Regarding preparing your radio for contests and field day operations.

Moral.. It’s not what you don’t know that bites you, its what you didn’t know you didn’t know that gets you!

I.E.. There’s nothing worse than getting bitten by something you didn’t know you didn’t know. Whether its that deer you didn’t see on your motorcycle, or a setting on your radio that you didn’t know about, that you didn’t know you were supposed to know about.

Synopsis..

While setting up and configuring the new Lenovo laptop I purchased at the Hilton Hamfest, I tested it on the new Icom 7300 running WSJT-X and FT8. I was using the “expected” settings on the app and the radio. (or so I thought)

While everything seemed to be running ok, John noticed on the Icom 746 that my transmitted signal had “interference” on it. After feverish troubleshooting it was discovered that my microphone was also transmitting audio while FT8 Data was also being transmitted. While disconnecting my microphone alleviated that problem, it led me to wonder how the heck this could happen.

After viewing multiple “You tube” videos I noticed that the “preferred” setting for the ICOM radios using this mode was “USB-D” or “USB Digital” mode. It is ridiculously easy to set, and alleviated my microphone interference issue. Ah HA! Problem solved.

Or so I thought!

Saturday morning comes around and I perform a test transmission to N2JQR in Spencerport. (literally about 2 Miles away) His report was that my signal was less than optimal. After messing with some settings, my audio appeared better.

So….

The Contest starts, and it becomes quickly evident that something is terribly wrong. Nobody and I mean nobody is replying to my CQ’s and no replies are coming back to my transmissions.

Fiddling around with the Radio and swapping out laptops did nothing.

I spent a good chunk of Saturday troubleshooting this issue.

Here is the interesting result.

The ICOM 7300 radio has some interesting modes and accompanying settings.

When you’re in “NON Digital” Mode the radio can be set to have its “connections” point to Mic, ACC, USB or a Combination of them. Normal USB operations in “non digital” mode usually is “MIC”. (SET MODE – “DATA OFF MOD” default:MIC,ACC.

Digital Mode is usually the Opposite. You don’t want the mike interfering with Digital operations. So when I set my radio to USB-D (Digital) I was using the wrong input. (which is another menu setting) DUH?

Attached are Jpeg’s of the Manual regarding “SET MODE”

So for FT8 and digital operations…SET Mode – DATA MOD (default:ACC) should be USB (signal from the USB port) not upper side band.

Once I set this Sunday Morning Magic! Everything worked.

Lesson learned.

The good news is this wont happen on field day.

Again…DUH!

Regards,

Mark