Discount Code: **K3SContest125Disc**

Free UPS Ground Shipping within the continental U.S. Offer Ends October 31, 2019.

[Learn more about the K3S here.](#)

Share Your Pictures!

Paul Gacek, M0SNA/W6PNG, shares what he has built and why in his KX3/PX3/KXPA100 Portable (suitcase or Jeep) SO2R blog post.

"It's all about having fun in contests but the twist is making it portable not just for contests on exotic islands but also for events like Cal QSO Party where a Jeep (my Jeep) can get the station to a fantastic part of the Cal wilderness and generates pile ups galore." -Paul G.

Check out his blog [here](#)...we know you'll enjoy it!

<https://nomadic.blog/2019/10/22/suitcase-dxpediton-so2r-why-drive-a-boring-bmw-m-series-when-you-can-have-a-ferrari/>

Email pictures of your shack, your Elecraft equipment out in the field, contesting and DXpeditions. We'll even post your videos of Elecraft equipment in action!

[Submission guidelines](#)



K4 Update

High-Performance Direct Sampling SDR



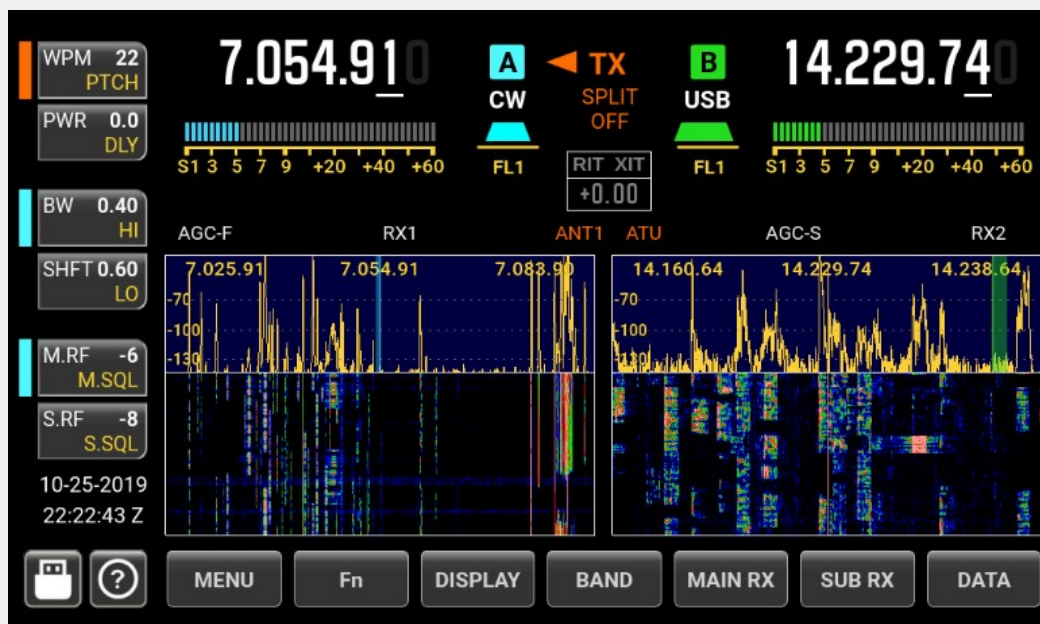
K4 Dual-Panadapter Mode

by Wayne Burdick, N6KR
& Eric Swartz, WA6HHQ

As we add new features to K4 software, we'll be periodically highlighting them in the Elecraft newsletter. This month: it's our dual panadapter display.

The K4's user interface provides a symmetrical display of settings for VFO A (main RX) and VFO B (sub-RX). There's a full set of icons for each, as well as dual S-meters. Each also has its own high-resolution fine-tuning aid -- the mini-pan -- which can be displayed by touching a signal of interest or by tapping the associated S-meter.

This symmetry extends to the main and sub panadapters as well. The screen capture below shows dual-panadapter mode, with side-by-side displays that maximize waterfall height.



In the example shown, the receivers are on two different bands, in two different modes, and are using two different antennas. This flexibility allows the operator to monitor any two bands at once, switching transmit bands with a tap of the A/B switch. A planned future mode will allow the operator to specify several bands of interest -- as many as six -- to do a quick check of activity over a broad spectrum.

Controls such as SPAN, REF LEVEL, WATERFALL HEIGHT, AVERAGING, SCALE, etc. can be applied to the two displays independently. If an external monitor is plugged into the video output (HDMI), its panadapter parameters can also be separately adjusted, or they can be individually linked to the LCD settings, saving adjustment time.

The K4's powerful, extensible processing architecture provides unlimited expansion possibilities. In future articles, we'll illustrate such features as built-in text decoding, the K4's easy-to-use menu system, and context-sensitive help screens, among others.

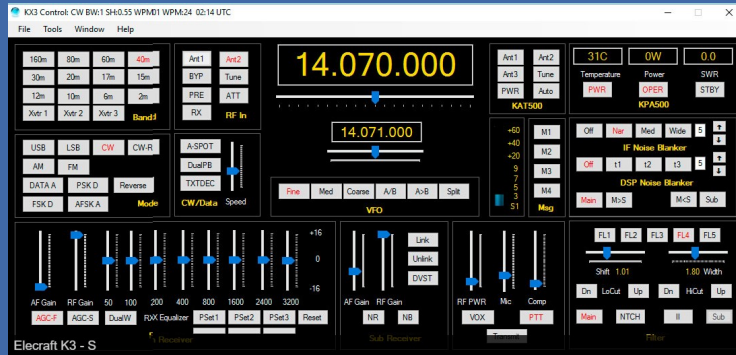
We are continuing to take deposits for the K4 - the first shipping group will be filled soon. At this time, we don't have final pricing for the K4 models. We are still gathering material prices from our suppliers; however, the full deposit for the K4 and the K4D will be close to the price of the radios.

Great Products From Other Manufacturers

Featuring *Win4K3Suite for Elecraft Radios*

Win4K3Suite is a comprehensive control package for the Elecraft K3, KX3, and K3S. It includes support for the P3, KPA500, KAT500, KXPA100, SDRPlay and LPPAN panadapters. Win4K3 interfaces to all third party hardware and software programs including HRDLogbook, DM780, DXLabsSuite, NAP3, N1MM+ and many more.

[Learn more about Win4K3Suite!](#)



Check out our list of Great Products From Other Manufacturers [HERE](#).