
CQ BARS

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President's Corner

The Presidents Corner When asked what season is the busiest season of the year, most people will answer the Christmas season. After 29 years of marriage, Christmas is pretty easy. I know what decorations we have and where they are supposed to go, who we will spend Christmas Eve with, and what the Christmas day schedule will be like. Yes, like many people, we have Christmas down to a science.

But then again, Ham Radio operators are not most people. For example, for those of us who support the Skywarn effort, the busiest season of the year is fast approaching. In fact, since I don't know the exact dates, it may be upon us by the time you read this. Are you actively preparing for the Skywarn season, or do you plan to simply do it again this year as you have done in the past? I ask that question because each year I hear complaints about volunteer spotters who never make the transition from "amateur radio rag chewers" to "trained NWS spotters," and each year I hear well meaning volunteer radio operators reporting information that is not wanted by our served agency, the National Weather Service.

Now I know that there is always going to be someone out there whose life mission is to make the job of net controller a living nightmare for Toni, WX9WRN, but for the rest of us, let's make ourselves three promises this year.

1. Attend the February meeting and pay special attention to the information that Toni plans to share with us.
2. Attend a spotter class. You need to attend a Basic spotter class at least every other year. Stuff changes, and we need to change with it. Not your year for the Basic class? Then try to make an advanced class!
3. Volunteer to help. Have your equipment ready, and be prepared to sign in when the net is activated. Also, we need to increase the number of people cleared to operate the back-up/liaison radios at fire station #5. Club membership is not a requirement, but living in Bolingbrook, or at least close to the fire station is preferred. Contact me if you feel you can help in this area.

See you on the Radio
Dale, KB9LMK



Secretary's Column

The severe weather season will be upon us soon. At the February meeting our own WX9WRN (Toni) will be presenting Skywarn information and possibly a video. Please plan to attend and LEARN!!

Field Day time is also approaching. If you recall, last year we found it necessary to disqualify ourselves from the competition because we incorrectly identified ourselves in an incorrect classification. Turnout was rather disappointing – we just didn't have the operators!! Please make your plans early this year so that we can try to get back to the 6A classification. It's a time of contesting, camaraderie, and great food.

For those of you who are interested in practicing your code, WD9AYR (Ed) has started a slow speed code net on the 145.250 DuPage repeater in conjunction with their Tech and General classes. They began last Monday at 7:00 PM. Everyone is invited to check in and participate. Even just listening could help improve your code speed!! Visit www.w9dup.org for more information on the classes.

Please check out our web page. Our WebPerson is putting together a page to honor our past Presidents. We need to help him get the missing names. My old records do not

name officers. Send any information you may have to him so that he can give honor to those who have served in the past.

73's for this month

Don - N9VJV

Last Months Meeting Minutes

The meeting was opened at 19:00 hours by KB9LMK (Dale). Introductions followed. Officers present were: KB9JHV (Jason), and N9VJV (Don). Also present at the meeting were:

N9LJY	WD9IWC	KC9IDF
K9GHX	KB9LMK	WB9GGB
WA9IL	KC9ERT	W9KHX
WB9PWQ	KB9JHV	N9ZMM
N9VJV		

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A motion to accept the minutes as published in CQ Bars was made by W9KHX (Dale), seconded by WA9IL (John) and carried.

The Treasurer's Report was presented by KB9JHV (Jason). A motion to accept as presented was made by WA9IL (John), seconded by WD9IWC (John), and carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

2 meter: KB9LMK reported that the machine was up and running.

220/440: WA9IL (John) reported that Echolink is operational but some noise is being experienced. He suggested that we investigate moving the machine to one of the local hotel roofs

Net Control: N9ZMM (Archie) and WD9IWC (John) reported that checkins for 2005 ranged from a low of 4 to a high of 19. KC9GRH (Brian) checked in the most times. John distributed the prizes.

Hamfest: N9LJY (Tom) reported that the check was received from the Village of Bolingbrook. The room has been taken care of and the tables have been ordered. The flyers are being redesigned and printed.

Education: No Report.

VE: W9KHX (Dale) reported that the last 2 test sessions had no candidates

Field Day: No Report.

Public Relations: WA9IQL (Elden) reported that the web site has been updated with everything up to date.

Skywarn: WX9WRN (Toni) reported that she feels that better training needed for night spotting. No class schedule is available yet. She is trying to get a local class set up for May or June..

Misc.: None.

OLD BUSINESS:

Could not conduct old business because there was not a quorum of members present.

NEW BUSINESS:

Could not conduct new business because there was not a quorum of members present
N9VJV (Don) presented information from Bob Mierop concerning the HF station that the Village of Bolingbrook is installing in the Station #5 EOC. The radio has been ordered. He asked for volunteers to help advise him about the antenna options and assist with the installation of the equipment. WA9IL (John), KB9JHV (Jason), W9KHX (Dale), and N9VJV (Don) volunteered. Don will provide Bob with contact information for each of them. This is informational only and not to be considered new business since no membership vote was required.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by WA9IL (John), seconded by WD9IWC (John) and seconded.

Respectfully submitted,
Don, N9VJV
Secretary

MINING DISASTER SURVIVOR RANDY MCCLOY, KC8VKZ, REPORTED IMPROVING

CQ BARS

There' s encouraging news this week on the medical condition of Randy McCloy, KC8VKZ, the sole survivor of the January 2 Sago mining disaster in West Virginia. Rick Robinson, W8ZT, reports he spoke with McCloy' s brother-in-law, Rick McGee January 18, and received an upbeat report on the 26-year-old miner' s progress.

"He was sitting up in bed and eating ice chips," he said. "His dialysis treatments have been reduced to every other day as his kidney function [is returning]." Other reports say McCloy' s heart and liver functions have improved, his muscle deterioration has abated, his neurological condition is stable and he' s been breathing on his own. His doctors say McCloy exhibits "purposeful movements" and appears to be responding to his family.

Robinson says McGee told him that McCloy' s wife, Anna, expressed appreciation from the outpouring of good wishes from the Amateur Radio community and elsewhere.

"His family wants to thank everyone for the cards and letters that arrive daily in the large plastic postal bins," he said. "The mail keeps his wife occupied and gives her consolation that so many think of her and her husband and family." Randy and Anna McCloy live in Simpson, West Virginia, and have two young children. A Technician class licensee, McCloy is a relatively new radio amateur, according to Robinson.

Well-wishers have been sending cards and QSLs to McCloy at PO Box 223, Philippi, WV 26435.

The Charleston Gazette reported January 19 that McCloy was out of intensive care and likely will be able to leave West Virginia University' s Ruby Memorial Hospital in Morgantown within a week or two for a rehabilitation facility. His physicians say it' s difficult to predict how fully McCloy will recover over the long haul, however, because his case is unusual. McCoy was the only miner among 13 men trapped for more than 40 hours in an Upshur County coal mine that filled with deadly carbon monoxide following a January 2 explosion.

McCloy reportedly is eligible for immediate medical and wage-replacement benefits as well as for workers compensation benefits based on the extent of his injuries. In addition, a fund has been set up to accept donations for his benefit: the Randal McCloy Jr Fund, c/o Clear Mountain Bank, 1889 Earl Core Rd, Morgantown, WV 26505.

According to "The Checkout" column <<http://blog.washingtonpost.com/thecheckout/>> of The Washington Post, federal and state authorities have warned consumers about a bogus e-mail seeking donations to aid McCloy. "The Checkout" reports that e-mails claiming to be from Dr Lawrence Roberts, McCloy' s primary physician, describe the young miner' s condition and seek monetary donations for his treatment.

"The Checkout" editor Caroline Mayer advises those who have received such e-mails to consider contacting the Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) <<http://www.ic3.gov/>>.

HAM RADIO OPERATORS "TRUE HEROES," REP MIKE ROSS, WD5DVR, SAYS IN "SALUTE"

US Rep Mike Ross, WD5DVR (D-AR), this week offered "A Salute to Ham Radio Operators" on the floor of the US House. Ross, one of two Amateur Radio licensees in the House of Representatives (the other is Rep Greg Walden, W7EQI, R-OR), addressed his colleagues February 8 to recognize the contributions of the Amateur Radio community in the wake of last year' s devastating hurricane season.

"Citizens throughout America dedicated to this hobby--a hobby that some people consider old fashioned or obsolete--were true heroes in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina as they were often the only line of communication available into the storm ravaged areas," Ross said.

He noted that while ham radio is often overlooked "in favor of flashier means of communication," Gulf Coast communities

learned after the 2005 hurricanes that technology can be "highly vulnerable" to storm damage. "Ham radios, entirely self-contained transmitters, require no cell towers or satellites, simply a battery and a strip of wire as an antenna," Ross explained. Because of the "critical intervention" of radio amateurs across the US, Ross said, many lives were saved following Hurricane Katrina.

"The dedication displayed by ham radio operators in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina sets a tremendous example for us all," Ross concluded, noting that "now more than ever" he's proud to be an Amateur Radio operator. "The people whose lives were rescued as a result of the tireless dedication of ham radio operators will forever be grateful to these selfless public servants."

SHUTDOWN "IMPERATIVE" IN FACE OF STILL-UNRESOLVED BPL INTERFERENCE, ARRL SAYS

After the operator of the Manassas, Virginia, BPL system failed to meet its own commitment to resolve complaints of interference to local radio amateurs, the ARRL again demanded the system's immediate shutdown. Writing on the League's behalf, ARRL General Counsel Chris Imlay, W3KD, told the FCC January 17 that Communications Technologies (COMTek), which operates the BPL system over the municipally owned electric power grid using Main.net equipment on frequencies between 4 MHz and 30 MHz, "has been given every opportunity" over the past 18 months to resolve interference complaints.

COMTek "is now apparently unwilling to voluntarily comply with its regulatory obligation to shut the system down," Imlay said, following a meeting January 17 between company officials and local radio amateurs. An ARRL representative also attended. Imlay said the meeting's outcome dictates "the urgency of the Commission's obligation to finally take action to stop the unlawful operation of the Manassas BPL system."

The League asserts that COMTek did not want to start the meeting with a local newspaper reporter present. Imlay said the company's "bizarre action" indicated that COMTek "was unwilling to subject itself to public scrutiny."

COMTek Vice President Walter Adams acknowledged at this week's meeting that its BPL system was causing harmful interference on Amateur Radio frequencies, despite its pledge to permanently notch ham bands by January 15, the League said. Even so, Adams "specifically declined to take any further steps to mitigate the interference," Imlay continued, calling COMTek's stance "totally unacceptable to the aggrieved licensees in Manassas."

In its letter, the League said it doesn't question COMTek's desire to eliminate the harmful interference. "However, the inescapable fact is that the Main.net hardware now in use in the city's BPL system is, and has been proven, incapable of being configured so as to function as intended without causing harmful interference to radio communication."

The League addressed its latest correspondence in the Manassas situation to FCC Spectrum Enforcement Division Chief Joseph Casey and to Katherine Power, an attorney in the division. Copies went to local radio amateurs George Tarnovsky, K4GVT, Donald Blasdell, W4HJL, and William South, N3OH, as well as to Manassas Journal newspaper reporter Jaclyn Pitts, COMTek and its attorneys, and the City of Manassas.

"Because COMTek has declined to do so voluntarily, it is imperative that the FCC order the system immediately to cease operation, in accordance with §15.5(c) of the Commission's rules," Imlay's letter concluded, "and that operation not resume unless and until new hardware is installed that is capable of operating without causing harmful interference."

Less than a month ago, the League called on the FCC to shut down the Manassas BPL system in another strongly worded letter. That communication was in response to a November 30 letter from Casey, who'd suggested further cooperation between the complaining radio amateurs and the city-owned BPL system.

"These meetings have not produced any solution to the interference problem but have, instead, created the illusion that the problem is being addressed," Imlay charged in his reply. Ham radio complaints of interference from the BPL system date back to early 2004.

A petition the League filed earlier last fall seeks to have the FCC modify the Part 15 BPL rules it adopted in 2004 to embrace more mature BPL technology with substantially less potential to interfere. Among BPL systems more likely to be involved in stubborn interference cases, the ARRL said, are those using DS2 or Main.net technology that lack fixed, permanent notches in the ham bands. Utilization of such BPL technology, the League maintains, has resulted in "substantial, extremely difficult-to-resolve incidents of interference" from BPL pilot programs and deployments to Amateur Radio.

A copy of the League's January 17 letter is on the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/plc/filings/Manassas-Complaint-Final-January-2006.pdf>>

Software Defined Transponder to fly on Phase 3-Express satellite:

The Board of Directors of AMSAT-DL (Germany) plans to fly a Software Defined Transponder (SDX) on its Phase 3-Express (P3E) spacecraft <<http://www.amsat-dl.org/p3e/index.htm>>. "This is outstanding news," said AMSAT-NA President Rick Hambly, W2GPS. "The opportunity to fly SDX on P3-Express will provide an early opportunity to demonstrate the potential of SDX in orbit and gives AMSAT-NA the benefit of in-orbit testing before placement on the Eagle-class satellites." Putting the SDX on P3E also will provide a test platform to evaluate its weak-signal processing capabilities that could prove valuable for the Phase 5-A deep space mission that AMSAT-DL is evaluating. Along with improved receiver performance, SDX offers the ability to program configuration changes while in orbit and the integration of uplink and downlink bands via digital connections. AMSAT-UK's Howard Long, G6LVB, will head development of SDX software for P3E and Eagle. AMSAT-NA's Lyle Johnson, KK7P, and Chuck Green, N0ADI, will build the flight hardware, while Bob McGwier, N4HY, and Frank Brickle, AB2KT, will handle integration with the transmitter hardware. "This announcement and the follow on work reinforce the close cooperation between AMSAT-NA, AMSAT-DL and AMSAT-UK as we develop the next generation of high earth orbit amateur radio satellites," Hambly commented. P3E will be placed into a highly elliptical Earth orbit and may launch as early as this year.--AMSAT-NA/AMSAT-DL

Winlink 2000, APRS join forces with APRSLink:

Following the Amateur Radio response to some recent disasters, Bob Bruninga, WB4APR, proposed using the Automatic Position Reporting System (APRS) to enable mobile and remote APRS users to access their Winlink 2000 e-mail accounts under emergency or unusual conditions. In response, the Winlink 2000 development team came up with APRSLink. APRSLink monitors all APRS traffic gated to the Internet and watches for special commands that allow APRS users to read or send short e-mail messages to and from other Winlink 2000 users, perform e-mail maintenance, receive notices of pending Winlink 2000 e-mail via APRS and query the APRSLink server for information on the closest Telpac gateway or Winlink participating station. Details are on the APRSLink Web page <<http://www.winlink.org/aprslink.htm>>.

Some articles courtesy of the ARRL.