President's Column

I periodically use Winlink to pass email. I originally tested it as a means to communicate with my daughter in Las Vegas while we were traveling in our motorhome and out of the range of cell phone service. I used HF frequencies and honestly my results were mixed. Sometimes I could check into a node right away, sometimes I would need a dozen attempts, and then there were times when I just gave up trying. Adding to the pain was the 300 baud character rate limit on HF. Several years passed and then I did a little research on Packet Radio and thought I would check it out. I was never able to successfully link up with a pure packet station but I did discover a Winlink packet node in New Jersey that I could rapidly and reliably use to transmit Winlink messages at 1200 baud.

The nuts and bolts: The Winlink node station is KC2TXB-10 at 145.070 MHz and it is listed on the Packet Radio Map. I have a dedicated Yaesu FT-2900 transceiver using a Digirig interface and UZ7HO Soundmodem software. As the transceiver doesn't support CAT control I leave it tuned to the proper frequency. The Digirig USB driver is down-loadable from their web site. If you are using Windows 10 you will have to give the microphone "permission" to communicate, a detail I spent a couple of hours figuring out. I set up the Yaesu FTM-400XDR/DE in the communication trailer to have the same capability to pass field day radiograms using the club laptop #1. Just another tool in the tool box.

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