

Turpitude

Slanapa 477
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Things have been good and bad around the Horvat Household since last I wrote. Actually, they've been more "interesting" than anything else.

Since my little stay in the DVA hospital, they have been gradually weaning me off of the plethora of drugs that Kaiser had me on. My depression and anxiety is a bit worse, but my mind is much clearer. It seems like a fair tradeoff, especially if it is only temporary. I got assigned to a new doctor in the Salem facility, which means that I don't have to drive to Portland for attention. (I will miss the excuse to hit the bookstores every couple of weeks, however!)

This doctor is all right. He looks like Walt Kelly, so I liked him right away. He is just now giving me some medication to help the depression and is lining me up for a series of meetings about OCD. (These will be back in Portland so I will get to shop a little.) His position is that I need less drugs and more therapy, what ever that means.

Sue's parents have a house in Waldport, right along the Pacific Ocean beach. They have been trying to sell it for a year or so with no luck. You may recall



that last year they moved to Stayton so we could be closer. Now they have decided to rent it out as a vacation rental. While this means putting furniture back into it, I think it will be a good thing in the long haul. I'm rather pleased that they'll keep it for a time. I would hate to lose a place where you can dangle your toes in the water from the front window! Sue and I spent the last couple days there, cleaning and putting on a new surface on the hardwood floor. My job was to run the buffer ~ which was possible solely because of my experience in the Army during basic training. Imagine, two years' experience and the most useful thing I got out of it was buffer command!

The really BIG thing that happened is that I got a huge, new beam antenna up for ham radio! What a honey it is, with invisible fingers that reach out to the stratusphere and grab radio signals.

I have been a ham for fifty years now, but always used wire antennas. I had lots of fun erecting antennas, as there are thousands of different wire configurations possible. But in the back of my mind, there was always the thought that some day I would put up



a beam. Four weeks ago I did. Now, I say “I” did with some hesitation, for, you see, I am quite afraid of heights. There was no way I could put a mast up, then climb up, assemble and attach the beam. Thank you for friends. Rich Warren, a ham friend (who you may recall as the fellow that put up an antenna at his house last June); Jack Fiske, a good friend; and SLANapan Dale Goble helped me out. In the photo above, Rich is on top, Dale is in the middle, and I am safely on the ground taking the photograph. Rich has a set of scaffolding that we used to get almost high enough. It took two days to assemble the antenna in the garage, then in the back yard; it took two days to haul the pieces up the scaffold, really put them together, attach the rotor, and mount the beam. I owe my friends a great deal.

What does having a beam mean in the Real World? It means that when a rare station comes on, I can call him and be heard over the roar of the multitude also calling him. It also means that I have a lot better chance of hearing him in the first place. If you can't hear him, you can't work him! I have talked to people in Greenland, Georgia (the country), Azores, Germany, England, Ukraine, European and Asiatic Russia, Lithuania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, etc etc etc. The best part of it all is that with me having a good signal, I can start a real conversation

with some of these fellows, more than just a quick Hi, How are you?

Along with the antenna improvement, I also finally figured out what was wrong with my amplifier. So now I have 450 watts output rather than just 100 watts. This makes a pretty large difference in signal strength in itself. Of course, though, the amplifier doesn't help you hear any better so it is really only effective when used with a good antenna.



When she OK'd this antenna, Susie only saw a large armload of pieces; little did she imagine that it would grow to 38'x42'! But she's been a good sport.



Greetings to all you SLANapans! Hope your Halloween is great and that you don't have too many Fall leaves to rake up!

Mike