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Summer 2003

The Bulletin of the
Richmond Amateur Telecommunications Society
P. O. Box 14828 - Richmond, Virginia 23221



Field Day 2003!

If summer comes can Field Day be far behind? Summer begins on June 21st, and Field Day is a week later on the weekend of the 28th & 29th.

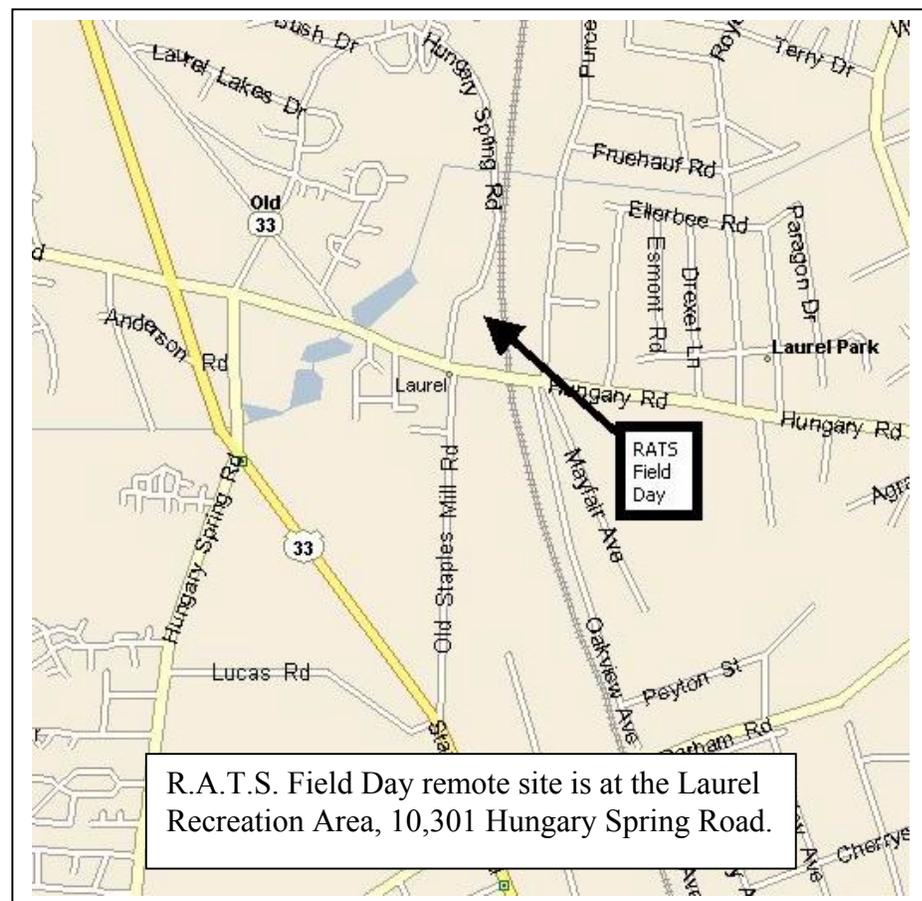
This year Field Day will be held at the Laurel Recreation Area located at 10,301 Hungary Spring Road (see map).

Volunteers Needed

Help is being sought in the set-up of the antennas and the stations—we'll have two contest stations and, perhaps, a GOTA station. Someone will be needed to make periodic announcements on the repeater about our activities and do talk-in. Help, too, will be needed in taking everything down and the clean-up at the end, or if you'd like to assist with the food preparation and service contact Robert Orndorff, W4BNO, at w4bno@attbi.com or Jerry Long, K4KJL, at k4kjl@arrl.net. You can also get in touch with them at May's meeting.

May Meeting

The regular meeting on May 16th will have Parke Slater, N4KFT; Dave Kiefer, N4DWK; and Guy Carlsen, K4CNF presenting a demo of HF and Field Day protocols and etiquette. The two club stations will be set up, and an orientation on their



R.A.T.S. Field Day remote site is at the Laurel Recreation Area, 10,301 Hungary Spring Road.

use given. If an antenna can be raised at the meeting site we will also do a few live QSOs.

June Meeting

As is our custom, Field Day activities will be our June meeting.

There will be no 3rd Friday gathering for this month. FD officially begins on Saturday, the 28th at 1800 UTC (2:00 PM local) and ends Sunday, the 29th at 2100 UTC (5:00 PM local). If you can attend the entire time or for only a part of it, we hope to see you there.

THE TIME IN BETWEEN—ARE CALL SIGNS OUR ONLY ID?

*Parke Slater, N4KFT, Vice-President
Board Liaison to the Technical
Committee*

While I have not been an amateur radio operator as long as many that will read this column, life experiences count for much. Remember 1970? I was 12 years old and recall my father urging me to become a ham radio operator.

Nothing doing. While it would have been a wonderful benefit for me to now be able to claim 32 years of being a ham, without the invention of Ritalin, my hyperactivity and short attention span would have sent even the most patient Elmer to Eastern State. A more suitable alternative for me was the pristine world of Citizens Band radio.

For those of you who were non-hams back then, remember those 23 channels that remained silent for the majority of the day? Twenty dollars for a 3-year license? During those years there was no profanity, 4 watts maximum for most AMers, and everyone who saw that extra antenna on your car thought you were the fuzz.

The late 1970's brought many changes. I still remained hyperactive, but the FCC announced it was increasing CB to 40 channels, recalling call signs and no longer charging any license fees. What the FCC did not do to CB in the way of de-regulation, *Smokey & the Bandit* did.

Here's a riddle: What do discourteous drivers, Internet chat room perverts and CBers have in common? The answer: "Anonymity." Devoid of a conscience that dictates otherwise, mankind is prone to all sorts of aberrant behavior (of varying degrees), if they believe they won't get caught and can remain anonymous.

With the new surge in

popularity in CB came a disproportionate amount of illegal amplifiers, discourteous behavior and profane talk. By opening the floodgates to everyone who ever dreamed of living out Burt Reynold's role in fleeing from the cops with impunity, a new segment of society found a vehicle by which they could be vulgar, rude, and yet remain unknown. While our amateur radio ranks today are not pristine, they are by-and-large many times more pure than any other radio services that do not require a call sign and are as regulated.

The FCC requires that every 10 minutes we tell the world whom we are. As the licensee of an amateur radio station, we're permitted by the United States government to operate a *radio station*, under conditions not dissimilar from WRVA, WWBT, and the like. One of the differences, of course, is that we do not broadcast, *per se*. Nevertheless, each time you key the mic, you represent every ham in the country. Whether you are discussing the effect of a solar storm on certain propagation, the velocity factor of RG8X coax, or the ingrown toenail your doctor removed, you represent me. And I represent you.

When you turn on your radio to show a friend why the Kenwood dual band rig in your car you spent \$400 on, is NOT a CB, you obviously want the differences apparent. And the fact that we utter calls signs every 10 minutes shouldn't be the primary distinction. It should be the time "in between" those IDs that make it apparent why ham radio is, and should be a world apart.

FALL MINI-DXPEDITION

Greg Curti, KG4KWW

Need to find an excuse to get out of doing that honey do list? Are you interested in getting some fresh air, sunshine, a little rest, and maybe making some new contacts via ham radio? Well if that's the case then I have just the thing. A Mini-Dxpedition to the Blue Ridge

mountains. Just think about it, sunshine, fresh air, talking on the radio as long as you want and making new contacts locally, nationally as well as internationally.

Have you ever wondered what it is like on the other end of a pile-up? Can you imagine 50 to 100 stations all calling you at the same time? I'm talking about operating from atop a mountain where your antenna will be free from ground clutter that can cause loss of some weaker signals.

For several years, I've been interested in setting up a camp site for a couple of days and operating from atop the Blue Ridge mountains, just to see whom I can receive and talk to. But you don't have to ONLY talk on the radio. You can hike the trails as well. Enjoy the fresh air and the scenery.

If you would like to join me this fall for some fun, fellowship, fresh air, the chance to make new contacts, or just to get away to the mountains for a couple days, please send me an email at

gcurti@worldnet.att.net

Remember it's one thing to work DX, but it's quite another to be DX!

VE EXAMS

Exams for licensing or upgrading for the next three months are as follows. There are two locations, one in Chester and the other in Richmond. To take an exam you must bring \$12.00 cash (exact change) and two forms of ID, one of which must be a photo ID. If you are upgrading, you must bring the original of your current license *and* a photocopy of it.

If you have credit for previously passed element(s) bring your original CSCE *and* a photocopy of it. Arrive 15 minutes early. Preregistration is preferred, but not required (unless you are taking the CW element in Chester, then

required). Walk-ins are welcome if seating and materials are available.

Testing is done at two locations, one south of the river in Chester and the other in the West End on Parham Road.

The first exam is June 14th at 9:00 AM at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, 1651 E. Parham Road, Richmond, Building B. For more information or to preregister contact Patrick Wilson, W4PW, (804) 932-9424 or go to:

<http://www.w4pw.org/hamtests.htm>

The second test of the summer is on July 7th at 7:30 PM at Pietro's Restaurant at the corner of Jeff Davis Highway and Osborne Road in Chester, but the 2003 exam schedule has not been announced as of press time. For more information or to pre-register call (804) 768-2255 or visit:

http://www.kr4uq.org/V__E__EXAM_S/v__e__exams.html

The third testing will also be at the J. Sargeant Reynolds locations on August 9th at 9:00 AM.

RATS MEETINGS

The Richmond Amateur Telecommunications Society meets the third Friday of the month at 7:30 PM at the West End Volunteer Rescue Squad building at 1802 Chantilly Street, Richmond.

Coming from either direction on Broad Street, Chantilly is the first block east of Staples Mill Road. The WEVRS building is ½ block south of Broad on Chantilly.

The exception to this schedule is the June meeting for Field Day and the December meeting for the annual Christmas Dinner.

THE RESOLUTION

During the April meeting Parke Slater, N4KFT, and Dave Kiefer, N4DWK, gave a presentation

about VHF and UHF communications, particularly when it comes to repeater usage.

Etiquette and repeater protocols were described. Also things not to do were presented in the form of "How to be a Lid." This was an informative and entertaining challenge for each of us to always be on our best behavior when we're on the repeater and show whomever may be listening

that, though we're amateurs, there's nothing amateurish about us.

Toward this end, the board of directors passed a resolution in April regarding conduct on the club's repeaters and any other equipment owned by the club. This resolution was presented to the membership during April's meeting and is reproduced below.

Resolution

Whereas, the Federal Communications Commission considers the standards for decency of language in amateur radio to be identical to that of commercial broadcasts;

Whereas, the limits set by the FCC are wide, in that they permit language that may be considered to be offensive by others;

Whereas, in order to constitute a violation of decency standards, such language must meet all tenants of a three-prong test in which: (1) An average person, applying contemporary community standards, must find that the material, as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest; (2) the material must depict or describe, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by applicable law; and (3) the material taken as a whole, must lack serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value;

Whereas, the parameters of the FCC's Safe Harbor Provisions allow even greater latitude in language between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.;

Whereas, the future of amateur radio lies solely within the ability of current licensees to recruit youth and develop their interest in the radio hobby;

Whereas, while certain language may not violate the FCC rules, it may still stand in opposition to "good amateur practice" and the "Amateur's Code";

Whereas, amateur radio operators must project a good image in order to protect radio spectrum, appeal to future potential operators, and encourage confidence from public officials and government agencies as a viable mode of emergency communications;

Whereas, amateur radio should remain a wholesome activity for the entire family;

Be it resolved, that without enumerating specific words, the board of directors declares that any and all words, which are not deemed traditionally appropriate in the presence of women and children, are hereby declared prohibited from being uttered or otherwise transmitted via any radio equipment or system belonging to the club.

Be it further resolved, that any intent to convey such inferences or meanings without a specific utterance or transmission, that would otherwise be inappropriate for all audiences or fail any of the three-prongs of the federal test for indecent or obscene language, are also prohibited from being transmitted via any radio equipment belonging to the club.

Passed by the board of directors of the Richmond Amateur Telecommunications Society, this 18th day of April, 2003.

Signed,

Guy K. Carlsen, President

Richmond Amateur Telecommunications Society

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Editor, *Solid Copy*, Mike Gabbert, K4AUR

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Please feel free to contact any of us regarding RATS business, information, and ideas.

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