



MARCH / APRIL 2003

REMARKS

www.marc-radio.org

MARC MARCH MADNESS! Annual Junque Auction Strikes Again March 18

The March 18 MARC meeting will feature our annual junque auction, where you clean out all the crusty old stuff you don't want any more and take home all the hairy old stuff somebody else didn't want any more. The auction combines hilarity with commerce, thanks to auctioneer **Bart K4BF**. Feel free to bring your friends from other radio clubs. We'll take their money, too.

The ground rules are simple: (1) Ham and ham-related equipment only. (2) Only MARC members may offer items for sale. No dealers, please. (3) MARC receives 10% of the sales price or \$10, whichever is less. (4) Tag items with your name and callsign (if any), the minimum acceptable price, and what the item is. (5) Take home any unsold items. NO DUMPING AT

THE TOWNSHIP BUILDING! (6) All items are sold as-is. MARC gives no warranties or guarantees, implied or otherwise, regarding items offered for sale. The club and the auctioneer(s) will not be liable for any problems arising from sales.

There is no limit on the number of items you may bring to sell. If you are disposing of estate equipment that belonged to a ham who wasn't a MARC member, that's okay.

People are looking for small stuff and bargains. Leave the \$500 rig at home. Bring some small bills or a checkbook. Any questions should be directed to President **Steve N3ORH**.

APRIL 15 PROGRAM DELAWARE COUNTY ARES/RACES

Our April speaker will be **Dan Amoroso W3DI**, who heads up ARES/RACES in Delaware County. Dan will tell us about Amateur Radio emergency preparedness in Delaware County and why all hams in the county should become involved now.

If you know any DelCo hams who don't have a home club, any new licensees in the county, or any non-hams interested in how hams contribute to emergency preparedness in the county, this is the time to bring those people to the MARC meeting.

Dan is involved in a number of community service activities outside of Amateur Radio, and there's a bakery business you may have heard of, too. He is a member of MARC.

TRAFFIC NET AWARD EXPANDS FOR 2003

Now you can earn a MARC Traffic Net Award for receiving radiograms as well as for sending them. Net Manager **Carter N3AO** has announced that net participants who send and/or receive at least one radiogram per month on the club's traffic nets will be eligible for a certificate in December.

Last year, operators were recognized for composing and sending one radiogram per month. However, receiving and delivering a radiogram are also important skills to be mastered. The 2003 certificate will reflect both sending and receiving activity.

MARC Traffic Net records are kept by **Bart K4BF**. Net participants are not required to keep any records or to apply for the award. If you have any questions about the certificate and what you must do to qualify, or about message-handling in general, please contact **Carter N3AO** on one of the nets.

Field Day planning meeting -- You're invited -- See page 7

DUES ARE DUE MARCH 1

The deadline for annual club dues is March 1. If you are paid up, thank you! If you haven't, please get your check in now, because we want to keep you as a member of MARC.

If you are not sure whether you paid or not, please contact Treasurer **Carter N3AO** (n3ao@arri.net, 610-993-9623) or Membership Services chair **Kay WT3P** (wt3p@arri.net, 610-993-9623).

PUBLIC SERVICE REFLECTIVE VESTS

Last year it was baseball caps identifying them as Amateur Radio communicators. This year, MARC's public service volunteers will receive orange safety vests purchased from the ARRL. These vests can be worn over a jacket or coat for cold-weather events.

They'll be yours to keep, just like the caps. If you lose your vest and need another one, you can order one directly from the League, or for \$15 the club will handle the re-order.



The yellow reflective strip says "Amateur Radio Communications" on one side of the vest and is plain on the other side.

REPEATERS LINKED DURING DRIVE-TIMES

On weekdays, '06 and '13 are now automatically linked from 6 to 9 AM and from 4 to 7 PM so the drive-time gang can chat regardless of which roads they travel to and from work.

ABOUT MARC

wb3joe@marc-radio.org
http://www.marc-radio.org

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

3rd Tuesdays, 8 PM, Radnor Township
Building, St. Davids. Guests welcome.
Smoke-free. Handicapped-accessible.

BOARD MEETINGS

4th Thursdays, 7:30 PM, Paoli Hospital.
Members may attend as observers.

SYSTEMS

145.13/R, 147.06/R, 224.42/R
145.13 147.06 CTCSS 131.8 Hz
Webmaster: Steve N3ORH (610-313-8080,
smaslin@marc-radio.org)

NETS

Club Net, Sunday, 8:30 PM
Traffic net, M/W/F, 8:30 PM
Homebrewer Net, Saturday, 9 AM
All nets on linked 145.13/R & 147.06/R
Net Manager: Carter N3AO
(610-993-9623, n3ao@arrl.net)

DUES

\$15 Full (licensed Amateurs)
\$5 Associate (unlicensed persons)
Family rate \$5 per ham after first
member pays full dues.

NEWSLETTER

REMARCS is published in the odd
months, edited by Kay WT3P
(610-993-9623, wt3p@arrl.net)

BRING A FRIEND
TO A MARC MEETING!

WEST MOUNTAIN RADIO COMING
TO MARC HAMFEST AGAIN IN 2003

West Mountain Radio, makers of the popular
RigBlaster and RigRunner products, plan to be at
the MARC hamfest again in 2003.

This year, they've agreed to present a demon-
stration of some of the software you can use for
sound card digital modes. Also, they'll show their
RigBlaster Pro (see page 133, February QST)
and possibly a brand-new product that they ex-
pect to introduce shortly before our hamfest. Be
there on July 13!

FOR YOUR DATEBOOK

March 18 - MARC meeting & auction
March 29-30 - Baltimore hamfest - Timonium
April 15 - MARC meeting
May 3 - License tests
May 4 - Warminster ARC hamfest
May 16-18 - Dayton Hamvention
May 20 - MARC meeting
June 28-29 - Field Day
July 13 - MARC hamfest

VOX

Please welcome **Anthony AA3VZ**, **David N3ENY**, **Bob W3LIA**, **Eric K9GUY**,
Paul K3HAZ, **Joe W3JY**, **Rob N3DSY**, **Mike KB3HMR**, and **Richard K2RSJ**
(whom you may remember as **KA3NXM**) to the club. **Kay WT3P** qualified for
DXCC on 17 meters. **Owen N3WO** won first place among 8th-graders at his
school in the Martin Luther King Day essay contest. **Dennis K3DS** is a mem-
ber of the ARRL's High Speed Digital & Multimedia working group. **Lynette**
KB3GZZ and **David N3ENY** upgraded to General. Two MARC members
have gone to Honduras with the International Health Service medical project.
More about that when they return home. How did **Steve N3ORH** arrange to
be in Florida during the worst of the February storms?

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BOARD MEETINGS

At their January 23 meeting, the board held an extensive discussion of the
'06/'13 link. It was decided to automate linking of the repeaters for nets and to
have the repeaters automatically linked during drive-time hours on weekdays.
The de-sensing problem has been cured at '13, thanks to **Jeff WN3A**'s work
with a co-located paging transmitter's technical staff. The board voted to au-
thorize spending up to \$300 for a new controller for the 224.42 repeater. In
addition, they voted to proceed with plans for putting a 440 MHz repeater on
the air. The Field Day site has been secured for 2003, but it was noted that a
Field Day committee and captain(s) are needed. The board voted to purchase
25 reflective safety vests from the ARRL to be given to public service event
volunteers; a replacement vest, if needed, will cost the volunteer \$15. A public
relations press kit is being assembled. The board discussed a member's sug-
gestion to make the 224.42 repeater an IRLP node. This had been considered
last year, and the board again decided not to do it, owing to expenses in-
volved and control operator issues. The treasury balance was \$10,247.55.

At the February 27 meeting, the board heard reports on future public service
events, membership renewals, and upcoming programs. A Field Day commit-
tee will be formed. Because of primary elections on the third Tuesday in May,
Bob W3SA has arranged for our May meeting to take place on the fourth
Tuesday. It was noted that increased activity on the traffic nets and popularity
of the homebrew net have spurred about half a dozen new people to join the
club. A member's suggestion to put an ATV repeater on the air was dis-
cussed, but there appears to be insufficient membership interest in the mode to
adopt the idea. In response to a member's question about why IRLP will
not be implemented on a MARC repeater, the board noted the expenses in-
volved in addition to control operator issues. Consideration of a member's
suggestion to purchase an HF radio for Field Day and borrowing by members
was postponed until the next meeting. The board voted to pay an additional
\$30 per year The treasury balance was \$10,037.19.

UPCOMING PUBLIC SERVICE EVENTS

- April 27:** MS Walk, 8 AM, West Goshen (Chester County). Talk-in on
147.06. Event captain is **Bob N3JIZ** (rjpelectric@worldlynx.net,
610-687-4587).
- April 27:** March of Dimes Walk, 8 AM, Haverford. Event captain is **Floyd**
KA3OXA (floydsradio@aol.com, 610-645-7707)
- May 26:** Radnor Memorial Day Parade. More info in the next newsletter.
Contact **Bob N3JIZ** (rjpelectric@worldlynx.net, 610-687-4587).

Do you know about any public events in the western suburbs which might
benefit from Amateur Radio communications? Send the information to **Bob**
N3JIZ for follow-up. Participating in public service events is not difficult,
doesn't take all day, trains you for tactical nets during emergencies, lets you
get to know fellow club members better, and helps the public appreciate ham
radio. Get involved . . . you'll be glad you did!

FROM THE EDITOR'S JUNK BOX

There may be some reason why the ham who delivered a radiogram on the answering machine at Carter's sister's house spoke the message as disjointedly as I would if I were trying to pronounce something in Chinese. There may be some reason why the fellow didn't turn his rig off while making the call, so loud SSB yakkity-cackle wouldn't be audible on the answering machine. All in all, however, the effect was that of a crackpot call which Carter's sister would have deleted and ignored, were she not accustomed to getting phone calls from ham radio operators delivering radiograms. I heard the answering machine recording, ladies and gents. It sounded like something that rhymes with "trap."

Wanting to participate in public service and traffic-handling is a commendable impulse. Doing it without training and skill, however, is indefensible. I recently read a comment about the military which said that that soldiers don't just need the will to win; first they need the will to prepare. Well, we hams don't just need the will to help. First we need the will to prepare.

None of this emergency comm stuff is performing brain surgery on babies or doing long division in hexadecimal. Anyone who doesn't have shredded wheat for brains can learn how to do it. If you want to help the public through ham radio, that is wonderful. Now prepare. Contact **Carter N3AO**, **Bob W3ZQN**, or **Dan W3DI** to find out how to join ARES/RACES and begin getting the training you need. Also see page 6 for contact information for the new ARES Emergency Coordinator in Philadelphia County.

Don't be like the poor schlep who left that answering machine message. Meaning well, he could have done more harm than good. -- **73, Kay WT3P**

ARRL VIDEO AVAILABLE

The 6-minute video "Amateur Radio Today" which was shown at the January club meeting, is available on the ARRL web site. You can purchase it as a MPEG file on CD-ROM or as a VHS video. With a high-speed Internet connection, you can download the 70 Mbyte MPEG yourself free of charge and burn your own CD. Narrated by **Walter Cronkite KB2GSD** (yes, *THAT Walter Cronkite!*) the video's main emphasis is on emergency communications, but there are also scenes of kids talking to astronauts on the International Space Station.

The video is intended for non-ham audiences (*you do know some non-hams, don't you?*). It would be perfect to use as the centerpiece for a presentation to civic groups, social clubs, professional organizations, other hobby clubs, youth groups, government officials, etc.

The video is for personal, non-commercial use and may not be broadcast. Permission is required to make copies for further distribution. Get the full story at <http://www.arrl.org/ARToday/>.

USED EQUIPMENT WANTED

An American ham who's a missionary in Kazakhstan is looking for some used ham gear for himself and a Kazakhstani ham friend. They are interested in a used ICOM rig, such as an IC-765 (preferred), IC-730, IC-735, IC-745, IC-750 or IC-761. They are also looking for a receiver along the lines of an R-1200 or R-1500, as well as one or more dual-band (2 meter/440) mobile rigs, something like an FT-5100.

The American ham will be in the USA for about a month during March and April. If you have or know about gear meeting his needs, please contact **Bob W3ZQN** (rjlees@aol.com, 610-265-6032) with the information.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2003

PRESIDENT

Steve Maslin N3ORH 610-313-8080
smaslin@marc-radio.org

VICE PRESIDENT

Bart Feroe K4BF 610-367-4288
k4bf@arrl.net

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rhaase@bellatlantic.net

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PUBLIC RELATIONS

Bob Weiss KB3FSQ 215-477-6475
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PUBLIC SERVICE

Bob Palin N3JIZ 610-687-4587
rjpelectric@worldlynx.net

TECHNICAL

Dennis Silage K3DS 610-353-4829
silage@temple.edu

PROGRAMS

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

To 9/30/2004: **Al Maslin N3EA**
610-446-4936, amaslin@earthlink.net
To 9/30/2003: **Gene Hoenig N3HG**
610-353-3281, n3hg@arrl.net

CALLSIGN TRUSTEES

WB3JOE: Al Maslin N3EA
610-446-4936, amaslin@earthlink.net
W3NWA: Kay Craigie WT3P
610-993-9623, wt3p@arrl.net

VOLUNTEER EXAM
SESSION REPORT

MARC's VE team served 7 candidates at the February 1 session in Bryn Mawr. Two people went home with new Technician licenses. Two did paperwork upgrades from Tech Plus to General. One person passed a test element that didn't lead to an upgrade. Unfortunately, two candidates did not pass the test elements they attempted.

The VE's who administered this session were **Bob W3ZQN**, **Paul NX3Q**, **Bob KA3NIQ**, **Susan K3SUE**, **Steve KD0VA**, **Dick K3ITH**, **Bob W3SA**, and **Dennis K3DS**.

The next MARC test session will be in Bryn Mawr on Saturday, May 3. Paid-up members of MARC may participate free of charge in one club-sponsored test session per year. That's a membership benefit now worth \$12 -- not a bad deal when you consider that MARC dues are only \$15. To pre-register for the May session, contact **Bob W3ZQN** (rjlees@aol.com, 610-265-6032).

TIPS ON FORMAL MESSAGE HANDLING

Also on-line at <http://home.earthlink.net/~wt3p/TRAFFIC.HTML>

The best way to learn to handle formal message traffic is to do it on the air in a training net such as MARC's. You are always welcome to address questions to the Net Manager, either during a net or by telephone or e-mail outside of net times. The wise operator will supplement on-air learning experiences with off-air reading and study. That is why we have put these hints on line and print them in this newsletter.

In addition, we recommend that hams who are serious about learning emergency communications skills should:

- * Study the FCC's Rules which pertain to legal ID's, third-party traffic, prohibited transmissions, and other subjects that may arise during the course of an emergency.
- * Read the chapters on "Traffic Handling" and "Emergency Communications" in The ARRL Operating Manual (latest edition published in 2000)
- * Get a copy of the ARRL Net Directory and study the instruction on message-handling in the back of the book.
- * Take the ARRL Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Course, Level 1. People who do not have Internet access can purchase the course textbook and take the exam at an in-person session.
- * Join and become an active member of their county's ARES/RACES organization, where additional training is provided.

SENDING A RADIOGRAM ON A VOICE MODE

Proper sending of a message received from another station requires us to have copied the message accurately in the first place. Never hesitate to ask for repetition of something you missed or have doubts about. Always count the check. There is NO excuse for careless copy.

Set up station equipment properly

- * Experts recommend not using VOX for emergency communications.
- * Hold hand-held microphone still -- avoid noisy fiddling and fumbling.
- * Learn how to hold the microphone relative to your mouth, so speech sounds clearest.
- * Adjust microphone drive control so that the signal does not distort.
- * Use of speech compression is seldom necessary.
- * Use sufficient RF power output to be solid into the repeater (on FM) or copyable (on SSB). Don't use any more power than that.

Read the message so others can copy it easily and accurately

- * Slow down! Slow down! Slow down!
- * Read in short phrases with short pauses between phrases.
- * Use the standard phonetic alphabet, if spelling is required.
- * Speak at a moderate volume -- avoid shouting.
- * Pronounce words clearly -- practice to correct sloppy speech habits.

Keep it simple

- * Sending just what is to be copied, using appropriate pro-words and no excess verbiage, works fine on Morse code nets and works fine on voice nets, too.
- * Avoid unnecessary words and clichés that waste time and may confuse the receiving station.

Some Examples of Unnecessary Verbiage

"Check of . . ." "Mrs., a married lady . . ." "Place of origin . . ." "Street address," "With a zipcode of . . ." "Call of this station," "Amateur call . . ." "Phone number with the area code, figures . . ." "Today's date . . ." "Common spelling . . ." "Going to . . ." "Break for text," "Break and the text," "Break for signature . . . and the signature"

Some expressions may be needed to let the copying station know what is about to happen, to clarify the message, and to produce a correct check. Here are some examples.

"I spell" Example: "PAOLI I spell PAPA ALPHA OSCAR LIMA INDIA"
 "I repeat" Tells the receiving station to expect a repetition, not new text. Don't overdo it!
 "Correction" Example: "THREE THREE FIVE Correction THREE FIVE FIVE"
 "Figures" Tells the receiving station that the following expression is to be written in numerals rather than spelled out in words: "1976" as opposed to "nineteen seventy six." Avoid "figures" when the following information could not be anything else but numerals.
 "Mixed group" Tells the receiving station that the following expression will contain both letters and numerals: "33RD" as opposed to "thirty third."
 "Letter group" Tells the receiving station that the following expression is alphabetic but not a word. Examples: QCWA, ARRL, UTC, RACES

Should we ever use phonetics when spelling words in FM message-sending?

- * Some say that because FM is so clear, phonetics are never necessary when spelling a word.
- * Others say that although FM may be clear, most people's speech habits are imperfect and local dialect pronunciation of letters may produce copy errors.
- * For example, say the callsign "N3AJ" and then the callsign "N3HA." In many people's speech, these callsigns sound exactly alike.

What is the difference between sending concisely and sending with excess verbiage?

Which one of these transmissions would you rather copy?
 Read both examples aloud to see how they actually sound.

(Continued on page 5)

FORMAL MESSAGE HANDLING

(Continued from page 4)

Please copy number five, routine, N3AO, one five, Paoli, Pennsylvania, August five. Mrs. Helena Handbasket, I spell, Hotel, Alpha, November, Delta, Bravo, Alpha, Sierra, Kilo, Echo, Tango. Two seven three Oak Street, Seattle, Washington, four one one nine three. Six oh two, five five five, nine one seven seven. Break.

GREETINGS FROM THE MALVERN FIRE
COMPANY CARNIVAL X-RAY BEST WISHES
TO UNCLE RUFUS X-RAY LOVE. Break.

TOM AND MARY TAYLOR

=====

Please copy number five, routine, call of this station, N3AO, check of one five, place of origin Paoli, Pennsylvania, today's date, August five. Going to Mrs., that's a married lady, Helena Handbasket, I spell, Holland, Albert, Nancy, Doughnut, Beehive, Alabama, Saxophone, Keychain, Edward, Teapot, street address two seven three Oak Street, Seattle, Washington, with a zipcode of figures four one one nine three. Telephone number with the area code figures six oh two, five five five, nine one seven seven. Break and the text.

GREETINGS FROM THE MALVERN common spelling FIRE
COMPANY CARNIVAL X-RAY BEST WISHES
TO UNCLE RUFUS, I spell, Rat, Ukulele, Fuzzy, Underwear,
Soupspoon, X-RAY LOVE. Break for signature.

And the signature. TOM AND MARY TAYLOR

=====

Which type would you want to copy 25 of?

DELIVERING MESSAGES

The classic story of how not to deliver a message says a Military Affiliate Radio System operator phoned someone and said, "Hello, Mr. Smith. I have a message for you from MARS." "You must be some kind of a nut!" [Click]

The story may not be factual, but it illustrates how we should put ourselves in the recipient's position. Most people are not accustomed to receiving messages out of the blue over the telephone from a stranger. We must avoid mystifying, alarming, or annoying them. Delivering messages should be a pleasant experience for both you and the recipient. What can you do to make it come out that way?

Before calling

- * Be sure you can read what you have written down -- copy it over if necessary to avoid stumbling over scribbled words.
- * Put yourself in a friendly, cheerful frame of mind -- if you can't do that, then make the call later.
- * Make sure you are ready to talk intelligibly - do you need to drink some water, to clear your throat, to cough, sneeze, or blow your nose?

Starting the call

- * Identify yourself and ask to speak to the addressee in a way that will not cause alarm: "Good evening. My name is Carter Craigie. I'm a ham radio operator in Paoli, and I have a greeting message for John Jones from his Aunt Brunhilde in Texas. May I speak to John, please?"
- * Avoid ham radio jargon ("radiogram," "piece of traffic," "Eastern PA CW Net") that is gibberish to the addressee.
- * Some hams like to say up-front that they are not selling anything and that there is no charge for the message.

Reading the message

- * Do not read the preamble, except for the date (and the time, if one is given). To a non-ham, the pre-amble is gibberish.
- * Do not read the whole address. ("The message is addressed to John and Cynthia Jones," is sufficient.)
- * Do not say "break" between the addressee's name and the text, or between the text and the signature.
- * Read the message text and signature slowly in short phrases. Offer to read it again, if the person wants to write it down or just hear it again.

During the call

- * Be ready with a concise explanation of how hams relay messages as a free service to the public. No jargon or gobbledygook! Idea: Try it out on a non-ham member of your family, and see if it makes sense.
- * Suggest that the person send a message back. Remind them it is free of charge. Be prepared to help the person compose a brief message. Double-check the address and phone number before hanging up.
- * Offer to give recipients your phone number, in case they would like to send messages in the future.
- * End the call pleasantly ("It's been nice talking with you. Have a good evening.").

What if . . .

It's a wrong number? . . . If you can't find the correct number, service the message back.

The person hangs up on me? . . . Use your judgment. If you decide that calling back is not a good idea, service the message back.

The person is rude or gives me the creeps? . . . If the person is rude, do not be rude in return. Deliver the message politely and say good-bye. If the person seems creepy, do not offer your phone number or say too much about yourself or where you live.

The person is a ham? . . . Then you can talk more about the details of message-handling and use some ham lingo. Does the person know about MARC?

(Continued on page 6)

FORMAL MESSAGE HANDLING

(continued from page 5)

What if . . .

I get an answering machine?

If you are sure the machine belongs to the recipient, you can leave the message on the machine. Include your phone number and invite the person to call you back. If the machine does not identify the person whose number you have reached, it is best to call back later.

The recipient does not know who the author is? . .

You can apologize for calling, hang up, and service the message back. Some hams send canned messages to long lists of other hams whom they do not know personally. Although some hams welcome these messages, others consider them to be junk mail or spam. If the recipient does not like receiving messages from unknown senders, make a note not to bother this person again.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TRAINING

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
Independent study courses
<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/>

FEMA Education and Training
http://www.fema.gov/tab_education.shtm

American Radio Relay League (ARRL)
Certification and Continuing Education courses
<http://www.arrl.org/cce/>

INTERESTING STUFF ON THE WEB

DXers who like to play with maps on their computers may want to have a look at "DX Atlas." You can download a 30-day trial version at no charge from www.dxatlas.com. If you like it, the registration key costs \$29.95. Tnx **Dieter WB3JWU** for this tip.

ARES COORDINATOR NAMED FOR PHILLY

Chris McCormick N3JHR (n3jhr@arrl.net) has been named ARES Emergency Coordinator for Philadelphia County. Contact Chris to find out how to get involved in ARES if you live in Philadelphia.

CONGRESSMAN'S LETTER RECEIVED

Congressman **Curt Weldon** wrote MARC a letter thanking us for our participation in the Main Line Volunteer Force's Santa's Brigade program. The letter was received by **Kay WT3P**, the club's contact person for the project.

Over 900 people received Christmas gifts in 2002 through the generosity of donors from participating MLVF businesses and organizations.

Gift donors for 2002 were **Judy N3MBW** and **Gene N3HG**, **Bob WA3PZO** and **Kim KB3COV**, **Dave WB3JOY**, **Janet KA3VTQ** and **Rob WI3S**, and **Kay WT3P** and **Carter N3AO**.

Would your business or organization based in the Main Line region like to enlist gift donors for Christmas, 2004, through the Main Line Volunteer Force? For information, please contact **Louisa McDonald**, 845 Box Hill Lane, Radnor, PA 19087.

HOLMESBURG ARC SIMPLEX CONTEST

Holmesburg ARC will hold their annual simplex contest on March 8 this year. This year the contest will be held on both 2m and 440 MHz. The hours are 7 - 11 PM, and standard simplex frequencies should be used. The exchange is your zipcode and a sequential contact number. For more information, e-mail wm3pen@harcnet.org. **Kay WT3P** has the official details, too.

CQ WORLDWIDE WORKED ALL PREFIX CONTEST

The SSB edition of CQ WW WPX is 0000Z on March 29 to 2400Z on March 30. Send RST and contact serial number beginning with 001. The CW version is on May 24-25. You'll work prefixes you never heard of before! Always "Work First, Worry Later." Some of the odd ones will turn out to be ho-hum, but some will be valuable additions to your DX log. For the rules: <http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com/cqworldwidewpx.html>.

MORE EURO POSTAGE INFO

A QSL received from Germany cost € 1.50 for airmail postage. One from Greece cost € 0.55, one from Guadeloupe cost € 0.58, one from the Azores cost € 0.70, one from the Netherlands cost € 0.75, and one from Italy cost € 0.77. Because \$1 is worth slightly less than € 1, \$1 is OK for return postage from Greece, Italy, the Azores, the Netherlands, and Guadeloupe, but \$2 must be sent to Germany.

The U.K. does not use the Euro currency. However, FYI, **Carter N3AO** received a QSL from an English ham who sent back one of his dollars. The guy wrote that \$1 is enough for return airmail postage from the U.K. to the USA. I received a similar message (and a dollar back) from a Danish Amateur. I guess there are still some honest people in the world!

Norway also does not use the Euro. *The Daily DX* newsletter printed a message from a Norwegian QSL manager, who says that \$1 is insufficient. It takes \$2 or 1 International Reply Coupon for return postage from Norway.

Could you ask someone who's traveling to Europe to bring you back some Euros to use as return postage? As far as I know, there isn't any € 1 paper money. I've seen only € 1 coins, which wouldn't be good to send through the mail.

A SHORT HISTORY OF MARC'S HOMEBREW GROUP

By Jack Keidel KB3GDC

Home brewing of equipment among hams is alive and well. At the September 2001 meeting of MARC, **Jack KB3GDC** asked MARC members who would be interested in forming a group dedicated to constructing their own ham gear. Shortly thereafter, five members responded. In the order they signed-up, they were: **Owen N3WO**, **Gene N3HG**, **Josy WQ3E**, **Carter N3AO**, and **Joe KB3FXZ**. **Leland N3LJB**, Owen's friend and classmate, joined at the April, 2002, meeting. Currently, these seven hams comprise MARC's one-year-old homebrew group. The first group meeting was held Saturday, January 12, 2002.

All meetings are informal. The general theme has always been members helping other members. Although meetings are attempted every month, except during the summer, it typically averages out to approximately 1-1/2 meetings every two months. One reason for this is that meetings are scheduled only when four or five members are able to attend. Education and encouragement seem to be the factors that keep this group together and, we hope, allow it to grow. Early meetings were devoted to the more experienced hams teaching soldering and construction techniques, as well as basic testing methods. Early educational efforts included handouts titled "Primer on Operational Amplifiers" and "Basic Transistor Testing."

As a result of this training and encouragement, and the re-

newed resolve of all members, many individual construction projects were undertaken and finished items began to show up at subsequent meetings. Among those items were a quarter-wave, two meter vertical ground plane antenna, a ham shack digital thermometer, a lightning detector, electronic keyers and electronic keyers with memory, a Norcal CW "Red Hot" 40 meter transceiver kit, a QRP 3 watt CW transmitter kit, and an antenna impedance bridge.

In June, 2002, **Leland N3LJB** spoke to **Carter N3AO**, who is on MARC's board, about the possibility of a homebrew net, which would be conducted using MARC's repeaters. A short time later the board approved the net, and Leland volunteered to be its net control operator. The net runs every Saturday morning at 9 AM on the linked 147.06 and 145.13 repeaters. The net has become a huge success, in many cases attracting a dozen or more active participants.

After completing one year of service, the group seems to have developed a uniquely workable framework: total informality, with all members contributing what they can, when they can. There is no individual leader, although all work diligently to keep things running smoothly. New members are always invited. Any interested ham may contact any member of the group.

MONTCO RACES HANDLES THE SNOW JOB

Montgomery County RACES was activated on February 16 during the Presidents Day snowstorm to assist in transporting essential workers within the county. The pagers were beeped, and a RACES net began on 2 meters. Transport activity continued until the evening of February 17, according to **Bob W3ZQN**.

Using their personal 4WD vehicles, six drivers drove 21 workers to hospitals and nursing homes, staying in constant contact with the RACES net as they traveled the snow-clogged roads. Six RACES members served as Net Control during the activation, and more than a dozen other RACES members who don't have 4WD offered to help in capacities other than transportation.

The county's RACES ID cards, which identify the bearer as essential personnel, made it clear to law enforcement that these drivers were not just out joy-riding during the weather emergency. The official ID also reassured the workers who accepted the transportation, and their employers, that the drivers are trusted by county officials.

Some hams who are not registered members of MontCo RACES offered to drive, but it was not possible to accept their services. RACES officials weren't about to ask workers to accept rides with drivers whom the officials couldn't vouch for.

Think about it! Would you want your wife or daughter to get into a 4WD with a man she never heard of before, and ride off into a snowstorm . . . unless the driver was vouched for by responsible officials who had issued the driver formal identification?

Wanting to help is good. Being prepared to help means more than just wanting to. Register in ARES/RACES now!

FIELD DAY PLANNING MEETING

Traditionally, MARC Field Day responsibilities have fallen on one or two people, who either burn out after one year or go on doing the work for years, feeling hard done by. It's time for that to stop. This year, we will form a committee to organize Field Day. It has worked for the hamfest, and it will work for Field Day.

If you want MARC to have Field Day in 2003, and if you're willing to translate that interest into helping divide up the tasks so that no one is over-burdened, then you're one of the people we need on the Field Day Committee.

A meeting of all (repeat: ALL) MARC members who are interested in organizing Field Day 2003 will be held at the home of **Carter N3AO** and **Kay WT3P** within the next two months.

We're not announcing a meeting date now, because we want to find out who would like to participate and then choose a date when most people can attend. We will set up an e-mail list to keep committee members informed and included.

Do you want to be on the Field Day Committee? Send an e-mail to **Carter N3AO** (n3ao@arrl.net) or **Kay WT3P** (wt3p@arrl.net). If you are not on e-mail, please phone us at 610-993-9623 or send Carter a radiogram on one of the MARC traffic nets.



**Bring a friend to a MARC meeting . . .
Or make one there!**