

# The Radio Hotel – Looking back at 2020

by Rick Hiller – W5RH

OK, we've all had a crappy year. Not even going to mention why, cause we all know. Paraphrasing the C&W song, "best thing I ever saw was look'n at 2020 in the rear view mirror". But even in crappy times we hams remain true to our hobby in the best ways we can. Thru the internet, Zoom meetings and presentations, You Tube, e-Ham, magazines, repeater nets and other social media platforms we remain informed with the news of club and hobby events, presentations about new antennas, new radios, etc. So, here are my favorite antenna discovery highlights of the year. The Nano VNA, the EFHW -- End Fed (multi-band) Half Wave wire antenna and the horizontally polarized, multi-band vertical antenna.

**The Nano VNA.** This \$ 59 2 port device is everything you wanted in an antenna system tester fit into a box the size of 2 packs of Camels. It measures SWR, return loss, S parameters and more. Gonna take you awhile to figure out how to use it and unless you've been studying about antenna system theory, it is gonna take you an even longer while to understand just what you are measuring, why and what the results mean. But, certainly, all for the good of your Ham Radio journey. Your antennas are a system of transmitter/receiver, transmission line and the antenna (the load). You want them to all dance together like Fred Astair and Ginger Rogers. If they don't, well...that's why you bought the NanoVNA H4. See [QST May 2020 Product Review](#) and purchase it at R and L Electronics. A nice video on this device by Alan, W2AEW, is at <https://vimeo.com/481077181>

**EFHW** – Steve Ellington, N4LQ, highlights a delightfully easy to build multi-band antenna. Multiband in that it works its' fundamental band, 80 or 40, plus all of the other HF ham bands without a tuner, all at pretty efficient levels. If you can fit it in your yard as a horizontal wire or a V or L, you are one lucky op. Tons of info is on the internet at You Tube and other club and ham sites. Theory, construction and deployment are all covered. Easily done, all for the cost of a nice Red Lobster meal with desert. Google "**Steve N4LQ EFHW**".

**Horizontally polarized vertically oriented multi-band antenna.** John Portune, W6NBC, implemented a vertical loop with a ATU at the base. Check out QST July 2019 for his original article. So, why 2020? Because he gave an upgraded presentation to the NARS group a few months back about a "double loop/slot" implementation. It is a great way to get directional, multi-band, horizontally polarized radiation, albeit a bit pricey when fully implemented with mast and automatic ATU at the base. I do disagree with the "slot antenna path" to his loop solution. I wrote about this in the Radio Hotel column for October 2020 (that, mistakenly, never got published). I show that his newly proposed antenna is really a slight modification of the full wave loop, as written about in various publications back in the 70's and 80's. Still, his loop is a nice, vertical way to get multiple bands with gain and directionality. [Note: That lost Radio Hotel column can be found here: "The Path to Radial-less Verticals" <http://www.bvarc.org/Tech/October2020.pdf> ]

Two other personal highlights of my year were 1) the fact that two good friends bought Flex Radios and allowed me to be a part of their discovery and excitement; and 2) another good friend, and refreshed ham newby, got his antenna situation sorted out, got his amplifier working properly and he bought a new Kenwood TS-890. All are very lucky dogs in my book. New rigs mean new destinations. I'm envious here, but certainly not jealous, as I am pleased that they have kept the economy going and allowed me to participate in their set-up, due diligence and in-depth discovery of these new radios and stations. Thanks guys.

Oh, one last thing: no matter what your poison, Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas and, certainly, a very happy, prosperous, healthy and fruitful New Year. I hope you are visited by Santa C and his Band of 8.

Enjoy your hobby.....73...Rick – W5RH