



MAY / JUNE 2004

REMARCS

www.marc-radio.org

MEMORIAL DAY PARADE COMMUNICATIONS MAY 31

MARC will provide safety communications for the Radnor Township Memorial Day parade in Wayne on Monday, May 31. In addition to the communications, MARC will have a car in the parade driven by **Carter N3AO**.

Leland N3LJB will be marching in the parade as a Valley Forge Military Academy cadet.

Our volunteers will meet in the Micro Center store parking lot on Lancaster Avenue at 8 AM, rain or shine. For information about what to expect and what to bring with you, please contact **Bob N3JIZ** (610-687-4587). Informal talk-in will be on MARC's 2m repeaters.

The parade and the crowd are noisy. Bring an earphone for your radio if you have one.

***Yo! Major BPL story on page 6.
Read it now!***

CLUB MEETING PROGRAMS

At the May 25 meeting, we will hear from **Joe Vilardo K3JV** about how to select and set up a generator for home use. This is the program that had to be cancelled earlier this year owing to nasty winter weather. Come and find out what you need to know to be ready for future power failures in your neighborhood.

At the June 22 meeting, the program will be a video tour of ARRL Headquarters in Newington, CT. If time permits, we'll also see a video of a brief talk on Broadband over Power Lines given by **Ed Hare W1RFI**, the League's point man on this controversial subject.

What's coming later this year? In July, the program will be given by a representative of Greater Philadelphia Search and Rescue. In August, we'll enjoy a program presented by MARC members about operating ham radio outdoors.

If you have ideas and suggestions for interesting program topics for future club meetings, please send them to **Dick K3IIN** (see page 3 for contact information).

FIELD DAY JUNE 26 - 27

MARC will operate Field Day at the traditional site in Audubon, PA (see the map on page 7) on June 26 and 27. Set-up begins around 10 AM. Thanks to **Bob W3SA**, we have both the field and some serious generators provided gratis by Verizon.

It looks as though Field Day this year will be made up as we go along. **Dick K3IIN** has volunteered to deal with the logs and data processing needed to turn in the report to the ARRL, but that's NOT the same as being in charge of Field Day. As this is being written, nobody has volunteered to be in charge of MARC Field Day. If you're interested in helping out in any capacity, please contact Dick (610-688-0874, k3iin@arrl.net) and talk about what you might like to do.

There will be a MARC Field Day. How well organized it turns out to be is anybody's guess at this point. Maybe we've over-organized and over-complicated it in the past. Maybe this is the year to keep it simple, Sam. So think it over: What you YOU want MARC Field Day to be in 2004, and what are you willing to do to make it happen?

ROUNDTABLE CHITCHAT GROUP MEETS ON MARC REPEATERS

The MARC repeaters come fully alive on Thursday nights these days. All Amateurs are invited to join the ChitChat Roundtable which begins at 8:30 PM. **Bob W3LIA** and **Dori W3IBH**, who are the initial tag-team Moderators, initiated the Roundtable.

It stemmed from Dori's observation about all the fun that she and other hams were having with the informal conversations after the formal traffic nets. Bob suggested that perhaps there could be a less formal, earlier gathering of hams on an off night, when the repeater utilization was low. Based upon his experience with HF roundtables, he put together some basic operating guidelines and floated the idea to a few MARC members, some of whom are on the MARC Board of Directors. The response was positive, so the ChitChat Roundtable went on the air for the first time on April 15.

There is no intent to pass formal traffic on the Roundtable. However, the Moderators will always do whatever is necessary to facilitate emergency or priority communications. "We're really just there to have fun and get to know each other a bit better," says Dori. With

(Continued on page 7)

Check out the club events calendar on the MARC web site: Go to www.marc-radio.org and click on Upcoming Events. Then select "Calendar of Upcoming Events."

ABOUT MARC

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

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

4th Tuesdays, 8 PM, Tredyffrin Township
Bldg, Wayne/Berwyn. 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 linked, CTCSS 131.8 Hz
Webmaster: Steve N3ORH (610-327-8666,
smaslin@marc-radio.org)

NETS

Club Net, Sunday, 8:30 PM
Traffic net, M/W/F, 8:30 PM
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 N3KN
(610-993-9623, n3kn@arrl.net)

BRING A FRIEND
TO A MARC MEETING!

MARCH AUCTION ADDS BUCKS TO TREASURY

The annual Junque Auction at the March club meeting was attended by about 40 people. Auctioneer **Bart K4BF** kept the pace brisk and the laughs steady. Treasurer **Carter N3AO**, assisted by **Kay N3KN** at the computer, kept track of the sales and the greenbacks.

Sixty-one items were sold for a total of \$646. Under the ground rules, MARC received 10% of each sale or \$10, whichever was less; some sellers donated all their proceeds to the club, for which we thank them very much. The club received \$148.30 from the event.

To prevent the auction from running past our usual ending time next year, the club's board of directors has voted to start the auction meeting half an hour earlier in future years. All other club meetings will continue to start at 8 PM.



VOX

Welcome new members **Walter N3RLV**, **Raymond N3ESS**, **Andy K3JSE**, **Jim KB3KLA**, and **Bill KN3EUF**. **Bob KB3FSQ** has been recertified as a broadcast technologist by the Society of Broadcast Engineers. **Bob WA3PZO** says that the alumni association of Lincoln High School in Philadelphia has named a scholarship for his late wife (and MARC member) **Kim Macnamara KB3COV**; for information about the scholarship, see the association's Web page at www.lincolnhs.phila.k12.pa.us/alumni/scholarship.html. **Bob W3LIA** discovered that his cell phone could be revived after it jumped into the hot tub. Ask him how he avoided having to buy a new phone! **Dieter K3DK** was one of the callers-in when ARRL President **Jim Haynie W5JBP** went on **Art Bell's** radio talk show to discuss BPL. **Carter N3AO** gave a talk on message-handling to MontCo ARES/RACES on April 24. **Owen N3WO** will attend Phillips Exeter Academy next year -- congrats on getting into this excellent school!

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BOARD MEETING

At the March 25 meeting, the board received reports on membership renewals, future public service events, and upcoming programs. The board voted to start next year's auction meeting half an hour earlier so it will not run so late into the evening. All other club meetings will continue to begin at 8 PM. The board also decided to look into the possibility of holding the holiday party earlier in the month than the fourth Tuesday. The board discussed the lack of progress towards getting the 440 repeater on the air. Field Day was also discussed, particularly the need for volunteers to do pre-event and post-event tasks. Problems with the club's Internet Service Provider (especially duplicated e-mails) has led the president to look into finding a different ISP. The treasury balance was \$11,718.81.

At the April 22 meeting, the board received reports on public service events, membership renewals, the club's new Internet Service Provider, and future programs. The board voted to hold the annual holiday party on the 2nd Tuesday of December rather than the 4th Tuesday, pending approval from the township for use of the room on that date. After extensive discussion, the board authorized purchase of a used 440 MHz repeater offered for sale on eBay for \$2,000, because it appears that the donated repeater we had been promised several years ago is not forthcoming. Repeated efforts by several people to contact the person who offered to donate a repeater have failed to produce any results. The treasury balance was \$11,734.45.

INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER CHANGED

As you probably know if you receive e-mails from MARC, we've had problems with the club's Internet Service Provider sending out multiple copies of messages. We really appreciated the fact that no club members were unpleasant about this, despite the inconvenience.

Another problem was that some of your ISP's would not accept e-mail relayed through the club's ISP. This meant that we had to e-mail these members' newsletters, announcements, etc., individually.

When it became obvious that our ISP was totally clueless about why their system was malfunctioning -- they didn't know there was a problem and couldn't understand what we were talking about when the problem was explained to them -- the board voted to change providers.

The ISP change was made at the end of March. Our Web site address is the same: www.marc-radio.org. The only change for users is that we had to change the password for the members-only section of the site. The new password will be distributed soon to members via e-mail. We're still open to suggestions for what material to put in the members-only section.

FROM THE EDITOR'S JUNK BOX

A recent column in a national ham radio magazine -- not the one I recently published an article in! -- gave bad advice to emergency communicators who find themselves with time on their hands.

Suppose we're out in the field for a drill or a real emergency, and nothing's happening at the moment which involves us, and the room has a computer connected to the Internet. We might pass the down-time with a little Web surfing. So far, so good.

Then the author cautions us, nudge-wink, to remember to delete all the hidden traces of Web sites we have visited that could shock or offend other people. Otherwise, he says, the electronic debris could be discovered later on and cause embarrassment to ham radio and ourselves.

Let me give you better advice: Don't do stupid things in the first place, and you won't have to worry about covering your tracks. A person who can't complete a drill or an emergency deployment without looking at some dirty pictures needs counseling, not computer skills. Good judgment should be part of every emergency communicator's "go kit." Got some?

Assuming you try to act your age instead of your shoe size and didn't need the good advice I just gave you, let's think about something else: What is the ratio of an igloo's circumference to its diameter? Why of course, it's Eskimo Pi.

MARC doesn't put on a hamfest because some of us don't have lives and need to fill the time. We do it because MARC can't pay the bills on membership dues alone. Neither you nor the craziest nut in the callbook would pay radio club dues sufficient to operate MARC for a year.

That's why MARC and other clubs have hamfests: to pay for the services provided to members and the benefits that trickle through to ham radio as a whole when clubs are well-funded.

Hamfest season is beginning in our part of the country. Please visit as many hamfests as you can to support our neighbor clubs. Most of all, please plan to volunteer at the MARC hamfest and give a little more than just your dues to the club that does a lot for you. -- **73, Kay N3KN**

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMUNICATIONS

Following several days of nasty cold drizzle, April 17 was a wonderful sunny spring Saturday, and MARC went to Downingtown to help at the Chester County Mothers of Multiples 5 K Race. This is a new event for us, and those in charge didn't have a clue what to do with radio amateurs. Our volunteers were assigned to be route marshals, and they graciously complied. After the race, however, our people explained to the police chief that hams can provide valuable safety communications support rather than just stand there serving as animate road signs. Things will be right next year. Our volunteers were **Dick K3IIN**, **Al W3AHR**, **Carter N3AO**, **Ted NT3J**, and **Bob N3JIZ**.

MARC communicated for the MS Walkathon in West Goshen, Chester County, on April 25. The volunteers who took part were **Bob N3JIZ**, **Dick K3IIN**, **Ted NT3J**, and **Carter N3AO**.

LICENSE EXAM SESSION MAY 1

Seven candidates took tests and passed 8 exam elements. There were 3 new Techs, one upgrade to Tech+HF, 2 Generals, and 1 Extra. MARC's examiners were **Bob W3ZQN**, **Dick K3ITH**, **Bob KA3NIQ**, **Steve KD0VA**, **Bob W3SA**, **Ted NT3J**, **Paul NX3Q**, **Dennis K3DS**, and **Merrill KT3Z**. Our next MARC exam session will be Saturday, August 7.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2004

PRESIDENT

Steve Maslin N3ORH 610-327-8666
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 N3KN 610-993-9623
n3kn@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

Dick Thompson K3IIN 610-688-0874
k3iin@arrl.net

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

To 9/30/2004: Al Maslin N3EA
610-446-4936, amaslin@earthlink.net

To 9/30/2005: Gene Hoenig N3HG
610-353-3281, n3hg@arrl.net

CALLSIGN TRUSTEES

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

W3NWA: Kay Craigie N3KN
610-993-9623, n3kn@arrl.net

HAMFEST FLYERS AVAILABLE

You may belong to other ham radio clubs, maybe a computer hobby club, or other organizations of people interested in high tech. Maybe you work at a high-tech company that has a bulletin board where employees can post items of interest to others.

MARC hamfest flyers need to be taken to other clubs' meetings and to those workplace bulletin boards. Since we haven't been able to teach the flyers to fly -- or even walk -- we need you to provide the transportation.

We're looking not only for buyers but also for potential vendors. Potential vendors / exhibitors could include organizations such as clubs devoted to radio-controlled model aircraft, model trains, computers, amateur astronomy, and things like that which may appeal to hams visiting our event.

Contact **Mike KF3CD** (610-935-4429, mpilotti@anro.com) for flyers to distribute.

DAYTON DATA WANTED

MARC members who are going to Dayton are encouraged to send in a paragraph describing your adventures. What forums did you attend? What banquets and dinners? What did you buy? What did you decide not to buy? What products seemed to be the hot topics at this year's Hamvention? Who'd you see?

Did you have any adventures en route? There was that one year when my flight was cancelled and a bunch of us hams wound up flying to Cincinnati and being hauled to Dayton by bus. What you may not know is that the Cincinnati airport is in Kentucky. And the year when the return flight was delayed for hours because of a broken fire extinguisher bracket on the plane. Yes, all us hams offered to repair it. Or go to Wal-Mart and get another one and install it. USAir said no. If you have any 2004 travel adventure stories, be sure to share!

GAITHERSBURG HAMFEST LIVES!

Stories appeared on the Internet in April about cancellation of the hamfest which had evolved from the old Gaithersburg (Maryland) hamfest. That was a shocker, and people were mourning the end of what was once one of the biggest hamfests in the northeastern USA. At its peak, Gaithersburg drew 7,000 people! However, your editor decided to go back to Journalism 101 and do some fact-checking. I contacted **Dan Blasberg KA8YPY**, president of the Foundation for Amateur Radio. Gaithersburg was sponsored by FAR, and the latest incarnation of the hamfest was co-sponsored by FAR. Here's what Dan said about what's cancelled and what's not.

Fall-Fest, which was the hamfest done by the Foundation for Amateur Radio and the Columbia ARA, was cancelled due to not being able to get the date we needed at the Howard County fairgrounds. This put the committee in the difficult position of having to come up with a new date, a new place, or both. A number of ideas have been considered, but none of them were agreeable to both organizations. Therefore, it was decided to cancel Fall-Fest, and for each organization to pursue their own respective hamfests if they felt they could do so.

FAR is sponsoring the Maryland/DC Convention at F.A.R. Fest Saturday and Sunday September 11 and 12, 2004, at the Montgomery County Agricultural Center in Gaithersburg, MD. Most hams have been asking FAR when or if there was a plan to return to Gaithersburg, and after a five-year absence, the hamfest has returned to the location where it started 47 years ago.

Due to having to share the facility with a rodeo, F.A.R. Fest will be smaller than expected for 2004, but we anticipate being able to accommodate all those who would like to be a vendor or tailgate at the hamfest. For more information, go to www.amateurradio-far.org/F.A.R.Fest.htm.

So the joint hamfest is off and the Foundation for Amateur Radio will hold a 2004 hamfest on its own at the old location in Gaithersburg. You can't take at face value everything you read on the Internet!

Check out the national hamfest schedule on the ARRL's Web site at www.arrl.org/hamfest.html.

CHANGES IN ARES/RACES LEADERSHIP

MARC encourages all club members to be active participants in ARES/RACES in their home counties. Some local ARES/RACES organizations have undergone leadership changes since the first of the year.

AI W3AHR has been appointed ARES District Emergency Coordinator for Eastern PA District 1, composed of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties.

In Delaware County, **Dan W3DI** stepped down as head of ARES/RACES and was replaced by **Joe Rzucidlo K3CGA**. Dan deserves a standing-O for getting the organization up and running. Other hams -- including several MARC members -- did their best to establish ARES/RACES in DelCo in the past but could not get much support from county officials. That's no longer the case.

In Chester County, **Lloyd Roach W3QT** stepped down as ARES Emergency Coordinator and was replaced by **Carter N3AO**. In addition to owing radio station WCOJ in West Chester, Lloyd has bought a number of stations elsewhere, and his burgeoning broadcast empire didn't leave enough time to devote to ARES leadership work.

Montgomery County ARES/RACES continues to flourish under the leadership of **Bob W3ZQN**.

MARC TRAFFIC NET REPORT

MONTH	QNI	QTC
March	219.....	75
April	191.....	94

QNI = Number of stations checking in
QTC = Number of messages handled

TECHNICAL UPDATE

Ron W3ZV and **Dennis K3DS** worked on the antennas at Paoli in April. The 2M antenna mount was repaired. The old 2m packet radio antenna was removed -- it's now lying on the roof but it's not in good physical shape -- the mounting pole was cut, the new 440 MHz antenna was mounted, and the 440 link antenna was moved to another mount and repositioned.

Dennis found an ICOM 440 MHz repeater on eBay, new in the box, for a very reasonable fixed price. It's the same type of repeater used at Temple University, so Dennis knows the hardware well. The MARC board decided, after much discussion, to go ahead and purchase this repeater, since we really need to go forward on the project of putting a 440 repeater on the air.

The repeater has been bought. As the newsletter goes to press, the package has not been received yet. We hope to have very exciting news about this project in the next REMARCS.

Do you know what to tell someone about today's Amateur Radio? The ARRL has an introductory page at www.arrl.org/hamradio.html. Check it out with a friend who isn't a ham yet.

ARRL'S ON-LINE TECHNICIAN COURSE

ARRL's newest on-line course brings preparation for the Technician license examination to a computer near you. It's a great option for people whose personal schedules and circumstances don't allow them to take an in-person course. Two classes will open each month, and people can pre-register at any time.

This course has 35 learning units and takes 20 to 25 hours to complete over an 8-week period. It's self-paced -- students can do the units at any time of day or night and progress at their own rate. Students interact with Individually-assigned instructors -- "Elmers" -- and other classmates.

The course closely follows the ARRL license manual *Now You're Talking!* A copy of the book is included with the course. More information, including a table of contents and a listing of student activities is available online.

As students prepare for the exam, they are introduced to the diverse world of ham radio activities -- from emergency and public service communications to high-tech radio technologies. Emphasis is also placed on the important role of radio clubs and the ARRL Field Organization.

There is also support beyond the test. Moderated online groups give students instant access to classmates, instructors and helpful Elmers. This support begins after course completion and lasts for up to 12 months. A study showing that about 25% of new licensees never get on the air at all because they can't find anybody to help them led the League to add this feature to the on-line course.

The course fee (including the textbook whose cover price is \$19.95) is \$99 for ARRL members and \$139 for non-members. The course and virtual ham radio campus are available through ARRL's partnership with the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium (CTDLC), a nonprofit organization that specializes in developing on-line courses for Connecticut colleges and universities. To find out more about the on-line Technician course, see www.arrl.org/cce/Tech.html.

PENNSYLVANIA 67 AWARD

MARC's "PA 67" award is for hams who have confirmed ham radio contacts with all 67 counties in Pennsylvania. Contacts must be 2-way in QSO's in real time made entirely on the ham bands (no Internet relay). QSL cards are not submitted with the application but must have been checked by a responsible person such as a club president.

The award was publicized in *CQ* magazine earlier this year, leading to two applications. **Edward Erickson W2CVW**, South Amboy, NJ, and **Brian Reid KG4CRJ**, Stoneville, NC, received their certificates. MARC charges only \$2 for the award, to cover the cost of the fancy paper and return postage for the certificate.

W3EAG, SILENT KEY

Tom Gibson W3EAG, past RACES Radio Officer and ARES Emergency Coordinator for Montgomery County, became a Silent Key on April 16. His dedication to public service set an example that will be remembered.

LICENSE RENEWAL / UPDATE PROCESS MADE MORE COMPLICATED BY THE FCC

Effective with mail received on or after Monday, May 3, 2004, the FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau will dismiss any applications filed on an FCC Form 605 bearing an edition date earlier than December 2003. Form 605 is the hard-copy version of the Amateur Service application. The change does not affect applicants filing on-line with the Universal Licensing System (ULS), the FCC said.

But wait -- there's more! Under the system going into effect in May, applicants not yet registered in CORES and filing on paper will need to file FCC Form 160, CORES Registration to obtain a FCC Registration Number (FRN). After the FCC has issued an FRN, applicants also might want to file FCC Form 606 to associate the FRN with an individual's license record(s) and call sign(s). CORES registration data and FCC license data are maintained in separate FCC databases.

The completed Form 160 goes to a unique Washington, DC, FCC address to obtain the applicant's FRN. Once the FCC issues an FRN to the applicant, this number must be used when filing FCC Form 605, which goes to the FCC's Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, office. The two forms cannot be mailed to Gettysburg together. Applicants must have obtained an FRN via Form 160 before they can file a Form 605.

By far the easiest way to do all this bureaucratic double-shuffle is electronically. "Electronic CORES registration and electronic license application on-line filing via the FCC Web site has become fairly straightforward in the past year, and can be done via the FCC's Universal Licensing System (ULS) page," says ARRL/VEC manager **Bart Jahnke W9JJ**. For CORES registration, choose "CORES/CALL SIGN." Once the FCC issues an FRN, on that same page follow the link at the bottom of the page to associate your call sign(s) with your FRN. Applicants also can do this via the FCC's secure Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Web site. Select "Update Call Sign/ASR Information."

Registered applicants may file on-line via the ULS by entering their FRN and password, then selecting "ONLINE FILING." This would include such routine tasks as license renewal (no earlier than 90 days before license expiration), change of address or name or filing for a vanity call sign.

Jahnke says the FCC action will have no effect on NCVEC Form 605, which Volunteer Examiner Coordinators such as ARRL VEC use at VE test sessions. "The NCVEC Form 605 will continue to be the required license application form at test sessions," he says.

Furthermore, organizations such as the ARRL which offer to file Forms 605 electronically for license renewals -- a free service for ARRL members and available for a small fee for non-members -- will still be able to do so using the vastly simpler NCVEC version of Form 605. This will be possible whether or not the applicant is already registered in ULS/CORES, if the applicant is willing to write his or her Social Security Number on the application sent to ARRL HQ.

Kay N3KN has copies of the new FCC forms and instructions for completing them.

PRESIDENT BUSH ENDORSES BPL . . . PRESIDENT HAYNIE RESPONDS

In a speech delivered on April 26, **President Bush** made the following remarks about broadband Internet access:

"Regulatory policy has got to be wise and smart as we encourage the spread of this important technology. There needs to be technical standards to make possible new broadband technologies, such as the use of high-speed communication directly over power lines. Power lines were for electricity; power lines can be used for broadband technology. So the technical standards need to be changed to encourage that."

So there you have what we are up against. The President of the United States has endorsed BPL.

Another president from Texas, this one named **Jim Haynie W5JBP**, responded to the comment about BPL in a letter to the White House which said, in part:

"Power lines were designed to transmit energy. They were not designed to transmit broadband signals, which in fact are radio-frequency signals. The broadband signals radiate from power lines and cause severe interference to radio reception. This has been shown time and time again at test sites throughout this country and overseas. You may have been told otherwise; if so, you were misinformed. Please withdraw your support for broadband over power lines and focus your administration's attention on more suitable technologies, such as Broadband Wireless Access."

ARRL supports wider access to broadband Internet -- but objects to the BPL approach because it generates spectrum pollution that harms licensed radio services including, but not limited to, Amateur Radio.

In direct response to the Bush speech, the ARRL is asking its members to support Haynie's request for the White House to withdraw its support for BPL technology. "Using power lines to

distribute broadband services is a bad idea that should not be encouraged," said ARRL CEO **Dave Sumner K1ZZ**. "Federally licensed Amateur Radio operators need to tell him so -- and also need to enlist their Members of Congress in reversing this bad administration policy. It is important for radio amateurs to get the facts across to the White House as well as to our Congressional representatives and senators."

The ARRL Web site provides an information package at www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/plc/cta/ explaining how members can contact the White House and members of Congress to express their views on BPL deployment and why they need to do so.

"Do it now!" Sumner urges in his call to arms. "We need thousands of responses from all parts of the country, right away, if we are to make an impression."

For additional information, visit the "Broadband Over Power Line (BPL) and Amateur Radio" page on the ARRL Web site at www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/plc/. The current spectrum defense fund-raising campaign will aid the League in paying for all of this. These Washington efforts are not cheap!

When we write to the President and members of Congress, it is essential to be respectful (no matter what your political party affiliation may be) and to stick to the facts. Rants, name-calling, insults, suspicions, unfounded allegations, and anything else that makes it possible to trashcan your letter as the ravings of a nut case does harm to our cause.

It is also essential to use your spell-checker. People who spell "amateur" wrong, especially, are not credible advocates. You'd be surprised how many hams can't spell the name of our radio service!

STALKING THE RARE DX VIA THE INTERNET

If you have been chasing DX in the last decade, you are aware of the DX Cluster, a real-time digital system of sharing information about what DX is on the air. I can use the DX cluster to see, for instance, that a station I want to work has just been heard on 14.195 MHz, listening up 5 to 10 kHz. I can also ask to see the last handful of WWV reports, so I can gauge propagation conditions. Callouts are received in real time, though I can also ask to see specific sets of past callouts -- say, the last bunch of spots on 17 meters or the last bunch of spots for the DXpedition I want to work. I can set up a filter to block callouts I don't want to see. I can add my own callouts to the system for the benefit of others.

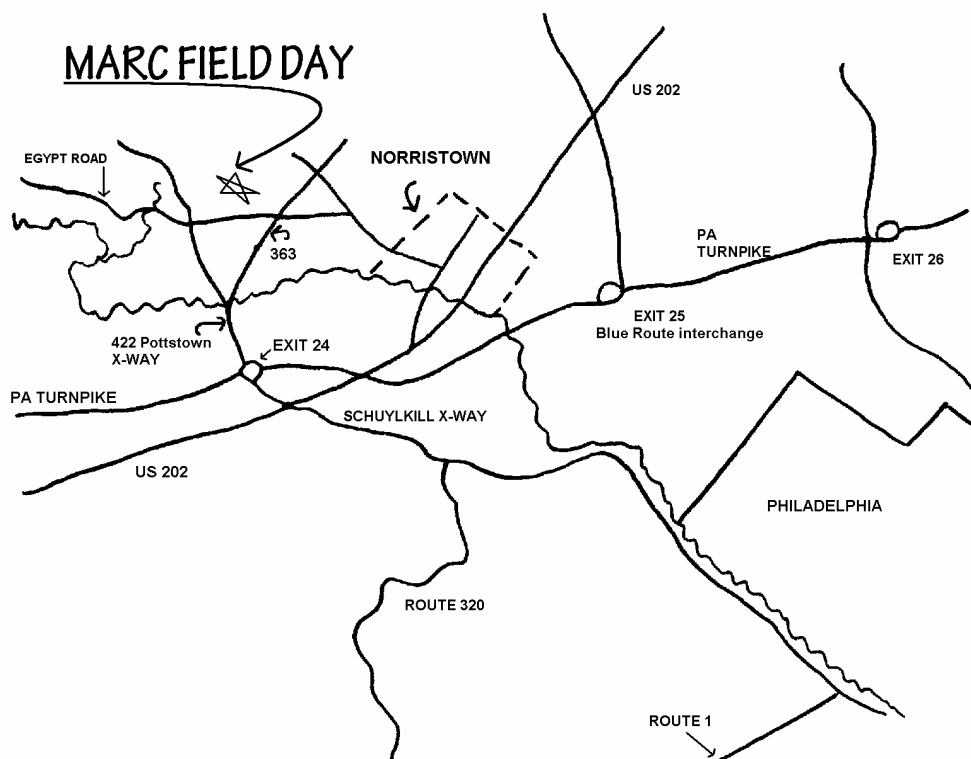
When the DX Cluster began, it was called the DX PacketCluster, and the network was composed of VHF packet radio nodes linked together via an RF backbone and accessed by users ordinarily on 2m FM. You needed a terminal program on your PC, a 2m station, and a packet radio Terminal Node Controller (TNC). The cluster still exists on RF here in the Philadelphia area, for which I am grateful when my Internet connection conks out.

At my house we were on VHF packet starting in the early 1980's and throughout the packet boom years. The mode was pretty well wiped by the Internet and the World Wide Web in the 1990's. Many of you have either gotten rid of your TNC's or wouldn't know a TNC if one bit you, depending on when you joined ham radio. One of its few remaining uses is for DX spotting.

Today, if you have a broadband Internet connection, the way to use the DX Cluster is via the Internet, not RF. The local DX Cluster, sponsored by the Frankford Radio Club, is open to hams who are not FRC members and no donation is expected. Connecting to the DX Cluster may be possible from within your logging program, if it allows TCP/IP connections, and it is certainly possible using the Telnet command. Once you have signed on to the DX Cluster via the Internet, the commands are exactly the same as what you may have used over an RF connection in the past.

The node that I use is W3FRC. If your logging program supports TCP/IP connections, W3FRC uses the IP address

(Continued on page 7)



MARC'S FIELD DAY SITE

MARC has Field Day on Egypt Road in Audubon, PA. It's near the new Shannondell retirement home complex.

If you need directions, go to the MARC web page at www.marc-radio.org and click on Upcoming Events. Then click on Field Day. There you'll find information about the event and directions to the site.

There is poison ivy on the property, so sandals and open-toed shoes are a bad idea. Be sure to bring plenty of drinking water, a hat, sunscreen, rain gear, etc. Field Day is rain or shine.

Non-ham guests are very welcome. That includes children, but they must be supervised by their adults at all times for their safety. Please drive carefully on the Field Day site.

ROUNDTABLE CHITCHAT GROUP STARTS

(Continued from page 1)

those objectives in mind, the guidelines for operation are somewhat different than directed net procedures. The function of the Moderator is to allow natural interaction between the participants, practicing control only to assure that everyone with a seat at the Roundtable is heard in their turn.

At the suggestion of **Bob W3SA**, there will usually be a core topic for the evening that should be of interest to all participants. On the April 22 Roundtable, for example, the topic was, "What type of antenna(s) are you using at your QTH or mobile operation?" The responses were varied and interesting. **Harry WA3AZS** told the listeners that he was using a broomstick as a mast and baling wire for the elements of his indoor antenna. His signal was full quieting into '06 from a second floor bedroom in his West Philadelphia home. In subsequent go-rounds between participants the topics of conversation ranged from healthcare insurance to classical music. The Roundtable signed off after midnight on Friday.

So come join the Roundtable. You will be assigned a seat number, so you will always know where you stand in the order of participants. You can leave, if you must, with or without notification. The Moderators pause a second or two after each courtesy tone to allow stations to check in, request to make a comment, ask a question, check back in, or check out. They're waiting to hear from you!

Editor's note: Hats-off to members who take the initiative to promote good clean fun on the MARC machines. Join in!

STALKING THE DX

(Continued from page 6)

w3frc.gofrc.org and port 7300. Users of DX4WIN should use the syntax w3frc.gofrc.org:7300 -- I don't know the syntax for other logging programs, so please consult the Help file for your software. If you are using Telnet from the command line, you will probably start your Telnet client and then type something like w3frc.gofrc.org 7300. I've never been able to get Telnet to stop echoing keystrokes, but maybe you have better luck.

There are other DX clusters on the Internet. The virtue of using W3FRC is that you see callouts originated by hams in the USA and Canada only, and many of the callouts may come from nearby hams. I really don't care what Italians or Germans can hear on 6 meters, for example, but I do want to know when the locals are hearing DX on 6. If you want to know what's being heard by hams around the world, then you can connect to another FRC node that allows spots from everywhere. It uses IP address k2ut.gofrc.org and Port 7300.

Sometimes the callsigns you see called out on the DX Cluster are not accurate -- "busted calls." We have to listen and make sure that we log the callsigns correctly. This is particularly important in contests, where we're penalized for mistakes, but it also helps in DXing if you send your QSL to the right station!

Like DX newsletters, magazine columns, listservers, and Web sites, the DX Cluster is an operating aid. It won't work the DX for us! It's not a magic wand and is certainly not a substitute for constant efforts to improve our skills and our stations. Smart DXers will tune the bands diligently, looking for stations that haven't been called out yet. Good luck in the pile-ups -- unless I'm in the same one!

MID-ATLANTIC AMATEUR RADIO
CLUB
PO BOX 2154
SOUTHEASTERN, PA 19399-2154