

## MT Reviews:

# the Halfwave Dog-Pull Antenna

by R. F. Burns

It all started with an atomic fireball—one of those huge red jawbreaker candies filled with cinnamon, the kind I hadn't seen since I was a kid.

In the middle of my Saturday morning errands, I saw a jar of atomic fireballs in the drugstore. I bought a couple and headed down the street.

As soon as I popped one in my mouth, the snap of the cinnamon brought back my earliest memories of radio: DXing AM stations after being sent to bed. The cheek-stretching atomic fireball was the candy of choice for my under-the-covers operations.

The next item on my errands list was wire from the hardware for a halfwave dipole.

"Ah'd lahk sum wahr fer a heffwave dugpull," I said to the clerk in the hardware, my mouth distorted by the gigantic sphere of confectionary.

The clerk blinked and asked me to repeat myself. With effort, I shifted the atomic fireball to the other cheek and tried again, carefully. "Ah'd like some wah-er fer a half-wave dog-pull," I said, pointing to a hank of lightweight bell wire.

The clerk nodded and disappeared. He reappeared with a plastic bag.

It contained about 75 feet of vinyl-coated aircraft cable, hooks, clamps, screw eyes, and shock-absorbing springs. In the middle of the cable was a curious-looking pulley arrangement with a downlead. (Frequency adjustment, I thought.) Altogether, it looked like a complete kit for a dipole

strong enough to withstand a moderate earthquake. I paid for it and left.

I can always use a little extra help putting up an antenna, so when I got home, I whistled up Ralph, an 11-year-old who lives next door. He's just getting into radio and likes to help with these projects. He's a nice kid, and I encourage him to ask questions whenever he doesn't understand something.

Since slopers have been getting such good ratings in the tests, I decided to try installing this antenna as a sloper. We attached one end to a tree at ground level, then I climbed a neighboring tree to make the stretch for the other end.

I had just finished attaching the high end when Ralph said, "Mr. B., what's that pulley for?"

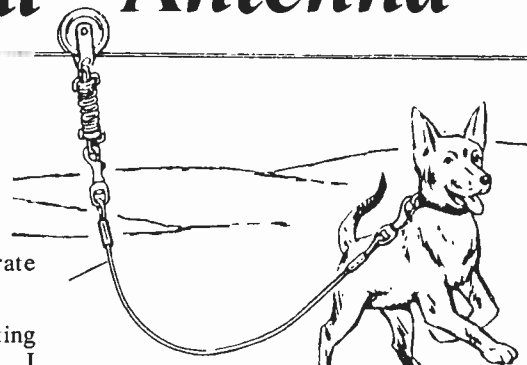
I grabbed it and began to explain: "Ralph, that's so you can slide it back and forth and adjust the resonant frequency of the antenna WHAAAhOooooOooooo!" Suddenly I found myself at the low end of the sloper, in the hyacinth bushes.

"Mr. B., what does 'WHAAAhOooooOooooo!' mean?" Ralph asked.

"It's a radio term that means I slipped because the \*#@%& branch was wet," I snarled.

"Mr. B., what does '\*#@%&' mean?" Ralph inquired.

"It means Larry Miller and Bob Grove run a G-rated publication, and, besides, I think



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your mother is calling you." Ralph said he didn't hear his mother, but he left anyway.

I reinstalled the antenna as a horizontal dipole, hooked it to my receiver, and got nothing but noise. I tried an end-fed configuration and still got only noise.

I was desperate, trying to figure out what had gone wrong, when suddenly the receiver crackled to life. I spun the dial, Europe, Asia, South America, even the African stations were booming in! "What a great antenna! The tropical bands are mine!" I cackled.

I dashed into the living room exclaiming to my wife how pleased I was with the new antenna.

"Antenna?" she said, looking out the window.

I looked too. There was Spot, our beagle, trotting happily back and forth, attached to the frequency adjustment pulley on my new antenna!

"This will never do," I thought, "a dog attached to my antenna!"

Then my mind flicked back to the scene in the hardware store that morning. I had asked for "some wah-er fer a halfwave dog-pull."

I just smiled, popped another atomic fireball into my mouth, and went in to listen to the African stations.

### Moral

Although atomic fireballs taste pretty good, avoid them when ordering radio gear. And if you are installing an antenna, make sure it is properly "hounded." ■

