



MARCH / APRIL 2002

REMARCS

www.marc-radio.org



ANNUAL JUNQUE AUCTION HEADLINES MARCH 19 CLUB MEETING

It's time once again to clean out your closet and dispose of all the ham gear and accessories that you don't want any more . . . so you can buy some of the stuff that another member doesn't want any more! The annual junque auction is fun as well as commerce, with **Bart K4BF** as our auctioneer and *bon vivant*. Feel free to invite your friends from other radio clubs to come and buy things . . . their money is just as green as ours.

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! (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.

Something different: This year, there is no limit on the number of items you may bring to sell. If you are disposing of estate equipment for a friend who wasn't a club member, that's okay.

People are looking for small stuff and bargains (*see the related story on page 3, listing some suggested things people might like to buy*). Leave the \$500 rig at home. Bring some small bills or a checkbook. Any questions should be directed to President **Steve N3ORH**.

KEY HAMFEST VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! (NOW, OR EVEN SOONER)

The hamfest is our principal fund-raiser. Several key tasks need new volunteers, because some or all of the people who did them last year have changed roles.

- ◆ We need a table sales chairman. We can't distribute flyers without table sales information. If this position is not filled, soon, (preferably by a person with good organizing skills) we don't have a hamfest. Period. That got your attention?
- ◆ We need several teams of physically-strong people to install roadside direction signs on Saturday and/or remove them on Sunday. We have maps showing the placements.
- ◆ We need public address system announcers. Most of the announcements are already in a notebook.

We always need people to take flyers to other hamfests and radio club meetings. This should start now. If you are involved with another high tech hobby, take flyers to those club meetings and explain what a hamfest is. Please contact **Mike KF3CD** at mpilotti@anro.com or 610-935-4429 if you can help.

BEING THE DX IN THE CARIBBEAN APRIL 16 PROGRAM BY DOUG W3CF

Unless you've been on the business end of a huge pile-up of calling stations, you can't imagine what an uproar assaults your ears. In April, **Doug Priest W3CF** will describe what it's like to operate major DX contests from Caribbean islands. He'll have pictures to go along with his talk.

A past officer of MARC, back when he signed **N3ADL**, Doug is now president of the **Frankford Radio Club**, modestly self-described as the greatest DX contest club in the known universe. He has been on several contest DXpeditions to contribute to the FRC's total in the ARRL and CQ contests.

What happens when something turns to smoke and you're a long way from HRO and Radio Shack? How do you pick call-signs out of the din of a contest pile-up? What do the contest stations in the Caribbean look like? How do the hams in a multi-operator, multi-transmitter contest operation run up their amazing scores? Do they get any time to enjoy the beach?

If you're interested in DXing, contesting, or both, you'll enjoy this program.

AUTOPATCH CODE UPDATE

Because we are now using the same kind of SCOM 7K controller on both 147.06 and 145.13, the autopatch access codes are no longer different on the two repeaters.

A revised autopatch codes and guidelines page is inserted in this newsletter for members who receive *REMARCS* on paper. It has been sent as a PDF file to members who get the newsletter electronically.



**MARC IS AN
ARRL SPECIAL
SERVICE CLUB**

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME!

Members who weren't able to renew at the January or February meetings have received a snail-mail renewal form. Please return it promptly with your dues, if you haven't already, because this is the last newsletter you'll get if your membership lapses.

If you aren't sure whether or not you're paid up for 2002, please contact **Kay WT3P** (610-993-9623, wt3p@arrl.net). MARC values your membership and hope that you do, too!

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
141.13 CTCSS 131.8 Hz
Webmaster: Steve N3ORH (610-313-8080,
smaslin@marc-radio.org)

NETS

Club Net, Sunday, 8:30 PM 147.06
Traffic net, M/W/F, 8:30 PM 147.06
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!

2001 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

At the end of the 2001 membership year, we had 157 members, 154 of whom were licensed hams. Seventy-eight percent of the licensed members were ARRL members. The box at right shows the license class statistics.

Novice	4
Technician	20
Tech+HF	13
General	36
Advanced	21
Extra	60

Where do our members live?
We're spread over 76 zipcodes. Most members live in Pennsylvania, but we have some in New Jersey, Massachusetts, New York, Virginia, Colorado, and California.

Paoli	5
Bryn Mawr	6
Newtown Square	6
19401 & 19403	6
Berwyn	7
Havertown	8
King of Prussia	9
Malvern	11

In 2001, we had 127 members who had e-mail and 30 who didn't. That comes out to about 81%, which is in line with statistical surveys of active hams nationwide. Of those who are on e-mail, 93 members received the newsletter electronically.

MEMBERSHIP LIST OOPS & UPDATES

For reasons unknown (other than the two-word phrase in which the second word is "happens"), the last two names on the membership roster were cut off the final version. Please add this information to your list.

W3ZV Ronald Kenwood 610-666-6828 rkenwood@erols.com
WA3ZZU Carl Wernitz 304-291-5820 cwernitz@pol.net

Please note the following e-mail address additions and updates. There have been so many changes that an updated roster will be distributed ASAP.

N3DTY: rialep@comcast.net W2MBH: mh-jh@rcn.com
N2JBE: ehidle@hotmail.com KB3CO: kb3co@arrl.net
KB3GYN: kb3gyn@arrl.net W3QA: w3qa@arrl.net
KB3HFI: kb3hfi@arrl.net WA1SSY: jglennonus@yahoo.com
WA2POW: wa2pow@arrl.net K3UNU: marshamoose@aol.com
KB2RTZ: kb2rtz@arrl.net K3KFD: k3kfd@comcast.net
WQ3E: jmalebranche@att.net N3RX: philschein1@comcast.net
W2OTT: w2ott@yahoo.com KB3EJS: kurtonium@aol.com
KC3DS: chaswood@comcast.net WB3JOY: dmacdonald1@comcast.net

VOX

Please welcome new members: **George K3UNU** from K of P, **Lor W3QA** from West Chester, **Charlie KB3CO** from Blue Bell, **Erie N2JBE** from Bryn Mawr, and **Steve KB2RTZ** from Turnersville, NJ. Returning member **Jeff KB3HFI** (ex-WB3KNB) is a past MARC president, and we're delighted to have him back. Jeff's old phonetics were "Kissing Norwegian Beauties." He says he thought about that when he found himself standing near the Norwegian women's ski team at the Salt Lake City Olympics.

Some recent upgrades: **Jules W2OTT**, **Stu W3SMC**, and **Steve KD0VA** to Extra; **Dave KB3HFO** to General. Congratulations! **Carter N3AO** and **Al N3EA** enjoyed QRP CW QSO's while Al was in Florida. **Dieter WB3JWU** qualified for Worked All States on 40m CW. Members who attended the hamfest planning meeting: **Mike KF3CD**, **Bob W3SA**, **Bob KB3FSQ**, **Bob N3JIZ**, **Gene N3HG**, **Judy N3MBW**, **Carter N3AO**, and **Kay WT3P**. **Owen KB3GVY** worked Brazil for his first DX QSO. **Dan KA3KHR** and **Bob W3SA** ran into each other at a Scottish / Irish cultural expo at Valley Forge. **Jenny KA3WVD** has moved to Christiansburg, VA. **Steve N3ORH** is getting married in April.

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

At the January 24 meeting, the board received reports on programs, auto-patch code changes, future public service events, the hamfest, and 2001 membership statistics. A thank-you letter from Delaware County ARES/RACES was received for packet gear donated by MARC. The Field Day site has been secured for this year. The board authorized spending up to \$75 for additional roadside direction signs for hamfest / Field Day. Additional magnetic car-door placards for public service will be purchased at a price to be determined. A procedure will be developed for loaning the club's radio equipment. A member suggested devoting a meeting program to discussion of the club's future course. The board decided to allocate some time at a membership meeting to this topic, but not in place of a regular program. The treasury balance was \$9,953.30.

At the February 28 meeting, the board voted to purchase fabric for pads to protect the tables in the meeting room, authorized offering the old ACC controller for sale on E-Bay, and voted to purchase roadside promo signs for Field Day. Membership renewals are just over 50%. Linking of the 2 meter repeaters is almost completed, and control codes will be given to control ops. Progress towards a 440 repeater is slow at this time. The treasury balance was \$10,506.21.

FROM THE EDITOR'S JUNK BOX

Do we listen to some of the stuff we say? Consider *"Watch your head!"* Unless I'm having an out-of-body experience, how am I supposed to watch my own head?

"Are you all right?" This is the first thing people ask when you have just been the victim of anything from an icy sidewalk to a falling piano. Since any idiot could see that, no, you are not remotely all right, what answer do they expect? "I'm fine. Nothing like a broken neck to set me up for the day."

"We've been licensed since 1983." Assuming you are not a clone, the Queen of England, or convinced you are John, Paul, George, and Ringo, calling yourself "we" on the air is a bad idea. People will start betting on whether you're two strings short of a ukulele or merely a pompous twit.

"Many stations calling you, so won't hold it." Unless he is dumber than a pine stump, the DX has already noticed that many stations are calling him. I am one of them. Get off the frequency.

Some new members have asked about the chorus of "Who??" when my name and call are spoken at club meetings. Here's the story. When you are somewhat of a public person and must refer to yourself in writing from time to time, there's a nasty little suspicion in the back of your mind that these self-references may come off as self-importance. I know a man who's so loath to refer to himself in writing that he'll run around his backhand and put everything in the passive voice to avoid using his own name or the dreaded first-person pronoun. I'm not that modest (*or that bereft of literary sensibility*), so what to do to avoid sounding like Louis XIV?

Sometime back in the 1980's, I decided to lighten it up by injecting an occasional tongue-in-cheek parenthetical (*who?*) after mentioning myself in these pages, to imply that I do not need an orthopedic hat.

Being a big fish is easy . . . the trick is remembering the size of the puddle. Any time you think you're a "really big shot," remember that puts you just one vowel away from being something else altogether. **73 – Kay WT3P**

HOME-BREW INTEREST GROUP STARTS TO MEET

Organized by **Jack KB3GDC**, a group of club members has started to meet to pursue their common interest in home-brewing. The first sessions were held at Jack's house on January 12 and February 23. **Gene N3HG**, **Josy WQ3E**, **Joe KB3FXZ**, **Owen KB3GVY**, and **Carter N3AO** have joined in so far. The sessions involve plenty of hands-on practice and demonstrations.

The group is very informal and meets at members' convenience. It is open to all MARC members, whether beginners or experts at the workbench. You don't have to attend every meeting to count yourself in. If you would like to be notified of future get-togethers, please contact **Jack KB3GDC** (jfk402@snip.net, 610-279-0920).

JUNQUE AUCTION WISH LIST

Members mentioned these items as things they might like to buy:

- ◆ Filters for Kenwood TS440 YK-88CN and YK88SN (narrow CW and SSB) for Kenwood TS440
- ◆ Test equipment
- ◆ Solar panels
- ◆ 1970's and 80's VHF and UHF commercial gear converted for use on the ham bands

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2002

PRESIDENT

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

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rjpelectric@worldlynx.net

TECHNICAL

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

PROGRAMS

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

To 9/30/2002: **Al Maslin N3EA**
610-446-4936, amaslin@earthlink.net

To 9/30/2003: **Gene Hoenig N3HG**
610-353-3281, ehoenig@pol.net

CALLSIGN TRUSTEES

WB3JOE: **Al Maslin N3EA**
610-446-4936, amaslin@earthlink.net

W3NWA: **Kay Craigie WT3P**
610-993-9623, wt3p@arrl.net

FEBRUARY LICENSE TEST SESSION

Six candidates came to the February 2 license test session. Everyone passed, though one person unsuccessfully attempted a second theory element.

The session produced 3 new Technician-class hams, 1 upgrade to General, and 2 upgrades to Extra. As usual, **Bob W3ZQN** had everything well-organized in advance, making things as smooth as possible for applicants and examiners.

The examiners were **Bob W3ZQN**, **Bob W3SA**, **Bob KA3NIQ**, **Paul NX3Q**, **Susan K3SUE**, **David KB3CRY**, **Ned WQ3Z**, and **Kay WT3P**.

One MARC member took advantage of the free test session that is a benefit of club membership. Club members are permitted to participate in one MARC-sponsored test session per year free of charge – the club picks up the \$10 test fee.

The next MARC tests will be on May 4, in Bryn Mawr. Contact **Bob W3ZQN** (610-265-6032, rjlees@aol.com) for information.

PUBLIC SERVICE EVENT APRIL 21

MARC will communicate for a Multiple Sclerosis walkathon in Downingtown on Sunday, April 21. Volunteers need to be there at 8 AM. Please contact **Bob N3JIZ** (610-687-4587) to get the details and sign up. No previous public service experience is required for these events. Bob has it very well organized, and he can explain what you need to bring and what you will be asked to do. Volunteering for these events is important not only for the safety of the participants but also because it's good public relations for Amateur Radio to be visible helpers in the community.

MAY PROGRAM: ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS AND HUMAN HEALTH

Thanks to **Bob W3ZQN**, **Chuck Boeggeman**, a Senior Engineer with PECO Energy will present a program on electromagnetic fields and human health at our May meeting. This will not be about RF fields, but rather will focus on 60 Hertz fields. He'll discuss what is the potential problem, what the studies have shown and what studies are under way, levels of EMF in our environment, how they are measured (with a demonstration) and so on. Chuck is not a ham, but is PECO's expert on this subject. It should be an interesting and educational program.

FRANKFORD RADIO CLUB 75th ANNIVERSARY AWARD

2002 marks the 75th anniversary of the **Frankford Radio Club**. To commemorate the occasion, the FRC is offering an award to anyone who contacts 75 or more FRC members in contests during 2002. The award is also available to SWLs. QSLs are not required. For more information on this award, please check the FRC web site: <http://www.frc-contest.org/anniva.htm>

On the web site you will find a roster of active FRC members that can be downloaded. The file is in .DIF format which can be read by a variety of spreadsheet programs. The award is free to DX stations and requires just an

TRY TRANSMITTER HUNTING WITH THE POTTSTOWN ARC

Also known as fox hunting, Amateur Radio direction-finding on 2 meters is enjoyed by many hams. Our neighbors the Pottstown ARC, sponsors of the 147.21 repeater, have invited hams from all over the area to get involved in their transmitter hunt activities. The first fox hunt will be on April 6.

On Saturday, March 23, PARC will conduct a free 3- hour interactive clinic for introductory through intermediate VHF radio direction-finding. Subjects covered will be theory, antennas, accessories, techniques, mobile installation, Internet resources, D-I-Y project ideas and more. The location is the Exelon Information Center at the Limerick Nuclear Power Station. The workshop starts promptly at 1:00 PM. There will be light refreshments. Attendance is limited and requires pre-registration by March 15, sent to **Bob Rex K3DBD** (k3dbd@arrl.net). Please use WORKSHOP for the Subject.

If you'd like to participate in the April 6 hunt or just ask what direction-finding is all about, please e-mail Bob.

**For news and features about Amateur Radio,
check ARRL's web page several times a week.
www.arrl.org**

AREA HAMFESTS

April 6/7	Baltimore ARC - Timonium, MD (ARRL MD State Convention)
April 28	Penn-Del ARC - New Castle, DE (ARRL DE State Convention)
May 5	Warminster ARC - Wrightstown, PA

Please support our neighbor clubs' hamfests, and take some MARC hamfest flyers to put on the literature table. **Mike KF3CD** (mpilotti@anro.com, 610-935-4429) has the flyers.

The ARRL Atlantic Division Director **Bernie Fuller N3EFN** and Vice Director **Bill Edgar N3LLR** plan to be at the Maryland and Delaware State Conventions, and Bernie plans to be at Warminster. You need to know your ARRL elected representatives. Ask questions, offer comments, and get to know the guys who volunteer a lot of their time for us.

UPDATE ON NICK UX0ZZ

Nick UX0ZZ is a Ukrainian ham who was befriended by **Mike KF3CD** several years ago. When he learned that Nick had health problems which could not be diagnosed, let alone treated, in Ukraine, Mike led a campaign to bring Nick to the USA. Here, through the generosity many people including some doctors who are not hams, Nick's seizure problem was diagnosed, and he went home knowing that his friends in the USA would make sure he'd be sent the vital medicine you can't get in Ukraine.

Nick has had no seizures since going on this medication. In addition to help in controlling his seizure disorder, Nick has received gifts of ham radio equipment from American hams, including an older Kenwood transceiver, a Yagi made up of parts from 2 broken antennas, and a computer. Nick was sent some American T-shirts and toys, which he sold for enough money to buy a used ham radio tower. Using the computer to practice, both of Nick's children have become chess whizzes who regularly defeat adult players and win tournaments.

Mike is Nick's QSL manager, and they talk on the air nearly every day. Nick is deeply grateful for what MARC members have done for him and his family. He welcomes QSO's with us . . . be sure to tell him you are a member of our club. Look for Nick around 28.465 MHz at 1430 UTC on weekends and 1230 UTC on weekdays.

Donations to pay for the next shipment of medicine to Nick are not being sought right now. However, when the time comes, MARC members will be the first to know about it. No club money is spent on this project, because some members object to that. Individual members are given the opportunity to donate if they choose.

HAM RADIO COMPUTER PROGRAMS I ENJOY

By Kay Craigie WT3P

Every ham who uses a computer in the shack, and that's about 90% of us now, has some favorite programs. Here are three that I like.

MIXW

Written by one of the authors of DigiPan, this is a multi-mode soundcard digital program. It's shareware. You can download a free trial version, but the real deal costs \$50 to register. The help file has to be downloaded and installed separately.

With MixW, you can do a laundry-list of modes, including packet, PSK, MFSK, RTTY, Hellschreiber, Throb, CW, and slow-scan TV, to name a few. That makes a big difference to me. When I'm tuning across the digital segment of a band and hear a signal, I can quickly switch to the correct mode, copy the signal, and (try to) work it. That's why I use the program regularly, even though I find it harder to tune and track MFSK and PSK signals with this program than with stand-alone programs. This program is on the web at <http://tav/kiev.ua/~nick/mixw2/>

DX4WIN

There are many logging programs on the market. None would please every ham. Fortunately, most programs have a demo version you can play with for a while. I would not buy a logging program that doesn't offer a demo version, in case I decide I don't like it after all. If you are new to computerized logging, try out several programs' demo versions before spending your money.

When I decided to change from a DOS to a Windows logger, several serious DXers

recommended DX4WIN. The current version of DX4WIN costs \$89.95.

DX4WIN has many information windows to hide or display, tracks awards, interfaces with packet for DX spotting networks, accesses a CD-ROM callbook, generates keyboard CW if you have a COM or LPT port interface, does rig control, has a terminal window for TNC-based digital modes, computes beam headings, generates QSL card labels, gives sunrise/sunset times, interfaces with a computerized rotator controller, and now has a built-in waterfall tuning PSK31 window. Logs from a long list of other programs are easy to import. The authors are polite and helpful, if you have a problem or question. The log file size is pretty small, which makes back-up a snap.

The program has its down-sides. Updating the databases that users can edit has often been hard for me. The USA county database cannot be edited by the user to add new ones or correct the fact that one Louisiana county can't be entered because the hard-coded name is too long for the space allowed by the logging window. Modes you can log are also hard-coded in a drop-down list. The authors do not plan to add any more digital modes any time soon, saying there's just too many to deal with. To log these modes, I have to pick a mode I never use and put a note in the QSO record that the mode was really something else. For example, I log MFSK as AMTOR and Hellschreiber as CLOVER. Arrgh.

However, many things about the program can be configured by the user to suit per-

sonal operating habits. On the whole, it's an excellent general-purpose logger, and I recommend it very highly. Find out more about DX4WIN and download a demo version at www.dx4win.com.

GEOCLOCK

GeoClock is shareware, and it has been around for a long time. According to the web, "GeoClock shows the current time (based on your computer's clock) with a high quality map of the earth. The current sun position is displayed, and the parts of the earth in sunlight and twilight are highlighted. This display is automatically updated every few seconds. Local sunrise, sunset, the sun's azimuth and elevation, and times around the world are also displayed. A variety of map backgrounds and other options are available. There are both DOS and Windows versions."

What's fun for hams is that we can watch the terminator (*no, not Arnold's movie!*) dividing daylight and darkness. The twilight zone (*no, not Rod's TV show!*) along the terminator is called the gray line (*no, not the tour company!*), and HF signals may propagate along this line in interesting ways. For operators new to HF, who're just beginning to think globally and talk to people on the other side of the world, this is a fun program to play with. It could also be used with kids to illustrate concepts in geography, time, and the solar system. The program can be downloaded at <http://home.att.net/geoclock/>.

What are your favorite ham radio computer programs? Write a few paragraphs about them for a future REMARCS.

FCC ROLLS OUT NEW WEB SITE FOR AMATEUR RADIO SERVICE

The FCC has redesigned its Amateur Radio Service Web site and changed the URL to <http://wireless.fcc.gov/services/amateur/>. The new layout makes it easier to find information on topics most requested by Amateurs, including licensing, Amateur exams, filing an application, changing an address or using the Universal Licensing System (ULS). The refurbished site also provides links to recent Amateur Radio-related news from the FCC.

ARRL ANTENNA MODELING COURSE BEGINS

The ARRL Certification and Continuing Education Program has begun its first on-line technical course: Antenna Modeling. Written by the well-known author and historian **L. B. Cebik W4RNL** and edited by ARRL Senior Assistant Technical Editor **Dean Straw N6BV**, the course offers students a hands-on tutorial. Registration for the first session began on February 11, and "seats" in the class quickly filled up.

A sample lesson based on the actual Antenna Modeling course is available on the ARRL Web site at <http://www.arrl.org/cce/sample-lesson/>.

The registration fee for this course is \$80 for ARRL members and \$110 for nonmembers. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are available for all ARRL C-CE courses. Answers to most questions about the courses are available on the ARRL Certification and Continuing Education home page at <http://www.arrl.org/cce> and the associated C-CE links. Watch the ARRL web site for announcement of the next antenna modeling course.

**Bring a friend
to the MARC meeting!**

KID'S DAY IN EXTON WITH WB3JWU

By Dieter Hauer WB3JWU

[Editor's Note: Kid's Day is a twice-yearly event started by the Boring ARC in Oregon and now fostered nationally by the ARRL. Dieter's follow-up letter to the Scouts is excellent and may give you some ideas for introducing ham radio.]

On January 5th, I hosted a Kid's Day Amateur Radio event for Webelo Scout Pack #216 in Exton, PA. I borrowed the club's TS-520 and 3 element tribander to setup a temporary HF station at the Scoutmaster's house.

I first gave a brief presentation to the Scouts, and then got them started. Each of the six Scouts got on the air and had nice contacts with stations in Louisiana, Texas, and Missouri. Some of the parents were present during these contacts and the event was a success.

Afterwards, I downloaded the PDF format Kid's Day Certificate, printed the color certificates on heavy stock, signed them, and gave them to the Scoutmaster. Yesterday, I sent a follow-up document over to the Scoutmaster.

This morning they held a breakfast, and each Scout was presented with a personalized certificate commemorating the Kid's Day event.

I'd like to thank **Harry W3FM** for loaning me his mini sledgehammer, stakes and rope for securing the telescopic mast; **Bob W3ZQN** for loaning me the club's rigs, microphone and antenna tuner; and **Susan K3SUE** for meeting me at the club storage locker so I could borrow the tribander, feedline and rotor.

Dear Scouts,

It was my pleasure to meet with you again and get more of you "ON THE AIR" this time. I hope that you feel the same, and that you found Amateur Radio enjoyable and interesting.

What you have experienced is just a small fraction of what this neat hobby has to offer. There are many other things you can do in addition to contacting someone in another state or country.

You could:

- ◆ Talk to an astronaut on the Space Shuttle
- ◆ Setup and participate in a Special Event Station
- ◆ Talk to other Ham radio operators via satellite or repeater using a handi talkie.
- ◆ Use voice, data or television to communicate on frequencies ranging from shortwave to microwave.
- ◆ Perform logistical and security support via radio communications for parades, walkathons, marathons, and disasters.
- ◆ Join a Ham Radio club and meet many interesting people who can provide useful insight on what you may want to do for a living someday. Hey, it's not just about radios! Many of us are doctors, lawyers, engineers, professors, etc.
- ◆ Participate in Field Day - A national ham radio event held once a year in June.
- ◆ Learn about electronics, geography, and foreign languages - many abroad do speak English, though.
- ◆ Participate in radio contests, work DX (foreign countries), and earn awards.

I wish to congratulate each one of you for participating in the Amateur Radio Kid's Day event and hope that you seriously think about becoming Radio Amateurs. You do not need to learn Morse Code to get a Technician class license and get your feet wet.

Later, when you have more time and if you want to "go for it," you can learn the Code and venture onto HF (shortwave) where communicating world wide is a common occurrence. I currently have contacts with Amateur operators in over 200 countries.

This is a hobby which will "grow with you." You can temporarily leave it (just remember to renew your license!) and come back as you wish. There is no age requirement for getting a license and the test only costs \$10.00 to take (pass or fail). Once you've passed the test, you'll receive your Amateur Radio license and a unique callsign - assigned to you!

Renewal of an existing license is free and there is a decent market of used and new radio equipment. The actual questions and answers for the multiple choice test are provided on some web sites (free) and you can also obtain excellent study material from the American Radio Relay League (<http://www.arrl.org> or 860-594-0200).

My recommendation is to get the ARRL book *Now You're Talking* (\$19.00) which educates you and provides study material and a questionnaire regarding the Technician test. Amateur Radio clubs usually proctor the test sessions, and my club does this about 4 times a year. The [arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org) website also provides helpful information on where to go for testing, when/where the next hamfest is, and other pertinent information.

I realize that taking a test, getting a license and getting "on the air" is somewhat foreign and intimidating. When I was your age, I had an "Elmer" and he was a big help in getting me started. Parents and Scouts, if you have any interest, please feel free to contact me at WB3JWU@ARRL.net. I would be glad to advise you and answer any questions you may have about this great radio service and hobby.

Take Care and 73, Sincerely - Dieter Hauer WB3JWU

CALLSIGN FUN QUIZ

How many can you answer without peeking at page 7?

1. Kay WT3P and Carter N3AO were granted licenses to operate as ZF2WT and ZF2CC. What country were they visiting?
2. Josy WQ3E came to the USA from the country whose prefix is HH. What country is that?
3. We all know that ham callsigns issued by the FCC begin with A, K, N, and W. Which of the following prefixes will NOT be found in callsigns issued to hams by the FCC? Here's the list: KP2, AP, KH0, AM, KL7, KG4.
4. If you went skiing in Colorado, what call area would you be in? Can you name the other states in that call area?
5. If you went to the Calgary Stampede, what prefix would you hear in the local hams' callsigns?

DXING ON SIX METERS

The 6 meter band this winter was mind-boggling. A friend who has DXCC on 6 told me he never saw such conditions before. I worked 25 new countries, a bunch of new states, and a load of new grid squares. In the morning Europe was coming in, and in the afternoon the band was full of Alaska and British Columbia. This DXing was done on a band that you can use whether or not you have passed the code test.

Some of the distant signals were booming, as if they were Delaware, while others reminded me why they call this stuff "weak signal" VHF.

Weak signal is not called that because people are running QRP. On the contrary, some operators are pumping hundreds of watts into honking big gain antennas. Owing to the vagaries of VHF propagation and the high noise that comes up when the bands are open, however, many signals are at or just above the noise level. This is where CW comes in handy, because it really does pierce through the noise. But the grid you miss today if you aren't on CW will be back again another time on SSB. It all evens out eventually. Most of my 6m QSL's are for SSB contacts.

What do you need to get started? First, you need a rig that will do SSB and CW on VHF. Single-band all-mode VHF rigs are expensive when new and hard to find on the used-gear market. However, many multi-band transceivers such as the ICOM 706 offer VHF SSB and CW as well as FM.

Although amplifiers are not needed for VHF FM operation, if you're going to do SSB/CW, you need an amp. A 150 watt amplifier will do just fine to start with. Called "brick amplifiers" because they're about the size of a brick, these accessories have a pre-amplifier feature that boosts the audibility of received signals. Boosts the noise, too, but you learn to live with it.

Finally, you need a gain antenna and a rotator. If it's a Yagi, get as many elements as possible to maximize the gain and install the antenna polarized horizontally. Antenna height really matters. My 6m beam, for instance, is stuck on top of my HF Yagi, and they share a rotator. You need a rotator because good VHF Yagi antennas are extremely directional and won't hear or be heard by what they aren't pointed at.

Buying cheap-o coaxial cable feedline is always a bad bargain in ham radio, and the higher you go in frequency, the worse it becomes. Invest in good feedline for VHF and install the connectors solidly.

You can earn ARRL's Worked All States and DXCC on VHF. VHFers also exchange grid square information to qualify for the ARRL's VHF-UHF Century Club award (VUCC). The earth is divided into latitude / longitude grids. The ARRL sells a North American grid square map and a (rather hard to read) world grid atlas. The easy way to find out what grid square you live in is to look yourself up on QRZ.com (click on "detailed info") or a Buckmaster CD-ROM callbook. If your address is shown correctly, your grid square will be displayed. Most people only use the first 4 characters (mine is FN20). Nearly all MARC members live in either FN20 or FM29.

A typical SSB exchange would be "VE9DX, you're 5-9 into Fox November Two Zero, and my name is Kay. Over." He would reply, "QSL, Kay. You're also 5-9 here in Fox November Seventy Five. Name here is Andy. 73!" Band openings are often brief, so we usually don't rag chew with the DX.

Unlike HF, when some band is at least sort of usable every day for QSO's beyond ground wave distance, the VHF bands will be as dead as dirt for months on end . . . then there's a wild & woolly band opening . . . then they're back to sleep. Think about that before you spend a lot of money on a VHF station. It won't be an every day dependable kind of fun. But if you're getting bored with repeater chat and don't want to take the code test yet, or if you've worked the world on HF, think about DXing on VHF. — 73, Kay WT3P

W3AA SPECIAL EVENT MARKS STATION'S 50TH YEAR

Located in the Franklin Institute Science Museum in Philadelphia, the station now known as W3AA was originally licensed as W3TKQ on March 5, 1952, and began daily operation on April 5, 1952.

The **Phil-Mont Mobile Radio Club** will operate W3AA as a special event station for the entire month of March. The station will operate on primary frequencies of 28.393, 21.350, 7.240 and 14.230 MHz SSTV. Probably the best frequency for us to try in the local area is the 40 meter one. Certificates are available for a self-addressed, stamped 9"x12" envelope sent to:

Amateur Radio Station W3AA
The Franklin Institute Science Museum
Benjamin Franklin Parkway at 20th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1194

The station will be on the air daily during museum hours of 9 to 5 PM EST. For more information about W3AA, visit the Web site at W3AA. For more information about Phil-Mont, set your browser to <http://www.phil-mont.org>.

CALLSIGN FUN QUIZ ANSWERS

1. ZF is the prefix for the Cayman Islands in the Caribbean.
2. HH is the prefix for Haiti.
3. Like all other prefixes starting with K, N, and W, the KP2 (U.S. Virgin Islands), KH0 (Mariana Islands), KL7 (Alaska), and KG4 (Guantánamo Bay) prefixes are in the sets of prefixes allocated to the USA. However, not all prefixes beginning with A are allocated to the USA. Only the AA - AL prefixes are ours. AP is Pakistan's and AM is Spain's, for example.
4. Colorado is in the 0 call area, along with Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas.
5. Calgary is in the province of Alberta, Canada, where the usual prefix is VE6.

Photographs by Gene N3HG from the MARC 2001 holiday party and 25th anniversary celebration are on line at

<http://home.earthlink.net/~wt3p/MARC25.htm>