



ANNUAL AUCTION HEADLINES MARCH 22 MEETING

The annual Junque Auction will take place at the meeting on March 22. If you're new to the club, the auction is a wintertime chance to sell the ham and ham-related stuff that's been taking up space in your shack and buy the stuff that's been taking up space at somebody else's house.

Small items and bargains usually sell the best -- save the big-ticket gear for the MARC hamfest. Even if you don't want to buy or sell anything, auctioneer **Bart K4BF** will make sure you are entertained. Invite your friends from other radio clubs to attend as buyers. We'll take their money, too.

The ground rules are these:

- Ham and ham-related equipment only. No kitchen utensils, fishing rods, kittens, lawn mowers, or paintings of Elvis on velvet.
- Only MARC members may offer items for sale. No dealers, please.
- MARC receives 10% of the sales price or \$10, whichever is less.
- Tag items with your name and callsign (if any), the minimum acceptable price (if any), and what the item is.
- Take home any unsold items. **NO DUMPING AT THE TOWNSHIP BUILDING!**
- 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 arriving from sales.

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

Bring some coins and bills smaller than \$20's, because we have very limited ability to make change. Plan on paying cash. We can't guarantee that sellers will accept personal checks.

MEMBERSHIP DUES PAYABLE NOW!

2005 MARC membership dues are payable now -- the annual deadline is March 1.

A big thank-you to everyone who has already paid. Membership cards in postcard format have been either mailed or handed to those who've renewed for 2005.

A final reminder will be sent on or about April 1 to members whose 2005 dues have not been received. After that, we revise the database and send the May/June newsletter only to paid-up members. MARC needs and values all our members. Please don't let renewing slip your mind.

MARCH / APRIL 2005

REMARCS

www.marc-radio.org

SPECIAL ELECTION CALLED TO FILL BOARD VACANCY

Nominations are sought for a special election to fill the unexpired Member-at-Large term of **Gene N3HG** on the MARC board. The term ends on September 30, 2005. Gene and **Judy N3MBW** are moving away in May, so Gene must resign from the board. Any licensed member of the club whose 2005 dues are paid up may run for the office.

The special election will be held at the March club meeting. Nominations will be accepted from the floor at that time, but it is preferable to make your interest known now to president **Steve N3ORH**. Self-nominations are fine. If you want to nominate someone else, please get that person's permission beforehand.

Two members have already said they would run for the position, but additional nominations would be fine. This is the first competitive MARC election in years . . . that's a change for the better, especially since either of the two already-nominated candidates would do a fine job on the board.

FUTURE CLUB MEETING PROGRAMS

Dick K3IIN has interesting programs for future club meetings either confirmed or in the works. Here are some of the topics:

- April: American Helicopter Museum presentation
- May: VHF/UHF SSB communications -- presented by a member of Mt. Airy VHF Radio Club (a.k.a. The Pack Rats)
- June: APRS (Automatic Position Reporting System)

If you have suggestions for program topics or specific speakers on ham radio / high tech subjects, please contact Dick and pass your ideas along. Do you have a specialty you'd like to give a program about? Don't be shy about letting Dick know you're interested in giving a program at a MARC meeting.

ESTATE EQUIPMENT DONATED

MARC has been given two rigs from the estate of past member **Don Walker KD3AY**, courtesy of another past member, **Ed Azemar KA3YGI**, who received the equipment from Don's widow.

One rig is a Yaesu FT-900 HF transceiver, and the other is a Kenwood TS-7950 2m mobile rig. The MARC board will determine the most appropriate use of the donated equipment.

Secretary **Dennis KA3QOT** has been asked to write to Ed and to Mrs. Walker to express the board's appreciation for their generosity in giving this equipment to MARC. Because donations to the club are not tax-deductible, this gift was made because the donors wanted to do it, not for any self-interest. The club is grateful for the donors' kindness to our organization.

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, 8 PM, Paoli Hospital.
Members may attend as observers.

SYSTEMS

145.13/R, 147.06/R, 224.42/R, 445.675/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: Dick K3IIN
(610-688-0874, k3iin@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!

*Please let PR chairman **Bob KB3FSQ** know if you see MARC press releases printed in local papers or hear them read on area broadcast stations. He distributes press releases to a lengthy list of media, and it will be helpful to him to get some feedback about where the announcements are being presented to the public.*

FEBRUARY TEST SESSION REPORT

The February 6 MARC license test session produced 4 new Technicians. The examiners were **Bob W3ZQN**, **Bob W3SA**, **Susan K3SUE**, **Dick K3ITH**, and **Walt WA3PPW**.

One candidate came all the way from Carlisle, PA, and spent the night in King of Prussia to take his test! We may have had candidates in the past who came to us from farther away than that, but we really don't remember when.

The next MARC exam session will be on the first Saturday in May. Please contact **Bob W3ZQN** (610-265-6032, rjlees@aol.com) for information and pre-registration.

VOX

Please welcome new members: **Lou WX3I**, **Paul N3TMX**, **Dan KB3LVB**, **Gerry W3GER**, and **Erin Thompson**, and returning member **Jim W3BG**. **Lou WX3I** is the National Weather Service Skywarn coordinator for ham radio in our area and presented a program for the club last year. **Erin** is **Dick K3IIN**'s daughter. **Carter N3AO** and **Kay N3KN** spent a February week thawing out in Aruba (that's P4 in DX-speak). **Bart K4BF** visited **David KA3HBK/0**, and they took advantage of David's private pilot skills to visit several western cities.

Dieter K3DK is our go-to guy when we have a program requiring an LCD projector, and we can't thank him enough for that help. Speaking of people we appreciate, **Bob W3SA** reserves the rooms for our membership and board meetings, and he arranges for us to use the Field Day field.

Mike KF3CD says he's now doing mobile CW with a Red Racer paddlette he got for Christmas. His first QSO was with another mobile CW op.

Dieter K3DK has information on a bus trip to Dayton. The deadline for reservations approaches, so contact him now if you'd like him to send you the info.

Several MARC members -- whom we won't name here out of respect for their privacy -- had some significant health problems this winter. By the time you read this, we sincerely hope everyone is okay. You know who you are, and be sure that your friends in MARC are keeping you in our thoughts.

PUBLIC SERVICE NOTES

Bob N3JIZ's sign-up clipboards may be hibernating now, but they'll be awake and frisky soon after you read this newsletter. We have events on the calendar now for the spring season:

- Multiple Sclerosis 5k Run/Walk - Sunday, April 24, West Goshen Park, 8 AM, talk-in on 147.06/R
- Radnor Memorial Day Parade, Wayne - Memorial Day, May 30.

Please contact Bob (610-687-4587) if you'd like to find out more about the public service events. These events are not hard to do, do not take all day, help improve our operating skills, and show off ham radio as the community asset that it really is.

The Eastern PA Section Traffic Manager, **Scott N3SW**, distributed a year-end report showing that the MARC Traffic Net handled more radiograms than any other local net in Eastern PA Section last year. In fact, we handled 2.5 times as many messages as the second-place net. Of course the other local nets do not meet 3 times a week, but that's not our fault, is it?

DIRECTIONS TO THE CLUB MEETINGS

We keep telling you to invite new people to the MARC meetings, how do you help visitors find the township building?

Detailed directions to the meeting site from all approach routes are posted on the MARC web page. Go to www.marc-radio.org. On the menu bar, click on "Club Information," then on "Meeting Information." We even have the GPS coordinates posted there!

The township building entrance is not well marked, especially if you're coming into Chesterbrook from northbound PA 252 after dark. We suggest finding the building in the daylight first.

FROM THE EDITOR'S JUNK BOX

Some elderly etiquette-expert lady took a poll (apparently among people who are fairly new on this planet) and proclaimed that Philadelphia ranks 8th in the nation for good manners. New York was 7th on her list last year, which clues us how seriously to take this. Anyway, when told about their achievement, grateful Philadelphians reportedly gave a quaint traditional folk gesture involving fewer fingers than the Boy Scout salute and went back to painting themselves green.

A couple of notches below Philly on the best-mannered list was Salt Lake City. That's further proof that this poll is whacked-out. People in Salt Lake City are so nice they squeak, and I counted precisely five items of litter on the streets in the center of the town. I kid you, as **Jack Paar** used to say, not. Philadelphia would use Salt Lake City for chewing gum -- and then throw the wad on the sidewalk!

Of course, my home town didn't make any of this lady's top-ten lists, so you don't have to pay much attention to my opinion, either.

Every time I break a pile-up in a contest with my 200 watts versus the legal-limit guys, I always wonder if my signal is that good . . . or that bad! So far, nobody has told me I have key clicks, chirp, AC hum, or other things that go bump in the night and make a signal stand out in the crowd.

Carter woke me up at a beastly hour one morning to say he had just worked a new country on 160 meters. I stumbled into his shack and worked the station myself. Was he in trouble for rousting me out? Not hardly. If he's sick, or the dog's sick, or the house is on fire, or there's a new country to work, then he can wake me up any darn time he wants to. Otherwise, it might be a good idea to think twice.

Fun in ham radio -- for me it's chasing DX -- is what keeps us alive in the hobby. Were it not for the *hobby* part of ham radio that keeps us interested and curious to learn more, we would be hard pressed to fulfill our responsibilities as a *service*.

If you want fun at a club meeting, you cannot beat the March Madness MARC junque auction. See you there! -- **73, Kay N3KN**

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BOARD MEETING

At the January 27 meeting, the board decided to change the meeting time to 8 PM to accommodate a member's conflicting obligation on Thursday evenings. The treasurer announced the current balance, \$10,338.82, and presented a report detailing income and expenses for 2004. Although we spent more than we took in because of one-time expenses for the 440 MHz repeater, the club is in good financial condition. Future programs and public service events were discussed. The board also discussed how to handle replacement of a board member who must resign because he is moving away. Problems with a repeater amplifier have been corrected. Members will be asked to report to the PR chairman when they see or hear announcements about the club in the media. Availability of the Field Day field for 2005 will be checked. The board accepted donation of an HF rig and a VHF rig, donated by a past member who obtained the equipment from the widow of another past member. Disposition of the equipment is to be decided at a future board meeting. The board will thank those who made the donation. A board member asked whether or not it is possible to have distinctive courtesy tones for '06 and '13. This will be taken up with the Technical chairman.

Because of a developing major snowstorm, the February 24 meeting of the board was cancelled by the president.

Don't just talk about the value of ham radio! Become an active member of your county's ARES / RACES organization now.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2005

PRESIDENT

Steve Maslin N3ORH 610-327-8666
smaslin@marc-radio.org

VICE PRESIDENT

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

SECRETARY

Dennis DeMarco KA3QOT 610-935-7954
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TREASURER

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MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

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PROGRAMS

Dick Thompson K3IIN 610-688-0874
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PUBLIC RELATIONS

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

PUBLIC SERVICE

Bob Palin N3JIZ 610-687-4587

TECHNICAL

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

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

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

To 9/30/2006: Bob Haase W3SA
610-293-1919, rhaase@bellatlantic.net

CALLSIGN TRUSTEES

WB3JOE: Carter Craigie N3AO
610-993-9623, n3ao@arrl.net

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

MEMBERS' GEAR SALES TABLE -- TO BE, OR NOT?

Now that we know for sure that **Gene N3HG** and **Judy N3MBW** will have moved away before the 2005 MARC hamfest, the need for people to step up and take over the members' gear sales table is critically important. The new people -- and it takes at least two to do the job -- need to talk with Judy and Gene before they move away in May.

The table -- a row of tables, actually -- is a very popular feature of the hamfest. It allows members to have their equipment sold while they are doing other things, such as working for the hamfest. Some members donate all or part of their proceeds to the club (no fixed commission is charged) and this has put nice extra dollars in the treasury.

Gene and Judy have it down to a science. The new people can use their system or invent one of your own. Without volunteers, however, the members' gear sales table will not happen. That will hurt our hamfest. Are you willing and able to help?

GEORGE VAN DYKE W3HK, SK *Past Section Communications Manager*

George Van Dyke W3HK of Philadelphia became a Silent Key in January, just short of his 90th birthday. George held office as Section Communications Manager for the ARRL Eastern Pennsylvania Section from 1967 to 1980, except for a brief period in 1974-75. The SCM position was abolished in 1983, when the ARRL created the Field Organization headed by the Section Manager.

George was active in the ARRL National Traffic System and still held the Official Relay Station appointment at the time of his passing. He was a member of MARS and QCWA.

George was always a gentleman in the way he represented the ARRL and ham radio, and he set an excellent example for those of us who followed him as elected officials of the League in Eastern PA. I recall being told by **Bob WA3PZO** when I was a brand-new Section Manager back in the 1980's that everyone respected George. As I got to know more about George over the years, I understood why that was true. -- Kay N3KN

FLEA MARKET

Bob W3ZQN has the following items for sale:

- Ameritron AL-811 600W HF Amplifier, including mod for 10 meter operation. (February QST ad price is \$650.)
- MFJ 962D 1500W Tuner. (February QST ad price is \$270.)

Asking price for both is \$600. Will split and/or negotiate price. Contact Bob at w3zqn@arrl.net.

FCC PROPOSES TO HOLD THE LINE ON VANITY CALL SIGN FEE

The FCC has proposed retaining the current \$20.80 Amateur Radio vanity call sign regulatory fee for the 10-year license term. The fee went from \$16.30 to \$20.80 last August.

In a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, "Assessment and Collection of Regulatory Fees for Fiscal Year 2005" (MD Docket 05-59), the FCC says it's proposing to collect more than \$280 million in regulatory fees for fiscal year 2005, as mandated by Congress "to recover the regulatory costs associated with the Commission's enforcement, policy and rulemaking, user information, and international activities." *(Plus the costs of all the Botox treatments they need to keep straight faces while talking complete and utter rubbish about Broadband over Power Lines!)*

The FCC says it anticipates 8000 vanity call sign applications during FY2005, up from 7800 applications in FY2004. The FCC expects to raise \$166,443 from vanity call sign fees in FY2005. More information on vanity call signs is available on the ARRL Web site at www.arrl.org/arrlvec/vanity.html. [tnx ARRL Web site, except for italicized comment, which is your editor speaking.]

MEMBERS' SHOW & TELL NIGHT . . . INTERESTING AND FUN FOR ALL

Homebrew Show & Tell Night at the January MARC meeting brought out a variety of members' projects. **Carter N3AO** kicked things off by showing his Elecraft K1 CW transceiver, which he and **Kay N3KN** built from a kit. He also showed a surface-mount technology add-on board he built from a kit, which enables the K1 operator to zero-beat other stations.

You may remember **Bob W3ZQN**'s article in November/December '04 REMARCS about the Pocket Tracker device he built from a kit. This device allows APRS tracking without a lot of cumbersome equipment (see www.byonics.com/pockettracker and October '04 QST, page 40). Bob has added on a 2m brick amplifier and a switch that selects between his regular 2m mobile rig and the tracker gizmo. He has housed the amp and the tracker device in a metal frame that began life as an ice-tray holder in a refrigerator. Nobody does the ham radio tradition of blending high-tech with junk-scrounging any better than Bob!

Gene N3HG displayed his Elecraft K2 transceiver with its 100w amplifier and automatic antenna-tuner add-on's. He also showed his iambic memory keyer and an antenna-tuning device for use with a dummy load. Because he and **Judy N3MBW** are moving to a location where HF operation is not possible, his HF equipment is up for sale. Look for information elsewhere in this newsletter.

Cliff W3NNL brought a rig that is a virtual history of ham radio in a single box. It's a homebrew transceiver that was his basic home station in the 1970's. It had been around a long time before then, starting out as a receiver. The final tube is 62-year-old war surplus! The rig has been evolving constantly and, following some restoration, works today.

Following that enjoyable quick trip through ham radio history, we moved into the future with **Dennis K3DS**, who showed some boards that form an all-mode 2m DSP rig.

Dennis also talked briefly about working with surface-mount technology on the home workbench. He recommends an illuminated magnifier, an ordinary glue stick to help secure the tiny components, and appropriate soldering equipment. You also don't want to work with SMT when you have a cold or allergy attack, because one little sneeze will send the tiny components flying, and you'll never find them again because they're next to invisible.

Jack KB3GDC brought 3 items to show and describe. One was an AC source that he calls a "poor man's variac." Another was a function generator, and the third was a total harmonic distortion analyzer. Jack's homebrew stuff is beautiful work, and he explained how he creates the front panel artwork using a computer graphics program. No more hit-or-miss with press-on lettering, which your editor remembers swearing at during her model railroad kit builder days.

Everyone enjoyed these diverse examples of ham radio creativity, and we thank the members who brought their work to show & tell night. Chances are that we'll do this program again next year, so get busy and have something ready to bring on show & tell night in 2006.

DX TIP

Ever hear some juicy DX in a contest but you don't call because you don't know what the exchange is? Find out in a snap by going to **Bruce WA7BNM**'s contest calendar web site at www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/weeklycont.php. It's the fastest way to figure out what gobbledygook to send to the DX, so you'll be in the log.

REAL-TIME DXCC STANDINGS ON THE WEB

DXers can now find out where they rank compared to others on a daily basis via the ARRL web site. DXCC standings are now automatically updated daily and posted as PDF files. The direct URL is www.arrl.org/awards/dxcc/listings/.

Once you've downloaded the award list you're interested in, use Adobe Acrobat's Search feature to find your callsign -- or your rival's callsign!

The old practice of updating the DXCC standings just once a year put a huge workload burden on the DXCC staff at deadline time and didn't take advantage of computer technology to keep information fresh for inquiring minds in the DX community.

By the way, Logbook of the World is revolutionizing DXCC application processing time. If we submit an application or endorsement using only LOTW credits, the processing time is one day. Processing time for an application or endorsement involving paper QSL cards -- whether checked in the field or at ARRL HQ -- averages nearly 6 weeks.

PENNSYLVANIA TOWN DROPS BPL PLANS

News from the ARRL Web Site

The Borough of Chambersburg, PA, has decided against plans to offer broadband Internet service via broadband over power line (BPL) technology, according to a January 18 report in *Public Opinion*. The Cumberland Valley Amateur Radio Club (CVARC) spearheaded ham radio opposition to the plan in the eastern Pennsylvania community of some 17,000 residents through an informational campaign.

"We were lucky, but only because many members of the local Amateur community put time in to fight BPL right up front, before the municipality had thrown so much money at it that it had a stake in it succeeding," CVARC President **David Yoder KB3HUC** told ARRL. "I can't emphasize that enough -- putting people in front of the decision-makers, working with the press and so forth paid off, because we jumped in as soon as we heard BPL was being considered."

The *Public Opinion* article quoted Chambersburg officials as saying there wasn't enough money in the municipality's Electric Department budget to go forward with a BPL deployment this year. Borough officials also cited state legislation effective last year that encourages telecommunication companies to provide broadband to consumers. While the BPL initiative is off the borough's 2005 projects agenda, *Public Opinion* quoted Borough Council President **Bill McLaughlin** as saying, "As far as I'm concerned, it's dead."

Public Opinion also noted that CVARC members were pleased by the outcome. "That is good news," the article quoted Yoder as saying. "All Amateur Radio operators in the area are relieved to learn that apparently our concerns were taken into account, along with the recent legislation." Among other things, CVARC members had told the Borough Council last year that BPL would interfere with Amateur Radio and its ability to provide emergency communication. Chambersburg officials had been looking into leasing the borough's power lines to an Internet service provider as a way to generate revenue, and a consultant had recommended Chambersburg look into BPL.

ANALOG ELECTRONICS IS ARRL'S LATEST ON-LINE COURSE

The ARRL Certification and Continuing Education Program introduced a new on-line course, Analog Electronics, EC-012, in February. In 16 learning units students learn about the use of instrumentation, Kirchoff's Laws, diodes, rectifier circuits, bipolar and field effect transistors, various amplifier configurations, filters, timers, op amps and voltage regulators.

Most lessons include a design problem and optional construction project. The course run 10 weeks and earns 2 Continuing Education Units. This course is designed for those who feel at home with basic electrical and electronic components. Prospective students should be able to read simple schematics; know Ohm's Law and the relationship between power, voltage, current, and resistance; own and be able to use basic test equipment and be competent in simple algebra.

Those who feel they need to brush up might consider browsing the first few sections of Chapter 6, "AC Theory and Reactive Components," in *The ARRL Handbook for Radio Communications* or pick up a copy of *Understanding Basic Electronics*, by Larry Wolfgang, WR1B. Tuition is \$65 for ARRL members and \$95 for nonmembers. Additional details are in the course introduction on the ARRL C-CE Web site at www.arrl.org/cce/intro-012.html.

Watch the ARRL web site for announcement of future offerings of this and other on-line courses. A digital electronics course is also in the works. See the related story on page 7 of this issue.

CALLSIGN FUN QUIZ

How many of these questions can you answer without peeking at the answers that follow below?

1. If you go to Dayton, which call area will you be in? What are the other states in that call area?
2. Which USA call area has 3 states that end in "ota"?
3. If you want to go on a nice vacation, should you pick the country whose prefix is P4 or the one whose prefix is P5?
4. Speaking of travels, if you go to the country whose prefix is VK, what language should you expect to hear?
5. Why do some people who have been licensed a very long time tell you their callsigns without the alpha part of the prefix (e.g., "I'm 3PDQ.")?

Answers:

1. Dayton is in Ohio, which is in the 8th call area. The other 8-land states are Michigan and West Virginia.
2. It's the 0 area, and the states are North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota (*tnx QRZ.com for this one*).
3. Choose P4. That's Aruba, a former Dutch island colony off the coast of South America with great weather (it's too far south for hurricanes), lovely beaches, and friendly citizens most of whom speak English. Not recommended in any travel guide for sane people is P5, which is North Korea.
4. Expect to hear English, because VK is Australia. Of course they have strange accents. But so do we!
5. Years ago, the alpha part of all USA prefixes was W, so you could skip the obvious part except when legal station ID was required. Even farther in the past, there were no alpha components to ham radio prefixes. Hiram Percy Maxim's whole callsign was originally "1AW."



DAYTON IS ARRL NATIONAL CONVENTION THIS YEAR

The 2005 Dayton Hamvention® will host the ARRL National Convention. Highlighting the National Convention will be a new feature called the ARRL Expo, a special area of demonstrations, exhibits, videos, and lectures. That's in addition to the usual ARRL booth at the Hamvention®.

Dayton is always exciting -- not just another hamfest by any means -- and this year the addition of the ARRL National Convention will enhance the Dayton experience.

If you plan to go to Dayton, be sure to visit the ARRL Expo and enjoy getting to know more about your League and what it does for Amateur Radio. The 2005 Hamvention® is May 20 - 22. See you there!

Read more about the National Convention at <http://www.arrl.org/announce/nc/2005/>

RAILROAD BUFFS CHAT ON IRLP

News from Amateur Radio Newsline

Hams interested in trains are invited to join the RailHam Roundtable every Sunday night on IRLP reflector number 9454 at 21:00 Eastern USA Time. IRLP is a ham radio / Internet linking system similar to EchoLink.

RailHam Roundtable is not a net, just an informal rag chew between hams who like trains, whether it's models, prototypes, passenger, freight, or what have you. There is no net control so just throw out your callsign and ask who else is listening to get things started. For more info see <http://members.trainorders.com/boteman/railhamnet.html>.

MORE ABOUT CALLSIGNS LONG AGO

In the "Callsign Fun Quiz" we referred to the absence of prefixes in the early days of ham radio. Another historical change in callsigns that many of us don't know about was a realignment of call area districts.

Flipping through a 1930's vintage *ARRL HANDBOOK*, I came across the call area map from way back then. The call area districts were the same as military districts. The most obvious difference from what we have today is that there were 9 districts instead of 10. The states in today's 0 call area were 9's.

Except for 1- and 5-lands, every call area has changed since the 1930's, in some cases rather dramatically. For one thing, call area districts did not necessarily follow state boundaries! New York, New Jersey, Michigan, and Pennsylvania were split. Part of NY was in 2 and part in 8. NJ was divided between 2 and 3. Lower Michigan was in 8 and the upper peninsula was in 9. Pennsylvania was divided between 3 and 8.

Other differences: Virginia was in 3, and Kentucky was in 9. Nevada, Utah, and Arizona were in 6. Alaska and Hawaii were not states, of course, but their call area digits were the same as today.

I have not done the research to find out when the present call area districts were created. Who will be the first MARC member to send in that information for a future newsletter?

DEALING WITH INTERFERENCE

Not all interference on a repeater is malicious. When there is a VHF/UHF band opening, it is not unusual to hear the output of distant repeaters which are on the same frequency pair as MARC's machines. CTCSS is used to minimize the chances of someone raising two repeaters on the same frequency pair -- because of where he happens to be located or because he is running more power than he should be. There can be other reasons why you might hear another repeater on a MARC repeater output from time to time. Generally speaking, this kind of repeater-to-repeater interference is not malicious -- just part of the magic of radio -- and the fix is either patience or some technical work on one or both repeaters.

Sometimes people make mistakes and cause interference accidentally. They start to talk and step on a QSO before they notice the volume dial is all the way counter-clockwise. They sit on their microphone and engage the PTT. File these cases under mistakes which you will make sooner or later, and boy you will feel dumb. But it's not malicious interference.

Sometimes hams have personal problems -- substance abuse, senile dementia, mental illness, etc. -- which cause them to lose the ability to operate responsibly, to be courteous to others, even to follow the FCC's Rules. They may not intend to cause havoc on the air, but they do, and it has to be addressed humanely but firmly by those in charge of the repeater.

Sometimes hams do not secure their stations properly, and an unlicensed family member decides to play pranks. Or the family member is unable for some reason to comprehend why using the ham station is wrong. The licensee is responsible for this misuse of his or her station. Is your station secure from unauthorized operation? Have you taught family members that there are serious legal consequences to operating your ham radio gear without a license?

Finally there is malicious interference, when someone deliberately disrupts communications. It doesn't matter why they do it. Maybe they don't like the club. Maybe they don't like nets. Maybe they don't like the individual who is talking on the repeater. Maybe they harass certain categories of people. Maybe they are just crazy as a boatload of bullfrogs. Doesn't matter. It's illegal.

The key thing for users of the repeaters is this: do not recognize or respond to interference in any way. Especially if the interference is or may be malicious, anything you say will encourage more of the behavior. Keep on operating normally if you can, and say nothing on the air about the odd things going on. It is hard not to get angry and say something, but ignoring malicious interference often makes the perpetrator give up and go away. The fun is as much in your reaction to the disruption as it is in making the disruption in the first place. Don't entertain the jerk!

Document incidents of possibly-malicious interference. Listen on the repeater input. Do you hear the signal? How strong is it? If you have a rotatable beam, from which direction does the signal appear to come? What is the nature of the interference -- what kind of noise is being made? Is there any pattern to the interference? If you can capture the sounds on a tape recorder or computer sound file, that's great. Date your report and pass the information to the **WB3JOE** trustee, **Carter N3AO**.

If the situation warrants, Carter will contact the ARRL's Official Observers and ask them to find the interference source and take formal steps to put an end to the problem.

HF STATION FOR SALE

Gene N3HG and **Judy N3MBW** will be moving to a retirement community in Maryland in May. Gene will not be able to operate HF at their new home, and so he has put his entire HF station up for sale. The list appears in the box below. Although we do not know if he would be willing to break up the package and sell you only certain items, you can always contact Gene and discuss what you are interested in.

N3HG HF station, in excellent physical and operating condition:

- Custom-fitted rolling operating desk with pull-out elevating keyboard/mouse platform
- Ten-Tec Pegasus 100 watt computer transceiver with internal LDG automatic antenna tuner and external remote control box, Ten-Tec hand microphone, Ten-Tec table microphone
- Control computer -- 500 MHz AMD K2 (Tyan motherboard), 192 MB memory, Windows 98, 3.5 inch floppy drive, CD-RW burner, Sound Blaster sound card, Diamond video board, RF-protected steel case, special quiet power supply, 14-inch KDS monitor, wireless Logitech keyboard and mouse; N4PY Pegasus control software
- Astron 25/30 amp switching power supply
- Autek QF-1A external audio filter
- External loudspeaker
- Ameritron ALS 600 watt solid-state no-tune linear amplifier and power supply
- Autek computing watt meter/SWR meter
- MFJ VersaTuner V -- 3 KW antenna tuner
- West Mountain Radio RigBlaster soundcard interface
- West Mountain Radio RigRunner power strip
- "Stealth" tune-up meter (during tune-up dumps 95% of signal to a dummy load) -- MFJ 100 watt dummy load included
- Two RF low pass filters
- All necessary connecting cables

Asking \$2,750.00.

Interested parties are welcome to see and operate the station. Contact Gene Hoenig N3HG at 610-353-2181, fax 610-359-1308, or e-mail ehoenig@pol.net.

YOU DON'T HAVE MAIL FROM THE FBI!

Hoax Message Spreads Virus

E-mails claiming to be from the FBI, accusing you of visiting illegal web sites and demanding that you open an attachment and answer questions, are really hoaxes intended to infect your computer with a virus. The virus is in the attachment.

The FBI says they don't send out this kind of message. See www.fbi.gov/pressrel/pressrel05/022205.htm

Always be suspicious of unsolicited e-mails telling you to open attachments, click on links to web sites to avoid having an account cancelled, etc. Chances are these scare messages are either virus carriers or so-called phishes intended to steal personal information that can be used to rob you.

I update and run my anti-virus program every day and use two other programs to scan my computer for spyware at least once a week. We lock our house and car doors, right? We shouldn't be any less careful with our computers!

ARRL'S ON-LINE COURSES

Is One of Them for You?

ARRL offers a dozen on-line courses on both operating and technical topics. All carry Continuing Education Units (CEU) and are offered in partnership with the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium (CTDLC), a nonprofit organization that specializes in developing on-line courses for Connecticut colleges and universities. The courses are

- Amateur Radio Emergency Communications (3 courses -- levels 1, 2, and 3)
- Antenna Modeling
- HF Digital Communication
- Radio Frequency Interference
- VHF/UHF -- Life Beyond the Repeater
- Antenna Design & Construction
- Technician License Course
- Radio Frequency Propagation
- Analog Electronics
- Digital Electronics (coming soon)

Most of the courses are opened for registration once a month. Information about each course, including costs, the syllabus, student activities, equipment needed, etc., are posted so you can be fully informed before registering.

Each student is assigned a well-qualified personal mentor with whom the student corresponds via e-mail. Students work at their own pace, but there is a completion deadline. The Certification and Continuing Education home page is at www.arrl.org/cce/.

MORSE REQUIREMENT, LICENSE STRUCTURE NPRM BY MID-2005?

The FCC continues to work toward developing a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) that will spell out what the Commission has in mind regarding possible changes in the current Morse requirement and Amateur Radio licensing.

Eighteen petitions have been filed, including one from the ARRL, seeking Part 97 rule changes addressing the future of the 5 WPM Morse requirement (Element 1) and revisions to the overall Amateur Radio licensing structure. The FCC plans to tackle all 18 in a single proceeding. As far as the code issue is concerned, petitions and comments in response to them run the gamut from retaining or even beefing up the Morse requirement to eliminating it altogether. (The ARRL's proposal would retain the 5 WPM Morse examination for Amateur Extra class applicants only.)

The League and others have also put forth proposals for a new entry-level Amateur Radio license class. At this point, personnel in the FCC Wireless Telecommunications Bureau are continuing to review the thousands of comments filed on the 18 petitions.

Once public, the NPRM would initiate another round of comments on what the FCC has proposed. It could be late 2006 or even into 2007 before the FCC releases a Report and Order to implement any new rules, although it's possible the Commission could wrap up the proceeding before that time frame. *[from the ARRL Web page]*

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