



www.marc-radio.org

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# REMARCS

January/February 2008

## THANKS TO WX3I and W3ZV!

**Lou Ruh WX3I** gave some very informative and captivating presentations at MARC's September and October meetings regarding Skywarn and weather. He showed many interesting slides on tornadoes, storms and explained Skywarn and some personal experiences with tracking storms.

**Ron Kenwood W3ZV** brought some radio equipment to show at our November meeting and explained trunked, Public-Service radio systems. He answered many questions and also had some interesting slides and history on how the local system evolved.

## MARC AMATEUR EXAM SESSIONS

**Bob Lees W3ZQN** reported that 2 Technician and 2 General class licenses were earned at the November 3rd session.

The following Volunteer Examiners assisted: **Bob W3ZQN, Paul NX3Q, Ron W3ZV, Dick K3ITH and Walter WA3PPW.**

At the February 2nd session, 1 Technician and 1 General class license were earned. The following VE's assisted: **Bob W3ZQN, Bob KA3NIQ, Ron W3ZV, Dick K3ITH and Dennis K3DS.**

The next exam session will be held at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church on May 3rd. You must contact **Bob W3ZQN** if you wish to schedule an exam session.

Bob may be reached at [RJLees@AOL.com](mailto:RJLees@AOL.com) or via 610 265-6032. MARC Members are allowed one free test session per year.

## VOX

MARC's Public Relations Chairman **Lori Jones KB3PRF** was present at the Marple ARC InfoFest back in early November. Lori had assembled and provided a nice introductory flyer about MARC. She also gave a brief presentation about MARC. Thank you Lori!

**Mike KF3CD** is now SKCC number 3737. SKCC is the Straight Key Century Club, see [www.skccgroup.com/](http://www.skccgroup.com/). **Dieter K3DK** is now Rooster number 1232. **Ed KB3JGU** has a new callsign and it's **W3DUB**. **Bob**, formerly **WR3K** is now **WB3T** (an abbreviated form of his original callsign - WB3BBT).

**Dennis KA3QOT** and **Bob WB3T** have both returned as Net Control Ops. Welcome back guys!

**Sam WA3LGL** is now MARC's Net Manager

A belated Thank You to **Jon N3VZG** for his earlier service as a MARC Net Control Op. We hope that you'll return in the future Jon.

**Dennis K3DS** received a National Outstanding Teaching Award from the American Society for Engineering Education. He made significant pedagogical innovations regarding undergraduate analog and digital communications, capstone senior design and high school outreach programs. Dennis promoted the reintroduction of amateur radio into ECE capstone senior design projects. Congratulations Dennis!

**Carter N3AO** has been experimenting with Winlink and now has a portable, Winlink communications setup for HF and VHF. **Lor W3QA** was a helpful mentor with this configuration.

Thanks to **Lou WX3I** for his past service as Net Manager.

The December 2007 issue of QST (page 84) shows MARC's callsign **W3NWA** and our achieved standing and score of 2,316 points for Field Day 2007 as a 2-Alpha station configuration. Thanks again to those that participated!

CORRECTION: Earlier, it was reported that **Doug N3ENU** was working in Dubai. While this is still the case, it was stated that Dubai is in Saudi Arabia. Oops! It isn't. Dubai is actually part of UAE (United Arab Emirates). Sorry for any confusion and please see Doug's interesting article on his amateur radio experiences in Dubai.

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## William Owen, W3KRB – Silent Key

It is with sincere regret that we announce the passing of Bill Owen. Bill was a long time MARC member and died on January 23rd at age 87.

Bill graduated from Upper Darby High School and then, earned a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Pennsylvania in 1942. Later, he earned a Master's degree from Penn.

During World War II, he served in the Army at a state-side post and was later recalled to military duty and served 2 years in Korea. While in the Army, he served in the Signal Corps. He was also an amateur radio operator for many years.



In the late 1950's, Bill returned to Penn and served as dean of admissions for 7 years, into the 60's.

He campaigned aggressively to recruit the top students according to daughter Sandi Richards and he became VP for development and public relations.

He was executive assistant to the president when he retired from Penn in 1986. Later, he served as a consultant for Penn's 250th anniversary celebration in 1990.

Bill enjoyed gardening, traveling and loved history. He was active in MARC for many years and served on the Hamfest committee and the MARC Board as our PR Chairman. We will miss him and his bright and inspiring personality.

He is also survived by daughters Lynda Safnauer, Ginger Fifer, eight grandchildren and two great-granddaughters.

## MARC INFO

[wb3joe@marc-radio.org](mailto:wb3joe@marc-radio.org)  
<http://www.marc-radio.org>

### MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS -

3rd Tuesdays, 7:30 PM  
Tredyffrin Twp. Bldg.  
Berwyn, PA – Guests Welcome  
Smoke Free, Handicapped-accessible.

### BOARD MEETINGS -

2nd Tuesdays of even months, 7:30 PM  
Paoli Hospital, Willistown Meeting Room  
Members may attend as observers.

**WB3JOE REPEATERS (CTCSS or PL = 131.8 hz) -**  
145.130 - / 147.060 + / 224.420 - / 445.675 -  
The 2 meter repeaters are linked.

### WEBMASTER -

Foster Schucker K3FXS  
[k3fxs@arrl.net](mailto:k3fxs@arrl.net) 302-363-7347

### 2 METER NETS -

Club Net, Sunday, 8:30 PM  
Traffic Net, M/W/F, 8:30 PM  
Roundtable, Thursdays, 8:30 PM

These nets occur on linked 145.13 - R / 147.06 + R

### 1.25 METER (220 MHz) NET –

Club Net, Sunday, 7:30 PM

This net occurs on 224.420 - R

### NET MANAGER –

Sam Mitchell WA3LGL  
[wa3lgl@earthlink.net](mailto:wa3lgl@earthlink.net) 215-530-2151

### DUES -

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

### NEWSLETTER -

The REMARCS editor is Dieter K3DK  
610-489-1920 [dhauer@gis.net](mailto:dhauer@gis.net)  
Do you have anything for REMARCS?  
Please let me know.

## UPCOMING CLUB MEETINGS

**February 19th, Dennis Silage K3DS** will give a presentation on EZNEC antenna modeling software. If you plan to homebrew an antenna this coming spring, you may find this tool to be quite helpful in creating an efficient antenna design.

**March 18th**, There will be an ARRL video that shows the Spark Gap transmitter and its operation.

## MARC BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2007-2008

### PRESIDENT

Dieter Hauer K3DK

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### VICE PRESIDENT

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To 9/30/2008 -

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## WARNING!

You're walking towards your car in the parking lot and you spot a lost iPod or memory stick lying on the ground. Fortunately, it hasn't been run over by another vehicle and it appears to be perfectly useable. **STOP!**

According to Laura Chappell, a network protocol specialist, there could be a nasty computer virus in that iPod or memory stick. Connect it to your PC at home or work and you may have just infected it! Also, your anti-virus software may not be up to the task of detecting and eradicating that virus.

## Ducie Island Logs Now Online

(February 15, 2008) – From ARRL HQ

The DXpedition to Ducie Island, [VP6DX](#), is well underway and the DXpedition crew has now posted its logs [online](#).

Have you worked VP6DX yet? Check and make sure you are listed in their log. There are 21 band slots in three modes (CW, Phone and RTTY) that can be worked. Their Web page also provides the optimum times for working VP6DX.

Depending on weather and other considerations, VP6DX will go off the air on or around February 27.

## MARC BOARD MEETING – NOTES

From: January 8, 2008 - By Sam Mitchell WA3LGL

**In Attendance:** Dieter K3DK, Sam WA3LGL, Lou WX3I, Bob N3JIZ, Dennis K3DS, and Jim W3DCL. No regular members were present at this meeting.

### Regular Business:

- Dieter K3DK discussed video programs for our meetings. Dennis K3DS will give a program on EZNEC. Discussed redoing the web site. Dieter will be showing a video of Everything You Wanted to Know About Antennas at our next General Membership meeting (Jan 15).
- Dennis K3DS discussed the SCOM 7330 repeater controller and recommended that we get one for our repeaters. The board approved the purchase of the controller (cost \$414.00).
- Bob N3JIZ presented receipts from the hamfest and field day to the treasurer. He also read a thank you letter from the Radnor Run that we supported last October.
- Jim W3DCL talked about library books being kept at a local library for members and others to sign out. He will report back to the board later.
- Sam WA3LGL brought up starting an HF Net. We need to find out who wants to run the net and how many people may be interested.
- We discussed the current By-Laws. No changes to be made at this time. The board will follow up on this at a future meeting.

### Public Service Events:

- Bob N3JIZ stated that there are no public service events scheduled at this time.

### MARC Nets:

- Sam WA3LGL was assigned as Net Control for the Sunday night 220 net and the Friday traffic nets.
- Ray KB3NFE will do the scheduling for the Thursday night roundtable.
- Sam WA3LGL is the new Net Manager.
- We discussed Echo-Link, IRLP's and nodes. No action will be taken now.

**Meeting Ended at 8:45 PM**

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### Getting Started in QRP and Other HF Tidbits, Part IV



By Bob Woish, WB3T

In the last few issues of ReMARCS, I've discussed the beginnings of QRP operation with many tips that apply also to general HF operating. I'll continue this theme with a discussion on a topic that many hams enjoy – homebrew antennas for HF. Based on the chatter commonly heard on the MARC 2m repeaters, the focus here will be on clandestine, or hidden antennas. Many of you have mentioned antenna restrictions. These are becoming far too common for my money.

Until about a decade ago, I was a lifelong apartment dweller. I now live in an antenna-restricted neighborhood, otherwise known as a CC&R development. This has inspired me to find ways to get on the air with efficient radiators despite the challenges. The ARRL and several congressmen and women have lobbied Washington to make antenna restrictions for amateur radio operators illegal, but for now, the laws remain as is. We can support our league's efforts by contacting local representatives and congressmen to express our concern for enhancements to public safety by removing CC&R restrictions, just as antenna restrictions on privately owned properties have been removed in the past. Hurricane Katrina produced major kudos from no less than President George Bush for the radio amateur community, who provided much-needed communication service when all else failed. But that is another discussion.

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*Light gauge magnet wire is the secretive ham's best friend. Once raised up to 20 feet or more, it is very difficult to find in the air, even when you know exactly where it is.*

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Meanwhile, how does one erect an effective HF antenna on a restricted property? A visit to my QTH would yield several answers. Although I have a variance for one ground-mounted antenna, my neighbors are not aware of the nine other HF antennas I operate from home. My first attempt was a B&W three-band trap dipole, deployed in the attic, for 80, 40, and 15 meters. On the same feedline is a 20 meter dipole. When installed in August of 1998, this antenna worked plenty of DX around the globe on both CW and phone. South America, Europe, Asia, and Australia were common contacts. I was delighted that I had hurdled the antenna restriction in fine style.

I simply ran the radiating elements around the attic wherever they would fit. Tuning was a tedious process with much iteration, but the payoff was worth the effort. As technology advanced and electrical noise increased from digital phone signals, cable TV, and Internet cabling emanating from attic wiring, the noise level on most HF bands increased considerably. Strong signals overcame this problem easily, but the weak DX stations could not be heard. Fellow hams in the area would say, "Can't you hear him?" I knew I had to do something. That's when I installed my GAP Eagle vertical 25 feet from the house. But that's no fun, I didn't build it myself. So I went back to work.

Light gauge magnet wire is the secretive ham's best friend. Once raised up to 20 feet or more, it is very difficult to find in the air, even when you know exactly where it is. Imagine trying to find it if you don't! I use #24 wire for most of my hidden antennas. There are presently five antennas hoisted over my side yard that nobody has been able to detect. These include a 75m half-in, half-out Inverted Vee, another for 30m, and a trio of half-in, half-out inverted "L"s laid against the vinyl siding for 80m, 40m, and 20m. The cold ends for all five antennas are strung through the attic, and the gable vent provides a convenient exit for the hot sides. If you are a Rooster, you have heard my signal from the 75m HI-HO on the air.

Keep in mind that dipoles are very forgiving. You can easily run a dipole indoors or outdoors simply by bending and routing to fit the available space. As long as the electrical length is correct, you'll get a good match. Start long, using the formula  $468/\text{frequency}$  in MHz for the length in feet for a center-fed antenna, and trim to resonance. Of course, radiating patterns and antenna efficiency will change, for better or for worse, depending on layout. That's where experimenting comes in! Just try not to fold the antenna back on itself for best performance. 90 degree bends are fine, a more acute angle will invite signal cancellation, unwanted changes in capacitance, and reduced performance. But if you're stuck with that option, give it a try, you might be surprised!

An MFJ-16010 random wire antenna tuner serves as the loading point for my multiband HF random wire antenna, which runs out my back upstairs window to a tree about 50 feet away. I dropped the remaining length of wire down the center of the tree, making a nice 75-foot antenna capable of loading on all HF bands from 80 – 10 meters, including WARC bands. Sure, the tree will absorb some radiated RF, but this antenna works for local and DX contacts at QRP power levels nonetheless. This one is also a little noisy, but not as much as the multibander in the attic. I use the random wire antenna frequently for 30m, and Eastern Europe is an easy target.

One thing to keep in mind if you experiment with magnet-wire invisible antennas – 100 Watts is about the limit, far less if the antenna is indoors or near any living area. For the QRPer, myself included, that is no problem!

The fence bordering the property provides a nice, eight-foot-high support for my full length G5RV, tucked invisibly between the slats. This also requires a tuner, but is all-band.

- Continued on page 5



Being so close to the ground, the launch angle is quite high – good only for close-in contacts, but it sure does a great job on those. Imagine the signal energy hitting the ground beneath at close range and reflecting straight up, forming a two-element design that aims at the sky, only to bounce back at close range. 75 and 40m rag chewing with the locals up to a few hundred miles out is the strong point of an antenna installed so close to the reflective Earth.

I have also tried Bilal Isotrons for 15, 20, 40, and 80 meters. These work surprisingly well for an antenna no bigger than a bird feeder. Got a tight space? You really should try these. Isotrons handle a full kW PEP and 500 Watts CW. But my favorite antenna project is my latest – a four band base-loaded vertical dipole for 80, 75, 40, and 30m. I wound the loading coil on an empty 7-Up bottle and ran a 24-foot length of #24 speaker wire up the center of the pine tree in my back yard. I spent a week slotting the yard with a garden edging tool, and laid 14 ground wires, between 15 and 66 feet in length, under the surface of the lawn. Once in place, experimentation with various taps on the coil yielded excellent SWR performance and radiating efficiency. I have loaded this one up with anywhere from 3 Watts to 500 Watts with surprisingly good results. A ground-mounted vertical with a *good radial system* offers a very low RF launch angle, conducive to hitting the horizon as far out as possible and maximizing DX performance. For the first time, I have had no trouble working DX on 75 and 80m.

Of course, an SWR meter is nearly a must for antenna experimentation. It is possible to work without one, but you're really shooting in the dark. An antenna analyzer is an even better idea. And don't forget – a counterpoise of a quarter-wave at each band of operation goes a long way toward improving antenna efficiency. These can be run around the perimeter of the attic or operating room along the baseboards. But be careful if you use this approach as the end of a counterpoise at high power can produce dangerously high voltage and a fire hazard. Once again – consider QRP operating! *A good earth ground or safely installed (i.e. completely suspended in the air and away from living areas) counterpoise is a must for high-power operation.*

Mailbag – Speaking of antennas, Sue (K3SUE) has received the SteppIR and will be looking for volunteers in early spring to assist with getting this amazing antenna up on the tower. Please look for Sue on the 2m machine to offer your help. If you like hamming, you won't want to miss the opportunity to see this state-of-the-art, monster antenna go up in person.

Correction - I received an email after the last issue informing me that the Elecraft K3 is in fact available as a QRP kit. I had saved that email in my inbox, but it has been purged as too old. So thanks to whoever sent that along although I can't claim to remember who that was!

Well, go to it! I hope these suggestions will inspire some new ideas. Let me know of your results, or if you come up with a new antenna idea. If you are antenna restricted, or just enjoy experimenting, an inexpensive hunk of wire with or without an antenna tuner can be a lot of fun. And don't forget – winter is prime building time for those QRP kits and HF antennas. Here's wishing you many sunspots!

72/73, Bob, WB3T [radioWB3T@AOL.com](mailto:radioWB3T@AOL.com)

## MARC PUBLIC SERVICE – WRAP UP FOR 2007

Thanks to those MARC members and friends that assisted with our Public Service events throughout 2007.

We wish to recognize our volunteers (below) that gave their time and efforts for the last three Public Service events that MARC concluded towards the end of 2007 (from October – November). Our Public Service Chairman **Bob Palin N3JIZ** coordinated the communications and placement of our volunteer communicators for each event.

### Penn Wynne Library 5K Run, Oct. 13th:

- Bob - W3ZQN
- Steve - WA2EAJ
- Lou - WX3I
- Floyd - KA3OXA
- Dieter - K3DK
- Bob - N3JIZ

### Radnor Run, American Lung Assoc. Oct. 28th:

- Sam - WA3LGL
- Steve - WA2EAJ
- Alex – KA2VLP
- Floyd - KA3OXA
- Foster - K3FXS
- Bob - N3JIZ

### Vietnam Veterans 5K Run, Nov. 11th:

- Alex – KA2VLP
- Josy – WQ3E
- Dieter - K3DK
- Sam – WA3LGL
- Susan – K3SUE
- Ryan – KB3MPX
- Bob - N3JIZ



MARC's Last Public Service Event in 2007, The Vietnam Veterans 5K Run - Volunteers (left to right): Alex KA2VLP, Dieter K3DK, Josy WQ3E, Sam WA3LGL, Ryan KB3MPX, Bob N3JIZ and Susan K3SUE.

## AMATEUR RADIO IN DUBAI

### A Compilation - By Doug Wilkens, N3ENU

*[Editor's Note: Doug Wilkens N3ENU is a long-time MARC member and is currently residing in the middle-eastern country of Dubai. He has been living in Dubai for approximately 1 & ½ years and is involved with the multi-media aspect of the Dubai Mall project (one of the largest building projects in the world!). Below are some of Doug's writings and photos of his personal experiences in Dubai. Thank you for sharing this piece of amateur radio history with us Doug!]*

#### January 11, 2008 – First Meeting of the UAE Amateur Radio Society!

Below are photos that I took a few days ago at the first meeting of the UAE Amateur Radio Society (their equivalent of the ARRL). This organization was founded by royal decree – officially starting on Thursday, 10 January (this was their “New Year’s Day” or equivalent to January 1 in the USA). I believe there were about 8 expatriates like myself and around 10 Emiratis (citizens of the United Arab Emirates) in attendance. Most of the expats are in the same situation as am I – waiting for licenses. No, you can’t see me in the pictures (immediately below), since I was taking the pictures.

They are in a nice facility (supported by the government), located on the grounds of the Scout Camp (again, a government supported facility for their equivalent of the Boy Scouts). In some of the pictures you can see the radio operating room and equipment sitting around on tables (equipment was donated by various members of the society). The antennas will be installed soon, the equipment set up – and they will be on the air from there as a club station. I am waiting to get my license here.

Yesterday was unusual because we had rain. We have 5-6 days of rain per year, so people get downright giddy when it rains.



#### January 14, 2008 –

There will be a JOTA (Jamboree On The Air) at an upcoming Boy Scouts gathering on the 19th of February. Hopefully, I will be able to get some more pix then – maybe even one with me in the picture! They will set up a station (not sure yet how many operating positions) in a large tent and have Scouts involved in some fashion – a bit like a Field Day setup. This is all being planned ‘on the run’ so no real details yet. This gathering will be held in Sharjah, a neighboring Emirate of Dubai and part of the United Arab Emirates (as is Dubai).

Here is a short blurb on the upcoming Scout gathering:

[http://www.scout.org/en/around\\_the\\_world/arab/information\\_events/node\\_2604/node\\_9454](http://www.scout.org/en/around_the_world/arab/information_events/node_2604/node_9454)

The folks involved with the UAE Amateur Radio Society are new at the game, but very enthusiastic – and want to make a name for their group. I was told they are going to have a booth in Germany at the big hamfest there and perhaps also in Dayton.

**73, Doug N3ENU**

## The K7RA Solar Update

From ARRL HQ – February 15, 2008

No sunspots appeared this week. Solar flux was about the same as last week. The 45-day outlook for solar flux and planetary A index from NOAA and the Air Force on February 10 was predicting a flat solar flux of 70; the following day, this was revised to show 72 for February 12-18, then 70 after that. On February 12, this changed to show 72 solar flux for February 13 through the rest of the 45 days.

Sunspot numbers for February 7-13 were 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0 and 0 with a mean of 0. The 10.7 cm flux was 70.8, 70.9, 72.2, 72.6, 72.1, 72.1 and 70.5 with a mean of 71.6. Estimated planetary A indices were 5, 4, 2, 18, 17, 11 and 12 with a mean of 9.9. Estimated mid-latitude A indices were 6, 3, 2, 13, 16, 6 and 10 with a mean of 8.

For February 10-13, we saw increased geomagnetic activity due to another solar wind stream. The planetary A index -- calculated from a number of mostly higher latitude magnetometers -- was 18, 17, 11 and 12 for those four days. Alaska's college A index, measured near Fairbanks, was 42, 31, 22 and 26, illustrating the increased geomagnetic activity toward the poles in response to space weather. Here at mid-latitudes, where many of us live, the A index (measured in Virginia) was 13, 16, 6 and 10. That magnetometer is near 38.3 degrees north latitude, which is a little south, and of course way east of the Boulder site (at 40.1 degrees north latitude), where we get the K and A index reported on WWW.

Jon Jones, NOJK of Wichita, Kansas, reports some February E-skip openings on 6 meters. He writes, "E-skip tends to become scarce in February, and March has the lowest occurrence of E-skip of any month." On February 2 he worked XE2YWB in Central Mexico (DL82) at 2237 UTC on 50.125 MHz with S7 signals. The next day he worked K4EU in Virginia via E-skip on 10 meters. K4EU reported working stations throughout the Midwest that day.

Ed Swynar, VE3CUI, of Newcastle, Ontario, took issue with a statement in last week's bulletin about the absence of sunspots being great for 160 meters. "Such mythology could not be further from the truth this year. The band has been most unremarkable this season, to say the least, and it continues to languish away in the doldrums. I thought that perhaps it was something at fault at my end: however, many subscribers to W4ZV's Topband Reflector seem to be of the same opinion." Readers have sent similar reports about both 160 and 75 meters over the past year. It seems that low geomagnetic and sunspot activity should be good for the lower frequencies, but perhaps it is not always the case.

Over the past week many, many e-mails arrived from readers with a link to an article in a daily business publication claiming that we are on the verge of another Maunder Minimum, a decades-long period of little or no sunspot activity that occurred roughly between the years 1640-1710. The article appeared with no byline, quoting Dr Kenneth Tapping of the Herzberg Institute of Astrophysics in Penticton, British Columbia; this is the observatory that supplies our daily solar flux values. But I thought the quotes sounded a little strange and not like Ken. Some readers also felt this way. As one wrote, "The article didn't quite ring true," and "I have a fairly broad scientific reading list."

I sent Ken an e-mail. He responded that this has been a difficult week for him. A few weeks ago he received a phone call from a woman who engaged him in "a long discussion involving possibilities ranging from likely to not likely." He wrote that the article promotes something that is untrue, and "in no way do I support the conclusions she assigned to me."

I think we can relax about any possible upcoming 70-year period of a quiet Sun. We cannot say that it could not happen, but in fact there is nothing unusual about the current Solar Cycle minimum, and really no known method of predicting such a period.

This weekend is the ARRL International DX CW Contest. The geomagnetic field is expected to be quiet. Last weekend I watched an interesting DVD from the local library, a 1994 documentary titled Picture of Light. This has some nice time-lapse long-exposure moving images of aurora, taken in Churchill, Manitoba, on Hudson Bay above 58 degrees north latitude.

## FROM THE EDITOR'S SHACK

By Dieter Hauer K3DK

I wish you all a belated Happy New Year and, a healthy one too. I don't make New Year's resolutions any more because they're never "honored". However, this time, a few are in order and one of them is to get a check up. It's something that hasn't happened in a long time.

No one ever looks forward to being scrutinized in that most personal way, but sometimes it's necessary medicine. Late last year, a family member came down with a serious illness and we were all on pins and needles'. That experience once again confirmed that each one of us should have a medical advocate if we ever make passage into the local hospital.

While medical technology has advanced tremendously, due to the power of computing, automation and advanced medical techniques... it's **common sense** that matters most and the lack of it can sometimes be a real killer.

If someone that you're close to becomes ill, do a basic check up (i.e. a simple visit) and see how they're doing. Although it isn't recommended that one play doctor or nurse (leave that important role to trained professionals), it is good, common sense to stop by for a visit and ask "how are you doing?". By the way, Mother is doing well and is on the mend, at home.

We all need basic maintenance and in rare instances, an overhaul – in more ways than one. If you attended the MARC Holiday Party, back in December, then you would have benefited from some good food and great company. Don't forget our VHF Nets as the regulars there will welcome you. An occasional meeting is good for the mind and informative too!

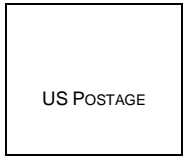
- 73 Dieter K3DK

## FESTS

**SWL Fest** – March 7-8, Kulpville, PA - <http://swlfest.com/> .

**BRATS Hamfest** – March 29-30, Maryland State Fairgrounds - Timonium, MD - [www.gbhc.org](http://www.gbhc.org) .

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