



Antique Wireless Association of Southern Africa Newsletter



233

December 2025



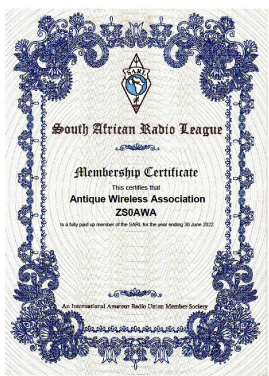
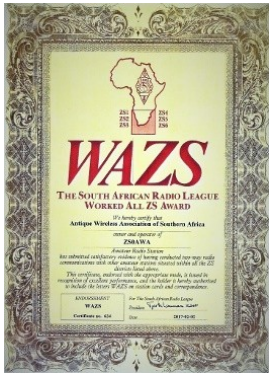
KW Viceroy MkIV

K.W. Electronics was a British manufacturer of amateur radio equipment founded in the mid-1950s by the late Rowley Shears G8KW. It was based in [Dartford, Kent](#), and manufactured a wide range of high frequency band receivers, transmitters and accessory equipment. The company was taken over by DECCA and subsequently ceased production during the 1970s.

The KW Viceroy MkIV is a single sideband amateur radio transmitter manufactured 1960 to 1965, that covers multiple amateur radio bands including 80m, 40m, 20m, 15m and 10m. It features a built in instrument, a VOX control, and is known for its power input of 180 watts PEP on SSB, 150 watts on CW and 90 watts on AM. The MkIV model includes an antenna change over relay and is similar to the MkIII, but with some design differences.

Later Viceroy models have a blue front panel. It is not clear whether this change co-incided with the change from Mark III to Mark IV. A late-model Mark III might have a blue front panel, or an early Mark IV might have a silver front panel .

It has a valve complement of 14 valves with 2 x 6146 valves in the finals.



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Chris's Musings

As we approach the end of yet another year, I'm reminded of that old adage that the closer one gets to the end of a toilet roll, the faster it seems to run. I would hazard a guess that the vast majority of our members are over the age of 50 with many of us being of retirement age.

While we dread the thought of getting older, new research suggests an unexpected benefit of ageing.

While previous studies have found that humans reach their physical peak in their mid-twenties to early thirties, researchers at the University of Western Australia, found that our psychological processing abilities continue to improve with our mental functioning peaking between the ages of 55 and 60..

It's welcome news for those questioning whether it's too late to pivot careers or take up new hobbies, but also highlights the value older minds bring to society and why people in this age range may be at their best for complex problem solving and leadership.

Why is this of relevance to amateur radio? Over sixties generally have more time on their hands XYLs complain about you getting under their feet and wish you were back at work.

Every year, we turn out over one hundred new radio amateurs. How many of these do we hear on the air? Don't you think that a new year's resolution could be to get 'out there' and use that peak mental functioning of the over 60s to share our knowledge and experience to mentor and encourage the new hams?

THE SARL HAPPY HOLIDAY HUNT

The SARL Contest Working Group is proud to announce an exciting holiday event for 2025! The Happy Holiday Hunt will run from midnight on Sunday 14 December 2025 to midnight on Thursday 15 January 2026 and everybody is encouraged to get on the air and enjoy the company of fellow amateurs on the air. The aim is to work stations in the SADC region. With many operators unable to fully enjoy the hobby during parts of the year when occupations eat into hobby time, this month-long event aims to promote on air activity over the holiday period. Whether you prefer CW, SSB or digital mode ragchews or just a quick QSO, you will find something to your liking (and bonus points on the 30 and 60 m bands too!). Just remember that most countries only have the WRC-15 60 metre allocation, it is only South Africa and Lesotho that have access to 5 350.0 – 5 354.0 kHz. Therefore, arrange your 60 metre QSOs carefully.

This is the ideal opportunity to work on your Worked all ZS and Worked all Grid Squares achievements while perhaps building and testing out that antenna you always mean to finish and get ready for the 2026 contesting calendar! Field station or holiday stations are encouraged, especially if you operate from a grid other than your QTH. More information about the event as well as the Excel log sheet can be found on the contest resources webpage at <https://mysarl.org.za/contest-resources/>. Also, on page 35 of the December Radio ZS.

Reflections:

Isn't it amazing that at this time of the year people sing "Tis the season to be jolly", but they are everything but that. This must be the time of the year when people are stressed out at their utmost and the time of year when things all tend to go really wrong because of the tension that raises it's ugly head.

Demands are made on people to put in extra hours at work in order to get the job done before the big shutdown when they all rush off to different destinations to "relax". By the time they get to their destination they are probably even more stressed out than what they were before they left.

They then spend so much time having a wild time "relaxing" that by the time they need to come home, they have blown the whole bonus, plus overspent and get back feeling even more stressed than before because the end of January for the next paycheck is still a long way away.

My advice, stay at home. Watch all the movies you missed during the year. Spend time with the family. Buy a new paddle and start learning CW again. Download the latest digital

comms programme and teach yourself how to use it. Tackle that old valve radio that has been standing on the shelf just waiting for you.

I can think of so many things I would rather do than spend my time and money travelling to some distant place, swearing at the other drivers who hog the roads and drive like idiots. But then, that's just me. I must be the grinch who stole Christmas.

Lets face it, these are extraordinary times we are living in at the moment. Going against all predictions, the sun is not sure what it is doing (my opinion), technology is going rampant with all the new things that are being invented, especially with the aid of AI, space travel is exploding with everyone wanting to get into new rockets that fly themselves and get caught in mid air or land on their own,. New space stations, trips to Mars and life on the moon.

I have seen video clips of Santa's sleigh colliding with various objects, like weather balloons or small aircraft with reindeer scattered everywhere, all AI produced obviously, and even clips of the man himself calling CQ from wherever it is he is supposed to live. The best is that his radio was a valve job and not the latest Icom.

Just goes to show, no matter how improved technology gets, valve ra-

dio will always be there and used by the best.

I'm sure even Alf would be out there calling to see if he can reach Melmac after crashing while following an amateur radio signal. I can't offhand remember what radio it was, but am almost sure it was a Hallicrafters. I could be mistaken. (For those who don't know what I'm talking about, go Google "Alf")

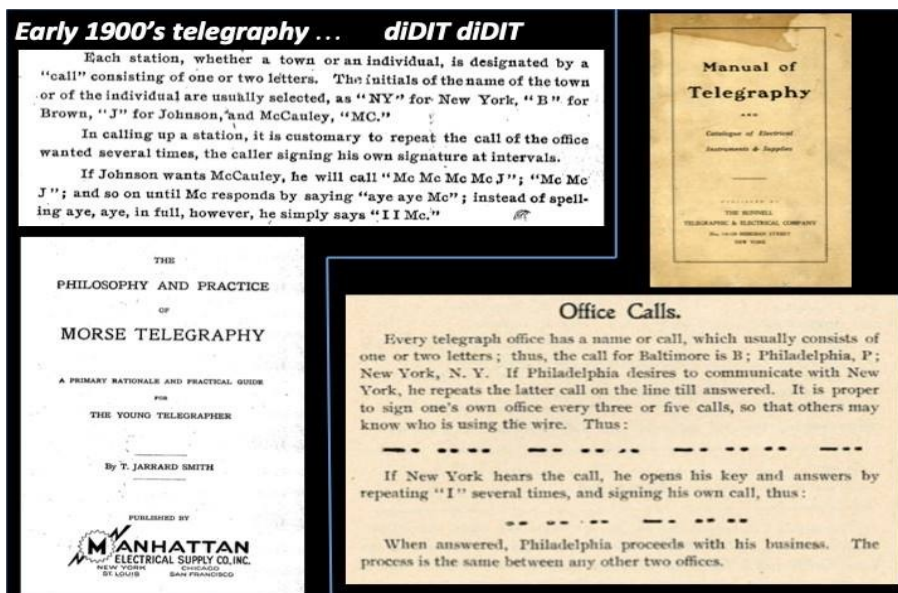
Unfortunately, at this time, my thoughts also go to the many families who have lost loved ones during the course of the year. At this time when it really is a time for family and friends to all gather together. May your hearts be filled with joy and friendship and fond memories of those who have left us.

So it remains for me to say to you all, Have a blessed time and whatever you celebrate, do it well. See you next year.

I wonder how many are still singing "fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la"

Seasons greetings

De Andy ZS6ADY



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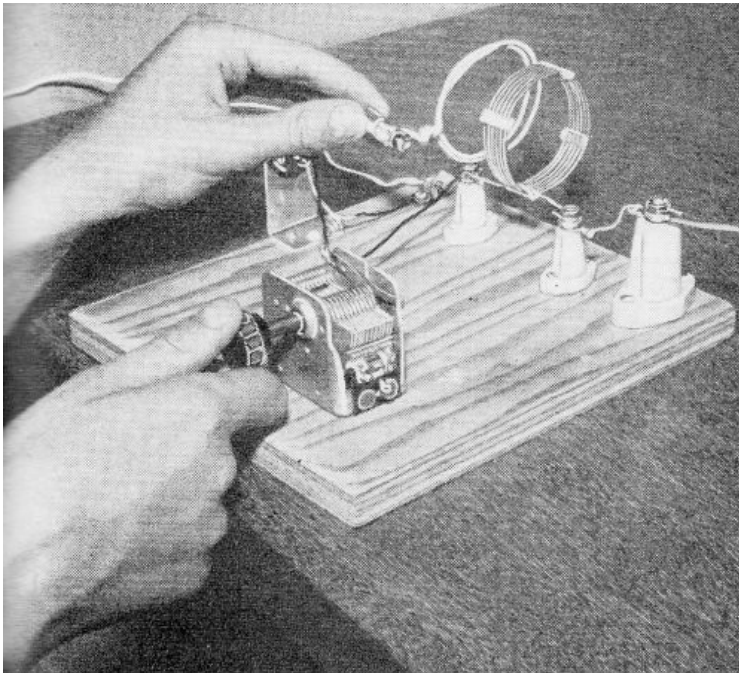
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The Novice 90 Antenna

October 1959 Popular Electronics

Do you know what a [Fahnestock clip](#) is? Chances are you would know one if you saw one, but you never knew what it was called. This 1969 *Popular Electronics* magazine article, requested by RF Cafe visitor Jan C., references a Fahnestock clip in the parts list for constructing an easily tunable long-wire antenna. The simple circuit uses just a handful of components for matching the high impedance antenna to a relatively low impedance coaxial cable feeder. A flashlight bulb and a few turns of wire act as an RF sniffer to tune for best match. A high quality ground is essential to the setup's operation so the author describes using copper sulphate crystals or rock salt to treat the ground rod vicinity for better conduction. It's a short article so go ahead and read it - if for no other reason than to see what a [Fahnestock clip](#) is.



By Jay Stanley

Many a Novice ham has difficulty in "getting out" - and nine times out of ten the trouble lies in failure to put power into the antenna. Fifteen watts of power actually in the antenna will put out a reliable signal on the Novice bands.

Transferring power from transmitter to antenna can be tricky business, and this is particularly true when you try to feed most ordinary long-wire an-

tennas with the typical pi network stage of a transmitter. In many cases, the antenna represents a high-impedance load and feeding it from the low-impedance output of the transmitter makes for a big waste of precious power.

This problem is neatly sidestepped with the "Novice 90" antenna, which is designed to be end-fed with a low-impedance line. Thus, the antenna is very simple to erect and, even more important, you can adjust resonant length right in the operating room. The adjustment is easily made using a 10-cent flashlight bulb which shows you the point of maximum antenna current.

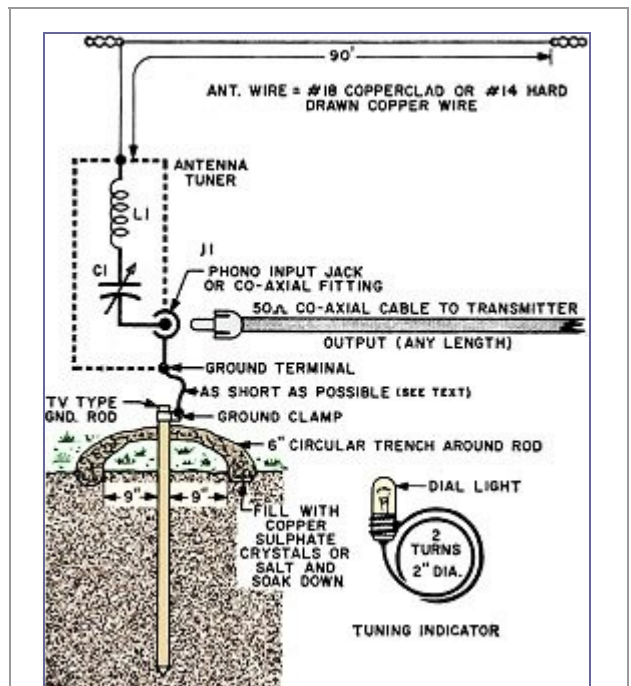
This current is the power being soaked up by the antenna.

Construction

The "heart" of the antenna is a simple tuner, consisting of a TRF-type single-gang tuning capacitor (C1) and coil L1. These parts are mounted on a convenient board as shown in the diagram. Stand-off insulators support the coil and the antenna terminal.

Variable capacitor C1 and the Fahnestock clip for the ground connection are mounted directly on the board. The RCA phono input jack J1 (a regular coax connector could be used instead) is mounted on a small metal angle bracket screwed to the board. Jack J1 connects to the coaxial cable jumper which runs to your transmitter output terminal.

The coil for the antenna tuner consists of six turns of No. 14 wire approximately 2" in diameter. Turns are spaced approximately 1/8" apart. Wind the coil yourself or cut some turns from a piece of B & W 2"-diameter No. 14 wire coil stock (Type 3900).



Locate the antenna tuner for the shortest possible ground wire while maintaining accessibility for tuning. A remote waterproofed tuner installation is possible but this would make tuning more difficult.

PARTS LIST

C1-350- μ f. (or larger) midget TRF single-gang variable capacitor

J1-RCA type phono jack (or suitable coaxial cable connector)

L1-Six turns of B&W 2"-diameter Type 3900 coil stock

3-Stand-off insulators

1-Baseboard

1-Fahnestock clip

The antenna itself is a 90' "L"-shaped length of wire. How much is horizontal and how much is vertical is not particularly important: for example, 30' up to 60' out is ideal. However, other combinations, such as 40' up and 50' out, will work as well.

For best results, keep the ground lead under 10' in length, the shorter the better. If it must be longer, subtract the length of the ground lead over 10' from the antenna length in feet. For example, if the ground lead is 14', make the antenna 86' instead of 90'.

You can build an efficient ground as shown in the diagram. Use a standard TV ground rod (the longer the better) and then improve the conducting characteristics by chemically treating the ground nearby. Copper sulphate crystals are excellent, as is rock salt. Ordinary table salt will work well also, but of course is more expensive. Dump in the chemicals, soak down the area with a garden hose, and you will have a ground far more efficient than the usual water pipe ground. The latter should be used only as a last resort and cannot be expected to work as well.

In a typical station layout, the antenna tuner should be mounted alongside a window sill. The ground should be just outside the window, close to the house. The antenna tuner can be connected to the transmitter by any convenient length of 50- or 52-ohm (approximately) coaxial cable.

Antenna Tune-Up

First, attach a two-turn loop of wire to a No. 44 dial light bulb or a bulb from a two-cell flashlight. The loop and the bulb provide an indicator for antenna current. Then, connect the coaxial cable from the transmitter to the antenna tuner. Set the capacitor on the antenna tuner approximately one-half "open."

Next, set your transmitter for 80 meters, and tune it following the manufacturer's instructions. Load up the transmitter final by adjusting the antenna loading and plate tuning capacitors in the transmitter. Now, couple the pickup loop and bulb (as shown in the photograph) to the antenna coil, and adjust antenna tuning capacitor C1 for maximum brightness. When you find this point, you have the antenna at resonance and it is taking maximum power.

On 40 meters the adjustment is quite similar, although the resonance point is usually very broad, as shown by the tuning loop indicator. On this band, set the antenna tuner capacitor to as high a capacity as possible (plates almost closed) where the tuning indicator is at maximum brilliance.

The last step is to adjust the transmitter tuning for proper load as indicated by the milliammeter in the final of the transmitter. Don't make any big changes in the antenna resonance adjustment already achieved, but check for maximum brilliance of the bulb.

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A MARVEL OF PERFORMANCE

KB8TAD

Antique Wireless Association CW Activity Day

The AWASA <http://www.awasa.org.za/>

1. Aim

The aim of the CW Activity Day is for participants to contact as many amateurs as possible on the 20, 40 and 80 m amateur bands.

2. Date and Time

13:00 – 15:00 UTC on the 1st Sunday of February - 1 February 2026.

3. Frequencies

14 000 to 14 060 kHz

7 000 to 7 040 kHz

3 510 to 3 560 kHz

4. Categories

4.1. Single Operator All Band, Low Power (maximum 100 W)

4.2. Single operator All Band, QRP (maximum 5 W)

4.3. Single Operator Single Band, Low Power (maximum 100 W)

4.4. Single operator Single band, QRP (maximum 5 W)

5. Exchange

5.1. RST, operators name and Grid Square locator

5.2. Each QSO claimed for competition credit must comply with the rules found under General Rule "5. Contacts".

6. Scoring

Contacts count 1 point for low power, 2 points for QRP.

7. Awards

Certificates are awarded to the first places and the highest single band score.

8. Log Sheets

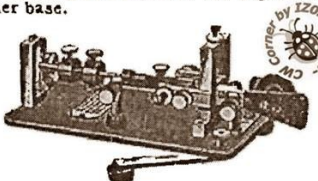
Log sheets must be submitted by 21:59 UTC Friday 6 February 2026 to

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Technical Topics

RF Power Tube TLC.

Chris
November 2025

Turner,

ZS6GM **Filament Voltage**

Though solid state transmitters and linear amplifiers are the norm these days, there are still thousands of hybrid transceivers and tube linear amplifiers in service. Replacement tubes (valves) are becoming scarce and expensive so we should do everything we can to extend the life of our output tubes. When properly tuned and operated, tube life can be vastly extended.

There are two critical factors that determine the life of a typical power tube, be it a 6146 in a hybrid transceiver or an 811A in linear amplifier. These are the operating voltages; filament, grid and plate, and correct loading.

PA Stage Topology

Let's first look at the topology of a typical tube power amplifier with Pi matching.

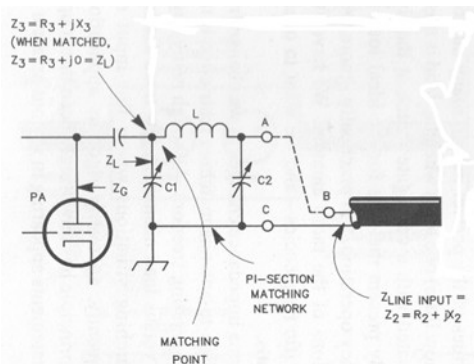


Fig. 1. Typical PA with Pi Matching. (Maxwell pg. 4-7).

The pi network tank circuit C1, L, C2 matches the antenna impedance B, to the optimum load impedance Z_L of the amplifier into which it delivers its maximum available power. Not to be confused with the amplifier internal impedance Z_G .

The *tuning up procedure*, involves several key steps to ensure optimal efficiency, performance and tube longevity. Grid current is the single most important indicator of correct tuning.

The load impedance is too high and said to be *under-coupled* when the load capacitor is meshed too far – high capacitance. It is the worst thing to do to any amplifier because failures occur in a matter of seconds, especially at high power levels!

If the load impedance presented to the output device is too low - load capacitor un-meshed - it is said to be *over-coupled*, current is excessive and efficiency suffers. This causes excessive heat which is a long term problem that takes a finite time to cause damage. It is generally NOT instantaneous damage as in the case of under-coupling.

One good thing about over-coupling is that screen or control grid current is reduced which protects the most sensitive and easily damaged parts of vacuum tubes. An advantage of slight over-coupling in tube amplifiers is that linearity generally is a bit better with slightly less splatter or distortion. This means you should rather over-couple than under-couple your PA.

Proper filament voltage management is critical for the performance, reliability and longevity of RF power tubes. The filament voltage must be carefully controlled within the manufacturer's specified range, typically $\pm 5\%$ of the nominal voltage, to ensure optimal operation and prevent premature tube failure. Operating outside this range, especially below the minimum, can lead to faster emission loss and even "poisoning" of the emitter, where contaminants attach to the filament surface and render it inactive, significantly shortening tube life.

The October 2011 QST Magazine quotes a private website, making grossly exaggerated claims of increased tube life through reduction of filament voltage to an arbitrarily created value. This advice is directly contrary to tube manufacturers recommendations. See the Eimac document referenced below.

Plate and Grid Ratings

The tube manufacturer's data sheet provides the optimum and maximum ratings for grid and plate voltage and current for various modes of operation. Reputable equipment manufacturers design to these specifications. This means that if the transmitter is tuned and operated according to the manufacturer's guidelines, then tube life should be maximised. Where grid metering is provided, such as on Collins transmitters and on linear amplifiers, take care to not exceed the maximum permissible grid current.

Tuning Procedure

With few exceptions the tuning procedure described here may be used for any pi coupled tube transmitter or linear amplifier.

Set the exciter to the CW mode or dedicated 'Tune' mode and key the transmitter - increase the drive to double the plate idle current. With the **load** control at the mid-point, resonate the output circuit; tune the **plate** by dipping the plate current while transmitting. Then adjust the **load** control for maximum output power. Repeat this process, alternately adjusting **plate** and **load** controls, while increasing the drive until maximum output power is reached. This should coincide with the maximum rated plate current. Be careful to not exceed the tube's rated plate and grid current limits. **DO NOT** go past the point where grid current starts to rapidly increase with small changes in



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drive power level. Too much grid current, either screen or control grid, is a clear sign you have the loading control too far meshed. In a grounded-grid amplifier or a grid driven tetrode amplifier, the grid current meter (control grid in the triode, screen grid in the tetrode) is the most reliable indicator of improper loading or tuning. Be especially watchful of disproportionately high grid currents compared to anode currents or drive power, or a rapid increase in grid current with a modest increase in drive power. Too much grid current is almost always a sign that the loading control is meshed or closed too far for the amount of drive power. This is hard to see on SSB, and best viewed on CW.

The most common amplifier tuning or loading error is adjusting an amplifier at **low or reduced drive power** as a last amplifier tuning step. When the radio or amplifier is loaded at reduced drive as a last tuning step, that power level is established as the absolute ceiling for drive and output power. Final loading at reduced drive results in a loading control too-far meshed. This can cause arcing, splatter and excessive grid current. The last step should always be to tune at full power for maximum output.

Myths and Fiction

Myth: Too high output power shortens tube life.

Truth: Provided it is operating according to design specs tube life is best when delivering maximum matched power.

Myth: Tube life can be extended by operating the filament at a lower voltage.

Truth: Excessively low filament or heater voltages can actually be more deleterious than needlessly high filament or heater voltages.

Myth: Reducing power output by detuning improves tube life.

Truth: Tube life is reduced due to mismatch. Always tune for the best match, i.e. maximum output keeping the grid and plate current within rating.

SWR or Reflected Power Myth:

We often hear people claim reflected power is absorbed back into the PA or burns up as heat in the power amplifier stage. This is not true at all.

The only effect of reflected power is to change the load line of the output device. This can either increase PA device RF voltage swing or it can increase PA device current. If the voltage increases, heat generally is reduced, but the PA can arc. If the load mismatch is of a phase angle that increases current, PA device heating increases because conduction angle and peak current increases.

In one case heat increases, in the other heat decreases. An

SWR mismatch only requires the matching network be readjusted to restore the proper load line at the output device. In an adjustable pi-network system adjusted to proper load at the output device, SWR only affects current in the inductor and voltage across the loading capacitor. In other words if you can retune the network and don't exceed voltage breakdown of the loading capacitor, your amplifier is very likely OK for any SWR. The pi network is capable of matching impedances of a few tens of ohms to several hundred ohms.

Final Word

Never tune, peak or dip the amplifier at reduced drive power and then attempt to operate or suddenly apply full drive! If you are going to make a mistake, make the mistake by having the loading control too far open or unmeshed...not too far closed or meshed! At least with the loading control too far open, you will not cause an arc, blow out a bandswitch, or damage a tube grid. You have slightly more time for mistakes and corrections when the loading capacitor is open too far than too far closed.

References:

Maxwell, M.W. (1990). *Reflections*.

Eimac. (1967). *Care and Feeding of Power Grid Tubes*.

w8ji.com. (2025). *Tuning loading RF amplifiers tune PA tank adjustments*. https://w8ji.com/loading_amplifier.htm

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This new beam tetrode typifies Raytheon advanced engineering and precision manufacture. For any other tube application you may have, there is a Raytheon tube engineered to do that job, give you outstanding satisfaction.

RATINGS

FILAMENT RATINGS	
8K-4D22	6.2 volts at 3.75 amps.
8K-4D22	25.2 volts at .8 amps. or 32.6 volts at 1.6 amps.
MAXIMUM RATINGS CLASS C TELEGRAPHY	
D.C. Plate Voltage	750 volts
D.C. Grid Voltage	200 volts
D.C. Screen Voltage	350 volts
Plate Dissipation	50 watts
Screen Dissipation	12 watts

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Antique Wireless Association
 of Southern Africa

Mission Statement

Our aim is to facilitate, generate and maintain an interest in the location, acquisition, repair and use of yesterdays radio's and associated equipment. To encourage all like minded amateurs to do the same thus ensuring the maintenance and preservation of our amateur heritage.

Membership of this group is free and by association. Join by logging in to our website.

Notices:**Net Times and Frequencies (SAST):**

Saturday 07:00 (05:00 UTC) — Western Cape SSB Net — 7.140; Every afternoon during the week from 17:00

Saturday 08:30 (06:30 UTC) — National SSB Net — 7.125;

Echolink — ZS0AWA-L;

ZS6STN Sandton repeater — 145.700

Kempton Park Repeater — 145.6625

Relay on 10.125 and 14.135 (Try all and see what suits you)

Saturday 14:00 (12:00 UTC) — CW Net — 7025

AWASA Telegram group:

Should you want to get on the AWA Telegram group where a lot of technical discussion takes place, send a message to Andy ZS6ADY asking to be placed on the group. This is a no-Nonsense group, only for AWA business. You must download the Telegram App first.+27824484368

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