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Author: Jim Ebner, N8JE

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Bill Finch, W4EHF, Upgrades at Age 93

On October 21, 2005, W4EHF passed his Amateur Extra exam given by the Volunteer Examiners of the Brightleaf Amateur Club in Greenville, North Carolina. He commented that he studied very hard for about a month before the exam. His motivation was to get more frequency to operate on and he wanted the "E" that Extra class license holders had on the club roster. But more seriously, he wanted it because "it's there — I want the highest license." What motivation! What is remarkable is that Bill was 93! (He's now 95.)

Bill remembers that he was on the air when he heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. He was talking to Walter, W4FHE in Florence, South Carolina. The amateur who broke into their QSO informing them of the attack also advised them to shut down their stations. Bill then listened to broadcast AM radio to get the details of the attack. Amateurs were not able to be on the air until couple months after the war ended in 1946 and Bill was on the air the very day the ban was lifted.

Bill is one of the nicest people you would ever want to meet. He is a good example for the rest of us — Amateur Radio operators, or not. Bill really didn't have to upgrade to Extra; like most of us, he had enough frequencies to be active, but he saw the challenge of going all the way. If Bill at 93 can pass an Amateur Extra exam (or run an 800 meter race, as he did at the Senior Games), maybe we all can take a look at what more we can do with our lives. — Murray Merner, K4MHM



MURRAY MERNER, K4MHM

Bill Finch, W4EHF, now age 95, likes building as much as being on the air. He recently built a QRP receiver kit — "for the fun of it." In his earlier days he built phone, CW and SSB transmitters and receivers.

Flagpole Vertical

Jim Ebner, N8JE

I recently relocated to Florida and wanted a good HF vertical that I could use on most of the bands. I wanted to keep it somewhat hidden, even though there are no restrictions in our area.

I had read in the May 1993 issue of QST that Albert Parker, N4AQ, took a Hustler 4-BTV and covered it with 2 inch thin wall PVC to make a flagpole.

I wanted to use a Hustler 6-BTV because it covered most of the HF bands, but could not find anything on how to cover it to make a flagpole. I wanted to come up with a way to cover a 6-BTV so everyone could use and enjoy this vertical antenna.

I started first by reading all the instructions. The mount calls for a 4 foot, 1 1/4 inch OD pipe for the mast. I am in the west central part of Florida and the ground is very sandy here. I did not think the 4 foot mast would be long enough to hold the antenna and the PVC cover. So, I used a 7 foot mast, leaving 18 inches above ground for mounting.

To cover the antenna mount at the bottom, I found that 6 inch PVC would work. I cut it long enough that I could bury 1 foot of the 6 inch PVC in the ground to help stabilize the pole after everything was up.

I assembled the antenna according to the instructions. After checking the match with an antenna analyzer, I found there was much tuning to be done. I took the antenna down and removed the traps above the 10 meter trap. Starting with just 10 meters I found I needed to trim some off the main mast before the trap. This is telling me my ground plane is better than average according to the instructions. Note: I did not use any ground radials.

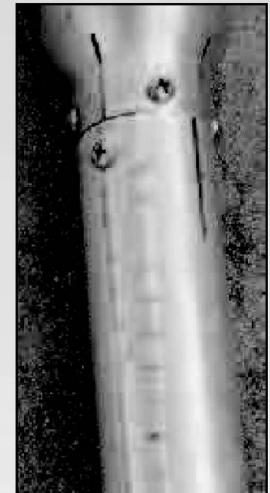
I reassembled the rest of the antenna, tuning each band as I went. After completely tuning the antenna I marked each spot on the antenna and measured, writing each measurement down on the instruction sheet. I then disassembled the antenna again, replacing the screw clamps on each trap with 4-#6 half-inch stainless steel sheet metal screws. I then reassembled the antenna, replacing the rest of the clamps with 2-#6 half-inch stainless steel sheet metal screws.

Have questions? Need assembly details? Send me an e-mail message at n8je@earthlink.net.

Photos by the author.



The author used 6 inch PVC pipe for the base.



The author marked each trap carefully for optimum tuning.



The completed flagpole antenna.