

THE TARA NEWS

Affiliate of the American Radio Relay League

Volume 19 © Issue 04 April 2009

Come Join In The Celebration
TARA's 18th Anniversary
April 21, 2009 7:00PM
Green Island Municipal
Center
17 George Street
Green Island, New York

CONGRATULATIONS CHIEF!!!

TARA NEWS WINS AGAIN

It's with great delight that I get to announce that our March Issue of the TARA NEWS has again been chosen as "Newsletter of the Month" for the Hudson Division. This is not the first award that Kenny and his staff have won and if this keeps up he'll be known as the Kyle Busch of amateur radio newsletters! (Just a little NASCAR humor.)

Again, I hope ALL of you are as proud as I am of the outstanding job Kenny has done with this newsletter over the year's. Here's what was posted in the March issue of the Hudson Division "Beacon" :

DIVISION NEWSLETTER OF THE MONTH

The March 2009 award goes to The Troy ARC - TARA - for the March 2009 edition of "TARA News" Congratulations to the entire crew who puts this newsletter together.

NEWSLETTER DEPT:

Editor-in-Chief: Perry White

Editor: Ken "Chief" Davis, KB2KFV

Co-Editor: Marilyn Davis, KB2JZI and Co-Editor: Karen Smith KS2O

Design/Layout: Ken Davis, KB2KFV

Columnists: Joe Pasquini N2NOU, and Steve VanSickle WB2HPR

Cartoonist: Dave Leavenworth WB2TGN

I especially enjoyed "Frank's Funnies" on page 8 - and no, I am not the author. Bill Continelli's "Perfect for Pocket or Purse" is also an interesting read. Once again, This is a great newsletter.

You might also want to visit the club's very interesting web page at <http://www.n2ty.org/> It has a great deal of interesting information.

Clubs please make sure that you continue to send a copy of your pdf file to n2ff@arrl.org. I have been missing some issues in the last few months. Not every division club is submitting each month. It's like Lotto, if you don't buy a ticket or send a PDF you can't win! Please take a look at

<http://www.hudson.arrl.org/pages/newsletterawards.htm>



I would like to thank the congregation for the overwhelming donations of Easter flowers to decorate the church. Now if someone would tell me where I can find the altar. We will begin the service.



More than a Club



We're a Family



Upcoming Public Service Events



Spring is here and the busy season for public service is quickly approaching. So I will be looking for all of the help I can get. Remember, this isn't just restricted to TARA members, any amateur operator is welcome to join our public service team. Here is an updated list of the Public Service Events coming up for TARA our team of volunteers! **Get ready Gang, Mid - May is going to be a very busy month !!**

On Sunday, May 17th will be the 29th Annual Bob Smith....East Greenbush Rotary Run at the Green Meadow Elementary School at Routes. 9 & 20. This race starts at 8:30 AM.

Then on Thursday, May, 21st will be the GHI Work Force Team Challenge in Washington Park and this race starts at 6:15 pm.

On Monday, May 25th will be the Watervliet Memorial Day Parade at 10:00 AM.

This year the City of Watervliet is working with the Arsenal and we will have a Military Band from Washington D.C. marching with the Parade. Also the Watervliet Wind Warriors will be in the Parade and one of the fly guys will fly his plane the entire length of the parade.

Our last event until fall will be the 31st Annual Freihofer's Run for Women on Saturday May 30th, at 10:15 AM. We have to be in the park by or before 7 AM.

The Freihofer's Run for Women 5km combines some of the top International and American women distance runners and over 3,500 women from the Capital Region and across the nation. From Olympians to recreational runner, it's a wonderful blend of competition, participation and camaraderie.

The start and finish lines are located on Madison Avenue, between the Empire State Plaza and the New York State Museum in Albany, NY.

I do need help in all these events. If you have any questions or if you want to sign up to help me, you can call me anytime at 273-6594. You can always email me at KS2O@N2TY.ORG, also.

There will be two more Public Service Events in the Fall.

Thank you & 73,

Karen KS2O

**Public Service Event
Coordinator**

**May-21-2009
GHI Work Force
Team Challenge
Washington Park, Albany
Thursday 6:15 PM**

**May-17-2009
29th Annual Bob Smith
E. Greenbush Rotary Run
Saturday 8:30 AM**

**May-25-2009 Watervliet
Memorial Day Parade
Watervliet, N.Y.
Monday 10:00 AM**

**May-30-2009
Freihofer's Run for Women
Washington Park, Albany
Saturday, 7:00 AM**

**September 2009
Arsenal City Run
Watervliet, N.Y.
TBA**

**10-30-09 and 10-31-09
Pumpkin Patrol
Rensselaer, Schenectady
and Albany Co's.
6:00-10:00 PM**

A Thank You From Ken Skinner - HMRRC

Hi Everyone:

A very heartfelt thanks to all of you for all the work you did helping coordinate various aspects of this year's Green Island race, our 10th anniversary. I waited to send this out so I could complete the race report and give you some details on this year's race. Obviously the weather report and the actual weather the day of the race was a big help in making this our largest attendance.

Thanks to Deb, Ed and Marcia, we have very good financial and race stats. We ended up with 488 registered runners (327 pre-race and 161 day of). We had 469 finishers, 10 numbers that didn't get picked up and 9 numbers that got picked up but the runners apparently didn't run. We also had 39 kids in the fun runs. We took in a little over \$7100 in entry fees along with \$400 in sponsor cash contributions (that number is down from prior years). Our expenses totaled approximately \$6000 so we made a profit of about \$1500.

Some other race stats. Of the race registrants, 70% were HMRRC members, approximately 88 (18%) were USATF members and 74 (15%) ran for USATF teams (15 Willow St. AC, 15 Adirondack AC, 21 Utopia, 12 Kinderhook AC, 11 ARE). Andy Allstadt, the overall winner, missed the course record of 19:36 by one second. Lori Kingsley's winning time of 23:34 was the sixth fastest female winning time (Emily has the course record of 22:58 as well as two other top 5 times). Ben Greenberg's masters time of 21:24 was 16 seconds off Derrick Staley's course record 21:08. Lori's 23:34 was 7 seconds off Emily's masters record of 23:27. Tom Dalton's 21:56 was the fastest run by a +50 male breaking the old record of 22:45 jointly held by Dale Keenan and Bob Giambalvo. Judy Phelps ran 28:01 missing the record held by Nancy Briskie of 27:10 by 51 seconds. In the 60 age groups, Tom Yannone was about 2 minutes off Pat Glover's record of 24:12 but a new female age record was set by Susan Wong who ran 29:31 beating the old record of 33:07 held by Annie Stockman. These stats were provided by Vince Juliano. Tom Dalton won the age-graded competition with an 87.87% effort and Judy Phelps came in second with an 87.50%.

This is my last year as race director but I will be staying on helping, most likely as course director. Thanks to all of you for being coordinators for many years; we couldn't do it without you. Marcia has given me some suggestions for my replacement so I'll be following up on them shortly.

Yours Truly,
Ken

THIS WEEK IN AMATEUR RADIO SUPPORT FUND - RUNNING LOW

Once again it looks like I need to appeal to all of our friends and listeners to help support This Week in Amateur Radio, and This Week in Amateur Radio International. We need financial support to help off-set our on-going expenses in keeping our news services on the air and on the internet. Here's what we're looking at. Currently we have under \$90 in our bank account. We have on-going expenses which include our internet costs, and expenses related to equipment up keep, and consumable supplies each month. **I have been paying out of pocket for over the last year.**

Our service has not received any significant support over the last 360 days. Unfortunately, this is situation that cannot continue. All of us involved with This Week in Amateur Radio do this as a way to give back to the amateur radio hobby we all love, by keeping the ham radio community informed. But, with rising expenses, I can't do it alone anymore. Most of our equipment here is aging, and donations of audio equipment and computers are far and few between. So if you can, if you appreciate our efforts, please help to support This Week in Amateur Radio.

As always, your donation is tax deductible. The address for our support fund is:

**This Week in Amateur Radio
P.O. Box 30
Sand Lake, New York 12153**

W2XBS - Executive Producer -This Week in Amateur
Radio International



FCC Denies Petition to Increase Size

of Amateur Radio Question Pools

In April 2008, Michael Mancuso, KI4NGN, of Raleigh, North Carolina, filed a petition with the FCC, seeking to increase the size of the question pools that make up the Amateur Radio licensing exams. Mancuso sought to increase the question pool from 10 times the number of questions on an exam to 50 times more questions. On March 19, 2009, the Commission notified Mancuso that it was denying his petition.

In his 2008 petition, Mancuso claimed that the current question pool is too easy to memorize and "that there has been a significant increase in the number of Amateur Radio operators receiving their licenses over at least the last decade or more who do not appear to possess the knowledge indicated by the class of license that they have received. Most discussion about this topic, both on the air and on Internet forums, generally refers to these widespread observations as the 'dumbing down' of Amateur Radio. It has been widely assumed that the cause of this observed situation is based upon the subject material addressed by the license examinations, that the material requirements specified for the examinations does [sic] not meet some minimum level of knowledge expected by some or many in the Amateur Radio community."

The FCC pointed out to Mancuso that each applicant for a new or upgraded Amateur Radio operator license "is required to pass a written examination in order to prove that he or she possesses the operational and technical qualifications required to perform properly the duties of an amateur service operator licensee, i.e., that he or she is qualified to be an amateur service licensee."

The Commission summed up Mancuso's petition, saying, "You argue that the current question pool size is no longer adequate, because online practice examinations enable examinees to memorize a question pool without fully comprehending the subject matter being tested. Consequently, you propose to increase the size of the question pools, in order to hinder memorization."

The Commission concluded that Mancuso did not present grounds for the Commission to amend its rules: "As noted above, the purpose of the examinations is not to demonstrate an applicant's comprehension of certain material, but rather to determine whether he or she can properly operate an amateur station. Moreover, your contention that there has been 'a significant increase in the number of Amateur Radio operators...who do not appear to possess the knowledge indicated by their class of license' is not supported by any data or facts."

The FCC pointed out to Mancuso that the Commission's Rules only dictate the minimum number of questions for each question pool for the three Amateur Radio license classes. This, the Commission told Mancuso, "does not prevent the National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC) from increasing the number of questions in a question pool should it decide that this is appropriate. We conclude, therefore, that the petition presents no evidence of an existing problem or other reason for a rule change."

Global Simulated Emergency

Test Scheduled for April 18

The HQ Stations of all IARU Member-Societies, as well as the stations of Emergency Communications Groups, have been invited by IARU Region 1 to participate in the 2009 Global Simulated Emergency Test (GlobalSET), on Saturday, April 18, 2009 from 1100-1500 UTC. The GlobalSET will take place on and near the emergency Center of Activity (CoA) frequencies on 80, 40, 20, 17 and 15 meters, +/- QRM.

Stations in the United States intending to participate need to register through their IARU International Emergency Communications Coordinator. For the United States, registrations should be e-mailed to ARRL Emergency Preparedness and Response Manager Dennis Dura, K2DCD at, k2dcd@arrl.org.

Dura confirmed that W1AW will participate in the GlobalSET. According to IARU Region 1 Emergency Communications Coordinator Greg Mossop, G0DUB, the GlobalSET is not a contest, but an emergency communications exercise to develop skills needed to provide an international emergency network.

Mossop said that the GlobalSET has four objectives:
To increase the common interest in emergency communications.
To test how usable the CoA frequencies are across ITU regions.
To create practices for international emergency communications.
To practice the relaying of messages using all modes: Voice (SSB), Data or CW.

"The exercise will build on earlier GlobalSET exercises and will focus on generating and relaying messages in a common format across country borders, rather than the information gathering capabilities that we've done in the past," Mossop said. "We will pass messages in a format that we may have to use for the agencies we may serve. The message exchange will take longer than in previous exercises, and stations will have to be patient to transmit their messages across country and language boundaries." Each participating station is to send messages to their Regional HQ station using the IARU International Emergency Operating Procedure, using IARU message forms. Stations should relay the messages they receive to their Regional HQ station; the Region 2 station is TG0AA in Guatemala. To comply with license regulations, all messages should be addressed to Greg Mossop, G0DUB, and should come from a licensed radio amateur. Messages should contain fewer than 25 words and should not include anything that would be considered as a "real emergency" message by a listener. Mossop suggests constructing messages that include weather conditions, the number of operators at the station or even an interesting fact about the station. "There is no limit on the number of messages to be sent," he said, "but each one must have a unique message number." Regional HQ stations will not be sending messages, only receiving them.

Mossop recommends that in order to create "a more realistic situation, please limit your transmitting power during the exercise to 100 W. We are especially interested in stations operating mobile/portable and/or on emergency power." For more Info:

<http://www2.arrl.org/news/files/2009GlobalSET.pdf>



New "PSK Rumble" Manager New Format for TARA Tourney

Howdy Folks:

TARA (Troy Amateur Radio Association) is pleased to announce that we've found a replacement for our PSK "Rumble" Manager. As many of you may, or may not know, Scotty, W7PSK resigned his position early this week due to some personal/work related issues. And, all of us from TARA and the amateur community wish him well.

So, without further delay I announce that Howard Friedman, W2AFD of Scotia, NY will be assuming this position effective immediately. Howard is no stranger to the HF digital modes (or the HF bands in general) and he was quite excited about becoming our new contest manager. I'm absolutely positive that over the coming months you'll be hearing from Howard and you will find out first hand just what a "Class Act" he really is. I've personally known him for a good number of years and I can assure you that he loves this great hobby we share together. Please, take a few minutes and introduce yourself to Howard and welcome him aboard if you would. You can reach him personally at w2afd@n2ty.org or rumble-manager@n2ty.org If any of you have any questions about the PSK "Rumble" Contest that takes place on 3rd October 2009, all you have to do is contact Howard, W2AFD, and he'll gladly take good care of you!

Thank You!

"Mr.Bill" NY2U

President of TARA

The **Skirmish** digital prefix contest

Please Note: The TARA All Season Contest(s) will be aligned to the calendar year, effective immediately. The first contest to run under this new format will be the upcoming "Skirmish" (4/18/09), followed by the "Grid Dip" (8/1/09), then the "Rumble" (10/3/09) and finally the "Melee" (12/5/09) will wrap things up for 2009. All scores accumulated from each of these contests will decide who will take top honors in the TARA Tour'ney for 2009 come December.

Prior to this change the contest season started in August of each year with the "Grid Dip" and end in the spring of the following year with the "Skirmish" making it in example the 2008/2009 TARA Tour'ney.

The Upcoming Skirmish score will therefore count as the first set of results for 2009 and will also be used as the final set of results for the 2008/2009 contest.

Good luck and make sure that you enter the "Skirmish" and get counted in both years.

Thank You!

Bill, NY2U & Ernie, WM2U



Attention, all you Digital Denizens out there in Radio Land!

Are you ready to Skirmish? TARA style, that is, on Saturday April 18, 2009 from 0000Z through 2359Z.

Dust off those rig interfaces. Adjust your sound cards. Sort out the cables. Fire up the software. Review the Macros and check out the rules at the [TARA Skirmish Web Site](http://www.n2ty.org/seasons/tara_dpx_rules.html)

http://www.n2ty.org/seasons/tara_dpx_rules.html

This is a multi digital mode operation, each mode being a separate entry. This contest is a must for you prefix hunters. There will be many new or rare prefixes heard.

'73 and hope to work you in the Skirmish - Bro. Rich, Contest Manager

kc2fol@arrl.net

Richard Fisher, KI6SN Named CQ Magazine Public Service Editor

Hicksville, NY April 6, 2009 -- Richard Fisher, KI6SN, of Riverside, California, has been named Public Service Editor of CQ Amateur Radio magazine, Editor Rich Moseson, W2VU, announced today. Fisher, a veteran journalist, succeeds Bob Josuweit, WA3PZO, whose final column will appear in the May issue of CQ. Josuweit, who has covered amateur radio emergency and public service communications for CQ VHF, and then for CQ, since 1996, is stepping down due to increased time demands at his full-time job.

Fisher has been a professional journalist for 35 years, working in various capacities for daily newspapers on both the east and west coasts. He is also a prolific writer on amateur radio matters, writing the "Washington Beat" column for Popular Communications and the "Trail-Friendly Radio" column for WorldRadio Online. He was previously QRP (low-power) editor of WorldRadio's print edition.



Richard Fisher -KI6SN

A ham since 1965, Fisher enjoys a wide variety of amateur radio activities, including QRP CW operating, outdoor operating, experimenting with antennas and building equipment. He is a co-founder of the Adventure Radio Society.

"I've loved CQ since before my Novice days," notes Fisher, "so joining the team will be a thrill." Editor Rich Moseson added, "While I will miss the close working relationship I have shared with Bob Josuweit for over a decade, and wish him all the best in the future, I look forward to working closely with Richard and to the added benefits he will bring to the column as a veteran professional journalist."

Fisher's first column will appear in the July 2009 issue of CQ.



**The following are exam dates for 2009.
Please, mark calendar and let Gerald,
WA2IWW, know if you will be able to attend
one or all of these sessions.**

APRIL 25 - SATURDAY

JULY 22 - WEDNESDAY

OCTOBER 17 - SATURDAY

NOVEMBER 14 - SATURDAY

ATVET NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT!!

So far we have the following Volunteer Examiner's
for the April 25th Session:

GERALD, WA2IWW

TOM, N2TR

NICK, NW2D

BOB, KT2D

KAREN, KS2O

JOHN, WM2Y

73 de NY2U "Mr. Bill"

Tech Talk

Li-Ion Battery Overcharge Danger

Lithium-Ion (Li-Ion) batteries are different than most types of rechargeable batteries in that they remain cool during normal charging. That can induce a false sense of safety, because Li-Ion batteries can burn, explode, and spread toxic material that inflicts human injury and damages equipment if they are overcharged. Most commercial Li-Ion batteries have several automatic protection devices built-in, because of that danger. Generally charging current is interrupted if the voltage across any cell exceeds 4.30 volts, internal pressure exceeds a preset threshold, or internal temperature rises to an unsafe level. Li-Ion batteries usually are left in an unusable state after any of those things occur. Never defeat any of the internal protection devices or otherwise try to charge a lithium-ion battery that has become unchargeable.

W

The "HyperDog" is Top Dog

Hello to all,

After a pleasant QSO on the TARA repeater last night, I found this related email in my box this morning concerning the Hyperdog tennis ball launcher. Here's a fellow that knows his stuff, and might very well be the Top Dog in the Hyperdog world. I'm sure he would be happy to answer any questions.

73,

Howard Friedman

W2AFD

From: "David Yarnes"

w7aqq@cox.net

Hyper-Dog Launching

I've used a Hyper-Dog for antenna launching in trees for years. In fact, I think I may have been the one who originally brought this to the attention of readers on this reflector. I stumbled across the Hyper-Dog at T.J. Maxx of all places. It was on the close-out rack, and I think I only paid ten or twelve dollars for it. Anyway, I've tried several different items to carry the line over trees. A modified tennis ball works O.K., but doesn't have enough weight/mass ratio in some instances. One thing that worked pretty well was to take a solid core golf ball (which most golf balls are now anyway), drill a hole through it, and use that. Personally, my favorite thing to use is a rather large nut, but it's a pretty dangerous projectile, so you need to be sure you won't land it on someone's head!

The key to a successful launch is to use something lightweight and smooth as a line. I use monofilament line, and you can easily mount a fishing reel on the tennis ball storage part of the Hyper-Dog. I use a Zebco 33, but I suspect even cheaper reels would work just fine. After launch, you just pull the heavier antenna wire back over the tree using the monofilament line as a leader line. Some folks tell me that fly line works well too, but I've never tried it, and it tends to be more expensive. 6# or 8# test monofilament seems to work well, and it isn't so big that loses its flexibility. Higher strength line just seems too stiff. If you are just going over a limb that has few obstructions, nylon twine works O.K.

Whatever you use, I strongly recommend a few test launches before you ever leave home. You need to be sure you have a good combination of line and projectile. Also, take extra materials, since you very well may have an unsuccessful launch or two, and snagging is always a potential problem. The Hyper-Dog is pretty accurate though, when you get used to using it.

Dave W7AQQ



FCC TO DE- REGULATE AMATEUR RADIO

Washington, DC, April 1, 2008: President Obama in un-precedented move to restructure dysfunctional federal agencies has decided to Invoke Executive Privelege and Order the Federal Communications Commission to deregulate the Amateur Radio Service. This comes at a time when budget cuts within the Commission are forcing its Enforcement Bureau to have shut down by 1 January 2009, anyway.

A spokesperson for the Commission stated that since Amateur Radio operators are supposed to be self-policing, that this new move "should not pose a problem". And that it would also "solve the whole issue of restructuring".

This news has come as quite a shock to many in the Amateur Radio community, striking up many heated debates. "Basically we're being told that we're on our own as of 1 January, 2009", said a high-level League staff member.

In the interim between 2008 and 2010 Amateur Radio operators are expected to act just as they do now. "Nothing's changed yet, and all the rules and regulations are still in effect," said a spokesperson for the Commission.

All of this is set to change however, starting in 2009. On 1 January 2010 Amateur Radio in the United States will cease to exist as an official radio service. At that time it will be up to the operators to make up their own rules and regulations and to enforce them.

To clarify one other issue, "call signs that have not already been issued will all be available on the 'honor system'," said another Commission spokesperson. The band-plans and power limitations are expected to stay the same.

Look for more information on this late-breaking news story as it becomes available.

On another note... If you're still reading this,

***** April Fools!!! *****

Gripper Pads are Re-deployed

By: **Steve VanSickle, WB2HPR**

I enjoy operating CW on the HF bands. I don't use my straight key too much except for QRP operation. Instead, I rely on my electronic keyer and paddle combination. On occasion, I break out the old standby "bug". When using either the bug or the paddles, I find myself repositioning these keys during a QSO, due to side-to-side movement, causing them to "walk" across the operating desk. This is due in part to their rubber feet becoming hardened over time. The solution to this problem lay in the kitchen "gadget" drawer.



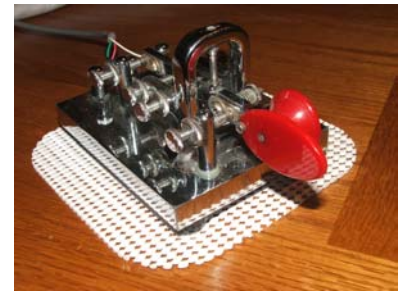
Bug on Pad

dilemma of the "walking bug and paddles". Sure enough, by placing one of these pads under the paddles, they now stay put, and the bug is no longer walking around the desk.

I have found additional applications: a lightweight tuner stays in place when its button is pushed; too-tight PL-259's are easily unscrewed; and it's a handy workbench pad which protects the equipment and keeps small parts and hardware from rolling away.



Auto tuner on Gripper pad



Paddles on Gripper Pad

Also, equipment without rubber feet don't scratch table top when you put one of these underneath. You can cut the pads to size with an ordinary scissor. They are sold in larger sizes for lining kitchen shelves or as placemats, and are made in a variety of colors. Look for them in department stores and \$1 discount stores.

So next time your paddles decide to take a "walk", try one of these pads and get a grip on it! –



Gripper Pads

73,
Steve VanSickle, WB2HPR,
3010 Tibbits Avenue
Troy, NY 12180
[**wb2hpr@arrl.net**](mailto:wb2hpr@arrl.net)

Wind Warriors Teach Watervliet Kids How To Soar

By Danielle Sanzone
The Record

Sunday, March 22, 2009

WATERVLIET In memory of a fallen flight enthusiast, Members of a local radio-controlled model plane organization are sponsoring a free aviation program this spring for children in Watervliet. Also, some are members of the Troy Amateur Radio Association, Inc.

The Watervliet Wind Warriors gave a demonstration on how to fly various miniature planes and helicopters at the Watervliet Elementary School Thursday in front of about 250 students in fifth and sixth grades.



The school assembly was organized to get the youths interested in flying and in a new program called the Tom Brown Youth Aviation Program.

The program, for fifth- and sixth-grade students, starts on April 18 and will be held each Saturday for six weeks. It is free for area children and forms will be sent home with students in the coming days. About a dozens kids will be chosen for the program's spring session and the Wind Warriors plan to hold another session in the fall, said Bill Womer, a spokesman for the hobby group.

The Wind Warriors organization, along with the help of some area pilots, will use some radio-controlled planes to teach the children about aviation. Some of the planes were left to the group by Tom Brown, a former Wind Warrior, who died in January.

"He left us all his planes," explained Womer. "The idea for the organization came from the hope of using these planes for a good purpose."

The organization's members flying their planes at the school Thursday collectively had about 75 years of flight experience.

When they asked if any of the students wanted to volunteer to fly the planes, dozens of students raised their hands but Hailey Strack, 12, a sixth-grade student at Watervliet, was chosen from the group.

Watervliet Wind Warriors member John Ryan of Troy helps sixth grade student Hailey Strack work remote controls to a radio controlled helicopter as fifth and sixth graders at Watervliet Elementary School learn about flying Thursday with model airplanes and helicopters.
(Photo by J.S. Carras)



Howie Cummings –N2HIC and Mac Smith –KB2SPM, Give a Speech and Aerial Demonstration to the Audience.

"It was a lot of fun. I will probably sign up for the program," said Strack who helped fly a model helicopter. "It was fun to try to make it spin. It was also kind of confusing since I had to use one stick to move it up and down and another one to go from side to side."

Local pilot Howard Smith spoke with the children about his experiences learning to fly.

"In grade school, I had no concept of the fact that I could be a pilot. Then, I ended up meeting a flight instructor and took lessons," said Smith who got his pilot's license in 1970 and worked for General Electric as a corporate jet pilot. "You learn math and science while flying without even knowing it and a model airplane works the same way as a real plane. I wanted to share with the students the excitement of flying." The Wind Warriors held a radio control sale and show on March 29 to raise funds for the Tom Brown Youth Aviation Program.

Sangean “Pro Travel” PT-50

I’ll be the first to admit it; I DO NOT NEED ANOTHER RADIO! However, when the latest AES Catalog arrived, I could not resist. There it was the Sangean “Pro Travel” PT-50 MW-SW-FM portable radio, originally \$79.95, now at \$24.95 closeout. I picked up the phone, called Milwaukee, and ordered it (along with \$125 worth of other items I really didn’t need!).

The package arrived on March 31, 2009, my late father’s birthday. (Happy Birthday Dad). I unpacked the radio and was immediately struck by its unusually good looks. Like the Grundig “Porsche Designed” SW radio, the Sangean is very attractive. It is silver, with bright chrome styled controls. It also includes a handsome leather case (not cheap vinyl, or a simple cloth carry bag). The radio measures 5.25 x 3.5 x 1.5 inches in the leather case – in the vernacular of the 1960’s it would be described as “coat pocket size”. The telescopic antenna was 22 inches long.

The PT-50 is an analog radio with digital readout. This means that tuning is done with the traditional inductor and variable capacitor, connected by string, pulleys or gears to a tuning knob. However, instead of a “slide rule dial”, a small frequency counter is connected to the local oscillator to give a digital readout. The advantage of this system is low cost, low power consumption, and the lack of “synthesizer hiss”. The disadvantages are the possibility of poor frequency readout, free play in the tuning knob, and backlash. The Sangean is powered by 2 “AA” cells, or an optional 3 to 6 volt AC/DC adaptor.

According to the manual, the PT-50 covers the following frequencies: [User Manual](#)

MW – 526.5 to 1710 kHz

FM – 87.5 to 108 MHz

SW – 5.9 to 6.2 MHz (49 m), 7.1 to 7.35 MHz (41 m),
9.4 to 9.9 MHz (31 m), 11.6 to 12.1 MHz (25 m),
13.57 to 13.87 MHz (22 m), 15.1 to 15.73 MHz (19 m),
and 17.5 to 17.9 MHz (16 m)

While the above frequency ranges cover the official international shortwave bands from 49 through 16 meters, many broadcasters go slightly out of band in order to find a clear channel. Fortunately, the PT-50 has a greater tuning range than advertised. My unit had the following coverage:

MW – 521 to 1710 kHz

FM – 87.0 to 107.8 MHz

SW – 5.79 to 6.32, 6.99 to 7.52, 9.30 to 10.02, 11.42 to
12.26, 13.39 to 14.16, 14.97 to 16.04, 17.29 to 18.18 MHz

Coverage was verified with a Kaito KA1103 SW radio.



Even with this expanded frequency range, the Sangean still misses 5.72 to 5.79 and 6.85 to 6.99 MHz, which are used by a handful of stations. It also completely omits the “Tropical Bands”. These are SW broadcast allocations at 2.3 MHz (120 m), 3.2 MHz (90 m), and 4.7 MHz (60 m), which are used in Third World countries for domestic broadcasting. In the U.S.A. there are two stations on 90 meters, and three on 60 meters. The PT-50 also skips the 13 meter band (21.45 to 21.85 MHz), and the 11 meter band (25.67 to 26.10 MHz). However, in practical terms, the Sangean covers about 99% of the active international Shortwave frequencies.

I DO NOT NEED ANOTHER RADIO, But !!!

Sangean emphasizes the clock radio feature of the PT-50. The radio has two LCD displays, one for “home” time, and the other for “world” time and frequency display. It has a sleep function (60 minutes), an alarm (radio or buzzer), and automatic selection of the time in 24 cities worldwide. There is also an earphone jack (FM stereo through headphones), and a mono/stereo switch.

OK Bill, cut to the chase. How does it perform?

For my objective test, I compared it to three other radios; the Kaito KA-1103, my Yaesu VX-5, and my Sony ICF-S10MK2 (of “pocket or purse” fame).

I started on the MW (AM) band. The Sangean was as sensitive as the Sony, and just a notch below the Kaito. I could easily hear every local station (with one exception described later). At night, I had no problem hearing the 50 kW powerhouses. During the day, I could hear many 50 kW stations in NYC, Hartford and Boston, as well as low power daytimers up to 50 miles away. The TIS on 1610 kHz and the beacon on 523 kHz came in loud and clear. Selectivity was good; I could separate stations 10 kHz away, PROVIDED THAT THE NEARBY STATION WASN'T TOO STRONG. And that's the rub.....the Sangean overloads in the presence of strong signals. I live one half mile from a 5 kW station on 1300 kHz. From 1270 to 1330 kHz, the Sangean threw in the towel. The 1300 kHz station dominated those frequencies, wiping out a local 1 kW station on 1330 kHz, about 15 miles away. The Sangean is single conversion, and image rejection was poor. Two strong local stations on 1460 and 1540 kHz came through loud and clear on the image frequencies of 540 and 620 kHz respectively. (Note: it appears that the i.f. in the PT-50 is 460, not the usual 455 kHz). On MW, the digital display reads in 1 kHz steps. Frequency display was accurate. The tuning knob is small, but did not have any free play or backlash.

Overall, I rated the MW performance of the Sangean as fair to good. The rating was lowered because of overloading and poor image rejection. For those in rural areas, away from powerhouse stations, I rate it as very good.

On FM, the Sangean performed as well as the Sony, but lower than the KA-1103. The PT-50 easily pulled in all local stations. Selectivity was slightly better than the Sony, not as good as the Kaito. The radio performed slightly better in the “mono” position. Audio quality was good, crisp and clear. Stereo through the headphones was good. The digital display read in 100 kHz steps, and was accurate. My particular unit only tuned up to 107.8 MHz, your mileage may vary.

Overall, I rated FM performance as good.

On Shortwave, the Sangean's sensitivity was slightly below the Kaito's, but better than the Yaesu VX-5. Selectivity was good, the PT-50 could separate stations 10 kHz away. Overload was less of a problem on Shortwave; in the worst case scenario, a strong station dominated about 20 kHz. Image rejection again was poor; however the major SW broadcasting bands are less than 920 kHz wide, thus minimizing the problem. The display reads only to 10 kHz, i.e. 6.15, 9.36, 15.60 MHz etc. For stations on 5 kHz steps, such as WBCQ (7.415 MHz), the Sangean shows the nearest 10 kHz frequency. On WBCQ, for example, the display will show 7.41, 7.42, or will flip-flop between the two. The display was accurate to the nearest 10 kHz. The tuning was a bit touchy, but again, there was no free play or backlash.

Overall, I rated SW performance as fair to good. Overloading was less of a problem on SW, probably because the Sangean only has a 22" antenna. There is no provision for an external antenna on the PT-50, and one should not be used.

Note: The Yaesu had a 24 inch telescoping antenna for this test. Connected to a 50 ohm antenna, it would have outperformed the Sangean.

The sleep and alarm functions worked without any problem. In summary, the Sangean “Pro Travel” PT-50 is a terrible choice at its usual price of \$79.95, but an excellent value at \$24.95. As the name suggests, this is an ideal radio to go with you everywhere. Put it in your radio bag. Use it as an alarm clock when traveling. Keep it as a standby or emergency receiver. Give it as a gift to someone to introduce them to the magic and wonders of Shortwave radio. If you're interested, get one now. I don't know how many AES has left at this price.

Rensselaer County ARES/RACES Nets Meets

First Thursday of the Month at 7:30 PM on 145.17 Repeater



Tom-KC2FCR, Dave -WA2IGM, Mac - KB2SPM and Karen - KS20 set up an 80 meter N.V.I.S. dipole at the Rensselaer County D.P.W. Garage



N.V.I.S.



CRO Tom Stewart KC2FCR attempts to make an 80m N.V.I.S. contact to Scott Haller - K2CK in Berlin

A few weekend's ago the group got together to try out some HF communications. The question. How do you rig up HF dipole's at an angle for N.V.I.S. without tree's or other vertical structure's. IMPROVISE !!!! Use two Dump trucks, with the box of one Dump elevated with Dipole mounted at the Top.

The purpose of the test is to see if we can establish dependable HF communications between any two distant points within the county utilizing HF bands in the event that VHF/UHF 2m/440 repeaters are not available. This test was not totally successful, but we were able to hear some stations and some locations. Some relaying was necessary. Back to the drawing board as the say.

Keep your eye on our Yahoo Group. Tom will be posting a meeting notice in the very near future, which will be a critique and antenna building session.

As always our meetings, unless otherwise posted will be at the North Greenbush Town Offices located at Main St. and Douglas Ave. in Wynantskill, N.Y.

TARA REPEATER PROBLEMS

On Wednesday evening April 15, 2009, at about 11:00 p.m., we had an unexplained catastrophic failure of the TARA Repeater system. It. was quite odd. It just gave up the ghost without warning. As of this morning the repeater was removed from the site for repair to see if it could be put back in service. In the meantime, it is suggested that all members operate in simplex mode on the output frequency until the repeater is put back in service.

In the "GOOD NEWS DEPARTMENT" it looks like the new repeaters should be back on-line some time this Saturday and the 2 meter and 440 side will both be P.L.'ed on the input and output with a tone of 127.3 hz So get your radio's programmed up in the meantime.

TARA CLUB OFFICERS – 1 YEAR TERM

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Vice President: Karen Smith, KS2O.....273-6594
Secretary: Marilyn Davis, KB2JZI.....272-0112
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TARA HF CONTESTING:

Bill Eddy, NY2U.....273-9248

HF DX & Contest Manager - NY2U

I QUIT !! Take this Job and Shove it.

April Fools ☺

TARA VHF/UHF CONTESTING:

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THE TARA NEWS

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P.O. Box 1292

Troy, New York, 12181-1292



Visit us on the Internet

At <http://www.n2ty.org/>

Regular monthly Meeting

Tuesday, April 21, 2009

7:00p.m.

**Green Island Municipal
Center**

Intersection of

George St. & Hudson Ave.

Green Island, New York

Ample Parking

Parking Lot on Hudson Ave.

Troy's Full Service Repeaters
145.170/R **447.075/R**