

THE VENETIAN BLIND ANTENNA

◆ I just read, with interest, about AA1DO's condo antenna farm (*QST* April 2001, page 64). My own situation is a ham's nightmare or challenge, depending upon how you look at it.

I live in a second-floor apartment and am unable to have any outdoor antenna or anything in the common attic space. This is a Senior Citizens apartment in a converted church building. I immediately tried to come up with a workable indoor antenna arrangement. What I devised has netted me 67 countries or so on 20, 17 and 15 meters CW and SSB.

The antenna is a simple bottom-loaded "inverted U" wire that is mounted in my second-floor window. It is supported on the venetian blind with cable ties. The blind slats are vinyl, not metal, of course. The window itself is 40 inches wide and 44 inches high, so the wire is 35 inches across the top and 40 inches on the two sides. A 27-inch piece of stranded insulated wire with an alligator clip on one end connects the one side of the inverted U to an airwound loading coil of 14 turns of no. 10 wire 2 inches in diameter. A short run of coax from my Yaesu FT-920 transceiver is connected to the bottom of the coil and a "ground plane" of random length 4-inch wide copper strap. Using the alligator clip I can resonate my Venetian Blind Antenna for 20, 17 and 15 meters with an SWR of less than 1.5:1. The built-in tuner in my FT-920 trims it down to a perfect match.

I'm pretty satisfied with its performance. I haven't been able to put in a lot of hours operating, but 67 countries in the limited time I have been on the air aren't bad. The one thing that amazes me, though, is this: The window my Venetian Blind Antenna is mounted in faces southwest. Contacts with Europe and Russia and Africa are most common and usually with the best reports (often S7 or better), yet my transmit signal has to go through the entire apartment building to exit toward those countries!

So, there is always hope for the "antenna disadvantaged" ham. Apartment dwellers, take heart!—*Ray Jenkins, W3MQA, Youngwood, Pennsylvania*