

Richmond Amateur Telecommunications Society

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DECEMBER 1999

RADIOACTIVITY

DECEMBER MEETING

Friday, December 17, at 7:00 PM, Welborne United Methodist Church, Maybeury Drive at Patterson Avenue. Our Christmas Social will be held in place of our regular meeting. The club will furnish chicken, rolls and drinks. Members are asked to bring a side dish or dessert. We're working hard to make this a fun family event. Bring the family and enjoy!

COMING EVENTS

FrostFest 2000 will be held on January 16 from 8:30 AM until 3:30 PM at The Showplace, 3000 Mechanicsville Turnpike (Route 360), near the intersection of Interstate 64 and Route 360.

Volunteers are needed for everything from setup on Saturday to closing. Security, ticket sales, talk-in and food service are some of the areas where help is needed. Jim Clark, N3JJF, will chair the event again this year. If you have not already volunteered, please contact any Board member (see back) or Jim Clark, N3JJF ASAP to volunteer. Let's make FrostFest 2000 the biggest and best ever!

VE EXAMS

Monday, January 3, 2000 at 7:30 PM

Monday, February 7, 2000 at 7:30 PM at C. E. Curtiss Elementary School, 3600 W. Hundred Road (Route 10), Chester, VA. Pre-register with TONY AMATO, KR4UQ, at 717-5237. Tony's web page for test information is: http://www.kr4uq.org/Pages/ve_exams.htm.

Saturday, February 20, 2000 9:00 AM at J. S. Reynolds Community College, 1651 East Parham Road, Building B, Room 201. Pre-register with PAT WILSON, W4PW at 932-9424 or email at w4pw@arrl.net. Pat's test information web page is: <http://www.mindspring.com/~w4pw/hamtests.htm>.

RULES & REGS

News from the ARRL and FCC

FCC DECIDES AGAINST STRENGTHENING PRB-1

The FCC has turned down a 1996 ARRL petition asking the them to go further in compelling state and local governments to reasonably accommodate Amateur Radio and apply the least restrictive means to regulate amateur antennas and activity. The League asked the FCC to amend Section 97.15(e) to say that state or local antenna height limits below 70 feet would be "presumed unreasonable" unless authorities could show they were necessary for health, safety or aesthetic reasons. They also sought clarification on the local government's role was to accommodate ham antennas rather than to balance local interests against Federal interests in "effective public service amateur communications." The League also wanted to be sure that localities could not require overly burdensome conditions and excessive costs related to amateur antenna installations.

The FCC position is that "it would not be 'prudent' or 'appropriate' to set a height standard for amateur antennas and supporting structures because of varying circumstances that may occur" for differing antenna configurations. The FCC does not want to mandate specific provisions that localities must include in zoning ordinances. "On a slightly positive note, the FCC did assert that PRB-1 precisely states the principle of 'reasonable accommodation.' Some courts have held that a local authority can merely balance its own interests against those of the amateur. PRB-1 says local regulations involving placement, screening, or height of antennas based on health, safety, or aesthetic considerations 'must be crafted to accommodate reasonably amateur communications, and to represent the minimum practicable regulation to accomplish the local authority's legitimate purpose.'" In its Order, the FCC said that given PRB-1's explicit language, "it is clear that a 'balancing of interests' approach is not appropriate in this context."

The ARRL Executive Committee will review the Order to decide what further action is appropriate
Tnx ARRL Letter Online, December 3, 1999

FCC INTERVENES IN POWER LINE NOISE COMPLAINTS

The FCC has contacted a West Coast power company, reminding them of their obligation to fix equipment problems that cause harmful radio interference. West coast amateur radio operators have had to endure interference during a long period of non-response by the power company. The FCC's Consumer Center requested that the power company correct the problem "within a reasonable time." "Under FCC Part 15, utilities and others that fall under its provisions are obliged to not cause harmful interference to licensed services and to cease operating a device that's causing harmful interference upon FCC notification. The FCC said that while it remains confident that utilities can resolve such interference issues voluntarily, its letter was intended as a reminder that the unresolved interference problem "may be a violation of FCC rules and could result in a monetary forfeiture for each occurrence."

The FCC encourages parties to work things out without FCC intervention, but will step in if and when necessary. Before contacting the FCC

to intervene, affected amateurs should first attempt to work things out and should contact the League for assistance.
Tnx ARRL Letter Online, December 3, 1999

HAMS ASSIST RED CROSS

The Metropolitan New Jersey Red Cross Chapter recently had a 2-meter J-Pole and seven-element beam installed by members of the West Essex (New Jersey) Amateur Radio Club. The radio system is used to establish direct communications with the lead chapter in Princeton. The club also relocated two scanner antennas and installed new 800-MHz antennas for the chapter's day-to-day communication. As part of a NNJ ARES reorganization, each Red Cross chapter will have a designated Amateur Radio club to which it can turn for support.

Tnx ARRL Letter Online, November 26, 1999

DITS 'N DAHS

A column about miscellaneous topics

NEW HAMS GRADUATE; WIDE DIFFERENCE IN AGES

A recent Newington, CT Amateur Radio League Amateur Radio licensing class taught by Ed Matthews, KC1JV, with help from Ted Ferreira, WA1NXC, resulted in 11 new Technicians and one new Tech Plus--who also passed the General written test. All but one of the class members say they're interested in learning the Morse code and attending a weekend General class. A brother and sister team from Massachusetts were aged 11 and 13 respectively; on the opposite end of the spectrum were a man and a woman aged 66 and 60 respectively. (Dan Miller, K3UFG, reports the two youngsters rode an hour each way to get to the class held at ARRL HQ.)

Tnx ARRL Letter Online, November 26, 1999

THE AMATEUR'S CODE

1. The Amateur is always Considerate..... He never knowingly uses the air in such a way as to lessen the pleasure of other persons.
2. The Amateur is Loyal..... He offers his loyalty, encouragement and support to his fellow radio amateurs, his Club and to the Radio League, through which Amateur Radio Is represented.
3. The Amateur is Progressive..... He keeps his station abreast of science. It is well built and efficient. His operating practice is above approach.

4. The Amateur is Friendly..... Slow and patient sending when requested, friendly advice and counsel to the beginner, kindly assistance, co-operation and consideration for the interests of others. These are the marks of true Amateur Spirit.
5. The Amateur is Balanced..... Radio is his hobby. He never allows it to interfere with any of the duties he owes to his home, his job, his school, or his community.
6. The Amateur is Patriotic..... His knowledge and his station are always ready for the service of his country and his community. (found on several web sites)

SMALL WORLD

I recently tried to work some DX after work on a tip that Vietnam had been active on 10-meters. I did not hear that station, but I did hear a station in El Salvador. I was excited when I was able to make contact with another new country, After we had exchanged the usual information including QTH, Francisco asked if I was in the 804 area code. I answered "yes" and he asked if I would mind doing him a favor. He had hosted an exchange student some years ago and asked me to call the young lady who had stayed with him. I replied that I would be delighted to do so. Unfortunately, the "phone number is no longer in service". I sent a QSL card with a note asking for more information, and I will try again.

Marie, KF4UUI

A HAM'S NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

'Twas the night before Christmas,
And all through 2 meters,
Not a signal was keying up
Any repeaters.

The antennas reached up
From the tower, quite high,
To catch the weak signals
That bounced from the sky.

The children, Tech-Pluses,
Took their H-Ts to bed,
And dreamed of the day
They'd be Extras instead.

Mom put on her headphones,
I plugged in the key,
And we tuned 40 meters
For that rare ZK3.

When the meter was pegged
by a signal with power.
It smoked a small diode,
and, I swear, shook the tower.

Mom yanked off her phones,
And with all she could muster
Logged a spot of the signal
On the DX PacketCluster,

While I ran to the window
And peered up at the sky,
To see what could generate
RF that high.

It was way in the distance,
But the moon made it gleam.
A flying sleigh, with an
eight-element beam,

And a little old driver
who looked slightly mean.
So I thought for a moment,
That it might be Wayne Green.

But no, it was Santa,
The Santa of Hams.
On a mission, this Christmas,
To clean up the bands.

He circled the tower,
Then stopped in his track,

And he slid down the coax
Right into the shack.

While Mom and I hid
Behind stacks of CQ,
This Santa of hamming
Knew just what to do.

He cleared off the shack desk
Of paper and parts,
And filled out all my late QSLs
For a start.

He ran copper braid,
Took a steel rod and pounded
It into the earth, till
The station was grounded.

He tightened loose fittings,
Resoldered connections,
Cranked down modulation,
Installed lightning protection.

He neutralized tubes
In my linear amp.
(Never worked right before;
Now it works like a champ).

A new, lowpass filter
Cleaned up the TV.
He corrected the settings
In my TNC.

He repaired the computer
That would not compute,
And he backed up the hard drive
And got it to boot.

Then, he reached really deep
In the bag that he brought,
And he pulled out a big box.
A new rig? I thought!

A new Kenwood? An ICOM?
A Yaesu, for me?!
(If he thought I'd been bad,
it might be QRP!)

Yes! The Ultimate Station!
How could I deserve this?
Could it be all those hours
that I worked Public Service?

He hooked it all up
And in record time, quickly
Worked 100 countries,
All down on 160.

I should have been happy,
It was my call he sent.
But the cards and the postage
Will cost two month's rent!

He made final adjustments,
And left a card by the key:
"To Gary, from Santa Claus.
73."

Then he grabbed his H-T,
Looked me straight in the eye,
Punched a code on the pad,
And was gone with no good-bye.

I ran back to the station,
And the pileup was big,

But a card from St. Nick
Would be worth my new rig.

Oh, too late, for his final
came over the air.
It was copied all over.
It was heard everywhere.

The Ham's Santa exclaimed
What a ham might expect,
"Merry Christmas to all,
And to all, good DX!"

1996 Gary Pearce, KN4AQ
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[Gary Pearce, KN4AQ, is Public Information Coordinator for the North Carolina Section.]

Y2K

Y2K is nearly here. After all the talk, do you really know what Y2K means to the amateur community? It stands for "Yaesu and 2 Kenwoods". Yours truly is ready.

CODE PRACTICE AND NETS

- ≈ Wednesdays 8:00 p.m. 28.210 MHz
Code Practice with Becky, KS4RX
Announcement on 146.88 RATS repeater about 7:55 p.m. announcing the text to be sent if no QSO.
- ≈ Thursdays 7:00 p.m. 146.88 MHz
Information Net -- Net controls
Bill, K4WMA, or Pat, W4PW
- ≈ Thursdays 7:30 p.m. 146.88 MHz
Trader's Net -- Net controls
Bill, K4WMA, or Pat, W4PW
Buy, sell or trade amateur -related equipment

- ✍ Mondays & Wednesdays
7:30 - 8:30 PM 146.565 MHz Simplex
Code Practice by Lin KT4JT

- ✍ Tomato Net 146.565 MHz Simplex
Mondays 8:30 PM Freddie AD4NB
Wednesdays 8:30 PM Lin KT4JT

If you know of other nets or code practice please let me know.
Tnx, Marie

INTERNET InSITEs

Amateur Radio, Electronics and Technology Related Websites

- ✍ 100 Years of Radio Web - 1895-1995
<http://monviso2.alpcom.it/hamradio/>
Nice collection of articles, pictures, and links dealing with Marconi, old radios, wireless communication, etc. Some articles are in Italian.

- ✍ UNITED STATES EARLY RADIO HISTORY
<http://www.ipass.net/~whitetho/index.html>
Articles and extracts about early radio and related technologies, concentrating on the United States in the period from 1900 to 1927, government regulations.

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P.O. Box 14828
Richmond, VA 23221

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Voice Mail System: (804) 739-2269, mailbox 7287

Internet E-mail Address: mail@rats.net

Frostfest E-mail Address: frostfest@rats.net

RATS Web Site: <http://www.rats.net>

Frostfest Web Site: <http://frostfest.rats.net>

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