



Episode 282 – Andras Bato - HA6NN

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Eric 4Z1UG:

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Eric 4Z1UG:

Welcome to the QSO Today podcast, I'm Eric Guth, 4Z1UG, your host. My QSO Today is with Andras Bato, HA6NN, or Andy as he has asked me to call him, from Hungary. Andy is a new listener to the QSO Today podcast, but is coming up on his 50th year as a ham radio operator. He sent me a message introducing himself and discussing his amateur radio activity. I thought that a QSO with Andy would be interesting to me and all of you, especially as Hungary was an Eastern Bloc nation in the former Soviet Union and Andy has served in leadership positions representing amateur radio and Hungarian hams. HA6NN, this is Eric, 4Z1UG. Are you there, Andy?

Andras HA6NN:

Yes, I am here. Nice to hear you, Eric. You are five and nine with me. This is HA6NN listening.

Eric 4Z1UG:

Andy, thanks for joining me on the QSO Today podcast. Before we get started, can you tell my audience where you're located?

Andras HA6NN:

I am located in northern Hungary, just on the Slovakian border. There was a border station about some three or four kilometers from here. I can see that part of the road even from the windows here. We are on the ninth floor so we can see the Slovakian

border. So the place name is Salgótarján, S-A-L-G-O-T-A-R-J-A-N, it's rather long. There are about some 50,000 inhabitants. It's an old industrial town, but some factories were stopped, but new factories are in building, new factories grows up here, perhaps the structure of the industry is changing continuously. So this town is the capital of Nógrád county, N-O-G-R-A-D. It's the name of an ancient fortress. Nógrád, you can find a fortress with the same name, and the country has got the name, Nógrád, and this is the capital of the county.

Eric 4Z1UG:

Can we start at the beginning of your ham radio story? When and how did it start for you?

Andras HA6NN:

It's quite simple. When I was during summer holiday, it was, let me see, in 1957, during the summer break. It was a summer break for pupils like me. A friend was visiting his relatives in the neighborhood, the same street, and we made friends. And the boy, I don't remember his name, told me his stories and told me how to build a cat whisker radio, which can be used to listen to AM transmissions. It was easy to listen to AM transmissions.

Andras HA6NN:

Think of that, I grown up in Orosháza, O-R-O-S-H-A-Z-A. There, the strongest AM station was Radio Bucharest, but, fortunately, they had some Hungarian language transmissions. So in a pen holder, I have made a simple radio circuit with a cat whisker diode. I have made an antenna. I had broken the roof of the old building during the activity of aerial construction. The radio was working quite nicely, then my mother has bought me a headphone; I still have it.

Andras HA6NN:

Think of that, the family has no radio. The family hasn't had electricity in the house. I have made the first radio for the family, and my grandfather was listening to Romanian folk music using my headphones. He liked it very much, so that was the beginning.

Eric 4Z1UG:

When I grew up in the United States in the '60 and '70s, Hungary was behind the "Iron Curtain". It was a satellite of the former Soviet Union.

Andras HA6NN:

Yes, indeed, unfortunately.

Eric 4Z1UG:

Amateur radio, was that still an open hobby under those circumstances in those days?

Andras HA6NN:

It's been an open hobby, and there was no problem, so anybody was able to ask for a license. It was very well organized because in Hungary, similarly to the other satellite states, there was an organization with some name as National Defense Organization or similar. There were radio clubs which was belonging to these organizations.

Andras HA6NN:

At that time, when I was a general school pupil, the name of the organization was something like Freedom Hunters or something like that, National Freedom Hunters or something like that. That was an organization which directed the work and activity of radio clubs. So that was the situation.

Eric 4Z1UG:

You have the first radio in your family and the only radio in your family, how did it go from there? What happened after that?

Andras HA6NN:

After a year or two, my mother has bought a normal radio set, but still we had no electricity in the house. It was a battery type of radio, but it has loud speaker and we was able to listen to Hungarian program one and program two, and also to radio Novi Sad, which was on the territory of Yugoslavia at that time. Radio Novi Sad was able to transmit in Hungarian for several hours a day, so it was quite interesting to listen to radio Novi Sad, the two Hungarian programs are still called Kossuth Rádió and Petöfi Rádió. So it's an old Hungarian habit to give a name of a famous Hungarian hero to name a radio.

Eric 4Z1UG:

Now, after you built your first cat whisker radio, did you do more electronics? Did you find other things to build?

Andras HA6NN:

Of course. We then moved to a nearby settlement, a smaller settlement, and I have bought electronic tubes, and I have made a 3-tube radio, which was able to be used on the short wave band, so I was eager to listen to short wave transmissions. After that, when I was some 15 years old, I went to Miskolc, that is a large town, the second large town in Hungary. I think still it is Miskolc, M-I-S-K-O-L-C. I was learning in secondary school there. It's an important time of my life because there was a very good radio club and I've paid some 120 forints for a one year long course. And I have learned the basics of amateur radio there, except for Morse code.

Eric 4Z1UG:

And this is towards getting the Hungarian Amateur Radio License?

Andras HA6NN:

I did not really prepared for an amateur radio examination at that time. But then I had to spend my compulsory military service I have started after finishing my studies in Miskolc. My parents moved here to this town and after they moved here, I had to go to serve as a soldier in the army in Budapest. Taking into account, I have learned Morse code in the meantime. Alone, I have learned Morse code alone. I have built a small audio generator and the Morse key, and I have learned Morse code alone; nobody helped me.

Eric 4Z1UG:

So you taught yourself the Morse code using your own code practice oscillator.

Andras HA6NN:

That's it. And when I went to the army, during the first hours, it was practically an examination. A commander asked me how many electrodes a pentode had, they played Morse code and asked me what code was it? And when he learned that I know Morse code, then I was chosen to be told as a radio telegrapher.

Andras HA6NN:

So then I was learning Morse code, and I have learned everything which was necessary to play the role of radio telegrapher. So when I was serving at the army for 27 months, at first, I was an operator, was at radio center. And when I was a Second Class soldier, I was the commander of the station. I always had fellow and we have made the necessary radio traffic each day using Morse code. We've used Morse code, almost only Morse code, and we have sent and received a lot of telegrams.

Eric 4Z1UG:

So what happened after you left the army?

Andras HA6NN:

During my military service, I've looked for a radio club in Budapest and I've told them I would like to have a license, I would like to operate radiometer station, and so on. When I finished my military service, I went to Budapest Radio Club. I've made some friends. After a short while, I've met a similar fellow who was a professional radio telegrapher at the Hungarian army, and he invited me to be a member of the Hungarian Center Radio Club. It's been the high time of my life when I was able to operate HA5KBP. You can find a man in Florida who was also an operator of that station. His call sign is W4KBP, just look for him. And I've had some famous Hungarian amateur radio operators, a flying cam who was a pilot during the second World War and similar people, so it was quite a nice gathering of famous Hungarian amateur radio operators.

Andras HA6NN:

I was told by them, there was a laboratory. When the leadership of the Central Radio Club has ordered Sugar Baby 200 and the Sugar Baby 101 in kits, and there were technicians working for the Central Radio Club. They've built the Sugar Baby 101 and the Sugar Baby 200, they've made a multiband dipole, and have injured operating on single sideband, so I've got some American pronunciation during that time.

Eric 4Z1UG:

When you talk about the Sugar Baby 200 and the Sugar Baby 101, are you talking about the Heathkit SB200 and the Heathkit SB101?

Andras HA6NN:

Yes, of course.

Eric 4Z1UG:

The Hungarian Amateur Radio Club purchased the Heathkit transceivers. The SB200, was that a power amplifier?

Andras HA6NN:

Yes, the 200 is a one kilowatt power amplifier. So it was quite easy to make QSOs, and I have made a lot of stations into the United States and also into South America. I remember a night, my wife has a job when he had to work during the nights. During those weeks, I went to the radio club and I spent the night beside the radio. And during when the propagation was nice, I remember a night when I've made so many contacts from the southernmost point of South America to Alaska, so it was wonderful. I was made QSOs into Guyana and some exotic countries, so it was quite a nice night.

Eric 4Z1UG:

And now this message from Icom America. Wish it, wrap it, gift it, these are the code words to your XYL or significant other to get the holiday gift of an Icom transceiver to meet your ham radio goals in the coming year. Icom offers a variety of high performance and innovative products, so make the most of the holiday season with one of these Icoms today. 'Tis the season to give your favorite ham the SDR they really want, and that's the Icom IC-7610.

Eric 4Z1UG:

This high performance SDR has the ability to pick out the faintest of signals even in the presence of stronger adjacent signals. The Icom IC-7610 is a direct sampling software-defined radio, or SDR, that will change the world's definition of an SDR transceiver. It is exactly the right rig for DXing, contesting, and rag-chewing. Its features include RF direct sampling system, 110 db RMDR, independent dual receivers allowing you to listen in two places at once, and dual DIGI-SEL.

Eric 4Z1UG:

The Icom IC-7300 has changed the definition of an entry level HF transceiver. This compact footprint also includes RF direct sampling, 15 discrete bandpass filters, a large 4.3 inch touchscreen, and a real-time spectrum scope or pan adapter. I have the IC-7300 in my ham shack and love being able to see the activity in the bands as I'm tuning.

Eric 4Z1UG:

Finally, the IC-9700 is Icom's latest entry in the VHF and UHF amateur transceiver market. The IC-9700 should be at the top of every ham's wish list this holiday season, especially if EME or moon-bounce or meteor scatter operation will be one of your New Year's resolutions. This all mode transceiver works in the two meter, 70 centimeter, and 23 centimeter bands. Keep your competitive contesting edge with the faster processors, higher input gain, higher display resolution, and a cleaner signal. Icom IC-9700 is the pinnacle of perfection. Features include a 4.3 inch touchscreen color TFT LCD display, dual-watch operation and full-duplex operation in satellite mode, real-time high-spectrum scope and waterfall display, voice recording playback function with an SD memory card, and it has the same form factor as the IC-7300 and will look beautiful next to any of your new Icom rigs.

Eric 4Z1UG:

Wish it, wrap it, and gift it are the code words that I opened this message from Icom; however, if subtle hints or leaving ham magazines open to full page Icom ads does not seem to have the desired effect on your XYL, then just tell her that you are pining after a new Icom rig and that you know where the nearest Icom dealer is near you and you'll be happy to save her the trouble of wrapping it and gifting it. And when you buy that new Icom holiday rig, be sure to tell your Icom dealer that you heard it here on the QSO Today podcast. (singing)

Eric 4Z1UG:

And now back to our program. So when did you get your first license, and how old were you?

Andras HA6NN:

I moved back to this town. I spent a part of the time with my parents, and then I bought a small house. It was in 1969, and then I went to take a radiometer examination and I've asked for a license in 1970. So I hold my license since about April, 1970; I hold the call sign HA6NN since then.

Eric 4Z1UG:

Does Hungary have different levels of amateur radio licenses, like other countries, like the United States?

Andras HA6NN:

Yes, of course. At first, I had to take two exams, because I had to take an exam for VHF and another one for HF. After taking those examinations, I've got two different call signs. One was HG6NN, and the other one was HA6NN. It was quite funny. That's why you've learned that I was the one who proposed to use HG on the high frequency bands as well, because it was very interesting at that time. So I have made a jump in time.

Eric 4Z1UG:

In other words, the fact that you had two call signs meant that if you were working DX on HF, you were using HG6NN; but if you then QSYed up to VHF and started working DX, then you're operating at now at different call sign, HA6NN. Was that what was happening?

Andras HA6NN:

It was very simple. At first, let me mention that there were three levels of examinations: A, B, and C. So simple it was, and I have made at first the A-level examinations, and then I've had two call signs. But HG call signs can be used on the two meters band at that time. So I've had an equipment, a very simple transmitter, working in CW and AM. I've had a military receiver for reception and a converter too, so I've had a long Yagi. So I took part in my first contest on the two meters band. Then I've made another examination and I've got the C-level, the highest level examination and got the license, which was also better.

Eric 4Z1UG:

A lot of my listeners, including myself, don't really know anything about how amateur radio is in Hungary. How many amateur radio licenses are there in Hungary now?

Andras HA6NN:

I guess some 4,000 or 5,000 are between the two, something like that. I don't exactly know.

Eric 4Z1UG:

Are there a lot of active clubs in Hungary? For example, in your town, for example, is there an active amateur radio club?

Andras HA6NN:

We have quite a nice and active radio club. In the United States, almost every amateur radio operator have heard the call sign HG6N, it's quite active during the contests. I myself was organized the building of a contest station on the highest mountain. The mountain is the highest one in this area. Its name is Karancs, K-A-R-A-N-C-S, anyone can look for it on Google maps. We've built a house there, two towers. The local electric company has helped us to erect two high towers and we've made Yagi antennas, and we've bought new

equipment, and we built a large power amplifier that is still in use. It has at least 1.5 kilowatt and the station can be heard in the United States quite well.

Eric 4Z1UG:

Okay, now in your town where you said there's about 50,000 people living, how many active hams are there in your town?

Andras HA6NN:

I guess some 15 or so, not exactly in this town, but in the area. There are a lot of settlements near here and there are one ham radio operator in each. So all together, the club has some 30 members, but there are members who live a bit far away from here.

Eric 4Z1UG:

And do you have repeater systems in Hungary, like on VHF or UHF?

Andras HA6NN:

Yes, of course. I have a hand radio. I have a Baofeng radio in my hand. But these FM repeaters are not so popular, so you cannot hear too much traffic on the FM repeaters at the moment.

Eric 4Z1UG:

And do you do any linking? Are you doing any mesh networking or anything on microwave there?

Andras HA6NN:

Unfortunately, not. Now, I am active on the HF bands up to 50 megahertz. One of my favorite bands is 50 megahertz. I have some 92 or 97 countries worked, but not all confirmed. I am on LOTW, so I use LOTW almost from the beginning. So I have, all together, some 249 countries confirmed. I have some 75 countries confirmed on LOTW on six meters, but on the HF bands, I have 249 DXCC entities confirmed on LOTW.

Eric 4Z1UG:

What's the current rig?

Andras HA6NN:

Think of that, I have Yaesu FT-450D, that's all. I have nothing else. I have an old 10 tag, but it's out of order.

Eric 4Z1UG:

On your QRZ page, you actually have pictures of your roof. You actually live in the ninth floor of an apartment building. I made a note here when you mentioned that you're on

the ninth floor operating HF. Do you use some kind of an artificial ground or some tuneable ground system in order to be able to work HF from a ninth floor apartment?

Andras HA6NN:

No, I have a ground plane antenna for 20 meters. It has two radios. My main antenna is an off-center-fed dipole. It's 41 meter long, it works quite nicely on all bands except for eight meters.

Eric 4Z1UG:

And you use an antenna tuner with that?

Andras HA6NN:

The FT-250D has a tuner built in and it can tune up on all bands except for 80 meters, so I have made... It's a balloon, we call it, usually, balloon, but it's an Unun. I don't know how to pronounce [inaudible 00:26:20].

Eric 4Z1UG:

That's not a balun, it's an unun.

Andras HA6NN:

Let me see, it's four to one. It's transforming ratio is four to one, that's why I can feed it a 50 Ohm coaxial cable. I am quite fortunate I've made it. I've had some fortune, it works quite nicely.

Eric 4Z1UG:

There's not a lot of, I think, high-rise ham radio operators in North America, but there is here in Israel, there's a lot of people living in high-rises. Since you're on the ninth floor and you're in an apartment building, sharing it with a lot of other residents, do you have any issues with the neighbors in terms of putting antennas on the roof?

Andras HA6NN:

It's a wonder, but I have no problems with the neighbors. I don't know why. Perhaps in this room there is no third cable, no ground. We have two connection points only. In these rooms, there are no grounding system.

Eric 4Z1UG:

So you have a neutral and hot wire?

Andras HA6NN:

Yes.

Eric 4Z1UG:

Right, but no ground.

Andras HA6NN:

No ground, so I think it's a fortune. But as for the antennas, I think the antennas are radiating quite well because the building was built with a lot of steel in the concrete. So I guess that's a fortune, and that means the grounding of the other half of the area.

Eric 4Z1UG:

Now, are you able to actually get to the iron in the building to use as a ground against your...

Andras HA6NN:

Yes, I can. I can, and it's connected to the transceiver.

Eric 4Z1UG:

Oh, good for you. Yeah, my house is also poured concrete and steel, and I've actually thought about going into the wall right near my ham shack and actually seeing if I can actually latch onto the steel rebar. It would cause me to have to dig into the wall a little bit, but it might be well worth it. What did you end up doing for a living?

Andras HA6NN:

My career was quite simple. At first, I've learned electronics.

Eric 4Z1UG:

But did you become an engineer in electronics?

Andras HA6NN:

Yes, I did. I also been learning informatics and I have been teaching for 25 years and I was retired from a local school where we've been teaching skilled workers. So in short, that's about my career.

Eric 4Z1UG:

So you taught electronics?

Andras HA6NN:

Yes, I did. At first, I've been teaching practical electronics in a workshop. I've been teaching how to solder and how to make printed circuit boards, and the like, and I have been teaching first grade students. After that, they went to factories and we've just went to talk to them time to time, and we've checked that they are learning well and so on. And after some six years, I have been teaching only theory. I did not teach practical electronics

for long, for six years only. And after that, I've got my second diploma as a instructor of electronics. That was my first diploma, and I've been learning for another three years for a engineering degree. And after that, I've been teaching computer hardware, PC hardware, I mean, and computer networks; that was my job.

Andras HA6NN:

And I've also been teaching technical English. So as you can hear, I'm not too much practice in speaking English. I was speaking English much better, but during the last 10 years, I have had not too much chance to speak English. But during the period, I was speaking more fluently during those years, I was teaching English as well. I've got a chance to accompany some pupils of mine to England. We've had a connection with the British school. We went there and the pupils and the teachers come here, and we've made friends and we've changed views, and we've talking about our practice, and the like, but the main purpose was to practice English and how to make us understood in English.

Eric 4Z1UG:

Well, I'm used to hearing all kinds of English, good and bad, and I think you're doing extremely well, so I think in 10 years you haven't lost a whole lot of it. Let's move on a little bit. You mentioned in an email to me that you are working Hungarian-made satellites, the SMOG-P and the ATL1. What are these satellites and how are you operating them?

Andras HA6NN:

First of all, let me say thank you for your compliment on my English. I try to do my best. So it's a rather long story. Perhaps it's familiar with you that during when I've been writing my dissertations, I have been writing two dissertations, I've had a chance to choose my instructor. It's called an advisor, and my advisor was HA5WH, he's a professor of Budapest Technical University. He has a dealing with the satellites during the very beginning, before the first Sputnik.

Andras HA6NN:

They've been university students with several friends of the activity, and they've made a small station on a Budapest hill and they have been tracking satellites. They have been tracking the first satellites, and Mr. Gschwindt, Mr. Andras Gschwindt, HA5WH, has been the project manager for the first Hungarian-made satellite, that was MASAT-1, that is MO-72, Magyar-Oscar-72, and he was the project leader. And the MASAT-1 has been orbiting the earth for three years, and it was quite simple to track the first Hungarian satellite. And at that time, I have had an FT-847 Yaesu satellite ground station, which was very good for that job. And I have decoded the transmissions of the first Hungarian satellite, and the software has sent the data up to Budapest Technical University data center.

Andras HA6NN:

Now, the second and third Hungarian satellite was made by the leadership of HA5WH, who has been the satellite coordinator of IARU Region 1 for several years, and they've finished the SMOG-P and ATL1 satellites and sent it to New Zealand. And fortunately, they was launched on the 6th of December and they are working very well indeed. And there will be a third satellite, which will fly next year, next summer, I guess, or by the beginning of Fall, and that name will be S-M-O-G-1, SMOG-1.

Andras HA6NN:

And why they have chosen the name SMOG? Because Mr. Gschwindt wanted to measure how much energy is radiated into space by TV and FM broadcast stations in vain. And now, SMOG-P is to measure the signal strengths of these TV and FM broadcast stations and how much energy is wasted when the antenna's radiating the energy up to the space. Think of that, and SMOG-1 will be measure the energy radiated upwards during next year, so that's about SMOGs.

Eric 4Z1UG:

Well, that's interesting. And what was the ATL1?

Andras HA6NN:

ATL1 is testing special material. So a Hungarian firm is dealing with special material. I do not know too much about those materials really, but they are testing it in space, and a sponsor paid the necessary money for building of that ATL1 satellite.

Eric 4Z1UG:

I see. Okay, sponsors. Okay. Are you a satellite operator yourself?

Andras HA6NN:

I don't say I am a satellite operator. At the moment, I had to change my FT-847, that satellite ground station, because it was a bit old. I have bought it on, let me see, you have QRZ.com. And I have found a shop, I don't remember the name, but it's in Kansas City, which offered an FT-847 at a rather nice price. And at that time, the US dollar was 199 forints; now, a dollar is now double, a US dollar costs 300 forints or so. So it's terrible, forint versus almost nothing. So I had to trade my elderly FT-847 for this FT-450D, which was brand new, but I now miss FT-847 very much because it was easy to listen to satellites. Think of that, the sensitivity was 0.2 micro-watt or so, so it was very, very sensitive on 435 megahertz, 437 megahertz, the satellite frequencies.

Eric 4Z1UG:

Let me take a quick break here to tell you about my favorite amateur radio audio podcast, the Ham Radio Workbench Podcast with George, KG6VU, and Jeremy, KF7IJZ, where they pursue topics, technology, and projects on their ham radio workbenches every two weeks. George and Jeremy document their projects and make circuit boards available for sale to

their listeners. They have interesting guests and go in deep. Even if you are a seasoned ham radio builder, or just getting started, be sure to join George and Jeremy for the Ham Radio Workbench Podcast. Use the link on this week's show notes page by clicking on the image. And now, back to our QSO today.

Eric 4Z1UG:

Now, you mentioned on your QRZ page that you represented Hungary at several IARU, that's the International Amateur Radio Union, Region 1 Conference in the past. How important is it to go to these international radio conferences for amateur radio? How important is that?

Andras HA6NN:

Do you mean how important is IARU radio for us as a radiometer?

Eric 4Z1UG:

Yes. I mean, some people might say, "Oh, well, that's just more politics," but how important is it to represent Hungary to an organization like this in order to represent the interests of amateur radio operators?

Andras HA6NN:

The representation of Hungary in IARU Region 1, if I want to be polite, I cannot say anything about that. But when I was a HR manager for the Hungarian Amateur Radio Society, MRASZ, then the representation of the wishes of Hungarian amateur radio operator was quite good. For example, as you have seen on QRZ.com on my QRZ page, that I myself had the idea quite long ago. When Budapest, the radio amateur operators, when the IARU Radiosport Championship, he became a champion, but not world champion, and that's why I've got the idea to write a document for the forthcoming IARU Region 1 Conference. And I've proposed to change the name of IARU Radiosport Championship to IARU High Frequency World Championship. That's the correct name, and it still has this name, and I'm proud of that, really.

Andras HA6NN:

I have written several documents about Morse code and how to measure the Morse code speed and similar things, but the most valuable achievement of mine was the changing of the IARU High Frequency Championship to World Championship, and it is still World Championship, fortunately. By the way, let me say, thank you for the help of Dave Sumner, K1ZZ, who has had some discussions with me during reception and he has given me some idea how to talk about the proposal. Fortunately, the conference has adopted my proposal and, since then, we have IARU High Frequency World Championships.

Eric 4Z1UG:

Well, Dave Sumner, K1ZZ, was my guest in episode 172 of the QSO Today podcast, and he was a fine guest and he spent 44 years with ARRL as it's CEO and general manager. He's a fine representative of United States' interest to the IARU as well. What projects do you have on your workbench?

Andras HA6NN:

Not too much. At first, I am constructing a 10-element Yagi for 70 cm. Now I am waiting for a converter, it will be a kit, I think. A Ukrainian fellow is producing kits, and I have to put together a converter for 70 cm, and I would like to copy the satellites and I would like to use the software to decode the transmissions.

Andras HA6NN:

The fellows and the students up there in Budapest has produced software. They produced several, but there is a very complex software which can be decode the transmissions of these satellites and can follow the satellites, can count the Doppler effect, and it's possible to decode the transmissions. And at the same time, it sends up to the database at the Budapest Technical University, so it's quite complex software. I have it on my machine, but I have some problems with it. But first of all, I have to have a radio which can be used for perfect reception, then I will be able to decode the signals.

Eric 4Z1UG:

Now, are you going to use azimuth elevator kind of rotator in order to be able to track the satellites that crosses the sky?

Andras HA6NN:

Think of that, it's not so important to elevate the antenna. I was tracking the first Hungarian satellite with a simple Yagi without any elevation, so it can be tracked without any elevation. So if you do not use a very long Yagi, I have been using a 7-element Yagi so it was enough. And the FT-847 was sensitive enough to pick up good signals and it was possible to decode the transmissions perfectly, and so it is not a must to elevate your antenna.

Eric 4Z1UG:

What do you think is the greatest challenge facing amateur radio in Hungary these days?

Andras HA6NN:

In Hungary, the greatest challenge is to teach young boys and to make them interested in amateur radio. I have been teaching for 25 years. I've met many students and I know them quite well, so it's not easy to make them interested in amateur radio, but when you can show them impressive things and techniques and operations, then they will be interested. So the greatest challenge, I think, all over the world, is how to teach young boys, how to make them interested in the hobby of amateur radio activity.

Eric 4Z1UG:

Do you think that young girls would be interested in amateur radio?

Andras HA6NN:

Sure. We've had several who were interested in amateur radio. Now, we have one in our club who is a great telegrapher. She takes part in world championships and she was among the first three, perhaps second or third, not long ago. By the way, the call sign of this young lady is HA6AA, Lena, L-E-N-A. Lena, it's a bit like a Russian Christian name. She can send and receive Morse code very fast, just like K1ZZ by the way. Her father is HA5PX, who is also a very good telegrapher, and her grandfather was HA5NA, my best friend who has died some years before, unfortunately. He was also an outstanding telegrapher.

Andras HA6NN:

So there are no courses during we teach young ladies and boys to send Morse code so fast, but in a family where a father or mother or both can send and receive Morse code very fast, they can teach their children. So you can find children of that kind, but we have no courses. We have even almost no courses where Morse code are taught.

Eric 4Z1UG:

And now this message from QRP Labs. QRP Labs has shipped thousands of QCX QRP transceivers kits to date. The odds of working another QCX user gets better every day. If you're looking for a satisfying kit experience where you end up with an amazing performing QRP transceiver for under \$50, let me say that again, for under \$50, then you owe it to yourself to go to QRP Labs.

Eric 4Z1UG:

We have many home brewers who listen to the QSO Today podcast. For you, QRP Labs also has parts, filters, enclosures, and other handy devices to make your home brewing experience even better. You can use these parts to either enhance your QRP Labs kits or to beef up your own home brew designs. Be sure to browse Hans's entire website. Use the link on this week's show notes page or the one in the sponsored section of the QSO Today website to get to QRP Labs to buy your QCX or any of the other fine QRP Labs kits or parts. QRP labs is my go-to ham radio kit company, it should be yours too. QRP Labs. And now, back to our QSO Today.

Eric 4Z1UG:

What excites you the most about what's happening in amateur radio now?

Andras HA6NN:

Solar activity. I would like like the sun to be more active and I would like to have openings on 10 meters, I would like to have even openings on 15 meters band. So the propagation

is terrible during these times, so I would like to think that old sun will be active soon and solar cycle 25 will begin soon. So that is the challenge for all amateur radio operators of the world, I guess. Technically I would like to have more money. How to express it? I'm a pensioner. I'm a pensioner, my pension is almost, I have a very...

Eric 4Z1UG:

You have a limited budget for amateur radio.

Andras HA6NN:

Yes, yes. There are only a few who can earn much money. Successful enterprise owners are able to buy amateur radio equipment, but I have absolutely no chance to buy more modern radio. This FT-450D is made for children in the United States, I'm afraid, so it's a children's radio, it's not built for an old man like me.

Eric 4Z1UG:

Will it operate in any of the digital modes like FT8?

Andras HA6NN:

Yes, I'm very active and I am collecting new DXCC entities using FT8 because it's easier. I can make it in CW as well. I make new DXCC. I am able to make QSOs with DXs from rare countries and with DXpedition stations, but it's much easier to make new DXCC entities using FT8. I have fulfilled the rules of Worked All States in JT9 and also in FT8, I have the sticker on my Worked All States award here in front of me on the wall. And I've started to make it on FT4, but FT4 is not so popular nowadays. It's also a plan of mind to fulfill the rules of Worked All States on FT4 as well. I have made, let me see, some 46 or 47 states, but only 44 confirmed on LOTW. So I would like to have all the 50 states confirmed on FT4 as well, so it's a plan of mine.

Eric 4Z1UG:

And it allows you to work with the equipment that you have and still work all over the world.

Andras HA6NN:

Yes, indeed. So, no problem. I have a small power amplifier, so I can use from 400 Watts of output or something like that.

Eric 4Z1UG:

What advice would you give, Andy, to new or returning hams to the hobby?

Andras HA6NN:

I would like to make an advice to buy a cheap radio like mine, FT-450D. It has an antenna tuner, which is an advantage. For example, almost everyone can erect a vertical antenna, and almost everyone can buy a PC or a laptop, and everyone is able to download the softwares made by K1JT, Mr. Joe Taylor. And just use the software made by the team of Mr. Joe Taylor and, using a PC or a laptop and a small radio and a vertical antenna, you can reach Antarctica, you can reach all parts of the world. And it's a wonderful hobby, and it's very exciting, and everyone can learn geography. Everyone can learn, where is Guyana? Where is Norfolk Island? And, where is Honolulu? And, where is [inaudible 00:55:44]?

Eric 4Z1UG:

And, where is Hungary?

Andras HA6NN:

And, where is Hungary? Yes.

Eric 4Z1UG:

Well, Andy, you've been a terrific guest. I really appreciate your reaching out to me. It's very interesting to me to talk to hams in other countries to find out whether the problems that we have in our country in terms of getting the numbers and getting new hams and keeping them excited are the same the world over. So I really appreciate your speaking to me tonight and wish you 73.

Andras HA6NN:

Thank you very much, indeed. I wish you Merry Christmas and I hope to meet you soon again on the bands and all the audience. I always like to make QSOs in any mode to the United States of America and they are very good QSO partners, indeed. I especially enjoy the CW QSOs into the United States, so I'm looking forward to lot of CW and FT8 and FT4 QSOs into the United States and to all over the world, to all countries, and to hope I can ask for a sticker to my DXCC, reaching the 250 DXCC entities soon. Thank you very much, indeed, for the invitation.

Eric 4Z1UG:

Have a good night, thanks so much. That concludes this episode of QSO Today, I hope that you enjoyed this QSO with Andras, or Andy. Please be sure to check out the show notes that include links and information about the topics that we discussed. Go to www.qsotoday.com and put in HA6NN in the search box at the top of the page.

Eric 4Z1UG:

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Eric 4Z1UG:

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Eric 4Z1UG:

Special thanks to Ben Bresky, who now edits the audio for this QSO Today podcast from the audio pieces that I give him. Until next time, this is Eric, 4Z1UG, 73. The QSO Today podcast is a product of KEG Media, Inc., who is solely responsible for its content.