



# THE TARA NEWS

*Affiliate of the American Radio Relay League*

**Volume 18 © Issue 01 February 2007**

## **TARA Christmas Party A Rousing Success**

I'd personally like to thank all of you that attended our TARA Christmas Party in December. As I discussed with the group on the repeater we found out that we can fit 75 hungry folks into the G.I. Municipal Building with all the tables & chairs too! Seriously, we did have around 72 at my last head count. And, we used every table & chair that we had setup. However, we did have another spare table and another 15 chairs in the back room. So, next year we can try again to fill the building.

We had a lot of you that brought some awfully nice hot & cold dishes and we thank you! That includes those that brought along some pretty neat dessert items too. Without your help this couldn't have been the huge success that it was.

In closing here, I want to thank Karen, KS2O and her refreshment committee for completely spoiling us. This year we also had a new volunteer that assisted Karen and that was none other than Lisa, KC2OEA. We appreciate you're assistance Lisa and we're all very glad to see you attending the meetings and pitching in.

Oh yes, one last thing. It was great to have Bill, KC2JDW & "Crusher" back with us at the Christmas Party. I needed somebody to help me with the 50/50 tickets and "Crusher" was more than glad to help. It seems I'm always looking for him to handle that chore but in the end he gathered up over \$100.00 in ticket sales. The winner of the 50/50 was Howard, KC2MNW, and in the spirit of the holiday's he donated his portion back to the club. Now, that was a very classy thing to do!

73,

*Bill - NY2U*

## **Thanks TARA Members "We Appreciate You"**

I want to take this opportunity to Thank each of you for all you have given to our organization over the year's. May this New Year we've just kicked off be filled with Peace and Happiness, but most of all Good Health for each of you.

This past year was one heck of a great building year and I see a lot more of this upcoming in 2007. The future is very bright for TARA but not without each of you supporting us. I hope for 2007, that you'll continue not only to support us as you have in the past, but help guide us into the future of this club as well.

We had a few of our members that became "Silent Key's" in 2006 and to the families of these individuals I want you to know our prayers and thoughts are with you as we journey into this new year.

I look forward to working with each of you throughout 2007! "Happy New Year!"

Mr. Bill - NY2U

## **PLEASE, "Check your Mike"**

Again, on February 14, 2007, the Night of the "Snowstorm of 2007" someone at 6:30 PM left their radio unattended and keyed down on the TARA repeater. It appeared to be a mobile because initially there was an alternator whine which stopped, shortly thereafter. The radio stayed keyed until approximately 6:00 AM, when either the radio gave out or the battery went dead. During this time, the TARA repeater system was shut down because it timed out. If someone was in trouble out there the TARA repeater was DEAD.

**Carelessness like this is totally uncalled for and has to stop.**

Anyone can make a mistake, but at least people should set up their radio's for the transmitters to time out after 3 minutes.

**Also, when they make a mistake at least own up to it.**



*More than a Club*



*We're a Family*



# Upcoming Public Service Events



The Hudson-Mohawk Road Runners Club (HMRRC) will be conducting the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual "Runnin' Of the Green (Island)" – A 4 mile road race through the streets of Green Island. The race will take place on Saturday, March 10, 2007 at 10:00 AM.

Registration will take place at the Legnard-Curtin Post American Legion Post , 35 Cohoes Ave.,

Green Island from 8:30 AM –9:30 AM on the morning of the race. Upon the completion of the Adult event there will be a "KID'S RACE" which will consist of a 200 or 400 meter race, an 800 meter race and a one mile race. Refreshments will be at the American Legion upon completion of the race.

If anyone would like to assist with communications at this event please contact me at 273-6594 or email me at [KS20@N2TY.ORG](mailto:KS20@N2TY.ORG)

73,

*Karen – KS20*

## A.T.V.E.T. 2007 Schedule

ATVET (Albany/Troy Volunteer Examiner Team) is proud to announce it will be serving the Capital District with a full slate exam dates beginning on February 24, 2007. This also marks ATVET's 23rd year of providing FCC examinations to the amateur community.

All of these exam dates will be held on the Campus of RPI - CII Building - Room 3051 in Troy. You can find full details on how to find this location on the TARA web site at: [www.n2ty.org/atvet.htm](http://www.n2ty.org/atvet.htm)

If you need additional information please feel free to contact ATVET's Liaison - Gerald Murray, WA2IWW at [atvet@n2ty.org](mailto:atvet@n2ty.org) or phone him at 482-8700 (evenings/weekends).

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### ATVET EXAM Times/Dates

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SAT. 2/24/07 - 8:30AM-1:00PM-CII- RM3051  
SAT. 3/10/07 - 8:30AM-1:00PM-CII- RM3051  
SAT. 4/14/07 - 8:30AM-1:00PM-CII- RM3051  
SAT. 5/12/07 - 8:30AM-1:00PM-CII- RM3051  
WED 6/27/07 - 5:30PM-9:00PM-CII- RM3051  
SAT. 10/13/07 - 8:30AM-1:00PM-CII- RM3051  
SAT. 11/10/07 - 8:30AM-1:00PM-CII- RM3051

## Public Service Events for 2007

**Saturday, March, 10, 2007**

**10:00 AM**

**Runnin' of the Green - Green Island**

**Thursday, May 17, 2007**

**6:25 PM**

**GHI Work Force Run  
Washington Park, Albany, NY**

**Sunday, May 20, 2007**

**8:00 AM**

**East Greenbush Rotary Run**

**Monday, May 28, 2007**

**10:00 AM**

**Watervliet Memorial Day Parade**

**Saturday, June 2, 2007**

**10:00 AM**

**Freihofer's Run for Women  
Washington Park, Albany, NY**

**Sunday, September 23, 2007**

**8:00 AM**

**Arsenal City Run –Watervliet, NY**

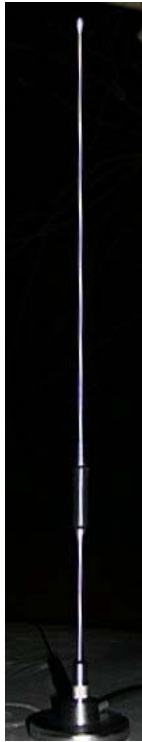
**October 30-31, 2007**

**6-10 PM**

**Pumpkin Patrol - Rensselaer & Albany Counties**

# New Antenna's From Bozak Antenna

Here is the new BOZAK 7/11 dual band Base Antenna for 2 meters 7dB and 440Mhz 11 dB gain. It's about 9 feet long and comes with all mounting hardware, ready to use. This Special Sale Price is PICK-UP ONLY, now at \$149.00 as you see it is stainless steel and fiberglass construction, Built to last.



Here is the NEW BOZAK dual band mobile antenna mag mount for 2 meters /440. Sale price now is \$39.00 pick-up only. It comes ready to use out of the box, with 17 feet of cable and PL-259 connector.

These are most popular because of the high performance and the sale price for locals...

Below is a picture of Craig – W2XAD trying out his new BOZAK antenna. He just couldn't wait to try it out and get it on the air. When you hear him, ask him how he likes it !!



BOZAK 2M/440  
Mag Mount  
Dual Band  
Made in the USA

CONTACT STEVE BOZAK AT  
[bozak@mail.usa.com](mailto:bozak@mail.usa.com)

**Tel:518-373-8069**  
**Fax: 518-373-0701**

**PLEASE, BEFORE YOU LEAVE, YOUR RADIO**  
**“CHECK YOUR MICROPHONE”**  
**or “ Shut the Radio Off ”**



# **Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Implements Restriction of One Request Per Vanity Call Sign**

**Released: February 8, 2007**

By way of background, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted a Report and Order that restricts an applicant to filing only one application on any one day for a vanity call sign. Beginning on February 8, 2007, only an applicant's first-filed vanity call sign application will be processed. Additional vanity call sign applications received from the same applicant on the same day will be dismissed. The restriction applies to all classes of Amateur licenses: Technician, General, Amateur Extra, Novice, Technician Plus and Advanced. Applicants will continue to submit their request electronically through the Universal Licensing System (ULS) and submit payment either electronically or manually with FCC Form 605 (Main Form) and Form 159 and the required remittance.

## **Previous Process:**

Previously ULS allowed an applicant to file multiple applications requesting the same desired call sign. Vanity applications are processed in receipt date order, randomly selected by the system. Since granting vanity call signs is based on a random selection batch process, if an applicant filed multiple applications for the same call sign, this increased his or her chance of having an application be the first one selected. When a call sign is granted, all other applications requesting the same call sign are dismissed because the call sign is no longer available.

## **New Process:**

ULS will now limit individuals to filing only one vanity call sign application on the same day. In the case where an applicant files multiple vanity call sign applications on the same day, only the first-filed application will be considered for the process and the additional applications will be dismissed. This new process will eliminate the possibility of an applicant having more than one application for the same call sign being considered on any one day.

For additional information or assistance on how to request a Vanity Call Sign, visit the Web at <http://esupport.fcc.gov> or call the ULS Customer Support Hotline at 877-480-3201 or 717-338-2888 (TTY 717-338-2824). Hours are from 8 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except Federal holidays). To provide quality service and ensure security, all telephone calls are recorded.

1 Amendment of Part 97 of the Commission's Rules Governing the Amateur Radio Services, *Report and Order*, WT Docket No. 04-140, 21 FCC Rcd 11643 (2006).

## **Lisa Nowak - KC5ZTB, Arrested Charged with Attempted Kidnapping & Attempted Murder**

An astronaut drove from Houston to Florida, donned a disguise and confronted a woman she believed was romantically involved with a space shuttle pilot she was in love with, police said. She was charged with attempted kidnapping and other counts.

U.S. Navy Capt. Lisa Nowak (KC5ZTB), 43, who flew last July on a shuttle mission to the international space station, was also charged with attempted vehicle burglary with battery, destruction of evidence and battery. She was denied bail.

Police said Nowak drove from her home in Houston to the Orlando International Airport — wearing diapers so she wouldn't have to stop to urinate — to confront Colleen Shipman.

Nowak believed Shipman was romantically involved with Navy Cmdr. William Oefelein, a pilot during space shuttle Discovery's trip to the space station last December, police said.

**W**

Courtesy <http://twiar.org> , [CNN](#) & [Fox News](#)

## FCC Now Processing Vanity Call Sign Backlog

The FCC has resumed processing new Amateur Radio vanity call sign applications. An initial stab at whittling down the backlog began February 8 -- five weeks to the day after the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB) issued the last vanity call sign prior to the resumption. The Commission stopped processing new vanity call sign applications received on or after December 18 while it readied the Universal Licensing System (ULS) vanity application software to accommodate a December 15 rule change to discourage the filing of multiple applications for the same call sign. The FCC has continued to accept new vanity applications and to process vanity renewals. A WTB staff member, speaking on background, told ARRL the Commission could be back on track by next week.

"We've resumed processing, and by next week we'll be caught up," said the staffer, who conceded that the FCC's ULS software had not been fully tested to ensure it could deal with the multiple applications issue when the new rule's December 15 effective date rolled around. "We knew the date was coming, but the software wasn't quite ready." The Commission could complete processing of applications that have been sitting in the queue as early as February 12.

As of February 9, the WTB appeared to have granted some 125 vanity call sign applications submitted between December 18 and December 22. Another 500 or so applications remain in the queue.

The FCC this week also issued a public notice to announce the formal implementation of the multiple applications rule, 97.19(a)(1), effective February 8. The notice said the ULS would limit individuals to filing only one vanity call sign application on the same day.

"In the case where an applicant files multiple vanity call sign applications on the same day, only the first-filed application will be considered for the process, and the additional applications will be dismissed," the FCC said. "This new process will eliminate the possibility of an applicant having more than one application for the same call sign being considered on any one day."

The Commission is likely to receive an avalanche of new vanity call sign applications after February 23, when elimination of the Morse code examination requirement is expected to spur a massive influx of license upgrades.

The FCC is processing new vanity call sign applications now in the queue in the order they were received. Typically, it takes 18 days from the time the FCC receives a vanity application until the call sign is issued -- or the application is denied. The current vanity call sign fee, payable for new applications as well as renewals, is \$20.80 for the 10-year license term.

## Propfire - Browser Ext. in Firefox

Propfire - Ham Radio Propagation in Firefox  
HF propagation info on your web browser status bar for Ham Radio/Shortwave.

Propfire is a web browser extension that allows users to view HF propagation conditions on their web browser status bar. Ham Radio operators and other shortwave radio enthusiasts will be able to monitor propagation conditions using this Firefox extension.

You should notice the solar propagation information circled in the image above. This data is retrieved from the NOAA website and is periodically updated in your browser as you surf the web. (assuming you are using Firefox).

## Have You Tried PocketDigi

Here is a program called PocketDigi which just released a new version 1.0.7. For those of you with your pocket gadgets this just might be what you're in need of. PocketDigi is an open source utility developed by OK1IAK to provide ham radio operators with PocketPC PDAs with the ability to use (encode and decode) digital modes such as RTTY (teletype), PSK (phase shift keying), and CW (Morse Code).

Want to take your PocketPC PDA to go backpack mobile and work PSK31 QRP? Then, PocketDigi is the app for you! Since the advent of mobile computing, radio amateurs have been exploring creative ways to utilize laptop computers and PDAs for portable ham radio operations and mini-DXpeditions.

PocketDigi was created by Vojtech OK1IAK who built the utility using Microsoft's Embedded Visual C. He used (and improved) portions of a Linux GNU open source application called gMFSK to do encoding and decoding.

Currently, PocketDigi is still in early development stages and has not been fully tested on every PocketPC platform. However, many hams have reported good results on PocketPC PDAs using at least a 206 MHz processor. Fortunately, Vojtech has made PocketDigi freely available, along with source code, via the Source Forge web site. This will undoubtedly lead to future development and improvement of this application for the ham community. Please go to:

[http://www.n0hr.com/PocketDigi/PocketDigi\\_intro.htm](http://www.n0hr.com/PocketDigi/PocketDigi_intro.htm)

Good Luck!  
NY2U Bill

# Codeless Amateur Radio Testing Begins February 23

The ARRL has learned that the FCC's Report and Order (R&O) in the "Morse code proceeding," WT Docket 05235, [http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/attachmatch/FCC-06-178A1.pdf](http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-06-178A1.pdf), is scheduled to appear in the Federal Register Wednesday, January 24. Assuming that occurs, the new Part 97 rules deleting any Morse code examination requirement for Amateur Radio license applicants would go into effect Friday, February 23, 2007. The League cautions that this date is tentative, pending official confirmation and publication.

"This change eliminates an unnecessary regulatory burden that may discourage current Amateur Radio operators from advancing their skills and participating more fully in the benefits of Amateur Radio," the FCC remarked in the Morse code R&O.

Publication of the R&O in the Federal Register starts a 30-day countdown for the new rules to go on the books. Rules and regulations that appear in the Federal Register constitute their official version.

Deletion of the Morse requirement is a landmark in Amateur Radio history. Until 1991, when a code examination was dropped from the requirements to obtain a Technician ticket, all prospective radio amateurs had to pass a Morse test.

On or after the effective date of the new rules, an applicant holding a valid Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination (CSCE) for a higher license class will be able to redeem it for an upgrade. For example, a Technician licensee holding a valid CSCE for Element 3 (General) could apply at a VEC exam session, pay the application fee -- which most VECs charge -- and receive an instant upgrade. A CSCE is good only for 365 days from the date of issuance.

The new rules also mean that all Technician licensees, whether or not they've passed a Morse code examination, will gain HF privileges identical to those of current Novice and Tech Plus (or Technician with Element 1 credit) licensees without having to apply for an upgrade. Novices and Technicians with Element 1 credit have CW privileges on 80, 40, 15 meters and CW, RTTY, data and SSB privileges on 10 meters.

The FCC R&O includes an Order on Reconsideration in WT Docket 04-140 the so-called "omnibus" proceeding. It will modify the Amateur Service rules in response to ARRL's request to accommodate automatically controlled narrowband digital stations on 80 meters in the wake of other rule changes that were effective last December 15. The Commission designated 3585 to 3600 kHz for such operations, although that segment will remain available for CW, RTTY and data.

The ARRL has posted all relevant information on these important Part 97 rule revisions on its "FCC's Morse Code Report and Order WT Docket 05-235" Web page, [www.arrl.org/fcc/morse/](http://www.arrl.org/fcc/morse/).

# American Red Cross changes Background Check Policy

CQ Public Service Editor Bob Josuweit, WA3PZO, reports that the American Red Cross has announced changes to its controversial policy requiring background checks of all volunteers, including, in many cases, hams working through the Amateur Radio Emergency Service. Many hams were concerned about invasion of privacy, as the standard consent form granted permission not only for criminal background checks but also for credit checks and "mode of living" checks.

A spokeswoman for the Red Cross region serving Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas, has confirmed the following changes in the background check policy:

- \* A new consent form will be developed that eliminates all references to credit checks and mode of living.
- \* People who signed the previous forms will not be subject to credit checks or mode of living checks. A new form will be developed for those positions requiring credit checks.
- \* Red Cross senior management will establish a policy to define which positions will require credit checks and how those checks will be evaluated.

WA3PZO will have additional details in his April "Public Service" column.

## FRANKS FUNNIES

A group of chess enthusiasts checked into a hotel and were standing in the lobby discussing their recent tournament victories.

After about an hour, the manager came out of the office and asked them to disperse.

"But why," they asked, as they moved off.

"Because," he said, "I can't stand chess-nuts boasting in an open foyer."

*W*



# Morse code signaling its own . . . - - - . . .

**A Telegraph Column By Dave Brooks**

<http://www.nashuatelegraph.com>

**Published: Wednesday, January 3, 2007**

Morse code might be the most rugged form of long-distance communication ever devised, not to mention the most famous (Can you tap out SOS? I thought so), but it's in trouble.

Last month, the Federal Communications Commission decided to drop all requirements that you demonstrate any proficiency with Morse before you can get any kind of license for amateur radio, also known as ham radio. The FCC judged the 175-year-old code unnecessary in the era of Webcams and cell phones, not to mention voice and teletype messages now used by amateur radio.

While most other countries made that move years ago and the U.S. has been inching toward it for a while – the requirement was dropped for beginner's licenses years ago, and Morse is gone even from places where you might think it lives, such as the Coast Guard – the FCC decision could turn Morse code into a museum piece, alongside semaphore and smoke signals.

"People with the ability to send and receive Morse code are a dying breed," admits Jack Duffy of Hudson, known over the airwaves by his radio call sign of KE1HS. Duffy isn't too happy about this, nor are many of his peers at the Nashua Area Radio Club, which for a quarter-century has been the focal point of the region's amateur radio fans.

Morse code, they say, remains important even in a YouTube universe because it can carry emergency messages in almost any conditions. All you need is a wire tossed over a branch to act as an antenna, a battery and perhaps \$50 in equipment, and you can call for help anywhere in the world, using dots and dashes.

"When the power goes out, when nothing else gets through, a radio operator can have a little emergency power and still communicate," said Stu Sherman of Mason, N1STY.

Perhaps the most unusual example of the power of Morse code's simplicity came during the Vietnam War, when captured Navy Capt. Jeremiah Denton was put in front of a camera and told to admit being a war criminal. As he spoke, he blinked his eyelids to spell "t-o-r-t-u-r-e".

More down-to-earth examples happened after Hurricane Katrina, when cell phones and landlines were wiped out, and equipment or power for radio voice messages was limited. Morse code was used by some amateur radio operators to maintain contact.

Talking with club members, whose proficiency range from a few words per minute to the whopping 30-35 wpm of club President Ed Deichler of Merrimack, K2TE, it's clear that Morse has some unexpected advantages. One of the thrills of amateur radio, for example, is making contact with people in other countries, which can sometimes be easier through a relay key than a microphone.

"I've spent half an hour just trying to understand somebody's call sign, because of their accent," said Duffy. The club members also say there's a subtler benefit to the code requirement: It has been a filter to ensure that people who show up on the airwaves are serious. Some fear that without Morse code, amateur radio might become a long-distance version of CB radio.



**Staff photo by COREY PERRINE** Nashua Ham Radio Club Ed Deichler of Merrimack talks with other club members near a Morse code relay key at a meeting Tuesday at the Nashua Public Library.



# Morse code signaling its own . . . - - - . . . (cont'd)

“People are expecting entitlements, but this is something you earn,” said Sherman. It is still necessary to pass a technical test to get any level of amateur radio license, but those are a lot easier to bluff than even a five-words-per-minute Morse proficiency. In fact, questions and answers are allegedly available online. Some see even wider connotations to the FCC’s decision. “It’s part of the dumbing down of the whole society,” grumbled Deichler.

Still, Deichler added, the fading of Morse “is inevitable.” The surest sign, he said, is that in any group of amateur radio operators, people’s proficiency with Morse “is directly related to their age.”

The big hope from dropping the Morse requirement, and the biggest argument in the move’s favor, is that it will let more people into the hobby.

Certainly the numbers of amateur radio operators isn’t booming, but Duffy feels that’s due to sunspots, rather than Morse code.

Amateur radio bounces signals off the charged portion of the atmosphere, or ionosphere, whose potency is related to the 11-year solar cycle. That cycle is currently in its low phase, which means the ionosphere is weak and it’s hard to send a signal.

That will change in a few years as the sun ramps up again, he said, and amateur radio should benefit.

Whether Samuel F. B. Morse’s dit-dah-dit benefits along with it, however, seems unlikely.

***Science From the Sidelines appears Wednesdays in The Telegraph. David Brooks can be reached at 594-5831 or [dbrooks@nashuatelegraph.com](mailto:dbrooks@nashuatelegraph.com)***

## Rensselaer County ARES/RACES Nets Meet

### Each Wednesday Night at 7:30 PM on 145.17 Repeater



The February ARES/RACES Meeting will be Thursday, February 22th, 7:30PM, in the large conference room in the Rensselaer County Public Safety Building. All area amateur radio operators are welcome.

The RACES part of the meeting will be SHORT. I'm going to keep it to 10 minutes. The topics are just:

1. A short description of the role of RACES, and our ARES/RACES group.
2. A quick review of the 2007 RACES goals and plans.

The ARES/RACES association meeting will be right after the RACES meeting. For anyone that missed the last meeting, the new RACES radio equipment will be at this meeting, again.

**What great stuff will there be to see at the next ARES/RACES meeting? “A GO KIT SHOW & TELL”**  
**Bring your own, Go Kits!**

At the end of the February ARES/RACES meeting, we're going to have a "GO-KIT" Show & Tell. Please bring your current, or favorite, or most handy, go kit. I'm going to bring the kit I took with me to 9-11, which is pretty simple, but it worked. If show and tell is popular, we'll do it at every meeting. The hope is that it's a way for everyone to share ideas with each other, and for both new and old hams to learn some new tricks.

The only condition is that the kit should be small - one trip, and no big, heavy items, please - and nothing dangerous. (In other words, please leave your generator and 100AH batteries at home!)

Tom Stewart, KC2FCR Acting CRO - Rensselaer County RACES  
VP - ARES/RACES



# In Memory of Friends

It's with great sadness that I announce that Robert E. Jones, WB2SWA, became a "Silent Key" on Monday, January 1, 2007. Robert served on the TARA Board of Directors and he lived in Watervliet with his wife Margaret. He wasn't able to use his radio's as much as he would have liked over the last 4 to 5 years but you can rest assure he spent many of hours each day listening to the TARA repeaters. Bob always knew what was happening with our club and he would always contribute each year to whatever projects we had going on. We're going to miss Bob.

Please, if you'd like to send a special sympathy card or a note to his wife I know that would be greatly appreciated. Send your cards/notes to:

Mrs. Robert E Jones  
405 Broadway  
Watervliet NY 12189-3938

Also, it's with great sadness that I announce the untimely passing of Marian G. Duffy, wife of Richard Duffy, N2TZQ on Saturday February 10, 2007. She had been battling cancer for a number of months.

If you would like to make a donation in Marian's memory it can be made to the "Seeing Eye Fund". and if you would like to send "Duffy" a Sympathy card send it to him at his QRZ.com address at:

Richard E. Duffy  
24 WIGGAND DR  
GLENMONT NY 12077-4429

God Bless,  
*Mr. Bill*

# Robert E. Jones WB2SWA -SK

WATERVLIET - Robert E. 'WB2SWA' Jones, 78, died on Monday, January 1, 2007, at Samaritan Hospital in Troy. Born in Troy on January 4, 1928, he was the son of the late Bertha Teeling Jones. He was a life long area resident and was educated in Watervliet schools. He served his country in the U.S. Navy and was honorably discharged in 1946. He retired from the Albany County Fire Rescue as a dispatcher in 1993 after many years of service. Robert was a proud member of the Troy Amateur Radio Association, VFW Post 729 and the Thomas B. Flynn, Jr. American Legion Post 1035, both in Watervliet. In his free time, he loved to communicate by ham radio or with his computer. Survivors include his loving wife of 49 years, Margaret McGrouty Jones whom he married on November 30, 1957.



## It's Back on Thursday Night at 9:00 PM

**TARA International Trader Net**

**145.170**

\*\*\* ECHOLINK \*\*\*

**447.075**

# After the Flood *A Series of Articles*

## By John "Steve" VanSickle WB2HPR

Last year, I began to clean some dark corners of my basement. I needed to make room for some newly acquired “treasures” – which meant I needed to weed out some of the unused junk. I must confess, I haven’t quite got everything neat and tidy yet, because I just couldn’t throw away all that “good” stuff! One item that I saved was a 1930 ERLA broadcast radio, which I had stored away in 1976. A former neighbor had given it to me, and he had stored it in his cellar, which had flooded many ears earlier. (Who could resist an old wooden radio with a waterlogged case?)

In it’s heyday, the old ERLA was a star performer during that Golden Age of radio – a time when the Maltese Falcon and Lowell Thomas were gaining notoriety. Even though it was in pretty sorry shape, I could visualize the ERLA in its original splendor, with polished wooden case, glowing tubes, and dial lamp. And besides, it was physically complete; it was documented (think: schematic!), and was a bit unusual because it had a clock mounted in the snowflake shaped grille. (Could this have been the forerunner of the first clock/radio?)



FIG  
1

The bottom of the cabinet had become detached. (Fig. 1)

So I made a replacement from plywood, and matching trim was duplicated using a router. Some stain, shellac, and varnish completed repairs to the cabinet. (Fig. 2) Although the cabinet suffered from severe water damage, the electronics needed attention, as well. When approaching a project like this, one needs to don his or her detective hat -- there had to be some reason the old radio ended up in said neighbor’s cellar to begin with.



FIG  
2

My first suspects were the old power supply filter capacitors. Sure enough, I saw evidence of leaking electrolyte, plus one of the originals capacitors was missing, having been replaced with a waxed paper tubular type, and attached with cloth friction tape! There were some suspicious “bath tub” capacitors, too, which did not measure close to their original values. The bathtub types were heated and their wax/tar insulation removed. They were retrofitted (“re-stuffed”) with new polyester film type equivalents. (Fig. 3) The large power supply capacitor was likewise re-stuffed. The missing metal tubular capacitors are no longer available, so a replacement was replicated using a length of aluminum antenna mast and a conduit fitting for the base. It looks pretty convincing next to the original unit! (Fig. 4 shows the underside of chassis with the bathtub capacitors in place.)



FIG  
3

After the capacitors issues were resolved, many resistance checks were made, and the chassis was thoroughly cleaned. The tubes were checked (using an antique tube tester), and the line cord replaced. The clock needed repairs, too, as the original lubricants had gummed up over the years. This meant disassembly, cleaning and re-lubrication, as well as new wiring. At this point, I thought I was home free – that is, until I looked at the loud speaker. Of course, it needed new grille cloth. I located some at Radio Daze in Victor, NY. But the paper cone had suffered from high humidity, and had cracks and holes, to boot. This required many hours of tedious work, re-cementing the cone to the frame, and patching the numerous tears in the paper.



FIG  
4

As a final check, the customary resistance measurements were made, and that's when I got my big reality check! The primary winding of the audio output transformer was wide open! (I guess that's why the radio was "retired" by its former owner)

I considered purchasing a replacement "fits-all" transformer – but I also had previous experience re-winding power transformers. Employing time-honored techniques, I got very lucky and had the transformer apart, repaired (minus 20 turns) and back in place in a few hours. And you have to look very close to see that it was taken apart.

Finally, the moment of truth; I carried the case, the loudspeaker, and the chassis from my basement shop to the dining room table. (Fig. 5) After reassembly, I plugged it in and voila: my 76-year-old ERLA began to play music again! I am proud of the results – the sound is quite good, the appearance is pleasing, and there's just something magical in tuning around the broadcast band, pulling in DX on the old ERLA. (Fig. 6) These same techniques may be employed in rejuvenating that old "boat anchor" which may be lurking in a dark recess of your basement, closet, or garage. I've gotten a great deal of satisfaction from getting this old timer going – and I hope that some of you may get to enjoy that experience, too!



**FIG  
5**

After the capacitors issues were resolved, many resistance checks were made, and the chassis was thoroughly cleaned. The tubes were checked (using an antique tube tester), and the line cord replaced. The clock needed repairs, too, as the original lubricants had gummed up over the years. This meant disassembly, cleaning & relubrication, as well as new wiring. At this point, I thought I was home free—that is, until I looked at the loud speaker. Of course, it needed new grille cloth. I located some at Radio Daze in Victor, NY. But the paper cone had suffered from high humidity, and had cracks and holes, to boot. This required many hours of tedious work, re-cementing the cone to the frame, and patching the numerous tears in the paper. As a final check, the customary resistance measurements were made, and that's when I got my big reality check! The primary winding of the audio output transformer was wide open! (I guess that's why the radio was "retired" by its former owner)



**FIG  
6**

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73,

*Steve*

### **IT'S YOUR RADIO and YOUR LICENSE**

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**(Just Temp for now!) Yup, Just like when  
 the Groundhog said we were going to  
 have an Early Spring, too !!**

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Troy Amateur Radio Association, Inc.

**P.O. Box 1292**

**Troy, New York, 12181-1292**



Visit us on the Internet

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

**Regular monthly Meeting**

**Tuesday, February 20, 2007**

**7:30 p.m.**

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