



JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2003

REMARCS

www.marc-radio.org

2003 MEETING PROGRAMS

January 21 -- The ARRL Awards Program, by Kay Craigie WT3P

Our kick-off program for the new year will introduce 5 operating awards sponsored by the ARRL or the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU). They are IARU's Worked All Continents (WAC) award and ARRL's Worked All States (WAS), VHF-UHF Century Club (VUCC), DX Century Club (DXCC), and DX Challenge award. The purpose of operating awards is to encourage activity on the air and stimulate hams to improve their operating proficiency and knowledge of propagation. The DX awards also promote international good-will among hams of all nations. And for many of us, awards are great fun. Everyone is invited to bring his or her ARRL / IARU operating award certificates to display.

February 18 -- To be announced: We hope to have a program about a local ARES/RACES group.

March 18 -- Annual Junque Auction

Because no one has run for program chairman in several years, the responsibility to come up with interesting program topics falls on all of us . . . or none of us!

If you have suggestions for specific speakers or program topics that you'd enjoy at a club meeting, please send them to **Kay WT3P** now.

Only you can make the MARC meetings events that you will like to attend.

CALENDAR OF MARC EVENTS 2003

January 21 - MARC MEETING
February 1 - License tests
February 18 - MARC MEETING
March 18 - MARC meeting - Junque Auction
April 15 - MARC meeting
May 3 - License tests
May 20 - MARC meeting
June 17 - MARC meeting
June 28-29 - Field Day
July 13 - MARC HAMFEST
July 15 - MARC meeting
August 2 - License tests
August 19 - MARC meeting
September 16 - MARC meeting & elections
October 21 - MARC meeting
November 1 - License tests
November 18 - MARC meeting
December 16 - Holiday Party

NEWSLETTER DELIVERY ISSUES AND OPTIONS

For reasons unknown, messages sent to the news and *REMARCS* e-mail distribution lists have been duplicating in the last few months. Tests have been made, trying to force the system to send duplicates and thus prove a theory, but nothing has worked. One more theory is being tested as we send out the electronic versions of this edition. If the messages duplicate, we apologize. It is not for lack of effort or thought that this is happening.

In the past, some of you said that instead of receiving *REMARCS* as a file attachment, you prefer to be sent an e-mail with a Web address from which the document can be downloaded. Although we don't really think that's a pro-active way to inform you about the club's activities, we are now offering a Web download option.

Members now have a choice of electronic delivery systems:

1. Receive REMARCS as a PDF file attachment.
2. Receive an e-mail saying that REMARCS (in PDF format) is available for download from a Web address.

Either way, you need Adobe Acrobat Reader (version 3 or later) installed on your computer to read the document. Please send e-mail to **Kay WT3P** (wt3p@arrrl.net) saying which electronic method you prefer.

If you do not have e-mail or for whatever reasons can't take the electronic edition, we will continue to send you paper *REMARCS*.

TRAFFIC NET CERTIFICATES PRESENTED

Nineteen members and friends of MARC were awarded certificates by Net Manager **Carter N3AO** for sending radiograms on the MARC Traffic Net between August and December, 2002.

Net participants had been challenged to send at least one radiogram per month on the MARC nets, which are affiliated with the ARRL National Traffic System at the local level. The challenge was intended to help operators develop their emergency communications skills by practicing the composition and sending of formal messages.

Also, much of the traffic in the NTS today is the equivalent of junk mail . . . canned messages going to a long list of people not acquainted with the sender . . . or net management reports. By asking MARC net members to send real messages to people they know, the challenge helped exercise the whole NTS system with messages that are not quasi-spam or administrivia.

(Continued on page 6)

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 147.06/R & 145.13/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!

SAVE MONEY ON THE QSL BUREAU NEW MARC MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT

Because we're affiliated with the ARRL, MARC can help club members who are also League members save money on outgoing DX QSL's.

As a benefit of MARC membership, the club will pay the fee for forwarding DX QSL's to the ARRL outgoing bureau. Members' cards will be pooled together for monthly forwarding to the League.

Here's what you do: Sort QSL's by country prefix, as if you were going to send them to Newington yourself. Attach a QST mailing label (original or photocopy) or other proof of current League membership. Bring the stuff to the MARC meeting and give them to **Owen N3WO** or **Leland N3LJB**.

Thirty cards per member per month will be the limit as we begin this service. We'll make adjustments as we see how things work out. The board has informally approved paying for submitting 1 pound of cards per month.

Heavy bureau users are requested to submit their cards on their own. Any questions? Contact **Kay WT3P**.

VOX

Kay WT3P and **Leland N3LJB** are enjoying their new broadband Internet connections. **Leland** has been busy working DX on 10 meters (Iceland, VQ9 Chagos, Japan!). **Dieter WB3JWU**'s phone Worked All States certificate should be on his wall any day now. **Bob W3ZQN** has checked into the Eastern PA CW traffic net (meeting 7 PM and 10 PM on 3610 kHz). Among the friendly faces at the holiday party were **Marlene WA3UOC** and **Don WB3AYT**, both too rarely seen at MARC events these days. **Janet KA3VTQ** and **Rob W13S** put on an outstanding holiday party: thank you!! Thanks also to **Gene N3HG** and **Judy N3MBW** for their part in the party, including **Gene's** photographs. Great to see **Mike KF3CD** vertical again after a bout of painful back trouble. Didn't we hear something about **Steve N3ORH** and a vacation in St. Lucia? **Bob WA3PZO** helped staff the ARRL booth at the NBC 10 Family Techfest in Philly again this year. **Frank Bissell**, one of our associate members, was injured in a fall but we're pleased to report he's making a good recovery. **Ray N3BPJ** lives at Dunwoody now, and we're sure he'd enjoy a note or QSL card from his MARC friends. The address is **Ray Steever**, Dunwoody Village, 3500 West Chester Pike, Newtown Square, PA 19073.

MARC LICENSE EXAM NEWS

The MARC VE team will administer license exams on Saturday, February 1, at the Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church on Montgomery Avenue in Bryn Mawr. Applicants should arrive by 9:15 AM to fill out the paperwork.

Important note: the test fee in 2003 is \$12. MARC members can participate in one club-sponsored exam session free of charge each year.

Pre-registration is strongly encouraged. To avoid wasting examiners' time, a session is cancelled if nobody pre-registers. Pre-register and get all the necessary details by contacting **Bob W3ZQN** (610-265-6032, rjlees@aol.com).

At our November test session in the **Tom Powell K3YPO** Memorial Examination series, the MARC VE team served 3 applicants. Two of them did paperwork upgrades to General, while the other passed the 5 wpm code test but did not pass General theory. The examiners were **Bob W3ZQN**, **Paul NX3Q**, **Walt WA3PPW**, **Dick K3ITH**, **Susan K3SUE**, **Al N3EA**, **Bob KA3NIQ**, **Kay WT3P**, and **Steve KD0VA**.

Read more about local license test sessions on page 7 of this newsletter.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMUNICATIONS

MARC communicators at the Penn Wynne Library 5k run on November 9, 2002, were **Owen N3WO**, **Floyd KA3OXA**, **Dick KB3IIN**, **Steve KD0VA**, **Carter N3AO**, **Bob W3ZQN**, **Bob KB3FSQ**, **Gene N3HG**, **Rick N3AGS**, **Bob N3JIZ**, and friend of the club **Ben W3LKI**.

On November 17, MARC handled communications for a 5k run benefiting the Vietnam Veterans of America, Valley Forge Chapter. The run started from the Norristown Farm Park in Norristown.

Leland N3LJB was Net Control, with **Dick KB3IIN**, **Josy WQ3E**, **Owen N3WO**, **Bob KB3FSQ**, **Carter N3AO**, **Bob N3JIZ**, and friend of the club **Rich KC2EFA** at the other positions.

The purpose of these communications is to help event organizers have a safe, orderly event, and to make sure that a participant or onlooker who needs emergency assistance gets it as fast as possible. Taking part in public service events is also good training for disaster communications. If you've never done a public service event, why not sign up for one this year?

FROM THE EDITOR'S JUNK BOX

I don't know how somebody who grew up speaking another language ever learns colloquial English. For example, although being called a "dumb ass" is an insult, being called a "smart ass" isn't a compliment, either.

And have you heard those airport announcements that say, "This will be the last and final boarding call for flight 123 to Margaritaville." I am still waiting to be told why a boarding call needs to be both last and final, and to hear a boarding call that is last but not final or final but not last. This assumes, of course, that any sense whatsoever can be made of air travel . . . hmm, maybe that's where I went wrong!

The English language and the airline industry defy common sense, so let's think about how we're going to become more proficient, more knowledgeable hams in 2003. Those of us, that is, who don't know it all. Just being an irritation to those who DO know it all can't be enough of a reason to live.

One option, if you're not already an Extra, is to upgrade. Another, which works for everybody, is to do something you haven't done before: a new band or mode, a new operating activity, a new ham radio computer program, making an antenna, building a kit, etc. Another option is to take some of the ARRL on-line courses: emergency comm, antenna modeling, HF digital communications, satellite communications, and (starting this month) radio frequency interference. Info is at www.arrl.org/cce/.

Another good move is to introduce or re-introduce someone to ham radio. I was at an school shindig years ago, when Jenny was little, and fell into conversation with a fellow parent. When I mentioned I was a ham, he said wistfully, "I used to have a Novice license, but I didn't upgrade in time and lost my license, and you can't get a license ever again if that happens."

"That's no longer true," I said. "You can be a ham again." Within the year, he was an Extra and a great personal friend. You never know who might be a former ham who'd enjoy coming back, if you'd just bring the subject up. There are so many friends out there waiting to be discovered!

Do you know a ham who's losing interest? Somebody who might drop out of ham radio if you don't reach out and invite him to our club, show her something meaningful to do that will revive an interest in hamming?

Think about it: What do you need to do to keep your own interests lively and your skills sharp? Who can you tell about ham radio? Who can you keep from dropping out? It isn't somebody else's job. It's yours and mine.
— 73, Kay WT3P

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER BOARD MEETING CANCELLED

The board meeting scheduled for December 5 was called off because that's the day the big snow storm came to town. President **Steve N3ORH** didn't want anyone to risk night-time travel in bad weather, so he cancelled the meeting early in the day. We usually hold one board meeting for November and December to avoid conflicts with major holiday dates. The next meeting of the board will be on January 23.

HOME BREWER NET WEB PAGE

MARC's Homebrewer Net meets on Saturdays at 9 AM on the linked repeaters and is open to everyone with an interest in homebrewing. Beginners and experts are all welcome to check in.

Net Honcho **Leland N3LJB** has set up a personal web site with a page for homebrew-related links. Go to www.angelfire.com/pa5/n3ljb/hlink.htm for a list of links any homebrewer will find useful.

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

SECRETARY

Bob Haase W3SA 610-293-1919
rhaase@bellatlantic.net

TREASURER

Carter Craigie N3AO 610-993-9623
n3ao@arrl.net

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

Kay Craigie WT3P 610-993-9623
wt3p@arrl.net

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Bob Weiss KB3FSQ 215-477-6475
kb3fsq@netcarrier.com

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

145.13 ANTENNA WORK PARTY

On November 9, a new antenna was installed for 145.13/R at Paoli Hospital. Users immediately noticed improvement in the repeater's performance. There are still some problems, apparently related to paging transmitters operating from the same room as the repeater. MARC's technical people plan to work on that next, now that the new antenna has been installed.

The work party was composed of **Dennis K3DS**, **Paul WA3YZL**, Paul's son **David Martin**, **Carter N3AO**, **Bob KB3FSQ**, **Jeff WA3RIZ**, and **Ron W3ZV**. The weather was very good for roof work, a nice surprise in November.

We'd also like to thank **Jeff WN3A** for helping us order the new antenna for 145.13/R.

Membership renewal is due by March 1, 2003. You can pay at the January and February club meetings. Notices will be mailed to members in February to members who didn't pay at the meetings.

FIELD DAY FOLLOW-UP

MARC Field Day 2003 was successful in many ways, including the way our score stacked up against those of other clubs.

The recently-created interactive contest score feature on the ARRL web page makes it easy for members to find their club's score, then sort and display scores in all kinds of ways . . . sure beats picking through the micro-print in *QST*!

In class 4A (which means we were a club or non-club portable station having a maximum of 4 stations on the air simultaneously), we scored 3,712 points. That score placed us 3rd out of 8 entries in class 4A in the Eastern PA Section. Our neighbors the Pottstown ARC were 1st in 4A EPA, followed by the West Branch ARA from Williamsport. Taking all operating classes into account, MARC finished 13th out of 58 in EPA. Shifting to the national view, MARC finished 46th in class 4A, out of 127 entries.

June seems like a very long way off. However, anyone who has

captained Field Day will tell you that Field Day requires plenty of advance planning. "Wait," somebody's saying. "Insofar as Field Day is an emergency preparedness exercise, what do you mean about advance planning? Emergencies just happen, and you don't get six months to plan for them. We should just pull Field Day out of our ear, to make it like *The Real Thing*."

See the photo of Owen N3WO at MARC Field Day on page 20 of December QST. The photo was taken by Dick K3ITH.

Oh yes we do get six months to plan in advance for emergencies. We get all the time in the world, in fact, and if we're smart, we use it. That's why we have ARES/RACES, NTS, and the ARRL emergency communications training courses, to prepare for *The Real Thing*. It's one of the reasons why we have Field Day. It's why they call it emergency "preparedness" and not emergency "make it up as you go along and fall flat on your face."

Enough soap-boxing. We need a group to meet and start to plan for Field Day 2003, assuming you want to have Field Day. We have a good previous year to build on. Who's in?

ARRL ELECTION RESULTS

Incumbent Atlantic Division Director **Bernie Fuller N3EFN** was re-elected for another 3-year term by ARRL members this fall. He received 3,115 votes while challenger **Tony Gargano N2SS** received 1,948 votes. Congratulations to Bernie and best wishes for a successful term as our Director. Vice Director **Bill Edgar N3LLR** was unopposed and will also serve another 3-year term of office.

PA QSO PARTY

Preliminary individual scores in the 2002 PA QSO Party are being posted on the Web at www.nittany-arc.org/preliminary_scores.htm. MARC's club total score will be down somewhat from last year for various reasons, but that's okay. Those who participated are appreciated. We hope you'll enter the contest again in 2003 and give your points to MARC.

AL HALL W2GPY - SILENT KEY

Because he lived in Dover, DE, **Al W2GPY** didn't attend club meetings or other in-person activities, but he frequently checked into MARC nets. His friendly attitude made him well liked on the nets, though we never had a face to go with the cheerful voice.

Al was killed in a car crash on November 2, 2002, at age 78. According to a ham in Delaware, as Al was turning into his own driveway, his car was hit by a drunk driver, and he died in the hospital in Wilmington.

Al's obituary in the Dover *Post* mentioned that he was a member of the ARRL and the Mid-Atlantic Amateur Radio Club.

Losing such a kind and pleasant member would be sad under any circumstances. Losing him because of the stupidity of someone who drove a car while drunk is even more upsetting.

Anyone who ever thinks about getting behind the wheel when under the influence . . . STOP AND THINK AGAIN!

FLEA MARKET

Wanted: TU-79 Tone Unit for the Kenwood TR-7930 / TR-7950. Contact **Ned WQ3Z** at (215) 836-0206 wq3z@arrl.net.

Give-away: 3 wooden card file boxes (1 3x5", 2 4x6") good for filing QSL cards. Contact **Kay WT3P** at (610) 993-9623, wt3p@arrl.net

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDENT HAMS

The Foundation for Amateur Radio, Inc., a non-profit organization with headquarters in Washington, D.C., plans to administer 58 scholarships for the academic year 2003-2004 to assist licensed Radio Amateurs. The Foundation, composed of Amateur Radio clubs, fully funds 7 of scholarships with the income from grants and its annual hamfest. The others are administered by the Foundation without cost to the various donors.

Licensed hams may compete for these awards if they plan to pursue a full-time course of studies beyond high school and are enrolled in or have been accepted for enrollment at an accredited university, college or post-secondary technical school. The awards range from \$500 to \$2500 with preference given in some cases to residents of specified geographical areas or the pursuit of certain study programs.

Additional information and an application form may be requested by letter or QSL card postmarked prior to April 30, 2003 from: FAR Scholarships, Post Office Box 831, Riverdale, MD 20783.

FAR is a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia, representing more than 75 Amateur Radio clubs in Maryland, the District of Columbia and northern Virginia. It is devoted exclusively to the scientific, literary and educational pursuits that advance the purposes of the Amateur Radio Service. MARC hopes the college students and gonna-be's in our club will keep this program in mind, when the time comes to think about paying for higher education.

LINKS TO DX INFORMATION AND FUN

ARRL's QSL Bureau Service

Incoming: www.arrl.org/qs/qslin.html

Outgoing: www.arrl.org/qs/qsout.html

DX-Central Dot Com

www.dx-central.com

(DX cluster spot archives, telnet to cluster in midwest, news and announcements.)

National Capitol DX Association

www.qsl.net/ncdxa/index.html

(Links to some national Amateur Radio societies abroad.)

EA5EYJ page for CQ World Wide contest QSL routes

www.arrakis.es/~ea5eyj/cqwwdx.htm

(Great for finding QSL routes for stations in CQ WW contests.)

NG3K page for DX / contest links

ng3k.com

(Many links for exploring DX resources on the web.)

DX.QSL.NET

dx.qsl.net/index.html

(Search dozens of DX logs to see if your QSO's are there.)

QSL VIA?

For information about how to use the ARRL QSL bureaus (incoming and outgoing), go to the ARRL web site (www.arrl.org), click on the yellow box tagged "Services," then choose "QSL service." Use of the incoming bureau is open to all USA licensees, but use of the outgoing bureau is a benefit available only to members of the ARRL.

The main advantage of the bureau is that it's cheap compared to sending cards directly to hams abroad. The main disadvantage is that it's slow. It can literally take years.

Some DX stations do not QSL via the bureau. In some countries, such as Germany, hams must be a member of the national society (their equivalent of ARRL) in order to use either the incoming or outgoing bureau. In some countries, such as the Bahamas, there is no bureau. Some DX stations QSL only via a QSL manager, a volunteer who handles this paperwork chore because he or she is a nice person. Most DXpeditions to exotic places use a QSL manager.

QSL manager information is published in the DX press, sometimes announced by the DX operator on the air, and sometimes posted on the Internet.

What if you want to send a QSL card directly to a DX station, or to a manager who lives outside the USA, but the address isn't on QRZ (www.qrz.com)? Although QRZ has become the standard place to look up addresses, there is another on-line call-book that sometimes has addresses not found on QRZ. That's Buckmaster at www.buck.com/hammain.html.

If the address of a station who says he only QSL's direct isn't found on either QRZ or Buckmaster, then we may be something that rhymes with "tattooed."

THE EURO AND YOU

The switch to the Euro currency, symbolized as € in 12 of the 15 European Union countries makes it easier for travelers -- you only have one exchange rate to remember, and you don't come home with leftovers in a bunch of different currencies.

The effect for DXers who send QSL cards direct to countries using the Euro is that when the reply cards come back, we can actually see what it cost the DX to send a card to the USA.

As I write this, one USA dollar buys about 0.95 €. I have begun keeping a list of what it costs in the Euro countries to air-mail a card back in my self-addressed envelope.

From France, it costs 0.69 € for airmail postage to the USA. From French Guiana (in South America but officially part of France), it's 0.67 €. From Spain, it's 0.75 €, and from Belgium, it's 0.57 €. That means \$1 will do. However, from Austria, it cost 1.09 €. One buck won't suffice.

Do you have any Euro postage information you'd like to share? For more info about the Euro, see http://europa.eu.int/comm/economy_finance/euro_en.htm.

DOING DX -- TIPS FOR HAVING FUN

Before you can work 'em, you have to find 'em. Some resources are

- * The DX cluster (locally sponsored by the Frankford Radio Club), a system for real-time call-outs of DX stations and their frequencies of operation. On VHF packet radio and now on the Internet, too.
- * DX newsletters and web sites. Some web sites allow you to telnet into a packet cluster. Others have info about who's operating where, when, and how to QSL them.
- * Your time, ears, and brains! The DX cluster is a wonderful operating aid, but not everything gets called out. Much good DX (defined as anything you don't have confirmed yet) is out there to be found by just tuning around. Start on the highest band that's open, and tune through your frequency privileges. Nice surprises await!
- * A good computer program for logging. Although "work first, worry later," is a good rule for any DXer, you may want to know if you need the Squadoofus Islands on 15 meter SSB before you spend half an hour yelling your way through the pile-up. That's half an hour you could have spent calling a station you actually do need to work.
- * The days just before and just after major DX contests. Even if you loathe contests, the fact is that interesting DX stations play in them. Many people operating in DX locations away from home are on the air testing out equipment before the fray begins and they don't always go home the day after. Also, they may be on bands not used in the contests: 12, 17, 30, and even 6 meters.
- * Build proficiency in more than one mode. If you become competent in CW and digital modes such as PSK31 as well as phone, you multiply the chances of working a new one, especially during periods of poor propagation and weak signals when SSB can be tough going.

NEW TECH EXAM QUESTIONS PUBLISHED

Present Questions OK Through June

The National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC) has released a revised and expanded Amateur Technician class (Element 2) question pool into the public domain. The new question pool becomes effective July 1, 2003, and must be used to generate all Technician written examinations administered on or after that date.

"The newly revised pool released this week includes significant efforts to present the pool in a more friendly and understandable fashion for beginners while maintaining appropriate emphasis on safety, rules and operating procedures," said ARRL VEC Manager **Bart Jahnke W9JJ**. "The Technician syllabus was completely revised during 2002 to allow for the revamping of the new question pool."

The new Element 2 question pool contains 511 questions -- up from 385 in the April 2000 release that occurred around the time of Amateur Radio restructuring. The new question pool, which will be available soon on the Amateur Exam Question Pools Web page (www.arrl.org/arrlvec/pools.html), includes all questions and answers as well as graphics related to the questions for Element 2. Question pools no longer are available via diskette or hard copy.

The NCVEC Question Pool Committee now will turn its attention to developing an outline for the General class (Element 3) question pool, which will be revised during the fall of 2003. The QPC has put out a call for input by January 31, 2003, to the Element 3 syllabus and question pool. The revised Element 3 syllabus is expected to be released for public comment in February or March, 2003. Commenters may address specific Element 2 questions as well as inputs to the Element 3 syllabus and question pool to the Question Pool Committee via e-mail to qpc@arrl.org. [*tnx ARRL web site*]

What does the Technician question pool change mean?

If you are teaching a licensing class, helping someone study for the Technician license, or will do this later in the year, here's what you need to factor into your plans.

If the examination will be taken before July 1, you should be working with the existing question pool and existing study manuals.

If the examination will be taken on or after July 1, you should be working with the new question pool. Revised license manuals will be in print as soon as the publishers can get them out the door.

Be sure to advise prospective hams to get the right study manual! Question pool revisions can result in significant changes in the exams. Don't give a prospective ham or wanna-be upgrader an old manual you have stuffed under a pile of junk in the shack. Wouldn't it be a turn-off to flunk the test and waste the fee because you studied the wrong stuff?

Current question pools for all license classes can be downloaded free from the ARRL at www.arrl.org/arrlvec/pools.html, if you are just curious or don't think you need a full textbook to study.

MARC NET CERTIFICATES PRESENTED

(Continued from page 1)

The certificates were presented at the holiday party and mailed to those who could not be at the party.

Operators who received the certificates:

Carter Craigie N3AO
Rick Miskinis N3AGS
Sarah Kelsall KB3BBR
Bart Feroe K4BF
Ed Naratil W3BNR
Charles Schmell KB3CEZ
David Del Pizzo KB3CRY
Gene Hoenig N3HG
Ray Jefferis KB3IGL
Dick Thompson KB3IIN

Bob Woish WR3K
Leland Berman N3LJB
Cliff Bader W3NNL
Dana Sargent AA3QN
Ben Kelsall WA3RLT
Susan Persing K3SUE
Jean Renomeron N2VQA
Ned Smith WQ3Z
Bob Lees W3ZQN

Net members are encouraged to continue sending at least one radiogram per month in 2003. We'll have another round of certificates at the holiday party in December '03.

Although long-haul message relay on the ham bands will probably never again be a part of disaster response in the USA, knowing how to send and copy formal message traffic is an important emergency preparedness skill for ARES and RACES operators on both HF and VHF/UHF. Just ask anybody who has ever been in one of the Limerick or Peach Bottom Nuclear Generating Station drills. Those messages are not in NTS format, but if you can do one format, you can do any format. The skills transfer perfectly. Join in the MARC nets and become prepared to serve.

NO COLD SHOULDERS HERE!

A recent unscientific ARRL web page poll asked, "When you're traveling, is it difficult to strike up a conversation on a repeater?" Nearly 60% of the responders said it is hard to do. They think it's either because nobody is monitoring or because the locals won't talk to somebody they don't know.

Please don't let this be true of the MARC repeaters. Whether the unfamiliar callsign belongs to a traveler, someone who just moved to our area, or a new ham, take a minute to pick up the mic and say hello. You don't have to propose marriage, invite them home for dinner, or offer to loan them money. Just say hello and chat for a minute.

It only takes a little effort to begin changing a stranger into a new friend and club member. MARC has a reputation for friendliness, and let's do all we can to keep it that way.

Baltimore ARC Hamfest / ARRL MD State Convention
March 29-30, Timonium, MD

Warminster ARC Hamfest
May 4, Wrightstown, PA

Mid-Atlantic ARC Hamfest
July 13, Kimberton, PA

CONTEST OPERATING FUN

ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes - 1900Z January 18 to 0400Z January 20. The exchange is your grid square. The start date printed in December QST is wrong. Rules are at <http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2003/01vhfss.html>.

ARRL International DX Contests - CW is February 15-16. Phone is March 1-2. Read the rules at <http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2003/intldx.html>. USA / Canadian hams send signal report and state or province. DX hams send signal report and approximate power output. USA / Canadian hams may work only DX, defined as stations outside USA / Canada. Alaska and Hawaii are considered DX, not USA. DX stations outside may work only USA / Canadian stations. Casual participants, please do not call USA or Canadian contest stations. Except for stations in Alaska and Hawaii, you'll be wasting their time.

Remember there is no contesting on 12, 17, and 30 meters. If bands are crowded on a contest weekend, either choose a different mode or choose one of the bands where there is no contesting.

ARRL DOES FCC PAPERWORK FREE FOR MEMBERS COST IS \$12 FOR NON-MEMBERS

For several years, the ARRL has been handling FCC license renewals, address and name changes, and modifications free of charge for League members. Non-members were directed to the FCC's free Internet or free (but very confusing) hard-copy application options or to other (fee-charging) providers of such services.

The ARRL has announced that it's now providing FCC Amateur Radio license renewals, address changes and other license modification services to non-members. For a \$12 fee, the League will renew a non-member's Amateur Radio ticket (the license must be *within 90 days* of expiration), file an application to change address or name, or request issuance of a new sequential call sign.

The ARRL Volunteer Examiner Coordinator is processing these applications. "The \$12 is in line with our calendar year 2003 exam application fee," said ARRL VEC Manager **Bart Jahnke W9JJ**. Jahnke suggests that non-members who choose to employ the League's application handling service also consider adding \$27 (based on the current under-65 full term member rate of \$39) for a full ARRL membership that includes free application handling and other services -- not to mention QST.

Members or nonmembers taking advantage of this service should submit NCVEC Form 605 to ARRL VEC, 225 Main St, Newington CT 06111 USA for processing. Non-members should enclose a check or money order for the \$12 fee, payable to "ARRL." For more information, contact ARRL VEC, vec@arrl.org.

Kay WT3P has NCVEC Form 605, available either as an Adobe PDF file you print out yourself or as a paper document. You can also download the PDF version from the League's web site at <http://www.arrl.org/fcc/forms.html>.

MARCONI CENTENNIAL SPECIAL EVENT

Special event station KM1CC will be on the air January 11-19, to mark the 100th anniversary of **Guglielmo Marconi's** inaugural wireless transmission between the US and Great Britain January 18, 1903 (January 19 UTC). On that date, from the sandy Cape Cod cliffs overlooking the Atlantic, Marconi -- using a powerful 35 kW rotary spark transmitter coupled to a massive antenna system -- transmitted a 54-word greeting from President **Theodore Roosevelt** to England's **King Edward VII**. The monarch promptly acknowledged receipt of the message via land line and cable, literally igniting the spark of global communication.

The Marconi Radio Club, W1AA, and the Marconi Cape Cod Memorial Radio Club, KM1CC, are working in partnership with the National Park Service at Cape Cod National Seashore to organize the celebration. The special event will take place at the former Coast Guard station at Coast Guard Beach in Eastham, Massachusetts, which is near the original Marconi site. Operation will include several Amateur modes, including SSB, CW, FM, digital and satellite.

Additional details are on the Marconi Radio Club Web site at <http://personal.tmlp.com/k1vv/w1aa/>. [Txn ARRL Letter]

MONTHLY LICENSE EXAM OPPORTUNITIES

The following teams usually offer tests every month. Some require pre-registration, while others accept walk-ins.

Pottstown: January 12, February 9. Contact **Alan Gooding AG3T** at 610-369-3783 or ag3t@arrl.net.

Wilmington: January 18, February 15. Contact **Richard Magdy AA3VX** at 302-475-2412 or aa3vx@arrl.net.

Philadelphia: February 6. Contact **William (Dusty) Rhoads ND3Q** at 215-482-0386 or nd3q@juno.com

Important note: The Phil-Mont Mobile Radio Club does not give tests at the Franklin Institute any more. Their test sessions (the Philadelphia listing shown above) are now in northeast Philly. Because they are testing at a public school, there will be some months when school is closed and no tests can be given. It is essential to call the contact person and confirm that the session is on.

Even if a test session's publicity says they accept walk-in's, it is wise to call or e-mail the contact person and confirm all details. If you show up without the proper ID, test fee, or other required documents, the examiners CANNOT let you take the test. Don't expect them to get themselves in serious trouble with their VEC or the FCC because you were ill-informed.

People with disabilities may request special testing accommodations to give them a fair chance at passing exams. However, you shouldn't just show up and expect that special accommodations can be made on the spot. For example, examiners will need to send off to their VEC for code tapes at a different pitch or written tests in Braille. If the applicant needs test materials to be read aloud, examiners will need to arrange a separate room so as not to distract other candidates. If the usual room is not accessible, it may be possible to give the test in a different room that is accessible. Bottom line is that you need to inquire and make these arrangements well in advance, so special needs can be met.