

Richmond Amateur Telecommunications Society
SOLID COPY
JANUARY 1999

FrostFest - January 17, 1999 from 8:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. at the Showplace, 3000 Mechanicsville Turnpike (Route 360), Richmond, Virginia. Tickets are \$6.00 Talk-in will be on the RATS repeater, 146.88 from 6:00 a.m. until noon on Sunday. **There will NOT be a regular monthly meeting. See you at the FrostFest and at the February meeting.**

CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

The RATS Christmas social was held December 18. A big thank you goes to Shirley, KF4EFZ, and Andy, KB4JXS for setting up the food. There was lots of fried chicken provided by the club, and a nice assortment of covered dishes brought by members.

VE EXAMS

Monday, February 2, 1999. 7:30 p.m.
at the Curtis Elementary School, 3600W. Hundred Road (Route 10), Chester, VA. Pre-register with TONY AMATO, KR4UQ, at 717-5237

Saturday, February 14, 1999 9:00 a.m.
at J. S. Reynolds Community College, 1651 East Parham Road, Building B, Room 201. Pre-register with PAT WILSON, K4OW at 932-9424 or email at pw@i2020.net.

THE 88 COMES THROUGH

The following email message was sent to mail@rats.net on Dec. 30, 1998 and is printed here with the author's permission.

I'm Bill Gandel and have been a "RATS" member for years and just want all RATS members to know how much I appreciate the autopatch with the great coverage it has.

On Sunday December 27, 1998 I used the autopatch twice from the far southwestern part of Prince George County. Once in the morning about 10AM then later about 3 PM. This in response to being paged by our Disaster Chairperson Of the Hopewell-Prince George Red Cross

Chapter. I had a cell phone but it decided to go south for the winter and there was simply no way to respond to this page without searching for a wired phone that would have taken 20 minutes to a half hour.

The reason I was paged and responded by autopatch is the I'm the Director Of Social Services and a Deputy Emergency Services Director here in Prince George County. There was priority message traffic I needed to have regarding emergency shelter ops. here.

The 146.88 repeater and autopatch let me respond and no emergency services or operations were delayed due to the phone problems I was having.

Shelter operations continued and all was well.

Thanks from Prince George County Government and me personally !

Bill Gandel, WA4QFP

KID'S DAY

Saturday, January 2, 1999, my next to last day of holiday before I return to work on Monday. Upon returning from grocery shopping at about 3 p.m., I turn on the HF rig and hear a very young voice. Now I remember--it is Kid's Day. From 1800 to 2400 UTC, youth--licensed or not--are encouraged to take to the air waves (accompanied by a licensed control op, of course). Get some hands-on exposure to the wonderful world of ham radio. Engage in a QSO, exchanging, name, age, location and favorite color.

It was a pleasure and lot of fun for me to talk to these young people. One contact was with 4 year old Brian and his 7 year old sister Sarah. Dad John was control op, and Mom was listening. A neat way to spend family time. Also contacted were 12 year old Daniel and 13 year old Kelsey, both licensed. Some exchanges were basic information and "nice to meet you", while others turned into 5 to 10 minute conversations about weather, where they lived, how they liked talking on the radio, how you can talk to people all over the world,... One was visiting his dad in Montana; he lives in Sidney, Australia. One was saving money to buy an Icom 706 MK II.

Kid's Day is sponsored by the Boring (Oregon) Amateur Radio Club. Another Kid's Day is scheduled for June 19. I enjoyed this one so much that I'm thinking about "adopting" several from my neighborhood or school to work with me next time.

Marie, KF4UUI

RULES & REGS

News from the ARRL and FCC

W1AW HAS NEW OPERATING SCHEDULE

On January 2, W1AW resumed a one hour code practice Tuesday through Friday beginning at 9 a.m., and discontinued morning bulletins. Visitor operating hours on weekdays have been expanded to 10 am - 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. There will no longer be weekend code practice or bulletins, and no more weekend operation by visiting hams. Evening code practice and bulletin schedules will stay the same, except that the final transmission of the day will be a code bulletin at 11 p.m. Eastern Time.

For complete schedules, see January 1999 QST page 74 or <http://www.arrl.org/w1aw.html>

Tnx, ARRL Newsletter Online, Dec. 25, 1998/Jan. 1, 1999

FCC DONE "TAKING NAMES"

Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH, of the FCC's Compliance and Information Bureau, has a list of "hams that are naughty, not nice", and is ready to take enforcement action against the worst offenders. "We are not going to stand for the Amateur Service to be further degraded or destroyed by them. 31% of all complaints concern jamming and deliberate interference, and 29% come from repeater misuse and jamming. HF offenses are considered more serious since they can be national or international incidents. Another 10% of complaints were about an unlicensed Californian who has already done jail time for past convictions.

Hollingsworth has sent out 30 informal "warning letters" informing recipients that a complaint has been filed, and that if the allegations are true, the individual's license could be in jeopardy.

While the warnings will continue, efforts are being focused on the hard-core habitual violaters. "We have now let everyone out there know we're back." Ongoing offenses will 'guarantee' license revocations, fines, or--in extreme cases--equipment seizures. Hollingsworth warned that rule breakers continue to do so at their own risk.

Tnx, ARRL Newsletter Online, Dec. 11, 1998

WIRELESS MODEM INTERFERENCE

Phonex Corp. of Midvale, Utah, a maker of wireless modems, and TCI, a cable company that has been installing them, have responded to the ARRL regarding interference complaints. The ARRL contacted the two companies after reports from Northern California Contest Club about interference on 80 meters. The two companies say they will do whatever it takes to keep the devices from causing interference. The devices operate under Part 15 of the FCC's rules, meaning that they may not cause interference to any licensed services.

Wireless modems are first cousins to wireless telephone jacks. Both are sold in pairs. One unit plugs into the telephone or modem jack and the other unit serves as a telephone or modem jack. Both plug into ac outlets, and the carrier-current devices impose RF on the power lines,

transmitting data in the form of wide band FM.

Phonex wireless modems operate on 3.52 and 8.27 MHz. TCI has been installing these units in some subscriber's homes, connecting the cable box to the telephone line to transmit billing information. They transmit a continuous carrier on the lower frequency, whether or not the phone connection is in use, and on both frequencies when the remote line is in use.

The ARRL received reports of persistent interference on the low end of 80 meters and on other bands. The interference is in the form of discrete, somewhat noisy and drifting carriers, usually around 3520 to 3530 kHz, but harmonics have been reported all the way to 20 meters.

TCI plans to replace the 3.52 MHz wireless jacks with 3.3 MHz units or run hardwired telephone connections. They will immediately replace any units causing interference, and others during routine customer service. They will install only 3.3 MHz units in the future. Phonex has made the necessary production changes. They will retune or replace any unit causing interference. They can be contacted at 1-800-437-0101.

ARRL Lab Supervisor Ed Hare, W1RFI, says "both companies have been refreshingly cooperative. If every RFI problem that involves amateur radio could be fixed so quickly, I would probably be out of a job."

Tnx, ARRL Newsletter Online, Dec. 25, 1998/Jan. 1, 1999

DITS 'N DAHS

A column about miscellaneous topics

DUTCH LOWFER EXPERIMENT

An event by several Dutch hams to work as many other LF stations as possible resulted in QSOs between PA2NJJ of the Netherlands and several stations in the UK and Europe on 136 kHz.

A 900 foot antenna was carried aloft by a kite and tied into place. Static electricity built up and several hams received shocks. "Sparks were springing from a distance of 2 cm." The transceiver had not yet been hooked up. A loop antenna was used for receiving. Once the transmitting antenna was up, the group could not receive as well. Transmitter power was 150 W, with EIRP estimated at 10 to 15 W.

PA2NJJ got reception reports from European countries including France, Germany, Sweden, Scotland, and Italy.

Tnx, ARRL Newsletter Online, Dec. 25, 1998/Jan. 1, 1999

As was printed in December Solid Copy, the ARRL has requested 2 low frequency allocations.

RADIO ROUND UP

The North American Center for Emergency Communications is conducting its first ever Radio Round Up to acquire additional equipment for its "Mission Honduras" project. Nacec has received just over \$2300 from individuals, organizations and companies for 2-way communications gear for remote areas of Honduras, which was devastated by Hurricane Mitch. More information can be found at <http://www.nacec.org/hurricane-mitch/>. Contributions are welcome to "NACEC Operation Fund", NACEC Operation Fund, PO Box 23057, Minneapolis, MN 55423.

Tnx, ARRL Newsletter Online, Dec. 25, 1998/Jan. 1, 1999

LIVE FROM MIR: IT'S SSTV

The Mir space station transmitted live SSTV images for the first time December 11. Several amateurs reported copying images on 2 meters, but transmission will move to a 70-cm frequency that's coordinated for that purpose.

The SSTV was turned off for several passes on December 14, and the packet system was back on 145.985 MHz. As of December 16, R0MIR was transmitting SSTV on some passes and packet on others.

Neither cosmonaut aboard Mir this time is a ham. The SSTV equipment was supplied by Miles Mann, WF1F and operates in automatic mode. It can display a new image every two minutes.

For details on receiving SSTV using your PC, see <http://www.ultranet.com/~sstv>.

Tnx, ARRL Newsletter Online, Dec.18, 1998

NAMES IN THE NEWS

✧ The Samuel I. Keene Memorial Service Award from the Disaster Preparedness-Emergency Response Association was presented to Lonnie McVaigh, KB9LUN, of Decatur, Illinois. McVaigh was seriously injured while on storm-spotter duty. When a funnel cloud threatened Decatur on April 19, 1996, McVaigh warned people to get off the street, taking shelter with a family at the last moment. He suffered a broken pelvis and nerve damage to his legs when the chimney toppled into the basement.

His wife, Melissa, KB9MDF, was able to stay in contact with him via radio, and was able to summon the rescue squad quickly.

McVaigh has been through several surgeries and rehabilitation and is unable to work. He and his family rely on public assistance, Social Security, and help from friends and church. They have three children of their own and five foster children. He continues his slow recovery.

- ⌘ W1AW weekend operator Al Alvareztorres, AA1DO began a new position as ARRL Technical Information Coordinator on January 4. Members can address technical questions to Al at 860-594-0214, write TIS, ARRL, 225 Main St., Newington CT 06111, or email at tis@arrl.org.
- ⌘ ARRL Roanoke Division Vice Director Dennis Bodson, W4PWF, is the recipient of the 1999 Charles Proteus Steinmetz Award sponsored by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Standards Association. The award is given for major contributions to development of standards in the field of electrical and electronics engineering.
- ⌘ ARRL Roanoke Division Director John Kanode, N4MM, has a new address -- 1741 Old Chapel Road, Boyce, VA 22620.
- ⌘ The FCC Wireless Telecommunications Bureau has named Thomas J. Sugrue as chief beginning January 19.

Tnx, ARRL Newsletter Online, Dec. 11, 1998, Dec. 25, 1998/Jan. 1, 1999

SOLAR UPDATE

Solar activity is generally on an upswing over the past months. You can find a chart at <http://www.dxl.com/solar/> or at <http://www.wm7d.net/hamradio/solar>. You can find the press release and images for a story released by NASA about solar wind squeezing ions out of the ionosphere at <http://www.spof.gsfc.nasa.gov/istp/news/9812>.

HOW'S THAT AGAIN?

The movie "Enemy of the State", in scenes depicting a spy satellite, includes a bit of Morse code. The satellite calls CQ! "As though pictures were sent from satellites by Morse" said Tom Bradbury, NU4G, who broke out laughing, to the puzzlement of those around him most likely. According to Steve Kaufman, VE2SKA/KB2SPH, the characters use what looks like a Yaesu HF transceiver to break into police frequencies. "The frequency shown is in the 40-meter band, but they do speak to the police dispatcher."

Tnx, ARRL Newsletter Online, Dec. 25, 1998/Jan. 1, 1999

ALPHA/POWER

BUYS RFCONCEPTS

Alpha/Power, makers of HF linear amplifiers, has bought the RFconcepts product line of VHF and UHF amplifiers. The deal includes name, inventory, current and non-current products, and manuals,... They will also handle service and repairs.

Tnx, ARRL Newsletter Online, Dec. 25, 1998/Jan. 1, 1999

TOP SIGNS THAT YOU MAY

NEED AN ELMER...

By Jeffrey S. King, N1DJS

An elmer is the guy you go to, to ask questions about topics in Ham Radio that you don't understand. In that vein, you know it's time for you to find an Elmer if...

- ✂ You friend tells you he has a new two meter radio and you figure one of the meters must be for swr and the other for power out.
- ✂ You hear a conversation on the low bands about CW and you think they're refering to the cold war.
- ✂ You hear someone sign this is N8XXX mobile 4 and you think it's because he has three other radios
- ✂ You hear that someone won a 40 meter radio at a hamfest and you wonder how they're going to get something that large in their house.
- ✂ You build a morse code key out of plexiglass and can't figure out why it won't key your radio.
- ✂ You think the difference between short wave and long wave is the speed at which you move your wrist back and forth.
- ✂ You're thinking about joining your other ham frineds in the local ATV group because you own a four wheel drive vehicle that will go just about anywhere.
- ✂ You won't use a repeater because you've heard that using a repeater could be dangerous. You've heard an alligator could get you.
- ✂ You think a colinear antenna can only be used with two amplifiers.
- ✂ You think fm is the modulation type that came after em, dm, cm, bm and am.
- ✂ You wouldn't mind getting into packet radio but no matter how much you practice you can't get the hang of sending those beeps and braps with your keyer.
- ✂ You wonder what sound a short wave makes and why anyone would want to listen to one.
- ✂ You think the repeater owner would be a lot happier if instead of talking about his cavities he just went to the dentist and got them filled.
- ✂ You think a CW ID is the number the army gave you on your dog tags during the cold war.

Tnx, Ham Radio Online

INTERNET InSITEs

Amateur Radio, Electronics, and

Technology Related Websites

Since there are many contests at this time of year, here are some websites about contesting (and other things).

[ARRL Contest Branch Calendars, scores, forms, rules.](#)

[Ham Radio Contest/DX Library](#), Links to contest calendars, records, rules, DX bulletins clubs, software

[Contesting Online Home Page](#), Participate in polls regarding favorite equipment; contest calendars, tips, etc.

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