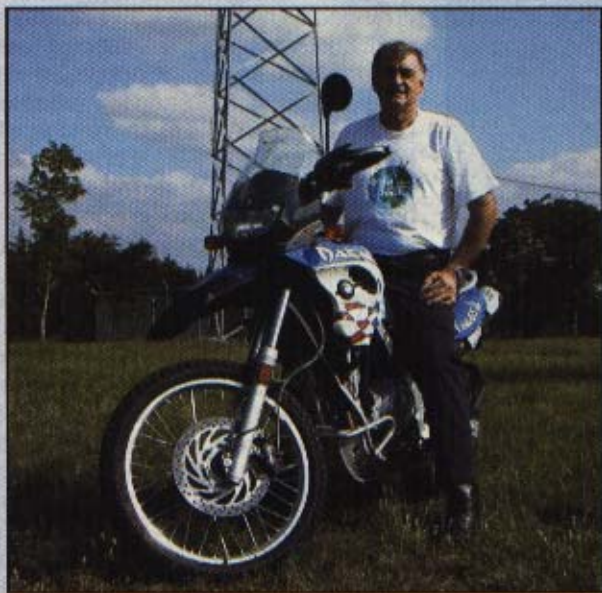


John Brosnahan, WØUN

John Brosnahan, WØUN, is no stranger to the amateur radio community. Formerly head of Alpha/Power, Inc., he has long been very active in contesting and DXing, as well as a renowned antenna and RF guru. John also spent four years in the high-profile rock and roll world during the heyday of some of the biggest names in the music industry, and it was through this work that he met Joe Walsh.



John Brosnahan, WØUN, with his 2002 BMW Dakar motorcycle.

"From 1969 to 1973 I owned Magnum Opus Inc., a company devoted to very high-powered audio systems, doing sound reinforcement for many of the most popular acts of the era," John told CQ. "We worked predominantly for rock-and-roll bands, who most need the amplification, but also for acts such as Bob Hope and Englebert Humperdink. The rock groups for which we ran sound included Jethro Tull, Jefferson Airplane, The Who, Led Zeppelin, Grateful Dead, and, of course, Joe Walsh and his band, The James Gang. I met Joe backstage doing sound somewhere. I don't remember exactly where we met, but as soon as we found out we were both into ham radio, we hit it off very well. We were just buddies who were out to have a great time together and shared an interest in radio. There were times when Joe thought it was more fun to ride along in the equipment truck with me talking about radio when I was driving the sound system than to ride with the band.

Joe even bought me my first 2 meter FM radio. We went down to CW Electronics in Denver, and he bought a couple of Standard 826s so we could talk to each other on the road. It also was always fun to contact someone who was going to the band's concert.

"I had been licensed earlier than Joe, am a couple of years older, and probably had a little more [radio] experience than he had. But Joe is very, very sharp technically. A few years ago when he visited me, he asked more detailed questions about some of the ionospheric sounder schematics that I was working on than anyone else who has visited me, and not just hams, but people who make their careers doing ionospheric sounding. I was very impressed with his insights into the equipment. We've had a lot of fun together."

John has since retired from Alpha/Power and sold his ranch in Colorado. He has started a new company, Signal Hill Research, LLC and moved to a 126-acre ranch in the hill country of Texas, southwest of Austin. Looking back on his long friendship with Joe, John concluded, "Amateur radio's been a big deal for both of us, playing an important role in both our lives."

a lot of them to give all the capacitors equal time. But that's what I have set up and what I really enjoy. I have nine operating positions in my LA house. I just got into PSK and that's a lot of fun. I've been doing that for a while; it's pretty exciting with low power. Then I have AM stuff. There's a great AM community on 3.870 MHz in southern California. I have a Globe King 500 that I love, with an HRO-60. For an antenna I have a great big 80 meter half-wave with open-wire feeder so I can go to pretty much any frequency. In my Jeep I have a TS-50 and a Perth Outbacker for when I drive down to San Diego to see my family. When I'm "on duty" in Los Angeles I listen a good part of the day and try to get on the air when I can.

CQ: Do you get e-mails from other hams wanting to schedule a QSO? Do you ever QSL?

JW: Hundreds of people. I gave up to keep my sanity. I just can't sked people. I monitor 6 meters all the time if the band is open. I scan all the frequencies. I'm often on 20 meters a couple hours in the afternoon if I'm not on the road—14.250, something like that. But I don't often QSL. Every once in a while I'll get them out and get caught up.

CQ: A rumor has been running around the internet about a "rock star" buying up boatanchors on eBay and driving prices through the roof; a \$4000 Hallicrafters SX-88 comes to mind. How do you respond to that?

JW: I'm aware of a lot of grumbling about my bidding [on eBay]. But in fact, I get out bid regularly, so the people who didn't try because I was bidding wouldn't have won the bid anyway. I will occasionally place a "stupid bid" to keep something in the country, but I think in general ham radio operators are grumpy old farts and should mind their own business [he laughs]. I don't think I single-handedly have driven up prices on eBay. I think eBay has peaked, but then again I think the economy has peaked. If I had found an SX-88 for less, I'd have paid less. But I don't think it will ever be worth less. It's pretty impressive to operate.

CQ: Do you think you're of the last generation to appreciate the old tube gear of the past?

JW: Yeah, I think we're the last generation. I think the tradition is going, with no-code and all. It's a shame, but I think [appreciation for the old gear] is going to die out. Technology is just progressing too damn fast. [In the future] I think we'll probably work the world with an HT via an uplink to a satellite. Cell phones will be the size of wristwatches. But it's hard to say. Technology is growing so fast it scares me. It's going faster than people had planned for.

CQ: One final question that I'm sure is on a lot of folks' minds. Is there another Eagles album somewhere out on the horizon?

JW: We're working on it right now. We're in the studio. It's going to be out early in 2003, and it's going to be good. So yes, there is another Eagles studio album in the works. We've completed enough of it so that I can say that.

Postscript

In April 2002 Joe invited me to his home in Los Angeles for a photo session with him and his radios. Nestled on a winding tree-lined lane on the hillside just above Studio City, Joe's house is a delight for anyone with an interest in classic radios of the tube era. "I threw out all the furniture to make room for more radios," he commented during one phone conversation.