

BY RICH MOSESON, *W2VU

Something Old, Something New . . .

Something Borrowed, Something Blue. No, I'm not getting married (my wife wouldn't like that idea), nor am I—yet—planning a wedding for either of my children. But a cartoon in an old issue of *CQ*, my yearly new product tour at Dayton, and a chance QSO on 40 meters kind of got me going on that theme.

On the air the other day for one of my all-too-rare CW QSOs, I talked with K9TTM, who was running a vintage Heathkit DX-60 transmitter and a Collins 75S3B receiver. I can't speak for the receiver, but the DX-60 sounded great—perhaps better than the DX-60s I remember using and hearing back in the '70s.

It's interesting that he was running both Heathkit and Collins gear, since they were the impetus for an interesting discussion I had at Ham-Com in Dallas in mid-June. A ham was looking through our book, *Heathkit—A Guide to the Amateur Radio Products*, and lamenting Heath's departure from the ham radio world.

"Well, those folks are doing a pretty good job as their spiritual successors," I said, pointing across the aisle to the Elecraft booth.

"Oh, but they're so expensive," the ham replied.

"Are they really?" I asked. "Let's find out." Having wireless internet access in the convention center, I fired up my laptop and went to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics inflation calculator website (<http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>). We started entering the listed prices of various Heathkits along with the years they were introduced and seeing what they would cost today. A retired Collins engineer joined the discussion and gave us the price of a KWM-1 when it was introduced. Into the inflation calculator it went, and guess what? Today's top-of-the-line \$10,000–\$15,000 transceivers are right in line with what a KWM-1 would cost in 2007 dollars. And the Elecraft kits started to look like real bargains.

I don't remember exactly which Heathkits we looked up, but one of my finds in the Ham-Com flea market was a stack of old *CQ*s, and I bought three of them for 50 cents apiece (double the cover price of the oldest one). Wow! There were some great values back in the "good old days" (or were there?). For example, in 1946, a brand new Hallicrafters S-38 receiver set you back only \$39.50! And a Globe Trotter transmitter from World Radio Labs was \$59.95 as a kit and \$75.00 factory-built. Prices were a little higher by 1951, when a Johnson Viking I transmitter cost \$209.50 and a Hallicrafters S-76 receiver sold for \$169.50.

But let's plug those prices into the inflation calculator. The S-38, in 2007 dollars, would cost you \$421. And that's just a receiver! Add the \$59.95 Globe Trotter (\$640 today for a kit, \$800 wired) and that not-too-fancy station would cost you between \$1000 and \$1200 today. Looking at the 1951 gear, the Viking I would now go for \$1675 and the S-76 would be \$1355—or about \$3000 for the pair in today's dollars. You can get some very nice gear today for \$3000, and something equivalent to the S-76/Viking combo would probably be under \$2000.

Something New (and Something Blue)

There was no shortage of "new" stuff at this year's Dayton Hamvention®. In fact, there was so much new stuff introduced at Dayton that we had to split our annual "Hot Stuff at Hamvention®" roundup into two parts—radios and amplifiers this month (pg. 28), antennas and accessories next month. Among those new radios is an HF transceiver from Hilberling, a German company new to the U.S. ham market, for which the buyer has the choice of three cabinet colors—black, red, and, yes, blue! See "Hot Stuff..." for details.

Something Borrowed

For more than a quarter century now, we've been borrowing some time every month from Karl Thurber, W8FX, who started out as our antennas columnist in 1980 and has been here every month since, most recently as editor of our "What's New" column. And while it makes us a bit blue, Karl has decided that

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This cartoon from the October 1951 issue of *CQ* led me to the general theme for this month's editorial.



Karl Thurber, W8FX, seen here with his wife, Millie, is retiring as a *CQ* columnist after 27 years.

after 27 years, the time has come for him to pass along the pen to someone else. Karl's final column appears in this issue. We'll be introducing his successor next month. Karl, mere words (even in print) are not enough to thank you for your time, effort, and friendship over the years. Our columnists are *CQ*'s lifeblood, and having people of your caliber, month after month, year after year, is part of what makes it so much fun to be this magazine's editor. On behalf of all of our readers and editors, past and present, thank you, Karl, for a job well done.

Closing Note

Our discussion earlier about how much things cost in the past vs. the present brings us to one closing note. The combination of the latest postal increase and higher fuel costs passed along in the prices of paper and ink (and just about everything else one buys today) is forcing us to raise our subscription price for the first time in nearly seven years. First-class postage has gone up 24% in that time period (second class, which we use, has gone up even more), and we all know the price of gasoline has gone up a whole lot more than that. As of next month's issue, a one-year subscription to *CQ* will cost \$36.95, or \$5 more than it does now. The bind-in card elsewhere in this issue will give you more details, along with a final opportunity to subscribe or renew at the current price.

73, W2VU