



# THE TARA NEWS

*Affiliate of the American Radio Relay League*

*Volume 16 © Issue 03 March 2005*

## FCC Morse Restructuring Proposals Could Be Out By Mid Year

ARRL Headquarters

Newington CT

**March 1, 2005-** The FCC continues to work toward developing a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) that will spell out what the Commission has in mind with respect to possible changes in the current Morse code requirement and Amateur Radio licensing.

A total of 18 petitions have been filed, including one from the ARRL, seeking Part 97 rule changes addressing the future of the 5 WPM Morse requirement (Element 1) and revisions to the overall Amateur Radio licensing structure. The FCC plans to tackle all 18 in a single proceeding.

On the code issue, petitions--and comments in response to them--run the gamut from retaining or even beefing up the Morse requirement to eliminating it altogether. The ARRL's proposal would retain the 5 WPM Morse examination for Amateur Extra class applicants only.

The League and others have also put forth proposals for a new entry-level Amateur Radio license class. At this point, personnel in the FCC Wireless Telecommunications Bureau are continuing to review the thousands of comments filed on the 18 petitions.

While the FCC appears unlikely to release an NPRM any sooner than mid-year, the issue still may be a major discussion topic during the FCC Forum at Dayton Hamvention, May 20-22, 2005

Once public, the NPRM would initiate another round of public comments on what the FCC has proposed. An FCC Report and Order implementing any new rules is unlikely before the second half of 2006, although it's possible the Commission could wrap up the proceeding before then.



## Not Bad For A "Dying" Hobby !

There are almost 5 times as many "Hams" today as there were in the 1950's. The number of Amateur Radio license holders in the USA has gone from 144,000 back in 1955 to over 680,000 in 2004.

Although the license classes and categories are now different than they were years ago, the predictions that the internet, computers, cell phones and other developments would be the end of Amateur Radio were obviously mistaken.

**Bill Eddy – NY2U**



*More than a Club*



*We're a Family*



**T.A.R.A.  
PUBLIC  
SERVICE  
TEAM**

**Congratulations  
Congratulations  
Karen - KB2UUC  
Amateur Extra**



Our Public Service Chairperson had quietly been studying for her Amateur Extra Class License and never told anyone about it. She successfully passed at the most recent ATVET Session held at RPI in TROY. Very Sneaky, Karen !!!  
Congratulations, Buddy it took a lot of hard work !!!

**Runnin of the  
Green Mar. 12**



We are still in need of Volunteers for this event, On March 12, 2005. The "Runnin of the Green" is in Green Island on Saturday March 12th at 10 AM. I would appreciate it if everyone got there at 9:00AM I am looking for a total of 11 volunteers and still need additional help with this event.

It is about a 4 and 1/2 mile run and is usually done before 11:00 AM. If anyone is interested in working this event, please call me anytime at 273-6594.

Or [Ksmithkb2uuc@aol.com](mailto:Ksmithkb2uuc@aol.com)

Thanks & 73. *Karen KB2UUC*

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"Mr. Nelson...I'm afraid you will have to leave the air for a while during this procedure."

**Tom "Bubba" Remmert, N2TR  
Wins Fire Commissioner Seat  
Challenger wins in Re-Vote for Fire Commissioner**

**GUILDERLAND, NY** - The fire district needed two elections to fill one Board of Fire Commissioners seat. But in the end, the challenger for the commissioner's position at Westmere Fire District scored a decisive win. Tom Remmert is a relative newcomer, with six years experience at Westmere, compared with his opponent, Theodore LaMountain, who has logged more than 30 years fighting fires. Remmert challenged the results of the first election, which state law required be held Dec. 15. More than 280 people voted in that election, an unusually high turnout for a fire district commissioner vote. But the number of ballots cast did not match the number of people who signed in to vote, and Remmert lost the election by only two votes.

On Tuesday night, 452 votes were cast, 275 of them for Remmert. Fire districts form the smallest branch of government in the state.

Districts are governed by five volunteer commissioners, who each serve five-year terms, with one term expiring every year. Remmert's seat will next appear on the ballot in 2009. Remmert took office Wednesday.



# Local Clubs in the News

## 2ND ANNUAL HAMFEST

East Greenbush

# W2EGB

Amateur Radio Association

### Saturday May 21, 2005

8:00 AM Until 1:00 PM

Phillips Road Firehouse  
East Greenbush, N.Y.

Pavilion Tables \$ 10. 00

Limited Space

1<sup>st</sup> Come – 1st serve basis

Tailgating Freewith \$5. 00

General Admission Fee

VE EXAMS held at 9AM

Off Site

TALK IN 146.52 Simplex

FOOD BOOTH OPEN ALL DAY

Rain or Shine

Vendor Setup 6:00 am

Gate Opens at 8:00AM

For Information on  
Reservations Contact:

[KB2HWL@nycap.rr.com](mailto:KB2HWL@nycap.rr.com)

Directions: I 90 East & West – Take Exit 9-Rte 4  
South 1.4 Miles to 9 & 20 – take 9 West 0.5 miles  
turn left onto Phillips Road – 0.6 miles to East  
Greenbush Fire Dept. #3 Station on Right.

From 787 North & South – take Rensselaer, NY  
Exit 2.7 Miles from light – take Rt. 9 East to  
Phillips Rd. Turn Right 0.6 miles to East  
Greenbush Fire Department Station #3 on Right

## RVWARS AUCTION

### March 21 7:15 pm



The Annual Rip Van Winkle Amateur Radio Radio Society Ham Auction will take place on March 21, 2005 at the John Edwards Elementary School, State at 4th St., Hudson, NY, at 7:15 pm.

RVWARS is also presenting a 10 week Tech-Level Amateur Radio Course starting March 16, at the Columbia-Greene Community College, Rt 23 near the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, Hudson. A VE Session will be held at the last class meeting May 18. The Testing session will be open to anyone. There is no fee for the course. Call 828-4181 ext. 3342 to register.

Dave WA2FTI  
RVWARS President

## Thomas W. Rankin

### N2AFD - Silent Key



A Few Weeks Ago, Our Friend and normally wise cracking, Tom Rankin - N2AFD popped onto the TARA Repeater to say hello to all of his many friends.

We hadn't heard him for a few weeks and most of us did not know why. Tom told us that he had had surgery for cancer and was under going radiation treatments, but stated that he was feeling a little better and would hopefully be alright.

Unfortunately, that Day was the Last time we heard Tom on the Air. I think it was probably Tom's way of saying Goodbye to his Amateur Radio friends on the TARA repeater without actually saying goodbye.

Therefore in the same spirit Tom our Dear Friend, We hope you will look down and read this Irish Blessing that we send to you from our Hearts on this St. Patrick's Day:

MAY THE ROAD RISE TO MEET YOU

MAY THE WIND BE ALWAYS AT YOUR BACK

MAY THE SUN SHINE UPON YOUR FACE

THE RAINS FALL SOFT UPON YOUR FIELDS

AND UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN,

MAY GOD HOLD YOU IN THE PALM OF HIS HAND.

**VERY IMPORTANT**  
**Rensselaer County**  
**ARES/RACES MEETING**  
**March 23, 2005 7:30 PM**



Please make every effort to attend this next meeting. The County Health Department has Invited us to participate in a Countywide Smallpox Drill with other County Emergency Agencies. If you can make yourself available to get the time off for April 15, 2005 at 9:00 AM, to participate in this drill. Your participation would be greatly appreciated.

The Meeting will be at the Rensselaer County Public Safety Building, 4000 Main St., South Troy, N. Y. at 7: 30 PM.

# Managing Your Scanner's Memory

## Maximize Your Listening Potential

By Joseph Pasquini

From the February 2005 Edition of "Scanning USA" magazine

<http://www.scanningusa.com>

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One of the biggest quandaries that many of us scanner enthusiasts have - both novice and professional monitors alike - is the question of how to best setup our scanner's memory for the most favorable listening opportunities. Sure, our receiver may be capable of storing five hundred or even one thousand channels, but what's the best way to organize those channels? Well, there isn't really a silver bullet so to speak, but there are some things you can do to make your listening more productive.

### Understanding Your Scanner's Memory

Virtually all scanners divide their memories into segments composed of banks which are in turn composed of channels. Think of a bank as a container for a grouping of channels. Channels, of course, hold specific information for a single data record entry such as frequency, CTCSS, mode, delay, etc. Dividing memory into banks also provides for the ability to enable and disable them which in turn allows for faster scanning cycles. Typically, scanners are setup with a fixed number of banks with each bank being composed of an equal number of channels divided proportionally amongst the banks. Most scanners feature a total of ten banks, but the number of channels available per bank will vary depending upon the model of receiver in question.

Other receivers, like the newly released Uniden BC-246t, utilize dynamic memory management making the paradigm of banks and channels obsolete. Instead of being organized into separate banks and channels, the scanner's memory can be allocated as needed. You simply use what you require from the memory pool to store as many frequencies, talk group ID's, and alphanumeric tags as you need (within the limits of the receiver's specifications) to monitor a specific system. As a result, no memory space is wasted.

Before the 246t, AOR's 8200 series allowed the user the ability to tailor the number of channels dedicated to a given bank. The 8200 also accommodates a proprietary memory card for expandability.

Obviously, any radio featuring any form of dynamic memory management allows the user a great deal of flexibility. No matter your radio, it is important to first understand its memory architecture before you can best decide how you intend to program it.

### Planning

The next step is to determine how you intend to listen to your scanner. This may sound like a simple thing to do, but it often is not, especially if this is your first radio. Do you want to scan based upon geographic divisions (i.e. Town of Duaneburg) or by types of service (Police and Fire)? There is no right or wrong answer to this question. Many factors are involved including the number of channels and banks available in your radio, the number of systems that you can actually receive, the number of radios available for your use, and finally your own personal preferences. Sketch out your thoughts on a white board or setup a spreadsheet or table to help design your monitoring plan. A little planning at this stage - before you start programming - goes a long way in the end.

### Bank Configuration

Since most of us are able to easily monitor numerous towns and villages and all sorts of communications, there is a natural tendency to organize banks based upon type of service. The advantage to organizing related systems into separate banks is that you can enable and disable each bank with a single key press. For most scanner listeners, grouping related services into a bank (or series of banks) works well. For example, program police frequencies into one bank, fire frequencies into a different bank and civilian aviation into yet another bank.

I tend to spread out my conventional frequencies into an assortment of banks so I can choose which ones I want enabled at any given time. If you determine that you want to monitor a substantial number of differing types of service, you will quickly find that owning an additional scanner or two comes in very handy.

### Trunked Systems

Monitoring trunked systems presents a small challenge. Dependent upon the radio, you may or may not be able to store both conventional and trunked systems into the same bank. Similarly, you can only program one trunked system per bank in most traditional scanners. The remaining unused channels in the bank are not used and consequently are wasted.

If your radio is capable of monitoring both types of systems within a single bank, consider not doing so. Why? From an organizational stand point, consider this question: Do the conventional frequencies have any relationship with the already programmed trunked system? If they do, then adding them to the same bank is fine if your radio permits it. However, if the systems aren't related, then the need to keep your radio listening arranged in an organized manner should be your primary focus.

Personally, I tend not to put conventional systems into the same bank as a trunked system. Instead, I have dedicated one scanner to monitoring my locally trunked systems and a second scanner to monitoring conventional systems. In the first scanner, each bank is composed of one trunked system. In the other, each bank is divided into categories such as EMERGENCY, POLICE 1, POLICE 2, FIRE 1, FIRE 2, AVIATION, MILITARY, RAILROAD, AMATEUR and MISC. The EMERGENCY bank is composed of the “important” local conventional frequencies of interest that I want to monitor in the event of something major happening in the immediate area. When something major does occur, I only monitor this EMERGENCY bank and the corresponding trunked systems on the first radio as applicable. This approach is something that I have found works extremely well for me, and I rarely ever miss anything when monitoring. Of course, your mileage will differ for many of the reasons mentioned already, so experiment!

### Enter the BC-246t

As referred to at the beginning of this article, the release of the Uniden BC-246t changes somewhat the way we have traditionally looked at scanner memory management. Rather than using statically allocated memory banks, the BC-246t utilizes and takes full advantage of dynamic memory management. This means that memory is managed as a pool from which the user can classify distinct systems to be monitored. A system is composed of groups which are composed of channels. Basically, a system is nothing more than a collection of frequencies and their associated characteristics. A system can be defined as either conventional or trunked. In addition, the 246 also takes advantage of a feature called Quick Keys. Think of quick keys as user definable banks. The 246 supports Quick Keys 0 through 9, however systems can remain unassigned. Unassigned systems are scanned at all times regardless of which Quick Keys are enabled or disabled. In this environment, unassigned systems would be similar to the EMERGENCY bank mentioned in the last section.



### Consider Using Software

Luckily for us, many of today’s scanners are capable of being programmed via software. Programming a receiver capable of 1000 channels (or more!) is quite the chore when done manually. Using software, you will be able to modify a specific channel, a single bank or the entire contents of memory. The ability to target your changes to a specific group of channels or banks helps to reduce the amount of time needed to write your changes to the radio’s memory.

Besides ease of use, one of the added benefits of using software is that doing so gives you the ability to reprogram your scanner depending upon the situation or location you want to monitor. For example, if you travel often, you may want to load one set of banks into your receiver for one area, and another set of banks for a completely different area. “Scanner software makes it possible to create an unlimited number of frequency files, especially useful when you travel. Modern scanner software, such as that found in the ARC product line, brings back the fun in scanner memory management,” commented Gommert Buysen, President of BuTel Software (<http://www.butel.nl>).

### Equipment

While not everyone’s budget may allow for it, consideration should be given to owning at least a couple of scanners for any serious listening post. Additional receivers provide the ability to simultaneously monitor a greater number of communications.

Until such time that scanner manufacturers allow for memory upgrades, the use of memory cards and multiple VFO’s, we all have to work with the constraints that we’re presented. But until then, we all have another excuse to purchase that next radio! Besides, extra radios provide us with the opportunity to monitor several transmissions at one time, so we’re less likely to miss important traffic.

### Conclusion

Scanner memory management is an issue that is determined by individual preferences and by the types of systems you want to monitor. Always strive to organize and manage your scanner’s memory using whatever methods best allow you to rapidly monitor an unfolding situation. However, no matter how you decide to manage your scanner’s memory, one thing should always remain certain: organize your scanner the way you listen to it.

### Further Reading

AOR 8200: <http://www.aorusa.com/ar8200.html>

BuTel Software: <http://www.butel.nl>

Uniden BC-246t: [http://www.uniden.com/productpop/00\\_productpop.cfm?prd\\_code=BC246T](http://www.uniden.com/productpop/00_productpop.cfm?prd_code=BC246T)

**Tune in Every Thursday Night at 9:00 PM**

**145.170**

**For the**

**449.225**

**TARA International Trader Net**

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

# Paradise "almost" Lost

Allen G. Pitts

Walk through the streets of any American city and it becomes hard to see even the faintest remains of the free, open country that it was just a few generations ago. We may call it progress, but when people drive for miles just to find open room to breathe and explore freely, we've lost something precious. Our very souls yearn for an escape to a less confining existence where we can be creative and truly human again.

But once, for a few wondrous years, there *really* was a frontier, open and free. A new world where anyone with curiosity could go, explore, be free and fully human. It was a special time. Now the only remains of that glory are found in the scattering of a few national parks. While governments and corporations would develop even these few precious remnants in the name of some greater good, thankfully we have resisted those efforts thus far. For the most part, they remain as they were, open for anyone to come, explore, and taste the wonder of freedom.

There once also was a parallel new world in another realm. Ever since the 1840's, after the telegraph was introduced, various inventors and crackpots sought to send signals freely through the water or air without connecting wires. And just as quickly, there have been those monopolies that sought to control or usurp any such freedom. Today, with much of the fresh wonder of radio long gone, and the airwaves choking with anesthetizing Muzak on the one hand and vituperative talk radio on the other, it may be difficult to appreciate the ham who takes to the air for fun, or out of curiosity, or to test their technical mettle. But realizing there is a new, invisible dimension out there --the electromagnetic spectrum--that can provide contact with others far away, and that opens up a dark yet crackling part of the universe to the human imagination--puts people, however temporarily, in further awe of the cosmos of which we are part. And this wonder, this joy of discovery before the commercial forces came in --all this we can, and should, envy.

The Amateur Radio bands, like national parks, are the last remaining vestiges of what was once an incredibly large, open electro-magnetic spectrum where the common man can still go, explore, tinker and play. Now only a few small slivers of frequencies are left where people like you and I can freely explore the wonders of radio.

Both hams' transgressions and their heroism on the air have raised a key question, namely who "owns" the spectrum and who decides who gets what. For the amateurs have always operated outside of and often in opposition to commercialism. Once they regarded their portion of the spectrum as a reservation on which they were trapped. Now they argue that it is much like national park lands, a commercial-free zone that must be preserved for them and future generations of adventurers.

At a time when greater chunks of the spectrum are being auctioned off for use by cellular phone companies, polluted by BPL and other corporate uses, they are the only voice crying to keep the notion alive that some of the air waves, like the land itself, are a common property resource in which everyone has a stake.

Some parts of above paraphrased with her permission from Dr. Susan J Douglas' book.



## Recipe of the Month

**Peanut Butter Kisses**

Makes 6 to 7 dozen cookies

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 cup **Crisco® Shortening**
- 1 cup **Jif® Peanut Butter**
- 2 eggs
- ¼cup milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 3½ cups sifted all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 (11 oz.) package milk chocolate candies

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 375°F

Cream together granulated sugar, brown sugar, **Crisco** Shortening and **Jif** peanut butter. Add eggs, milk and vanilla; beat well.

Stir together flour, baking soda and salt; add to **Jif** mixture. Beat well.

Shape into 1-inch balls; roll in additional granulated sugar. Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake in 375°F oven for 8 minutes.

Remove from oven. Press a milk chocolate candy into the center of each warm cookie. Return to oven; bake 3 minutes longer.

# New World Record: 13 Million Miles per Watt

Bill Tippett, W4ZV, of New London, NC correctly copied code word OMAHA from the N2XE beacon transmitting with a peak carrier power of .0000406 watts at 3.5455 MHz on the 80 meter Amateur Radio band.

Bill confirmed reception of the beacon at 2328Z, January 2, 2005. The precise distance between the stations is 546.8 miles, establishing Bill's record reception distance at 13,467,980 miles per watt. Tippett used a Ten Tec Orion Transceiver with a 1000 foot Beverage antenna (named after Dr. Harold Beverage who invented it in the 1920s).

The N2XE beacon transmits from an Elecraft K1 (heavily attenuated) using an 80 meter off-center fed dipole, 45 feet AGL (above ground level). The beacon peak carrier output was measured using an Agilent 8563EC Spectrum Analyzer at 40.6 uW (40 millionths of a watt). The beacon transmits a unique code word each evening. Receiving stations are required to correctly copy the code word in their report. The word is published the following morning.

The N2XE Beacon Project was started in December, 2004 by Paul Stroud, AA4XX, Raleigh, NC and John

Contest logging software designers have already worked to prepare MAQSO modules for distribution to their customers, and information about these programs are published on the website when available.

Come visit our website for full information and updated information, especially as logging software designers prepare for the event. Our site is: <http://www.qsl.net/maqso/>

Ceccherelli, N2XE, Wappingers Falls, NY with the goal of having a little fun and to go where no diminutive signal has gone before. Beacon times and frequencies are posted daily on the QRP-L reflector [www.kkn.net/archives/html/QRP-L](http://www.kkn.net/archives/html/QRP-L). Tests will continue on 160, 80 and 40 meters through the end of February 2005.

Commenting on his remarkable success, Bill said "I've spent 25 years on 80 & 160 listening to below noise level signals. There are at least three factors to this stuff: Antennas with good signal to noise like Beverages, a good receiver and the knowledge to use it and an operator with good ears and knowledge of propagation--not to mention patience and persistence."

Beacon station operator John Ceccherelli, N2XE, seemed more excited than Tippett about the achievement, even though it requires almost no effort on his part. "Hey, I have to flip the switch, grab a beer and go watch TV—that's effort" he's reported saying, adding "I'm thrilled the record was set by an all-American team using all-American equipment." The Ten Tec receiver is manufactured in Seville, TN and the Elecraft transmitter is produced in California and offered as a kit

**Get Ready for the AUCTION!**  
March 21, 7:15 pm  
John L Edwards School  
Hudson

## Mid-Atlantic QSO PARTY



The Mid-Atlantic QSO Party is a new event to give amateur radio operators across the country and around the world the opportunity to enjoy the fun of a regional QSO Party. The First MAQSO Party will run from 1600 UTC May 14<sup>th</sup> 2005 until 4400 UTC May 15<sup>th</sup> 2004 and from 1100 UTC until 2400 UTC on May 15<sup>th</sup> 2005, on all HF bands except WARC bands and on VHF/UHF through 450 MHz. For the purposes of this event the Mid Atlantic region will consist of the states of Delaware Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.

The Mid-Atlantic QSO Party will provide operators the chance to pursue a competitive challenge while maintaining a low-key, low-pressure atmosphere. Or, for others a challenge to meet or exceed their personal goals within a competitive environment. In short, the purpose of this event is for each amateur radio operator to have fun, enjoy the event, and seek whatever level of participation they desire.

The MAQSO Party committee will offer a multitude of certificates and awards, including: Top scorer in each Mid-Atlantic state, Top scorer in the entire Mid-Atlantic region, Top scorer in each other state, Top scorer in each DX country from which an entry is received, and more. Fixed, mobile, and rover stations are all welcome, as are QRP, and multiple operator stations.

All amateur radio operators are invited to check the MAQSO Party website at <http://www.qsl.net/maqso> for full details and contest rules, including state and county maps, and the list of the standardized 5-letter county abbreviations, all available for downloading. There are a lot of county multipliers in seven Mid-Atlantic states!

Contest logging software designers have already worked to prepare MAQSO modules for distribution to their customers, and information about these programs are published on the website when available. Come visit our website for full information and updated

**TARA OFFICERS: 1 YEAR TERMS**

President: Bill Eddy, NY2U.....273-9248  
Vice President: Karen Smith, KB2UUC...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

**(Just Temp for now!)**

**TARA VHF/UHF CONTESTING:**

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# ***THE TARA NEWS***

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, March 15, 2005**

**7:30 p.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**

**449.225/R**