

**Richmond Amateur Telecommunications Society**  
**SOLID COPY**  
**MARCH 1999**

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**MARCH MEETING**

Friday, March 19, at 8:00 p.m., Derbyshire Baptist Church, 8800 Derbyshire Road. See everyone there!

**FEBRUARY MEETING  
HIGHLIGHTS**

The meeting was called to order by President Seth Rosenthal, KF4DJX. After the minutes and treasurer's reports were read, a moment of silence was observed in honor of our SKs. Eight applications for membership were received and accepted. The FrostFest wrap-up report was given by Pat Wilson, W4PW and Jim Clark, N3JFF. Attendance was about 2800, down slightly from previous years, but this seems to be the trend at other hamfests. There were 76 volunteers. A drawing from names of those who had volunteered was held. The three prizes this year were a CD callbook, a Diamond SWR meter, and a Yaesu VX5R tri-band handheld radio. Congratulations to the winners, and many thanks to all who volunteered.

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**VE EXAMS**

Monday, April 5, 1999. 7:30 p.m. at Aunt Sarah's, I95 and Willis Road Exit. Pre-register with TONY AMATO, KR4UQ, at 717-5237

Saturday, April 10, 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.

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**DINWIDDIE TORNADO**

A powerful storm system moved into Virginia on Wednesday, March 3. Skywarn was activated and reports of potential severe weather were transmitted on the 145.43 and 147.36 repeaters. Around 5:30 p.m. there were reports of a funnel cloud and then of a tornado touching down in Dinwiddie. The tornado hit Chaparral Steel Co. construction site in northern Dinwiddie County, overturning trailers and vehicles, and injuring workers still on the job site. Several persons were pinned under trailers. Some people were treated for injuries at the scene and 16 were transported to the hospital with back and neck injuries. Two emergency rescue workers were injured in a car accident while they were en route and were also hospitalized. K-9 Search and Rescue was called in to search for potential victims. Thanks to all ARES, Skywarn and other persons who assisted in reporting the developing situation and with rescue efforts in any way.

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### **NEW ARES ID AND TAGS**

ARES members will soon get new membership cards which will resemble a driver's license. Automobile license plates will also be available in the near future.

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### **SKYWARN TRAINING**

Two Skywarn training sessions are scheduled, one April 8 and one April 28. More information in the April newsletter.

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### **INFORMATION/TRADER'S NETS**

Just a reminder about the two nets that meet back-to-back on the 146.88 repeater on Thursday nights. The Information Net beginning at 7:00 p.m. provides a forum to discuss current happenings concerning ham radio. The Trader's Net follows at 7:30 p.m., giving area hams the opportunity to list items they have for sale or trade or want to buy. Both nets also provide a chance to practice traffic handling and net protocol. Remember current events in history class? Why not check in and share some tidbit of news or some helpful advice with others? Also, consider taking a turn as net control for a week or two.

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### **VIRGINIA LEADS THE WAY**

A bill to amend the Local Government Code in Texas to prevent local jurisdictions from enacting or enforcing ordinances that fail to comply

with PRB-1 was introduced in the Texas House of Representatives at the request of amateurs. The bill would require ordinances dealing with Amateur Radio antenna placement, screening, or height based on health, safety or aesthetics to "reasonably accommodate amateur communications" and "represent the minimal practicable regulation to accomplish the municipality's or county's legitimate purpose." A letter circulated to Texas clubs to gain support for the measure cites the success of Virginia hams in passing the nations first and only specific tower protection bill.

Tnx ARRL Letter Online February 26, 1999

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## **RULES & REGS**

News from the ARRL and FCC

### **FCC SUSPENDS REPEATER**

In the first major VHF/UHF enforcement actions in recent months, the K7IJ repeater facility in the San Francisco Bay area has been shut down for 120 days by the FCC and the licensee was told that his ham ticket could be in jeopardy. The repeater operates on 145.29, 223.78, 440.175 and 441.175 MHz. Four individuals accused of unlicensed operation on the repeater prior to getting their ham tickets or other behavior, have had their license grants set aside by the FCC. "The FCC's Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH, said that for almost a year, the repeater's control operator, identified as Blake B. Jenkins, N6YSA, of Berkeley, California, "has apparently not only allowed, but encouraged, use of the repeater by unlicensed operators, rebroadcast of cordless telephone calls, playing of music, and profanity and obscenity." He said extended QSOs have taken place between the control operator and unlicensed stations."

Tnx ARRL Letter Online February 26, 1999

### **HF PRIVILEGES SUSPENDED**

A New Jersey ham has lost privileges to operate below 30 MHz for 180 days. The license-modification letter from Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH, came after an earlier warning letter for violation of Section 97.101(a), good engineering and good amateur practice, and Section 97.119, identification requirements. "Specifically, you were apparently broadcasting and talking to no particular station for several hours, during which time you prevented the use of the frequencies by others and maliciously interfered with other stations attempting to use the frequencies."

Tnx ARRL Letter Online February 19, 1999

### **RETEST OR LOSE TICKET**

A Delaware ham has been notified by the FCC to retake her ham radio exams or lose her license. Questions were raised about how the ham upgraded to Extra. The ham must retake all the elements in series in an exam session administered either by the FCC or a designated VE. A license would then be granted consistent with the elements passed. Last month, the FCC dismissed the Extra class license held by her husband, who took the complete exam series in one session, not holding an amateur license before then. There are plans to call in 25 to 50 more hams for retesting in the near future. In all cases there is reason to suspect the integrity of the examination process. Examinees allegedly might have been coached or given test answers.

Tnx ARRL Letter Online February 19, 1999

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### **DITS 'N DAHS**

A column about miscellaneous topics

### **SUNSAT LAUNCHED**

SUNSAT was finally launched on February 23 from Vandenberg AFB in California after more than a month of delays and aborted launch attempts. The payload deployed and the ground team has communicated with the satellite and monitored telemetry. SUNSAT should be fully operational in about a month. SUNSAT stands for Stellenbosch University Satellite and takes its name from the South African university whose students constructed the payload. Included in its package is digital store-and-forward capability and a voice "parrot" repeater to be used mostly for educational demonstrations. It has two VHF and two UHF transmit-receive systems. More information can be found at <http://sunsat.ee.sun.ac.za>.

Tnx ARRL Letter Online February 26, 1999

### **PALESTINE: NEW DXCC ENTITY**

Shortly after Palestine gained DXCC status, E44DX began a full-blown DXpedition. The operation began February 16 around 1200 UTC, just after the call sign was released to the Palestine Wireless Society. During its first 48 hours, E44DX made more than 10,000 contacts. Led by Martti Laine, OH2BH, the international team includes QST DX Editor Bernie McClenny, W3UR, as well as Pekka Kolehmainen, OH1RY, and Pekka Holstila, OH2TA. They are working in cooperation with Ali Yashruti, E44A (formerly ZC6A) and Sami, E44B (formerly ZC6B), using two stations from the Palestine Hotel equipped with Yaesu FT-1000MPs and FET amplifiers. Antennas are dipoles and verticals. "The equipment was left behind for the new club station when the DXpedition concluded February 23. "Totten is setting up a "simple" E44DX "DXpedition to Gaza City, Palestine" Web site at <http://www.n4gn.com/e44dx/>. "Almost a week before E44DX was even authorized, some stations reported working a station identifying as "E4DX" on 40-meter CW. That station appears to have been a pirate. Palestine formally will be added to the ARRL DXCC List effective October 1, 1999, but contacts made with E4 stations after February 1, will

count toward DXCC. QSLs for E44DX go to OH2BN.--thanks to Tim Totten, N4GN "

Tnx ARRL Letter Online February 19, 1999

### **HOLLINGSWORTH TO VISIT DAYTON**

Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH, is scheduled to address enforcement issues at the Dayton Hamvention on May 14-16, 1999. He will also address the 3865 Drake and Antique Radio Tube Net Group forum Saturday morning.

Tnx ARRL Letter Online February 26, 1999

### **W4EHW OPERATORS COMMENDED**

Operators at W4EHW ("Early Hurricane Warning") at the National Hurricane Center in Miami were presented with Certificates of Commendation for their commitment and dedication in late January by Max Mayfield, NHC Deputy Director. Despite all the technological advances in satellite imagery and modern hurricane hunter airplanes, the hams many times are the only ones that can tell us what is actually happening on the ground, and, for this we are grateful," said NHC Director Jerry Jarrell. For nearly 20 years, volunteer hams have donated their time and equipment to help gather weather and storm data. During the busy 1998 season, W4EHW operators logged more than 180 hours during Hurricane Georges and nearly 90 for Hurricane Mitch, and many more hours during other storms. Support for the Center began during the 1980 hurricane season. "Julio Ripoll, WD4JNS (now W4EHW assistant coordinator), carried a borrowed HF radio in a cardboard box to and from the Center whenever a storm threatened," he recalled. "He set it up on a forecaster's desk, ran a wire antenna, and with a crew of five volunteers, operated for 12-hour shifts. Today the station consists of HF, VHF and UHF radios, six antennas and two computers that handle APRS and Internet communication. The 30 volunteers usually work three-hour shifts, starting when a hurricane is 200 to 300 miles from land.

For more information, visit the W4EHW website.

Tnx ARRL Letter Online February 26, 1999

### **WIRELESS PRIVACY BILL**

The Wireless Privacy Enhancement Act of 1999, HR514, has been introduced to amend the Communications Act of 1934. Its aim is "to strengthen and clarify prohibitions on electronic eavesdropping, and for other purposes. An identical bill passed the House by a 414-to-1 vote last session but was not acted on by the Senate. It would have banned most types of scanners and scanner listening. The bill's sponsor worked with the ARRL and representatives of public service organizations manufacturers, and scanner enthusiasts to redraft the bill completely. HR514 forbids manufacturing or modifying scanners to receive cellular, PCS, or "protected" paging service frequencies, as well as receiving, divulging, publicizing, or utilizing such communication. The ARRL opposes expanding prohibitions on radio monitoring beyond those now

in existence protecting services that interface with wireline networks. Amateur Radio appears to be unaffected by the new bill.

A copy of the bill is available on the Web at the Library of Congress.

Tnx ARRL Letter Online February 12, 1999

### **PSK31**

PSK31 is not new, but has not been noticed until recently. Peter Martinez, G3PLX, the father of AMTOR, also gets credit for PSK31, a "live QSO keyboard-to keyboard mode that occupies a sliver of bandwidth and offers terrific performance even under weak-signal conditions." PSK31 has become the latest HF fad since Martinez developed free software that works with a PC sound card. It does not use synchronized linking--or handshaking--protocol to exchange error-checked data packets. It operates much like traditional 45-baud RTTY. Some hams experimenting with PSK31 claim that it outperforms all other amateur modes for weak-signal work--including CW. " Most activity is at 14.070.15, 3.580.15, 7.035.15, and 21.070 MHz. PSK31 requires a PC running Windows with a sound card. It also requires an HF SSB transceiver which is very stable and tunes in 1-Hz increments. Software is available on the Web, some as zipped files.

The latest version includes some tuning aids which make finding and tuning signals much simpler. The "official" PSK31 website is operated by Eduardo Jacob, EA2BAJ. It has lots of information and links to other PSK31 and DSP-related sites, plus .wav files of PSK31 signals. W1AW Station Manager Joe Carcia, NJ1Q, has tried out the new mode; initial results were quite good. Plans are being made to add this mode to the other modes available to W1AW visiting operators.

With the wording of Section 97.309(a), there has been a question whether hams are permitted to use PSK31, and the answer is "YES". The FCC amended the section in 1995 (Order DA95-2106) in response to an ARRL inquiry, "to clarify that amateur stations may use any digital code that has its technical characteristics publicly documented."

Tnx ARRL Letter Online February 12, 1999

### **HAARP TEST**

The High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program (HAARP) facility in Gakona, Alaska, will conduct a second HAARP Listening Test. HAARP rarely transmits, but their previous test in 1997 was so successful they are going to do another. They are looking for reports from hams and SWLs in Alaska and other states. CW messages requesting signal strength reports will be sent on or near 3.4 MHz and 6.99 MHz. On March 26 0800-0830 UTC and March 27 0700-0730 UTC listening test will begin on the hour on 6.99 MHz with an ID, followed by three four-minute periods of carrier only for signal-strength measurements, then a CW message. A somewhat shorter test will begin at 20 minutes past the hour on 3.39 MHz, with an ID, followed by one four-minute carrier and a CW message. These times are early for the East Coast, but they are the best times for East Coast listeners who lost out on the last test due to poor propagation conditions. QSLs will be available only for reports mailed to HAARP, PO Box 271, Gakona, AK 99586.

Tnx ARRL Letter Online February 12, 1999

### **NPR FEATURES CW**

National Public Radio's "Talk of the Nation, Science Friday" discussed the continuing use of Morse code among amateur radio operators as the maritime is phasing it out. ARRL's Jennifer Hagy, N1TDY, worked with NPR staff to obtain an interview with Les Kalmus, W2LK, for the life, half-hour talk show. Amateur Radio was portrayed in a very positive light according to listeners, and callers interested in getting their ham licenses were referred to the ARRL. The program is available via RealAudio.

Tnx ARRL Letter Online February 12, 1999

### **CONTEST YEARBOOK DISCONTINUED**

The ARRL Contest Yearbook has been discontinued. Anyone needing contest rules, forms, or other information on ARRL-sponsored operating events can obtain them from ARRLWeb.

Tnx ARRL Letter Online February 26, 1999

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### **INTERNET InSITEs**

#### **Amateur Radio, Electronics, and Technology Related Websites**

Welcome to the PSK31 WWW Page <http://bipt106.bi.ehu.es/psk31.html>

The official PSK31 page with downloads.

EA2BAJ's Ham Homepage <http://bipt86.bi.ehu.es/~jtpjatae/ham.html>

Information and links for ham radio digital modes, including PSK31.

Oliver Welp: Amateur Radio Soundblaster Software Collection <http://www.muenster.de/~welp/sb.htm>

Programs for ham radio using sound cards--e. g. RTTY, fax, but also DSP or audio frequency analyzing.

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