THE TARA NEWS

Affiliate of the American Radio Relay League

Volume 17 © Issue 03 March 2006

Dayton Hamvention® Announces Theme for 2006 Show

"Ham Radio is Public Service" is the theme for Dayton Hamvention 2006--reflecting the renewed awareness by the public of the service Amateur Radio operators provided after the Gulf Coast hurricanes and other disasters. In announcing the theme, Hamvention 2006 General Chairman Jim Nies, WX8F, said that it serves to remind the public and the ham radio community that one of the reasons ham radio exists is to provide communication in emergencies when all else fails.

Several forum sessions are expected to deal with emergency communication-related topics, including how Amateur Radio performed after the hurricanes wiped out communications in a wide segment of the south. For more information, visit the Dayton Hamvention Web site http://www.hamvention.org . More than 25,000 visitors are expected to attend the three-day event Friday through Sunday, May 19-21. The ARRL has announced that it will present ARRL EXPO 2006 during Hamvention. http://www.arrl.org/announce/nc/2006/ .

In this Issue

More than a Club SKYWARN *We're a Family*

Upcoming Public Service Events

Runnin' of the Green - March 11th

Spring is in the air and our Public Service Events will be kicking off this Saturday morning. We are getting ready for the Annual "Runnin of the Green" in Green Island. This run will be held this Saturday March 11th. Kick off time is 10:00 A.M. Snow date will be March 18th if needed. We are looking for 9 volunteers to help with this event. Please be there for 9:00 AM. Handhelds or mobile rigs can be used for this event.

There should be the Annual East Greenbush Rotary Run in May, and we will be doing the GHI Challenge on Thursday May 18th at 6:25 P.M.
We will also be doing the Annual Watervliet Memorial Day Parade which is being held on Monday, May 29th. at 10 A.M.

If you are interested in helping with any of these events, please call me anytime at 273-6594 if you have any questions about Public Service or email me at KS2O@N2TY.org .

Thank you and 73,

Karen Smith -KS2O

RVWARS Annual Auction

Save this Date!
March 20,2006 – 7:00 p.m
RVWARS Annual Auction!
Questar III, BOCES
Greenport/Hudson, NY

Here's a little blurb about the RVWARS Au
Rip Van Winkle Club Auction Set for March 20, 2006
The Rip Van Winkle Amateur Radio Society (RVWARS) annual auction will take place on Monday, March 20 at 7 p.m. at the Questar III (BOCES) school on Rt. 66, Hudson, NY. The school is located on the left after Healy Blvd., the Greenport School, and just before the railroad crossing. Talk in will be on the RVWARS repeater, 147.21 (no PL).

You are welcome to bring serviceable equipment to place in the auction. Be sure it is tagged with your name and call and the lowest amount you will accept. RVWARS collects 10% of the selling price. Of course, everyone is invited to bid and buy, so bring lots of cash and good checks!

Thanks!
73,
Dave, WA2FTI
RVWARS President

AARA TO HOLD DINNER APRIL 7th

The Albany Amateur Radio Association is proud to announce its 2006 Annual Dinner. This dinner is open to all radio amateurs (and their spouses/significant others). Our guest speaker will be Julie Murphy from the NY State Police Counter Terrorism Intelligence unit. She will be discussing "Operation Safeguard & Counter Terrorism Awareness". The role of Amateur Radio in Counter-terrorism.

Details are as follows:
Date: April 7, 2006
Location: Shaker Ridge Country Club, Albany, New York.
Time: Cash Bar at 6:00 PM with Dinner to start at 7:00 PM

Dinner Choices (select 1 per person):
Prime Rib of Beef
Cranberry Harvest Chicken
Potato Crusted Halibut

Dinners include salad, vegetable, potato and dessert.
Price: $30.00 per person

Those interested are requested to pay in advance by March 10th. Please send a check made out to AARA and your dinner choice(s) to:

Harry Hovey WF2B
15 Sylvan Lane
Troy, NY 12180-8542

Section Manager Election Results Announced

In the only contested Section Manager race this winter, Glen Sage, W4GHS, outpolled incumbent SM Carl Clements, W4CAC, 720 to 656. Ballots were counted February 21 at ARRL Headquarters. Clements has served as Virginia's SM since May 2001.

Sage, who lives in Hillsville, has been licensed since 1976. He has a strong interest in--and commitment to--emergency communication, teaching licensing classes and serving as a volunteer examiner.

Three other ARRL sections are getting new SMs. In North Carolina, Tim Slay, N4IB, of Mooresville, was the only candidate to succeed John Covington, W4CC, who decided not to run for another term after serving for six years.

Bob Schneider, AH6J, of Keaau, Hawaii, will return to the Pacific SM post when he takes over the reins from Kevin Bogan, AH6QO, who did not seek a new term. Schneider has served three separate terms as Pacific SM, beginning in 1992.

Tuck Miller, NZ6T, will once again become San Diego SM, a post he'd held previously for nearly two terms. Incumbent SM Pat Bunsold, WA6MHZ, decided not run again.

Four incumbent ARRL SMs faced no opposition and were declared elected: Pete Cecere, N2YJZ, Eastern New York; Eric Olena, WB3FPL, Eastern Pennsylvania; Mickey Cox, K5MC, Louisiana, and Richard Beebe, N0PV, South Dakota.

New two-year terms for all successful candidates begin April 1.

You Never Know !!

LICENSE CLASSES ARE IMPORTANT

Hi Ken,
I believe you are the gentleman who inspired my son Nathan to earn his first Ham license in Boy Scouts? Forgive me, but I couldn't remember your name.
I just wanted to let you know, I passed the first 3 elements of the exam last week and earned my general class license. Thanks Ken, you inspired Nathan, and he inspired me.

Regards, John KC2PCX

Editor's Note: It was almost four years ago when I taught Nathan. I was very touched to receive this thoughtful note from John. He is a professor at the USMA, West Point, NY and in a position to inspire others to get their ticket. You never know what a little ELMERING can do to promote the hobby.

Adopting a School

Well here we are in a new electronic revolution, computers, I-Pods, and video games. How can amateur radio compete? How can Amateur radio survive? Kids have no interest in learning about ham radio. Ham radio is for grandpa or grandma- not for the kids. Kids have cell phones, I-Pods, computers, and little time for sitting around tuning a rig to a station half way around the world. For that matter, why learn that dit-dah dit-dah thing that's old hat? Nobody uses that any more.

Well, like in nature when you lose one creature, you usually lose 5 more that depended on the fellow to keep those species alive. And technology is not any different. The last hamfest I attended was a sea of gray and very few young folks were there. The ham club I am secretary of is also a sea of gray with the average age between 50 and 90. Our youngest and only young member is 30 years old. So what are we doing wrong as a community of communication?

Maybe we need to get out there and go to grade schools, middle schools and high schools and offer our expertise and promote our hobby to the young children and teach them about amateur radio and where the technology came from for that cell phone or computer. The ARRL has grants for schools to teach and set up ham radio stations right in the classrooms at no expense to the school or teachers. So why are we not out there promoting ham radio before it dies completely? Every club in America should adopt a school and donate a few hours of time giving these kids a chance to maybe talk to the astronauts, or a country that they may have never heard of.

There are only a hand full of schools across this great land that currently use Amateur radio as a teaching aid in the classrooms. The importance of amateur radio has been proven over and over in our communities across the country every year that has past since ham radio came into assistance. Hurricane Katrina was a good example of why we cannot let amateur radio pass away. So lets consider adopting a school as a club project.

Thank you
KD5IBY
The Old Captain 73

Radio Shack to Close 400-700 Stores
Edmonson Resigns in Shame

On February 17, 2006, Lance Turner of the Arkansasbusiness.com Daily Report released information that Radio Shack Corp. of Fort Worth, Texas, said Friday that it will close 400-700 company-owned stores, but a company spokesman added that the retailer had not decided which specific stores it would shutter.

The spokesman told Arkansasbusiness.com that it would be six to eight weeks before the company decided which stores it would close. He noted that only company-owned stores, and not dealer franchised stores, would be on the chopping block.

Across the country, Radio Shack operates about 5,000 stores itself. It has between 1,500 and 1,800 dealer franchise locations, the spokesman said. In Arkansas, Radio Shack has 30 company-owned stores and 50 dealer-franchises. Radio Shack announced the closings in its fourth-quarter and fiscal-year earnings release, which reported declines on both fronts.

For the fourth quarter, net income fell to $49.5 million, or 36 cents per diluted share, from $130.9 million, or 81 cents per diluted share. For the year, net income dropped 21 percent to $337.2 million.

The lackluster earnings report comes two days after Edmondson admitted lying about his academic record on his résumé and on the Radio Shack Web site.

The Fort Worth Star-Telegram discovered and reported the discrepancies. Edmondson has since admitted lying and apologized for any embarrassment the situation caused. Meanwhile, Radio Shack's board of directors is investigating the matter.

As for the health of the company, Radio Shack announced a plan to achieve three major goals over the next 18 months: increase the average unit volume of its core store base, rationalize its cost structure and grow profitable square feet in its store portfolio.

The company said it will replace old, slower-moving merchandise with new, faster-moving merchandise within higher growth categories. It will close a number of under performing stores and work to better align overhead costs with its business model to generate more profit per square foot. The company also said it will continue to expand its kiosk business and relocate Radio Shack stores to better real estate.

Editor' Note:
The following day, Edmondson RESIGNED in shame. It is unknown what affect this will have on the future closings when a New head of the Shack takes over to salvage the decline in fiscal earnings.

Rensselaer County ARES/RACES Meeting March 23, 2006

Guest Speaker - George Bowen - " This Week In Amateur Radio"

Our Monthly meeting will be on Thursday, March 23, 2006 at 7:30 PM.
Club Elections still have not been held because there has not a quorum at the last two meetings. Let's see if we this resolved.
George Bowen W2XBS will be our guest speaker and will talk about his program "This Week In Amateur Radio". This should be a interesting presentation.
Remember the meeting starts at 7:30 PM at the Public Safety Building (the county jail) 4000 Main St. Troy NY.

Mark you Calendar for the April, May, & June Meetings
April 20 Joe Squillace – "Army MARS and You"
May 18 – Open Meeting
June 15 – Open Meeting – Discussion of Fiend Day

Thanks and hope to see a lot of people there. Bring a friend.

Jim Noble K2ZP
EC/RO
Rensselaer County
518 286-3586
k2zp@nycap.rr.com

From the CQ Newsroom...

The White House today released its review of the federal response to Hurricane Katrina, which, according to a statement, "identifies the systemic problems in Federal emergency preparedness and response revealed by Hurricane Katrina - and the best solutions to address them." The report included 17 lessons the Executive Branch learned after reviewing and analyzing the response to Katrina; made 125 specific recommendations to the President, and identified 11 critical actions to be completed before the first day of the 2006 hurricane season. The report also included a section titled, "What Went Right" in the Katrina response, which singled out amateur radio operators for particular praise:

"Other organizations worked tirelessly to assist emergency responders that, due to the storm, did not have the equipment and means to effectively carry out their duties. Amateur Radio Operators from both the Amateur Radio Emergency Service and the American Radio Relay League, monitored distress calls and rerouted emergency requests for assistance through -out the U.S. until messages were received by emergency response personnel. A distress call made from a cell phone on a rooftop in New Orleans to Baton Rouge was relayed, via ham radio, from Louisiana to Oregon, then Utah, and finally back to emergency personnel in Louisiana, who rescued the 15 strand-ed victims. Ham radio operators voluntarily manned the amateur radio stations at sites such as the National Hurricane Center, Hurricane Watch Net, Waterway Net, Skywarn and the Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network."

Finally, the report identified three immediate priorities:
1) Implementing a comprehensive National Preparedness System "to make certain that we have a fully national system that ensures unity of effort in preparing for and responding to natural and man-made disasters;"
2) Creating a "Culture of Preparedness" that "emphasizes that the entire Nation - at all levels of government, the private sector, communities, and individual citizens - shares common goals and responsibilities for homeland security;" and
3) Implement corrective actions "to ensure we do not repeat the problems encountered during Hurricane Katrina." A White House fact sheet summarizing the report is available online at http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/02/20060223.html
Our Thanks to CQ Public Service Editor Bob Josuweit, WA3PZO

NASA Honors TV Journalist Anchor Walter Cronkite - KB2GSD

NASA recently honored legendary CBS TV news anchor Walter Cronkite, KB2GSD, for his coverage of the US space program. Cronkite, who has narrated two ARRL Amateur Radio videos. He received the Ambassador of Exploration Award on February 28th during a ceremony hosted by the Univer -sity of Texas at Austin Center for American History at the studios of KLRU-TV. "His marathon, live coverage of the first moon landing brought the excite -ment and impact of the historic event into the homes of millions of Americans and observers around the world," NASA said in a news release announcing the award.

NASA is presenting the Ambassador of Exploration Award to the 38 astronauts and other key individuals who participated in the Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo space programs for realizing America's vision of space exploration from 1961 to 1972. Cronkite is the first non-astronaut and only NASA outsider to receive the award, which consists of a small sample of lunar material encased in Lucite and mounted for public display. The material is part of the 842 pounds of moon rocks brought back to Earth during the six Apollo expeditions between 1969 and 1972. Cronkite will, in turn, present the lunar sample to University of Texas President William Powers. He accepted the award on behalf of the Center for American History, the archival home of the Walter Cronkite papers, and the sample will be on display in the Center's exhibit gallery.

Cronkite is the best-remembered journalist for his commentary and enthusiastic coverage of the historic progression of missions from the early Mercury launches, through the groundbreaking Gemini missions, to the Apollo 11 and subsequent moon landings.

145.170

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For the

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TARA International Trader Net

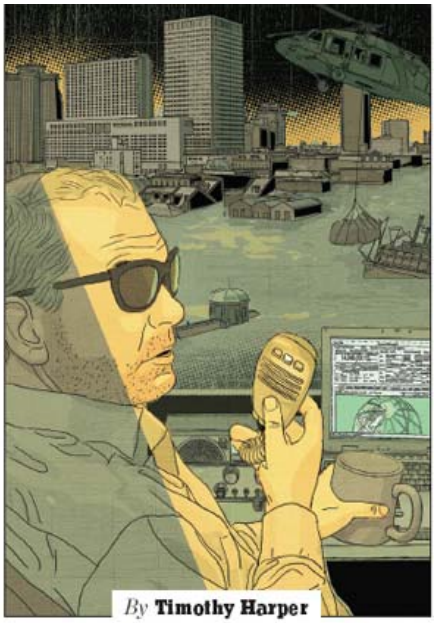
****** ECHOLINK ******

04

role-playing

Frequency Flyers

Natural DISASTERS can bring out many *heroes*. Ham radio operators are usually *among* them.



By **Timothy Harper**

It was the fourth night after Hurricane Katrina, and something like a thousand patients, doctors and staff were trapped at a Medical Center in Louisiana in downtown New Orleans, surrounded by floodwaters. Outside reports were grim. People were drowning in their attics. Inside the hospital there was no running water, no power, no phones and no Internet. Cell phones didn't work. Each day the authorities said evacuations were about to begin, but nothing happened.

The staff thought they'd seen everything the disaster could bring. Then, in the middle of the night, a pregnant woman dragged herself out of the foul, dark water surrounding the center's Charity Hospital, having managed to swim several blocks from her home, where she had been trapped. She was in labor and the pain was intensifying.

By flashlight, doctors quickly determined that she needed a Caesarian section. But with no running water, no electricity, and no way to clean her up or to sterilize instruments, surgery was out of the question. The doctors conferred, and then sent Tim Butcher, at that time Charity's emergency operations director, upstairs to a conference room where a 5-foot-3-inch, middle-aged jazz musician, known for his cigarette-rasped voice and salty language, was sleeping on an air mattress. "Richard, wake up," Butcher said. "We need you."

Richard Webb, who happens to be legally blind, is one of the nations more than 660,000 licensed amateur radio operators. (They're nicknamed "hams" for reasons that are unclear.) As an amateur radio operator and a member of the Mobile Maritime Network, Webb regularly relays messages from small boats, occasionally participates in small-vessel rescue operations and helps with tracking hurricanes.

Pitching in and helping is a long tradition among hams, particularly in times of emergency. In fact, the Federal Communications Commission's regulatory charge to amateur radio operators urges them to enhance communication, "particularly with respect to providing emergency communications." Whether it's an earthquake or a forest fire, a blizzard or a hurricane, when usual communication systems go down, ham radio operators are up, ready to connect the scene of disaster with the outside world. As the series of recent emergencies and other natural disasters so amply illustrates, hams are often the sole means of communication from disaster sites. Within minutes of the first impact in the World Trade Center attack on September 11, 2001—which put the radio and phone towers atop the building out of commission—ham radio operators set up an emergency network that authorities used to coordinate rescue operations.

When the phone lines are down and "wireless" takes on a whole new meaning, when cell phone and PDA networks fail and batteries go dead, when the lights go out, authorities fall back on this seemingly antiquated but always reliable form of communication. Amateur radio becomes quite literally a lifeline.

"Most communications systems are all going through some common checkpoint," says Allen Pitts, media and public relations manager of the American Radio Relay League. Whether it's a telephone switchboard, an Internet relay or a radio tower, "knock out that checkpoint, and the whole system fails," he says.

Rather than relying on a network, each ham operator has a complete, self-contained transmitting and receiving station. "There is no checkpoint," says Pitts. "They are like ants at a picnic. You can knock out some, many or even most of them, and they still get to the food. Each one is a mobile, independent unit working in cooperation for a common goal."

Understandably, many government agencies and hospitals have enlisted amateur radio operators to be on call for emergencies. When the two hospitals making up New Orleans' Medical Center—University and Charity hospitals—decided to set up their station two years ago, they looked around for volunteers to run it. Richard Webb and his wife, Kathleen Anderson, who is also a ham, raised their hands. They set up the station and tested it every week or so.

The night before Katrina hit, Webb pushed Anderson—she uses a wheelchair—to their van and she drove them to the hospital from their small home in suburban Slidell, Louisiana. Pretty much every other vehicle they encountered during that 30-mile trip was heading out of, not into, downtown New Orleans. At the hospital, this unlikely A-Team—a blind man and a woman in a wheelchair—set up their antennas and gasoline-fired generators, got on the air, tracked the approaching storm and rode it out.

Like much of New Orleans, the hospital suffered relatively little damage from Katrina directly. Then the levees broke. Soon the hospital was isolated, an island surrounded by water 10 feet deep in places. (And, yes, when the power went out, a hospital staffer did offer Webb a flashlight. "Thanks," he said, "but I don't need it.")

Frequency Flyers

Webb and Anderson listened in on the emergency networks and heard how other hams, including many who drove in from all over the country, were a vital part of numerous rescues. In hundreds of cases, people trapped by floodwaters in homes or on rooftops tried calling 911 on their cell phones. The calls wouldn't go through. So they called relatives in other parts of the country, sometimes a
thousand miles away and the relatives in turn dialed 911. Their local emergency dispatchers then would pass along messages to ham radio operators who contacted rescuers in New Orleans: There are three people trapped in an attic at this address . . . five on the roof of this building . . . 15 on an overpass at this intersection.

A word about all this relaying. While most of today's sophisticated communications equipment uses horizon-to- horizon, line-of-sight radio frequencies, ham radio must rely on lower frequencies for long-distance transmission. "Low-frequency waves do an interesting thing," says Pitts. "They ricochet. These waves bounce off the ionosphere, 60 miles over your head." Depending on atmospheric conditions, some days you can communicate more clearly with another ham operator in Kenya than with your buddy across town. "By using different frequencies, directions and means, ham operators learn the art form of getting them to bounce where they want them to go," Pitts says.

Webb took one call from a teenager who had a brand-new license with no kind of emergency training. He was in a school building with a number of other people, and nobody knew they were there. Two babies needed formula, and an elderly man needed a respirator. Webb relayed the call, and the group was rescued.

As the week wore on—the storm hit on a Monday night—more and more people began stopping by Webb's radio room, the only link to the outside world. When he could, he sent out word from hospital staffers and patients to their families: I'm at the hospital, I'm OK, I hope to be evacuated soon, I'll call you when I can. Hams who received the messages in other parts of the country telephoned or e-mailed the families.

A number of people tried to pay Webb for sending out their messages. "Sorry, can't take it," he'd growl. "Not allowed. I'm strictly a volunteer."

Sometimes during lulls between radio transmissions he pulled out his guitar. Small crowds gathered, welcoming the diversion. Webb became a rare source of light and calm in the darkness and confusion of a disaster scene.

The night the woman in labor swam to the hospital, Tim Butcher shook Richard Webb awake and told him that she needed a helicopter. "We have a two-hour window to get her out of here," Butcher said. Otherwise the mother would probably die, and the baby might, too. Webb ran to his radio, broke in on the network, and tried to relay a message to anyone.

On this evening, the first ham that Webb could reach was a fellow member of the Mobile Maritime Network in Texas. The Texas ham contacted a Network member in Cleveland—who was also an auxiliary Coast Guard officer. The Cleveland ham contacted his superior officers, and within a short time the patient was being airlifted to another hospital, where she had a C-section. At last report both mother and baby were doing well.

Webb saved one life that night, Butcher says, maybe two. And no one knows how many other people at the hospital might have died if Webb and his radio had not been there. Butcher's sure of one thing: "Richard is a real hero."

****

Timothy Harper is a journalist, author and editorial/publishing consultant based at www.timharper.com

Illustration by Thomas Kuhlenbeck

NET Listings

Mon-Fri 1830 hr. 146.94 Mhz
Capitol District Repeater Traffic Net

Tuesday 1930 hr. 147.12 Mhz.
Albany Co. RACES Net

Tuesday 1900 hr. 147.21 Mhz.
Columbia Co. EMCOMM Net

Tuesday 1930 hrs. 28.375 Mhz.
RVWARS New 10 M SSB Net

Tuesday 2000 hrs. 145.25 Mhz.
Northeast Connect Walton, NY
Multi-County & State Check-ins

Wednesday 1930 hr. 145.17 Mhz.
Rens. Co. ARES/RACES Net

Thursday 2100 hr. 145.170 Mhz.
TARA TNT Trader Net

WB2HPR - Mobile Installation

This month, we are going to try to start a new Member column and hope that it catches on. I would like to feature Club members Home Shacks and Mobile Installations each Month and if it really catches on maybe at the end of the year or at Field Day we could vote on who submitted the best Feature Article and Best Installation. The Idea of this whole Column is to promote member participation and just have FUN. – **The Editor**

Greetings Everyone, my name is Steve Van Sickle and my call is WB2HPR although I have been licensed since the sixties. I only just recently joined TARA.

My mobile installation is installed in my Ford Explorer with my Yaesu FT-987D mounted on a custom-made pivoting table. I built all that in my work shop, along with the custom made antenna mount No visible holes thru vehicle skin -- all hardware is concealed behind vehicle's trim and rear hatch. This makes for an excellent grounding system, too. The antenna is a DH-3 by Don Johnson, W6AAQ. . He is the inventor of this so-called "screwdriver" antenna. It is named so because it uses a modified Black and Decker cordless screwdriver to operate the tuning mechanism (variable loading coil) which is concealed under the corrugated rubber boot.

I have made 100's of CW and SSB QSO's on 3.8-29 mHz. I've worked all continents with only 100 watts since last August - mainly just driving around here in the Capital Region - to/from work. There's almost always some activity on one of the bands. Yes, there's more to operating mobile than 2 meters and 440! Note –I formerly had a NYE Viking straight key but I replaced it with a set of home-brew paddles, and a SWR bridge has been added. Note the note pad and pen for logging. the other black box with the 3 LEDs and switches on the left of the rig are the screwdriver antenna tuning controls. Also included is a remote ALC control, (hard to see) - used to control the RF tune-up power when making adjustments. (Reduces wear and tear on the finals, even though they are SWR protected)

In the close-up of the rig, you will note the addition of the home-brew paddles, an LED illuminator for the Field Strength meter, and a custom built SWR indicator, which is the readout for the RF sampling bridge located in the rear of the vehicle, close to the antenna feedpoint. Also, the white box with all the cables is a custom made headset interface with remote volume control, channel up/down, and remote volume control, as well as manual PTT buttons. There is also a microphone "kill" switch - used to disable the microphone in order to prevent unwanted VOX transmissions. There is a garment clip which allows the control box to be "worn" on the operator's clothing, making the buttons easy to reach. The headset is an ultra-light unit made by Plantronics, and has been modified for this application.

On the **next page**, you can see the **in-line RF sampler** used to detect forward and reflected power in the coax at the base of the screwdriver antenna. This is also custom made, and features a solid copper RF tight enclosure. The other 2 leads are the DC output signals that are run to the SWR indicator art the operator's position. So that's it, for now, and when the weather gets a bit warmer, I will be pulling out the FT-897D and installing the new '857D (remotely), and will add a new multi-band U/V rig strictly for 2 meters and 440. It will look totally different then.

73,

Steve - ***WB2HPR***

More Pictures
Next Page

WB2HPR Mobile Installation

In-line RF sampler used to detect forward and reflected power in the coax at the base of the screwdriver antenna.

Front and Rear Views of the Screwdriver Antenna Installation
" Nice and Clean"

ARRL Staff Member John C. Hennessee, N1KB - SK

NEWINGTON, CT, Mar 7, 2006--Long-time ARRL Headquarters staff member John Hennessee, N1KB (ex-KJ4KB), of Newington died March 2. He was 42. A Headquarters employee since 1986, Hennessee was a regulatory information specialist in ARRL Field and Educational Services. In that role, he answered a seemingly never-ending stream of members' questions about FCC rules and regulations and other legal issues pertaining to ham radio. He also was the primary editor for *The ARRL FCC Rule Book*. ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, described Hennessee as "a valued member of the Amateur Radio community far outside the walls of Headquarters" who achieved a lot in his short lifetime.

"John came to Newington 20 years ago, fresh out of college, and quickly became an expert in FCC rules and local land-use regulations affecting radio amateurs," Sumner commented. "His death leaves a hole in the fabric of the ARRL family."

ARRL General Counsel Chris Imlay, W3KD, expressed his own shock at Hennessee's death and spoke highly of his dedication. "I don't think many people at Headquarters worked harder or more diligently than John," Imlay said. "He helped me so many times, and he never failed at anything I asked of him. It is a very sad day indeed."

Long-Time Radio Amateur

First licensed at age 14 as KA4AUR in his hometown of Cheraw, South Carolina, Hennessee joined the ARRL Headquarters staff as in 1986 following graduation from Wingate College in North Carolina. ARRL Contest Branch Manager Dan Henderson, N1ND, has known Hennessee since their Novice days. "When John first got on the air, he spent a lot of time on many of the various Novice nets in the South," said Henderson, who notes that he and Hennessee shared an Elmer. "I fondly recall the times we would chat before the Carolina Novice Net, then one of us would be NCS. Our hobby was better because of John." A North Carolina native, Henderson said he would miss chatting with Hennessee about mutual friends "back home."

The FCC Rules "Go-To Guy"

To handle hundreds of questions each year regarding how to interpret the FCC rules required Hennessee to keep abreast of ongoing Amateur Radio legal and regulatory matters and proceedings. That task became increasingly difficult for him as his eyesight and general health continued to fail. Nonetheless, he persevered in keeping on top of what was happening in areas ranging from the PRB-1 limited federal pre-emption and covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs) affecting ham radio antennas to new Amateur Radio rules and privileges, license restructuring, reciprocal licensing and licensing rules and procedures in other countries. He also maintained the regulatory pages on the ARRL Web site.

Earlier in his Headquarters tenure, Hennessee for several years edited the "Washington Mailbox" and "Happenings" columns in *QST*. Over the years, he also contributed to *The ARRL Handbook*, the *ARRL Operating Manual* and *Now You're Talking!*

ARRL Hudson Division Vice Director Joyce Birmingham KA2ANF, said Hennessee's passion for and knowledge of Amateur Radio and his love for people would be missed. "His faith inspired, lifted him up and carried him throughout his years as he battled health problems and failing eyesight," she said.

The DJ-X7T: Taking It With You - Anywhere!

Alinco Introduces Low Profile Wide Band Communications Receiver

By Joseph Pasquini

From the February 2006 Edition of "Scanning USA" magazine
http://www.scanningusa.com
Reprinted with permission

Alinco DJ-X7T

Credit card sized communications receiver offers 1,000 channels, customizable banks and covers 100 kHz to 1299.995 MHz (less cellular) in AM, FM wide and FM narrow modes;

List price of $199.95

(936) 271-3366

http://www.alinco.com/usa.html

It's been a little while since Alinco has released a portable communications receiver. Back in 2001, the Japanese based communications manufacturer introduced their DJ-X3 wideband radio. Akin to something you might have expected to see in a circa 1955 science fiction movie, the DJ-X3 featured an unusually outfitted silver, grey and orange exterior and even included a "bug" detector for finding hidden transmitters. Yet, despite its somewhat controversial appearance and feature set, the radio did offer a rather respectable receiver and did have its share of followers.

Fast forward to Fall 2005. Unmistakably based upon the form factor of their ultra thin DJ-C7T 144/440 MHz amateur handheld, Alinco has released the credit card sized DJ-X7T handheld communications receiver. With a much more conservative look and feel than their last receiver model, this newest model also offers a more robust feature set – as well as smaller dimensions - than previously seen from the company. Briefly, the DJ-X7T features coverage from 0.100 to 1299.995 MHz (less cellular), 1,000 memory channels, customizable and linkable banks, triple conversion AM/NFM, double conversion WFM, computer programmable capability, preprogrammed service bands for AM/FM/TV broadcast reception, four different antenna selections, multiple scan modes including CTCSS discovery and a long duration removable Li-Ion battery pack.

So, let's take a look at the DJ-X7T and see just how it measures up.

Out Of The Box

If you have the radio shipped to you, one of the first things you'll probably notice is the weight of the box. Or, should I say the *lack* of weight! The radio weighs in at less than four ounces yet looks and feels solidly constructed.

Packaged along with the receiver itself, Alinco also includes the following accessories:

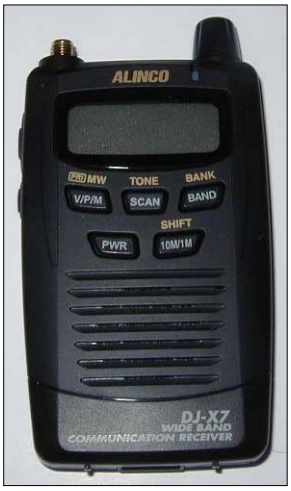
- EBP-58N Li-Ion battery pack (3.7V, 600mAh)
- EDC-126 AC Adapter (120V)
- EA-133 SMA whip antenna (originally labeled EA-131)
- EME-25 Curl-cable earphone (2.5mm) with foam cover
- A cap for the SMA connector (more about this later)
- Instruction manual with errata
- Warranty card

Did you notice anything unusual about this list? Well, there are three noteworthy observations. The first is that the DJ-X7T doesn't utilize a belt clip. While this might disappoint some, this actually makes perfect sense considering that the receiver is so thin. This is a radio that is clearly intended to be carried in your shirt or coat pocket. As a result, any decently built belt clip would dwarf the radio. The second noteworthy observation is that the DJ-X7T ships with an earphone. At first, this might appear to be simply a nice addition to the included accessory roster. But, in reality, the earphone serves as a design element for the radio. The final observation is that a PC interface cable (ERW-4C) does not come with the radio but rather is available separately. We'll discuss these last two items in a moment.

Other optional accessories include a DC socket cable (EDH-32), a soft carrying case (ESC-38), a straight cable earphone (EME-18) and the ERW-4C interface cable. Additional battery packs and AC adapters are also available.

Layout

FRONT - The front of the DJ-X7T is basically divided into three sections: the LCD, the keypad and the speaker.



The LCD is located towards near the top of the radio. Frequency information is large and easy to read under normal circumstances. Contrast is not adjustable. The display is backlit, but the dim green backlighting renders it somewhat difficult to read in low light conditions. A LED sits just above the display and turns green to when the squelch threshold is reached.

The keypad, which is located between the display and the speaker below, utilizes black keys with white lettering. The keypad is not backlit. Similar to other competing micro receivers, the DJ-X7T does not include a numeric keypad. Yellow lettering - indicating alternative functions - is situated immediately above all of the keys with the exception of the power button. Alternative functions are selected in conjunction with the side mounted function key. While the keys are obviously not visible in the dark, they are easily read under normal well lit operating conditions.

The speaker grille resides below the keypad area and takes up the lower half of the front side. One of the enjoyable features of the DJ-X7T is its crisp audio. Despite the size of the radio, the small yet efficient speaker delivers surprisingly good audio response and is very comfortable to listen to for lengths at a time.

BACK - The upper half of the radio's back is comprised of the usual compliancy and regulatory statements as well as the model and serial number label.

The lower half of the back of the radio is dedicated to the unit's EBP-58N Li-Ion battery pack. This 3.7V, 600mAh battery has two small tabs on each side along with a sliding lock on the bottom. To install the battery, first simply place it into the compartment so that the tabs fit into the corresponding openings found on each side of the compartment. The next step is to press the battery upwards and depress the locking tab. The battery then sits flush with the rest of the radio.

As mentioned, while the DJ-X7T does not sport a belt clip of any kind, it does provide a lanyard loop on the back situated at the upper edge. A lanyard, however, is not supplied with the radio.

LEFT – There are two multifunction buttons on the left side of the radio – the FUNCTION key and the MONI key.

When used in conjunction with other keys on the DJ-X7T, the function key allows access to many alternative features found on the unit. Unlike many other receivers, the DJ-X7J does not require both keys to be depressed simultaneously. Rather, just a single press activates the key. When depressed for one second, the FUNCTION key also activates the key lock feature.

The remaining button, referred to as MONI, opens the receiver's squelch when temporarily depressed. Pressing the key down while the radio's FUNCTION setting is enabled lets the user change tuning steps while in VFO mode. The user can also configure the MONI key via the radio's configuration menu to act as a temporary MUTE feature. Additionally, this key also lets the user progress backwards through the menu.

RIGHT – The power/charging jack resides on the right side of the unit. According to Alinco, the DJ-X7T can safely be operated while the battery is charging but some noise may occur.

TOP – Working from left to right, the top of the radio features a gold-plated SMA connector with its slim profile detachable antenna, a 2.5mm earphone/programming jack and a rotary/push control.

Any SMA handheld antenna can be attached to the DJ-X7T. However, be aware that any after market antenna is likely to stick out beyond the width of the radio. For external antenna users, the radio also features a 20dB

attenuator. Unfortunately, the attenuator function is not memory channel specific.

The 2.5mm accessory jack is primarily designed for use with the supplied earphone. It is also configured for stereo audio. As previously mentioned, the radio can be configured to allow the attached earpiece to serve as a general coverage antenna for stealthier listening. The jack is surrounded by a molded “collar” which appears to provide it with additional stability and strength.

In the absence of a numeric keypad, the rotary/push control is central to this radio’s functionality. In rotary mode, it is traditionally used to select a frequency, memory channel or preset mode. When depressed, it is used to cycle through both volume and squelch settings. Additionally, its alternative usage (in conjunction with the FUNCTION key) is to access the radio’s configuration menu.

OPERATION

Banks and Scanning

The DJ-X7T features four different types of memory banks. Ten banks, labeled as 0 - 9, will accommodate up to a total of 1,000 channels divided into each bank. Via software, this can be expanded to a total of 50 banks. Band linking is also possible via the software. A dedicated bank, labeled PS (Programmed Scanned) for preprogrammed search channels, accommodates 50 pairs of band edge frequencies. There is no auto memory write capability, however. The 100-channel PAS band is dedicated to holding user provided skip-search channels. A 10 channel Priority band is also available.

Keeping in mind that this radio is a communications receiver as opposed to a scanner, it nonetheless does feature numerous scanning modes. The radio’s Scan-Resume mode is composed of two conditions: Busy Scan and Timer Scan. Both are selectable via the radio’s configuration menu (also referred to as Set mode). Busy scan, which monitors a transmission until the signal is lost, is the default. When Time Scan is selected, the radio stops on a received signal and then resumes scanning after a five seconds pause. In VFO Scan mode, the radio scans using the pre-specified tuning step. In Programmed Scan mode, the radio searches for signals between a particular pair of frequencies. As just mentioned, up to 50 pairs of frequencies can be programmed into the radio’s dedicated PS bank. In the Memory Scan mode, users can scan individual banks, linked banks or all numerically labeled banks. Of special interest to many monitoring enthusiasts will be the radio’s ability to quickly detect CTCSS tones.

Can You Hear Me Now?

The DJ-X7T features four different antenna modes. The external SMA connection can be used for receiving any band which the receiver is capable of receiving. The internal AM bar antenna is an internal antenna which is intended for receiving 100kHz to 3MHz. Like its AM cousin, the shortwave bar antenna is an internal antenna designed to receive 3MHz to 30MHz. Lastly, the earphone antenna option is intended for reception over 30MHz. The status of all four antenna selections is made via the radio’s configuration menu. By default, the earphone option is turned off and both internal antennas are enabled. If you intend to monitor any SW broadcasts, you’ll want to disable the unit’s internal shortwave antenna as it doesn’t really hear anything.

Let’s talk more about the earphone antenna. For those times you want to really maintain a low profile with the radio, you have the option of leveraging the receive capabilities of the earphone’s coiled wire. Performance will obviously be a factor, but for certain situations such as sporting events where the RF is nearby or those times you simply want to enjoy some music from your favorite local FM station, the 2.5mm earphone will be sufficient. This is where the protective cap for the SMA connector comes into play. When the SMA connection is not in use, the user can place the cap over the connector to help keep it clean and protect it from damage. It also gives the radio an overall clean appearance. That’s a nice touch.

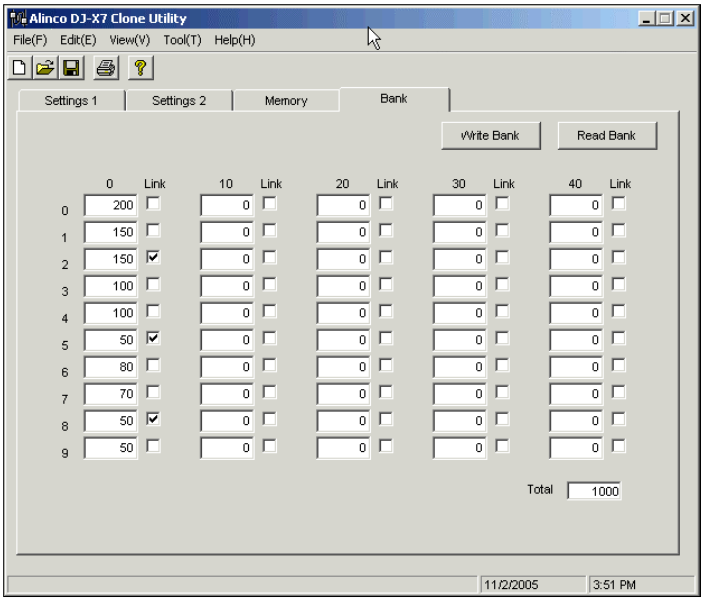
Cloning and Computer Control

By connecting two DJ-X7T's together using a 2.5mm male-to-male stereo plug cable, a user can transfer the contents of one receiver to another. In addition, the radio also provides for a connection to a PC for modifying the radio's memory and configuration settings. The ERW-4C computer interface cable, which connects the radio's earphone jack to a computer's 9-pin RS-232 port, is required. The cable provided by Alinco for this review sported a 3.5mm stereo connection along with a 2.5mm stereo adapter required to fit the radio. Alinco currently provides free "beta" software, aptly named "DJ-X7 Clone Utility," from their website.

An interesting feature of the software is its ability to modify banks sizes! Up to 50 banks can be configured and linked together as desired. This functional enhancement is only available when using the software – banks cannot be modified via the radio's keypad.

Performance

Using typical AM/FM broadcast and some VHF/UHF public safety transmissions as a baseline, the radio performed quite well. Reception was respectable and the audio was clear, especially on FM. Performance on HF was also decent for a handheld, but not until the internal HF antenna bar was disabled via the radio's configuration menu. When enabled, I was unable to receive any signals on HF. When disabled, the radio instead used its SMA connected antenna which was able to receive the normally high powered VOA and BBC transmissions. Using an external antenna, I was actually able to monitor traditionally weaker signals such as WWV. With the external antenna, stronger transmissions routinely required the use of the radio's attenuator.



DJ-X7 Clone Utility, the free software available from Alinco's website, lets users resize banks and link bands together.

What Happened to the Presets?

While there is lot to boast about with the DJ-X7T, there is one somewhat frustrating anomaly that should have been caught by Alinco before the radio ever made its way to US shores.

One of the marketing bullets for the DJ-X7T is its ability to get a new user up and running in short order thanks to its built in preset bands for AM/FM and TV broadcast reception. However, there is a problem: the FM and TV broadcast bands unfortunately do not correspond to American band plans. For example, the radio's FM preset spans the range from 76.1MHz to 89.9MHz which corresponds to the FM broadcast plan in Japan. While this oversight does not appear to impact normal VFO usage or the user programmed memories, it may be an issue for users wanting to quickly monitor their favorite FM radio or television station. A quick fix for this problem is to dedicate a bank for any regularly monitored broadcast stations. Alinco Japan plans on updating their freeware programming utility to allow users to modify the presets. By the time you read this article, the updated DJ-X7 Clone Utility should be available for download from the Alinco web site.

On a related topic, another mild disappointment with the DJ-X7T was its inability to program a channel with any alphanumeric text. With over 1,000 memory channels at one's disposal, it would have been nice to have been able to include alpha tagging like the majority of the current generation of receivers in today's marketplace.

PROS AND CONS

Pros:

- Miniature form factor
- Multiple antenna options
- Multiple scanning functionality
- 1,000 channels
- Priority function
- Customizable banks sizes and linkability
- Computer programmable (the program, which is in beta, is available as a free download from the Alinco US website.)
- Long lasting Lithium Ion battery
- Excellent audio characteristics

Cons:

- Backlighting is dim and reminiscent of displays commonly seen on older radios
- No backlight key
- Keypad not backlit
- Memories do not accommodate text characters, only numerics for frequency input. This is especially surprising considering that the receiver is capable of being programmed by computer. All but the simplest of today's scanners and receivers provide for text input!
- "Preset bands" do not reflect US band plan.
- PC interface cable is not included
- Attenuator function is not memory channel specific

CONCLUSION

Alinco likes to state that the new DJ-X7T receiver "*…sets a new standard for miniature electronics technology…*," and this certainly is the case. The radio is so compact and lightweight that it will easily, and unobtrusively, fit into your shirt pocket, briefcase or organizer. In addition, it also comes with some features which will prove very useful to the monitoring enthusiast. As long as you can live with or look past some of the DJ-X7T's idiosyncrasies, you may find that that this inexpensively priced communications receiver might just become your "every day carry" (EDC) utility radio.

DJ-X7T SPECIFICATIONS

Frequency Range: 100 kHz to 1299.995 MHz (less cellular)
Modes: AM, FM wide and FM narrow
Antenna connection: SMA male at 50 ohms
External Supply voltage: 3.6 - 6 VDC
Current consumption: 90 ma (22 ma during Battery Save)
Operating temperature: 14° to 140° F or -10° to 60° C
Channels: 1000 (10 banks of 100 channels; bank sizing is customizable via software)
Frequency stability: ± -7 ~ +3 ppm
Selectivity AM/FM: 12 kHz @ -6dB, 30 kHz @ -60 dB
Selectivity WFM: 130 kHz @ -6dB
Typical Operating Time: 19 hrs with included Li-Ion EBP58N battery (RX:1 Standy:4, BS on).
Unit Dimensions: 2.7 x 4 x 0.7 inches (58 x 96 x 15 mm)
Weight: 3.7 oz (103 g)
System: Triple-conversion Superheterodyne
- 1st IF: 243.95 MHz
- 2nd IF: 39.155 MHz NFM/AM, 10.7 MHz FM
- 3rd IF: 450 kHz NFM/AM

List Price: $199.95

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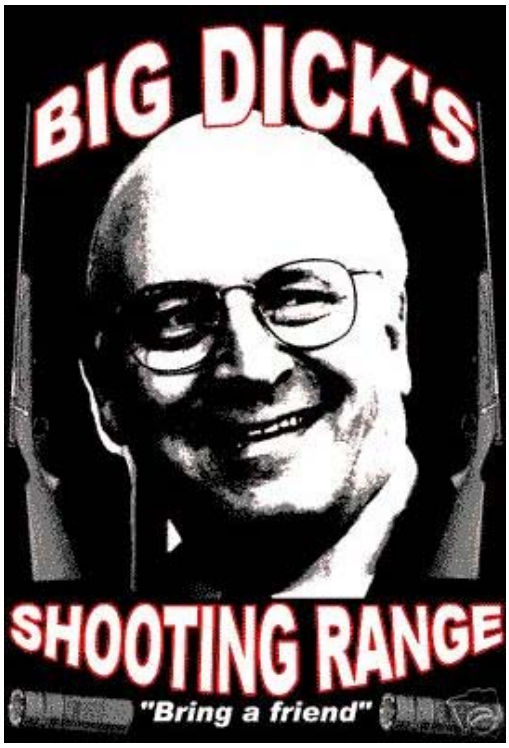

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THE TARA NEWS

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