

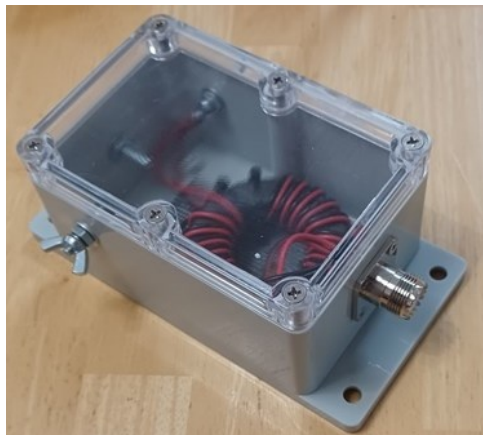
Microvolt

Monthly newsletter of the Utah Amateur Radio Club

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DYI : doing it yourself



From the earliest days of amateur radio, operators and participants have set the standard of designing and building their own equipment. More than an optional activity like it is today, many past amateurs have had to build their own gear out of necessity, which led them to experiment, innovate, and improve upon previous designs. Today's amateur radio continuum offers us the unparalleled freedom to modify and enjoy our own craft within our license privileges. Whether to improve your skills or just because it's fun, you might prefer to *do it yourself*.

Cover story	2
Editorial	3
Letters to the editor	4
Club news	5
For your information	6
Spotlight on AI7UG	7
Tech corner	9*
Strays	14*

**Online version only*

Cover – Doing it yourself

Those of us who engage in making our own amateur radio equipment sometimes say that we *home-brew* our gear, a tongue-in-cheek reference to the times when people illegally brewed their own liquor at home. Seriously, our licenses provide us the privilege of creating a radio out of scraps, and even modifying existing radios meant for other services. We can legally use our creations without their being subjected to any kind of government scrutiny, so long as we use them within the limits of our license privileges.

While numerous hams enjoy the activity of home-brewing their own antenna and electronics, it's become something of a dying art. The ease of making a purchase by a few mouse clicks, together with the complexity of modern electronics, have discouraged many away from *tinkering*. Also, the cost and time commitment of building electronic equipment have placed many good designs out of the reach of today's busy hobbyists. These have confined the list of possible projects to antennas, baluns / transformers, and support gear (launchers, software, pass-throughs, etc.) for numerous would-be crafters.

Still, those who have ventured into the home-brew world have discovered that they can make production-quality antennas for under \$30, that otherwise are marketed for well over \$150. At the same time, they add to their experience and hone their skills with each step. Additionally, they also realize that building their own equipment is another milestone toward self-sufficiency because they become less dependent on others to install equipment, build simple gadgets, or perform repairs.

Rewarding as it might be, doing it yourself doesn't necessarily mean doing it alone. While some tasks require serious time working by yourself, friends and helpers can assist with many others, like a club kit build, an online design collaboration, or folks gathering to raise an antenna for a disabled ham.

Because of your unique skills and your generosity, you might have found yourself being asked to take on the work of *doing it for others*. That's terrific, and we highly encourage your unselfish service! Might we suggest, however, that while you build, install, or mount something for another, try not to do all the work yourself, and let your benefactor do some of the work, so he or she can share the joy of the DIY experience.



Finally

The word *amateur* was bestowed on our hobby to give us the uncommon *ability* to do things ourselves. However, the idea of home-brewing or building something might not appeal to you at all, and that's fine; many are perfectly satisfied pursuing amateur radio in their own way without needing to pick up a screwdriver or a drill. It's simply one potentially fun way to involve yourself in our craft of many faces if you're so inclined.

Microvolt editorial staff