

The Rod Newkirk Collection: From the Pages of the K9YA Telegraph 2004-2009

Reviewed by Terry Fletcher, WAØITP

Rod Newkirk, VA3ZBB/W9BRD contributed 47 monthly articles for the K9YA Telegraph between 2004 and 2009. All were based on his personal experiences, except one. His wife, Betty Broome Newkirk, VE3ZBB, also authored a great story that you won't want to miss.

Mr. Newkirk was the ARRL's DX Editor, writing *QST*'s "How's DX?" column for 25 years, and actually worked at the ARRL HQ for a short time as a young man. He coined the term "Elmer" in a 1971 *QST* article, is a member of *CQ* magazine's CQ Amateur Radio Hall of Fame, is the recipient of a 55-wpm award, and was a long time radio officer for the Illinois State Police.

All of Rod's stories are written in his unique and easy reading style, and they are about real people with whom we all can identify. Philip Cala-Lazar, K9PL, editor of the *K9YA Telegraph*, says it much, much better than I can in this quote from the book's foreword, "Within these pages you will find wit and humor, drama and pathos, character studies, razor-sharp reminiscence of amateur radio 'Golden Age' and some novel antenna designs." Indeed you will, and many of the stories you will remember for a long time.

Here are some of my favorites are:

"Beat Me Daddy, Eight to the Bar" in which a 2 handed method of straight key sending at 30 wpm turns heads at the Chicago FCC office. Rod says. "physical flourishes occur that would make a big band jazz drummer proud".

"The Indoor Sportsman" is a non technical description of indoor loops beginning with a single turn quarter wave loop, progressing to multi turn designs, and the most unusual wire vertical you ever saw. These are effective indoor antennas, and the two models that I built worked very well.

Particularly humorous is "Bailey's Barn". As the transformer warmed, the "tantalizing

whiff of authentic rural Connecticut” remained recognizable for many years.

“From a Galaxy Far Away” is a poignant story about a multi generational ham radio family, and a long-delayed echo.

As mentioned above, Rod's wife Betty Broome Newkirk VE3ZBB, contributed a story also. It's entitled “Morse Code Magic”. This quote provides a glimpse of this splendid story. Betty writes, “It's difficult to believe that what happened in my life could be possible. Cynics will frown, but seasoned amateur radio operators and dreamers will smile knowingly.” A must read for the romantic in all of us.

Rod has an amazing ability to recall details and craft great stories about them. His skill and ability to write about his them in a genuine manner uplifts the reader, making him/her feel good about hamdom and his fellow man. This little book resides on my coffee table where the pages are beginning to show some wear.

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