THE TARA NEWS

Affiliate of the American Radio Relay League

Volume 16 © Issue 04 April 2005

Special Anniversary Issue

The Troy Amateur Radio Association
Cordially invites you to Its
14th Anniversary Celebration
to be held on
April 19, 2005 at 7:00 PM
At the
Green Island Municipal Center
19 George Street
Green Island, New York

It's hard to believe that fourteen years have passed since we all gathered in the living and dining rooms of Bill Eddy's House back in 1991 to discuss starting our own Amateur radio club in Troy, a new kind of club which has its roots in Friendship and Family, not in Roberts Rules, Politics and Cliques. To this very day, our club has stood by those standards and has grown to over 100 members strong, from the original founders. Our Motto, Keep it Simple and always Take Care of your Friends.

We spent many an evening meeting, sitting in Mr. Bill's driveway, where everyone brought their own beach chairs and we all sat there with a bottle of soda and a snack and laughed and shared stories and jokes and got a lot of stuff done just because we all good friends. Sure it was a club, but that was secondary. We were all just friends having a good time. When someone was needed to help put an antenna up we had a group of guys which we referred to as the A-team. When you stop to think our Club has made one heck of a journey from 1991 to 2004. **Editor**

TARA Skirmish - April 16

Digital Prefix Contest

It's time to preplan your strategy for the upcoming "TARA Skirmish" Digital Prefix Contest is coming up on 16-April-2005. Our fearless leader "Big Ernie," WM2U is looking for huge turnout for this year's running of the Skirmish, so you better not let him down!

If you think you might be a little rusty for the contest, fear not! The recently announced FIRST ANNUAL PSK 31 FLAVORS CONTEST, sponsored by the PODXS 070 Club will serve as an excellent opportunity for each of us to get our station's ready for the "Skirmish." This is a six-hour sprint that will allow many of us to ready our station for the contest the week after. For more information check out: _http://hometown.aol.com/n3dqu/psk_31_flavors.htm_
Don't forget, this is the final contest for this year's "Four Season's Tour'ney." It's going to be interesting to see who can take top honor's in this year's Tour'ney. So far the top 10 list are: (1) VE9DX, (2) N3FX, (3) YV5AAX, (4)OK1VSL, (5) W3HF, (6) KR4U, (7) OH4LRP, (8) VE1OP, (9) UA4FCO, (10) RV6YZ/6After the contest you can follow the results at:
_http://www.n2ty.org/seasons/tara_tourney_results.html_
If you want to read more on the TARA Tour'ney please go to:
_http://www.n2ty.org/seasons/tara_tourney.html_
Below I have sent you the official announcement for the TARA Skirmish, please review if carefully!

73 de NY2U Bill Eddy
President of Troy ARA
ny2u@n2ty.org

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TARA Skirmish--Digital Prefix Contest--sponsored by Troy ARA, 0000Z-2400Z Apr 16. Frequencies: 160-6 meters, work stations once per band. Categories: High, Low (<100 W), Great (<20 W), QRP (<5 W), SWL. Exchange: Name and Prefix. Score: QSOs × WPX prefixes × power multiplier. (High ×0.5, Low ×1, Great ×2, QRP ×3) Multipliers count once per band. For more information:
_http://www.n2ty.org/seasons/tara_dpx_rules.html_
or skirmish-manager@n2ty.org
Logs due 14-May-05 via the contest score entry form at
_http://n2ty.org/seasons/tara_dpx_score.html_
This contest is brought to you by:
TARA - Four Season's Contesting & Awards
Bringing you the very best in contests for ALL Seasons!

More than a Club SKYWARN We're a Family

Indiana Bats - Monitors Needed In Northeastern States during Spring

Volunteers successfully aided Texas Bat researchers in 2003. Now a new request for bat tracking assistance arrived on 20 January 2005 from Carl Herzog AB2SI of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation:

"Our agency is currently preparing for two radio tracking projects that will take place from mid-April to early May 2005. We will be attaching transmitters to Indiana bats, an endangered species, as they leave their winter caves and we'll attempt to find them in their summer habitat out on the landscape. Both projects will be happening simultaneously and we are looking for volunteers (with or without equipment) to help with radio tracking. "One cave is located in the Kingston, NY area. Previous experience suggests that some of these bats will fly to Orange and Dutchess Counties in NY. Others might fly anywhere within 300 miles, but most likely they will be found in lower NY, Western CT, Northern NJ, or Eastern PA. The bats do not limit themselves to wilderness, but are often found in farm country or even suburban areas.

"The second cave site is in western NY near Watertown. We have no idea where these bats will go but, again, we do not expect them to travel more than 300 miles and probably less than 50 miles. This radius includes southern Ontario and Quebec - bats know nothing about national borders.

"Transmitters will be operating between 150 and 151 MHz. If you think of a single Morse "dit" repeated every second or so, you'll have a good idea of what they sound like. Generally speaking, you'll need a SSB/CW capable receiver to hear anything. For folks who live in the right areas and are willing to devote a bit of time to this project, we might be able to provide receivers and/or antennas."

Updates on this project will be posted at this **Homing In** Web site. You can e-mail Carl Herzog directly at cjherzog@gw.dec.state.ny.us

Tips of Antennas

By Steve Bozak WB2IQU

The higher the better! The antenna is like a bright light shining for others to see. If it is high on a mountain top you can see it from far far away. In fact to calculate the ERP (effective radiated power) we take into consideration the height of the antenna from ground. The antenna needs to be “seen” because these radio waves want to travel in a straight line only. Until they reach something to bounce of off…
The horizon at ground level is only about 40 miles away, but get up 100 feet and you can “see” as far as 80 miles. A pilot told me with his 5 watts aircraft radio (125 MHz) he could nominally reach 200 miles at 37,ooo feet.
So, the “**Antenna Tip**” should be the higher the better.

Public Service Events

Runnin of the "Snowy" Green

Greeting to all,
We have just completed our first Public Service Event of the season.
It was the "Runnin of the Green" in Green Island.
I want to thank everyone who came out in the bad weather to help out with the race.

Margaret N2PEK
Duffy N2TZQ
Dwight N2SDL
John N2HQD
Bill KC2JDW
Howie KC2MNW
Art KB2JZJ
Sue KC2IBI
Ray N2ZQF
Ron KC2NUS
Donna WA2ILD
Dick WA2COI
Mac KB2SPM
Karen KS2O

There will be more Public Service Events coming up during the next few months. If anyone would like to volunteer for them please let me know.
You can call me anytime....Karen 273-6594
Thanks again,
Karen ~KS2O

Events Coming in May

These are a few of the upcoming Public Service Events that I have so far.

The Albany GHI Corporate Challenge will be held in Washington Park on Thursday, May 19th at 6:25 p.m. This race should be about an hour.

There will be the Watervliet Memorial Day Parade on Monday May 30th at 10 a.m. This parade will last about 20 - 30 minutes.

If anyone would like to help with any of these events, please call Karen at 273-6594 anytime.
Thank You,
Karen ~KS2O

Amateur Radio Operators Prove Vital In Tracking Severe Weather

By Howard Greninger/Tribune-Star

While radar is important, weather experts depend on "ground truth" from amateur radio operators during severe storms, a meteorologist says.

In Terre Haute, that ground truth is what the weather is doing below 7,000 feet. Seven thousand feet is the altitude the National Weather Service's Doppler Radar is observing.

"We are seeing what is going on in the clouds, but not at ground level in the Terre Haute area, so weather spotters help us in the severe weather warning decision process," said David Tucek, warning coordination meteorologist for the National Weather Service's headquarters in Indianapolis.

"Close to half of the spotter reports are from ham radio operators, so they really are the backbone. The rest comes from law enforcement with some reports from the public," Tucek said. "Communication is the key to public safety."

It was amateur radio operators who first spotted signs of a potential tornado over Terre Haute heading toward Indianapolis last May 30. Storms combined to create 23 tornadoes on that day, largely in central Indiana, for the second largest tornado outbreak in state history, causing one fatality in Crawford County from lightning, Tucek said.

"We average about 20 tornadoes per year, so that was a big day for Indiana," Tucek said.

During those storms last May, 98 percent of the storm warnings sent out from the National Weather Service came from information obtained from amateur radio weather spotters, Tucek said.

Many of those weather spotters are part of Illiana Skywarn, a group of ham radio operators who undergo training courses from the National Weather Service. Skywarn covers the Wabash Valley and three counties in Illinois. Tucek conducted a training course Monday in World Gospel Church, Terre Haute.

Speaking to spotters: David Tucek of the National Weather Service uses a laptop computer attached to a video projector to provide storm photos and video during a weather spotters class Monday evening in World

Illiana Skywarn was formed in 1973 and has about 110 radio operators who consistently volunteer their equipment and qualifications to communicate with the National Weather Service when severe weather strikes, said Keith Reedy, Skywarn coordinator. Reedy is blind, but knows radio equipment thoroughly and can convey weather information instantly to the National Weather Service.

"We had 56 people tracking that storm near Memorial Day last year in 14 counties," Reedy said. "We had our radio spotters out in about 15 minutes. We can talk directly to the National Weather Service office right next to the meteorologist looking at the radar.

"The whole thing takes about 30 seconds. Years ago, we had to give that information to State Police who conveyed it and that could have taken five to seven minutes. Now it is just seconds," Reedy said.

There are about 500 licensed ham radio operators in Vigo County and an additional 150 in Sullivan, Clay, Parke and Vermillion counties in Indiana and in Clark, Edgar and Crawford counties in Illinois, said David Pifer of Terre Haute. Pifer is Indiana's state emergency coordinator for the Amateur Radio Emergency Service. He overseas all 92 Indiana counties.

While tornadoes can happen at any time, March is considered the beginning of tornado season in Indiana. Tornadoes are most destructive in Indiana in April, but are most numerous in June, said Tucek said.

Most tornadoes in Indiana are considered weak or moderate, with winds up to 112 mph, but some can generate winds 207 to 260 mph and greater.

The worst tornado to strike Terre Haute was on March 23, 1913, killing 21 people, according to the National Weather Service. The last tornado death in Vigo County was on May 21, 1949, when a storm killed three people, two of them picnickers at Deming Park.

Most wind damage is caused not from a tornado but from straight-line wind, the No. 1 cause of damage from thunderstorms in Indiana, Tucek said.

Darrell Davis, 57, of Linton, just got his ham radio a year ago this month. His call sign is KC9FKK. He decided to become a licensed ham radio operator after reading novels of ham radio operators intercepting codes sent to German submarines during World War II.

Davis said Monday's course was his first chance to learn how to spot storms. "I will watch them, but I won't chase them," he said. "I know this information can save lives."

John Voigt, 40, of Terre Haute said he stopped chasing storms after 1990, when he saw three tornadoes along Illinois 1, between Paris and Chrisman, Ill. "The adrenaline was going, so I really had no time to be scared. We saw part of a house torn off and some huge grain bins rolling down a field for about a half mile. I've never chased [a storm] since," he said. Voigt said he attends training courses annually. "I've gone for several years. It's always a good refresher and you can pick up something new," he said.

Howard Greninger can be reached at (812) 231-4204 or howard.greninger@tribstar.com

Speaker: David Tucek of the National Weather Service speaks to about 60 weather spotters Monday evening in Terre Haute's World Gospel Church. (Tribune-Star/Bob Poynter)

Listening Post Power Connections

Standardizing Your Equipment With Anderson Power Connectors

By Joseph Pasquini

From the March 2005 Edition of "Scanning USA" magazine

http://www.scanningusa.com

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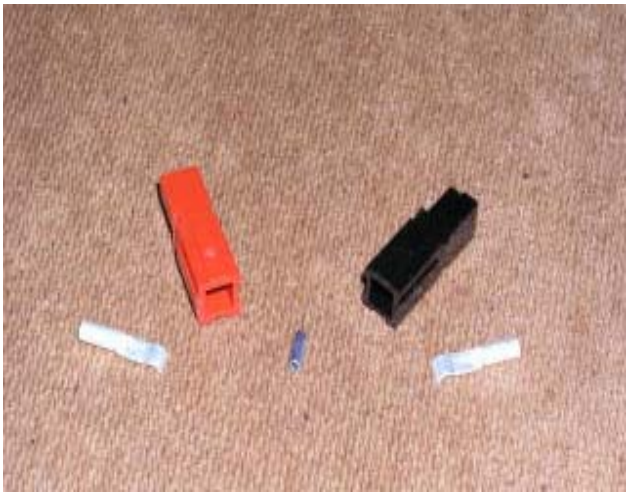
We all have them strewn across our listening posts – those frustratingly blocky and sometimes electrically noisy AC/DC power adapters. They take up precious real estate on power strips and often take up more space than they otherwise should. We have come to accept them as a necessary evil when it comes to powering our scanner equipment and accessories. But should we? If you are only using one or two base radios, or have just handhelds, then the answer is probably a simple 'yes.' However, if your shack is overflowing with numerous types of receivers, perhaps some two-way radios and other related 12-volt capable equipment, then there is another option. This alternative, which has quickly become the DC power connection standard of choice for general radio communications, is commonly known as the *Anderson Powerpole* connector.

Anderson Powerpole connectors – otherwise known simply as Powerpoles - allow for dependable, swift and safe installation and changeover of radio equipment, batteries and power supplies. The level of standardization that they offer provides easy serviceability, even in the field. For example, you can easily move your scanner from your home to your car with virtually no effort. No more searching for that misplaced AC/DC power adapter. Powerpoles are both polarized and genderless, so as long as you use proper assembly techniques, you do not have to worry about polarity issues and male versus female contacts. The connectors are used for both supply and load.

There are a number of very desirable features of the Anderson Powerpole. Powerpoles are actually composed of two components: a silver-lined contact connector and a plastic housing. The highly conductive silver-plated copper connectors allow for low contact resistance levels. Self-wiping action upon the making of a connection helps to keep the conducting surfaces clean. The Powerpole contacts themselves have small intentional dents on them which help to keep mated connections together. This feature is especially useful in mobile applications. Non-corrosive stainless steel leaf springs within the main plastic housing help to maintain constant contact pressure. The housing of each Anderson connector is made from high impact-resistant polycarbonate plastic.

A pair of Powerpoles - one red connector and one black connector – is required to make a standard connection. The positive (red) and the negative (black) connectors are designed in such a way that they can slide together to form a single, compact unit. Between the red and black pieces is a circular channel designed to accommodate a 1/4 inch metal roller pin. Placing a pin into this channel helps to hold the assembly securely together.



Components of a pair of Anderson Powerpole connectors: 2-silver-lined contacts, 1-red plastic housing, 1-black housing and 1-center pin.

What do you need?

In order to convert your equipment to the Anderson standard, you will need the following items:

- A fused 12-volt lead for each of your radios
- A DC power panel (available in both base and mobile configurations)
- A good quality, regulated power supply
- A gel-cell battery (optional)
- A bunch of Anderson Powerpole connectors

Anderson Powerpole Part Numbers			
15-ampere	**Complete Connector**	**Housing Only**	**Contact Only**
Black	#1395G1	#1327G6	#1332
Red	#1395	#1327	#1332
30-ampere	**Complete Connector**	**Housing Only**	**Contact Only**
Black	#1330G4	#1327G6	#1331
Red	#1330	#1327	#1331

- Tools: proper crimper, a good soldering iron, electrical tape/wire wraps, small blade screwdriver, etc

Many base receivers come with a general power lead with a barrel plug on one end (connects to the radio) and no connector on the other end. For those units that do not come with a lead, you can easily make your own or buy one preassembled from your favorite electronics reseller.

A power distribution unit is composed of a bank of mounted Powerpoles and is fused for each piece of equipment plugged into it. Both base station and mobile power panels are available. Having a power distribution unit is not a requirement, but it does allow for a very clean and tidy installation, and also provides fused protection of any equipment you plug into it. Honestly, it is the preferred method. The primary manufactures of Anderson based power panels are West Mountain Radio and Saratoga Amateur Products, but there are others.

The regulated power supply will have two posts on the back (or front) of it to which you will attach a lead with a set of Anderson connectors on it. Such a supply offers relatively clean DC output unlike the vast majority of those simple AC/DC wall warts. Make sure that your power supply is rated to handle all of your equipment needs. If your shack is composed of only receivers, a 10 or 15 amp supply will be more than plenty.

While a gel-cell or similar battery is optional, having one does allows you to operate your listening post under all conditions. If you lose power, you simply disconnect your power supply from your power panel and then connect your battery to the panel.

You really don't need any special tools to assemble Powerpoles. Anderson and a couple of other vendors do make crimping tools specifically designed to expertly make solidly crimped connections. But, like any specialty too, they tend to be a little pricey. That being said, you shouldn't just use your average automotive crimping tool, either. An improper crimp will make for a poor connection as it will deform the barrel of the contact thus making it difficult to insert them into the plastic housings. One inexpensive alternative is to use a standard Gardner Bender GS88 crimp tool which can usually be picked up for under $10 at your local hardware store. If you have a lot of connections to make though, or if you like to collect quality tools, you may want to consider one of the specialty crimping tools as they do really make for a professional installation.

Connector Assembly

Anderson connectors can be either soldered or crimped. The 15-ampere contacts are deigned for 16-20AWG wire. The 30-ampere contacts are designed for 12-16AWG wire. Either the 15-ampere or 30-ampere sizes may be used as both sizes mate with each other. The plastic housings are the same for both sizes. The only difference between the two is the size of the barrel area of the connectors. Since receivers generally have a low power consumption, you really only need to be concerned with the 15-amp contacts. The 30-amp contacts are going to be too large.

If you need to attach wires smaller than 14 AWG to a 30A contact, you should strip a longer length, fold the bare conductor in a "Z-fold" fashion and insert the multiple folds of the wire into the contact barrel. This will help to prevent flattening of the contact when it is crimped.

After a contact has been attached to a wire, it should be installed into the plastic housing so that the housing spring mates with the underside of the contact. The proper assembly orientation is, when viewed from the contact side (opposite the wiring side) with **tongue down and hood up**, is **RED on the LEFT** and **BLACK on the RIGHT**. This is the assembly standard that has been adopted by many emergency service operations.

Personally, I prefer to crimp the wire within the connector followed up by some solder, especially when dealing with smaller gauge wiring. While you really don't need to both crimp and solder, doing so does give you a stronger physical connection between the wire and the connector. Flux the exposed conductor before beginning the soldering process. Use care to make sure that you leave no solder on the exterior of the barrel. If you do get a little solder on the mating parts of the connector, use a small file to remove it.

After you have inserted the contacts into the plastic housings, you will want to mate the red and the black sides together to form one unit. There are various methods you can use to make sure that the sides don't separate, from securing them with plastic ties to gluing them to using a ¼ inch long roller pin between the two housings to keep them from sliding apart. A tip to keeping the housings secured together is to slightly bend the pin slightly before inserting it into the channel. Some people have reported success using hot glue in the middle in place of the metal locking pin. Anderson also makes a more elegant locking mechanism. If you need additional security, use some Velcro or cable ties to hold the red and black sides together.

To remove a contact from the plastic housing, you can use a very small flat screwdriver to depress the spring, which in turn will allow the contact to be removed. You can also use the Anderson insertion/extraction tool as well. If you've never installed a Powerpole connector before, make sure to buy extras to practice with as you undoubtedly will make a couple of mistakes as you learn how to properly assemble them. You can purchase connectors from a number of sources including Powerwerx as well as West Mountain Radio. Pricing usually starts at under $1 per connector pair and drops based upon quantity purchased.

One thing worth mentioning is that variations have evolved regarding best practices of Powerpole assembly. Consult Anderson or your Powerpole vendor for detailed crimping and assembly instructions. Then, experiment with the information above and tweak it to work in a way that's best for your needs.

Putting It All Together

The next major step is to connect the DC power panel to the power supply. Typically, the DC power panel will have a fused high amperage connection designed to receive the 12 volt output from the power supply. Once you have done this, check your equipment's specifications to see what size fuses you should be using for each one of your connections. A typical scanner will use a one amp fuse. Always remember that it's a heck of a lot less costly to replace a fuse than to replace a radio!

Once the DC power panel is active, then it's simply a case of plugging in the connections from your various 12 volt capable gear into the DC power panel. You should label your connections for easy reference later on.

Making Connections to a Powerpole equipped DC Power Panel

If you have access to a 12 volt gel-cell battery, you can easily power your listening post during a power outage. Simply DISCONNECT your power supply from the DC POWER PANEL and connect the battery in its place. Viola! You are now operating under emergency power! When commercial power is restored disconnect the battery and reconnect the power supply and you're back in business. Devices do exist that will allow the battery to serve as a live backup to the power supply, but we will save that discussion for another time.

Miscellaneous Stuff

For more robust operating, consider making up some extra cable sets using your Anderson connectors. Make up a car adapter for quick mobile operation or make some extension cables for when operating of off your gel-cell battery. Once you get started, you'll quickly discover lots of ways to increase your listening post flexibility.

Conclusion

Converting your listening post, and perhaps even your vehicle, to Anderson Powerpoles does require a small investment in time and money. If you don't already have a regulated power supply, your total outlay of money may be over a couple of hundred dollars for everything. However, it is a worthwhile investment for anyone with a well stocked station composed of 12 volt equipment. No longer will you have to deal with a dozen power adapters on the floor or listen to their sometimes annoying AC hum.

Even if you are new to the scanning hobby and your novice shack is relatively modest at this time, odds are good that you will add more scanners to your listening post as your enthusiasm and involvement grow. You'll also be one step closer to being equipped for two way communications should you ever decide to get your amateur radio license or operate other two way radio equipment.

Just think - no more power bricks!

Further Reading

Anderson Power Products: http://www.andersonpower.com
Powerwerx: http://www.powerwerx.com
Saratoga Amateur Products: www.hamstop.com
West Mountain Radio: http://www.westmountainradio.com [*They have an excellent tutorial on how to assemble Anderson Powerpoles…*]

Troy Amatuer Radio Association
14th Anniversary Celebration
April 19, 2005
7:00 P.M.

Vehicle Insurance and the Radio Amateur

Alan Applegate (K0BG) on March 8, 2005
View comments about this article!

I am one of many who frequent this web site, and aid and abet those amateurs with questions about every facet of amateur radio. The facet I enjoy most is mobile operation, and I even support a web site dedicated to it. As a result of my eham.net activity and my web site, I get a lot of personal e-mail. Recently, one of those e-mails brought up an important issue we all have to deal with if we drive -- automobile insurance. If you operate from your personal vehicle, or from a rental vehicle, especially if the installation is temporary, the following information is of vital importance.

Automobile insurance is a competitive business. The comprehensive coverage, basic costs, liability issues, the scope of coverage, and to some extent the state you reside in effect your personal liability if you're involved in a crash or suffer a theft. No two insurance companies have the same ultimate coverage, although state and federal law set the minimum coverage. There are parts of the coverage, however, that are universal and distinctively apply to amateur radio, especially to temporary installations.

In the past, automobile insurance companies offered rider policies to cover communications equipment. It was commonly referred to as CB coverage. About eight years ago, State Farm (the largest automobile insurer in the US) and the other major insurers dropped this separate rider in lieu of covering such losses under the comprehensive portion of their policies and requisite deductible. It is this change in coverage we're most interested in.

The actual wording varies among insurance companies, but the common wording is as follows: Loss means, when used in this section, each direct and accidental loss of or damage to, your car, its equipment which is common to the use of your car as a vehicle, detachable living quarters attached or removed from your car for storage, or other items securely fixed in place as a permanent part of the body. You must have told us about the living quarters or other items before the loss and paid any extra premium required if any.

In case you missed it, the part which reads or other items securely fixed in place as a permanent part of the body is telltale to any amateur who uses a mag mounted antenna, or a transceiver (or HT) which is not permanently attached therein. Should they become dislodged and strike anyone or anything, your insurance company may not cover the loss if any. In the case of State Farm, this coverage extends the liability portion of your policy as well. In other words, you may not have insurance protection if it isn't permanently attached to your vehicle. With today's litigation-prone atmosphere, that fact could be a financial disaster in the making.

As I said earlier, there are differences in coverage between individual companies. I called my State Farm agent and ask the appropriate questions. I even posed the mag mounted antenna issue. My comprehensive coverage includes my amateur radio equipment, it doesn't require any additional premium, and my $100 deductible applies. I was told I should keep copies of the sales receipts (don't we all?) in case I had a loss. As for a mag mounted antenna loss, IT IS NOT covered, period!

You may not have State Farm insurance or live in New Mexico, so your coverage may be different. In any case, if you operate mobile radio in any guise, call you insurance agent and make sure you're covered against any loss. Remember the old adage; an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Alan Applegate, K0BG
www.k0bg.com

FRANKS FUNNIES
Captain BraVO

Long ago, there lived a Sailor named Captain Bravo. He was a manly man's man, who showed no fear when facing his enemies. One day, while sailing the Seven Seas, his lookout spotted a pirate ship. The crew became frantic! Captain Bravo bellowed, "Bring me my red shirt!"

The first mate quickly retrieved the captain's red shirt, and while wearing the brightly colored frock, the Captain led his crew into battle and defeated the pirates.

That evening, all the men sat around on the deck recounting the day's triumph. One of them asked the captain, "Sir, why did you call for your red shirt before battle?" The captain replied, "If I had been wounded in the attack, the shirt would not have shown my blood. Thus, you men would continue to fight, unafraid."

All of the men sat and marveled at both the courage and intelligence of such a manly man's man. As dawn came the next morning, the lookout spotted not one, not two, but TEN pirate ships approaching! The crew stared in worshipful silence at the captain and waited for his usual brilliant orders.

Captain Bravo gazed with steely eyes upon the vast armada arrayed against his ship, and without fear, turned and calmly shouted, "Get me my brown pants."

International Lighthouse Weekend

The 2004 International Lighthouse/Lightship Weekend took place over the weekend 21/22 August 2004 when over 380 lighthouse stations were established in 52 countries. A full list of stations with their details can be found at http://illw.net/2004_list.htm

This year the event will run from 0001 UTC 20 August until 2359 UTC 21August 2005. Guidelines for the International Lighthouse/Lightship Weekend 2005 can befound at http://illw.net/index.html
So come and join the fun and let us have over 400 stations at lighthouses or lightships.

73 Mike GM4SUC
Gm4suc@compuserve.com

League Files Opposition to BPL Reconsideration Petitions

ARRL Headquarters **March 24, 2005**
Newington CT

The ARRL has filed an Opposition to three petitions for recon - sideration in the broadband over power line (BPL) proceeding, ET Docket 04-37. The League's filing targets points raised in reconsideration petitions from Current Technologies LLC, the United Power Line Council (UPLC) and Amperion Inc. Each seeks reconsideration of certain aspects of the Report and Order (R&O) the FCC adopted last October, spelling out new Part 15 rules to govern BPL deploy -ment. In its Opposition, the ARRL says the FCC should not eliminate its requirement that BPL providers give 30 days' advance notice of service initiation, as Current, UPLC and Amperion have requested.

"Grant of the petitioners' request to eliminate the 30-day advance notice requirement would not only be antithetical to the Commission's goal of providing competitive, affordable and efficient broadband access;" the ARRL said, "it would also eliminate even the most minimal means for Amateur Radio licensees to be able to identify and contact the source of harmful BPL interference when it occurs."

Keeping the 30-day notification period in place, the ARRL argued, offers radio amateurs a chance to determine baseline ambient noise levels ahead of a BPL deployment and to be able to identify interference when it occurs and the extent to which the HF and low-VHF operating environment is degraded.

The ARRL also took issue with requests by Current and UPLC either to extend the transition period for certification of BPL equipment made, marketed or installed on or after July 7, 2006, or to drop it altogether. Either approach, the League contended, "is tantamount to an abdication of any requirement to implement any of the admittedly inadequate interference mitigation requirements in the Report and Order at all."

As the rule is written, the League's Opposition points out, "no BPL system placed in operation ever has to come into compliance with the interference requirements." The ARRL maintains that the FCC erred in its R&O by permitting the installation and operation of non-compliant equipment after the R&O's effective date.

The League Opposition also commented that the FCC "has not adopted any rules that will protect licensees in the Amateur Service from interference from BPL systems."

In its own Petition for Reconsideration in February, the ARRL asked the FCC to "reconsider, rescind and restudy" the October BPL R&O, calling the FCC's action to permit BPL "a gross policy mistake."

Amateur Radio Operators Needed for the Empire State Games

July 27th -- 31st 2005

Hi Folks, this is the event of events. See you there... Pete N2YJZ Spring is here and before you know it the Empire State Games will be here. The Hudson Valley has been chosen for the 2005 Games. From the 40,000 athletes who have tried out between 5,500 and 6,000 have been chosen to go for the gold at this year's event.

This is the first time that the Hudson Valley has hosted the Games. During the 25 years of the Games, the Amateur Radio community has always played an important part in the success of this event. Venues will be in Dutchess, Orange and Ulster counties at various sites.

Ham radio operators provide communication between the Games Headquartersand each of the 28 different sporting events for safety and emergencies.This is no small undertaking. It will require more than 100 operators to fill 65 to 70 shifts each day.

After working this event last year in Binghamton, I can tell you this isa wonderful opportunity. Volunteers get to see the best of New YorkState's best athletes giving it their all. If you have a favorite sport, we will do our best to make sure you will cover that event. Volunteers can also attend any event when they are not working a shift with their Empire State Games Radio Operator identification.

If you are willing to travel to the Hudson Valley and would be willing to work several days, housing will be provided. Housing is limited, socontact us early to be sure we can arrange a room for you. Games' housing will be on college campuses so you would need to bring you own sheets, pillows and towels.

This is a high profile event. The exposure for Ham Radio is excellent. So, check you calendar and please give us a hand to make this big success for all.

For more information or registration forms please contact:
Frank Stone KB2YUR ESG Local Communications Chair
Email: KB2YUR@yahoo.com (845) 883-5195

FCC Adopts Rule Changes for "Smart Radios"

NEWINGTON, CT, Mar 24, 2005--The FCC has released a *Report and Order* (*R&O*) on cognitive or "smart radio" systems. In its 42-page *R&O*, "Facilitating Opportunities for Flexible, Efficient, and Reliable Spectrum Use Employing Cognitive Radio Technologies" (ET Docket 03-108), the Commission declined to adopt any new regulations for Amateur Radio transceivers or for digital-to-analog (D/A) converters "at this time." The ARRL and the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council had commented earlier on the impracticality of incorporating hardware features to prevent out-of-band transmissions. The League and others also opposed regulating the marketing of high-speed D/A converters as burdensome, more costly to consumers and unnecessary because the devices don't pose a risk of interference.

"No parties have provided any information that shows that software programmable amateur transceivers or high-speed D/A converters present any significantly greater risk of interference to authorized radio services than hardware radios," the FCC concluded in its *R&O*. The Commission went on to note that,"certain unauthorized modifications of amateur transmitters are unlawful" and that it may revisit the issues "if misuse of such devices results in significant interference to authorized spectrum users."

In its December 2003 *Notice of Proposed Rule Making* (*NPRM*) leading up to this month's *R&O*, the FCC had proposed exempting manufactured software defined radios (SDRs) designed to operate solely in amateur bands from any mandatory declaration and certification requirements, provided the equipment incorporated hardware features to prevent operation outside of amateur bands. The Commission also had sought comment on the need to restrict the mass marketing of D/A converters "that could be diverted for use as radio transmitters."

In its comments last May, the ARRL sympathized with the Commission's concerns about out-of-band operation and expressed its appreciation for the FCC's "sensitivity to the need to encourage, rather than discourage, amateur experimentation and innovation." But, the League characterized the FCC's fears as "overstated."

The Commission said its *R&O*, released March 11, is intended to "facilitate continued growth in the deployment of radio equipment employing cognitive radio technologies and make possible a full realization of their potential benefits." The hope is that cognitive radios will allow more-efficient use of the radio spectrum.

"Given their technical and operational flexibility, smart radios make possible the improved use of vacant spectrum channels--that is, spectrum that may be available in a specific frequency range at a particular geographic location or during a particular period of time--spectrum that would otherwise go unused," the FCC explained in a *Public Notice*. "Smart radios have the technical capability to adapt their use of spectrum in response to information external to the radio."

ARRL participates in international bodies that are currently working toward establishing standards for SDRs and cognitive radios. These include International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Working Parties 8A (Land Mobile Service, excluding IMT-2000; Amateur and Amateur-Satellite service) and 8F (IMT-2000 and systems beyond IMT-2000).

CQ Introduces New DX Award

Hicksville,NY **March 14, 2005**

CQ Amateur Radio magazine today announced the introduction of a new operating award, the **"CQ DX Field Award,"** recognizing achievements in contacting at least 50 of the world's 324 10x20-degree "grid fields." This is the first of three new programs to be announced by *CQ* over the next three months with the goal of revitalizing ham radio's core activity of DXing, or contacting stations in faraway places.

The CQ DX Field Award is based on the Maiden-head Grid Locator system, already popular among VHF DXers and contesters, in which the world is divided, based on latitude and longitude, into 324 10x20 degree "fields" and each field is broken up into 100 1x2 degree "grid squares" or "locators." CQ DX Awards Manager Billy Williams, N4UF, has calculated that there are 177 fields with which the active ham stands a pretty good chance of making a contact, noting that many fields are in Antarctica, the Arctic or wholly within oceans.

Williams estimates that a ham who has achieved the basic levels of the traditional CQ DX Award program and/or the ARRL's DXCC program - both of which require confirmed contact with at least 100 DX "entities" - will probably also qualify for the basic CQ DX Field Award level of 50 confirmed fields. Endorsements will be issued for each additional 50 fields up to 150, then in increments of 25 fields to a final level of all 324 fields.

Contacts made on or after January 1, 1980 (the year in which the grid system was adopted for amateur radio use) will count toward the new award. Complete details and rules will be published in the April 2005 issue of CQ magazine and posted on the magazine's website at http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com. In addition, Williams has developed an online cross-reference guide for converting countries to fields. It will be accessible at http://home.earthlink.net/~bfwillia/gridfieldsx.html .

LEAGUE FILES OPPOSITION TO BPL RECONSIDERATION PETITIONS

Vol. 24 No. 13 **April 1, 2005**

The ARRL has filed an Opposition to three petitions for reconsideration in the broadband over power line (BPL) proceeding, ET Docket 04-37. The League targeted points raised in reconsideration petitions from Current Technologies LLC, the United Power Line Council (UPLC) and Amperion Inc. Each is seeking reconsideration of certain aspects of the Report and Order (R&O) the FCC adopted last October 14 that spell out new Part 15 rules to govern BPL deployment. In its Opposition, the ARRL says the FCC should not eliminate a requirement that BPL providers give 30 days' advance notice of service initiation, as Current, UPLC and Amperion have requested.

"Grant of the petitioners' request to eliminate the 30-day advance notice requirement would not only be antithetical to the Commission's goal of providing competitive, affordable and efficient broadband access;" the ARRL said, "it would also eliminate even the most minimal means for Amateur Radio licensees to be able to identify and contact the source of harmful BPL interference when it occurs."

Current, UPLC and Amperion contended in their petitions that the 30-day rule forces BPL providers to tip their hands to their competition. The League charged that the petitioners were, in effect, asking the Commission "to protect them by regulatory means from competition in broadband delivery."

Keeping the 30-day notification period in place, the ARRL argued, offers radio amateurs a chance to determine baseline ambient noise levels ahead of a BPL deployment and to be able to identify interference when it occurs and the extent to which the HF and low-VHF operating environment is degraded.

The ARRL also took issue with requests by Current and UPLC either to extend the transition period for certification of BPL equipment made, marketed or installed on or after July 7, 2006, or to drop it altogether. Either approach, the League contended, "is tantamount to an abdication of any requirement to implement any of the admittedly inadequate interference mitigation requirements in the Report and Order at all."As the rule is written, the League's Opposition points out, "no BPL system placed in operation ever has to come into compliance with the interference requirements." The ARRL maintains that the FCC erred in its R&O by permitting the installation and operation of non-compliant equipment after the R&O's effective date.

"The rule, as it now stands, actually encourages the installation of systems incorporating non-compliant equipment which creates harmful interference over the next 18 months," the ARRL said. Based on actual interference cases, the ARRL continued, "any reasonable analysis of BPL leads to the conclusion that the rules adopted in the Report and Order are woefully inadequate in terms of interference prevention."

Noting that Current's equipment already excludes all amateur allocations but 60 meters, the League said everyone would be better served if the FCC had required BPL providers to avoid Amateur Radio spectrum altogether--or if they would so voluntarily

The ARRL also took the FCC to task with respect to how it's dealt with the BPL initiative and the industry itself. "The extent to which spectrum-polluting BPL systems have been accommodated by a Commission with its collective head in the sand about interference is shameful and an abdication of duty," the League's Opposition concludes. "To further deregulate this ill-advised polluting technology would, in this context, be unconscionable."

FT5XO Kerguelen Island DXpedition logs nearly 68,000 contacts

Apr 7, 2005 -- The recent FT5XO Kerguelen Island DXpedition racked up 67,954 QSOs during its 11-plus days of operation in late March. Located in the subantarctic region of the Indian Ocean, Kerguelen (IOTA AF-048)--also known as "Desolation Island"--is ranked as the 13th most-wanted DXCC entity worldwide and the 10th most-wanted in the US. The multinational Microlite Penguins DXpedition Team--AG9A, GI0NWG, HB9ASZ, M0DXR, N6MZ, N0TT, SP5XVY, VE3EJ, VK6DXI, W3WL, W7EW and 9V1YC--reports that 68 percent of the contacts were made on CW--many of them on 40 and 30 meters--while 29 percent were on SSB and 3 percent on RTTY. European DXers were the primary beneficiaries, accounting for slightly more than one-half of the FT5XO contacts made. Japan followed with 21 percent, and the US at 17 percent. The operation took place from an abandoned whaling station, Port Jeanne d'Arc, close to the shore and with good takeoffs in most directions. Weather during the team's stay ran the gamut from strong wind, rain and sleet to heavy snow. Static from snowstorms produced fierce QRN and forced the operation to shut down until it abated. The DXpedition was organized and sponsored by the Northern California DX Foundation. QSL FT5XO via VE3XN.--*George Fremin* III, K5TR

W

2ND ANNUAL HAMFEST

East Greenbush

W2EGB

Amateur Radio Association

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Phillips Road Firehouse

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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.

Texas BPL Pilot Project Shuts Down, League Withdraws Complaint

NEWINGTON, CT, Mar 30, 2005--An Irving, Texas, BPL pilot project that was the target of an ARRL complaint two weeks earlier has shut down and removed its equipment. In mid-March, the League called on the FCC to shut down the system and issue fines for causing harmful interference to Amateur Radio communications. The ARRL's March 15 filing to the FCC's Enforcement Bureau, its Office of Engineering and Technology, system operator TXU and equipment manufacturer Amperion supported a complaint from ARRL member and NorthTexas Section BPL Task Force Chair Jory McIntosh, KJ5RM, who regularly commutes through the BPL test zone in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. "I just got back from reviewing the site and can confirm that the BPL installation in Irving, Texas, has been removed and is no longer operating," McIntosh told ARRL this week. "Things are so quiet you can hear a pin drop. Definitely quite a change!" He said when the system was running, interference in its vicinity was 20 dB over S9 or stronger on all amateur bands from 40 through 6 meters.

The ARRL became involved after FCC failed to respond to a formal complaint McIntosh filed last fall. ARRL Laboratory Manager Ed Hare, W1RFI, also took measurements at the Texas site that verified McIntosh's observations. ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, thanked McIntosh for his help in bringing the situation to a head. "I hope your example inspires other amateurs facing similar situations to get involved," Sumner added. On the basis of McIntosh's report, the ARRL this week canceled its complaint to the FCC seeking the system's shutdown and fines for the operator. "ARRL therefore withdraws its complaint with respect to the TXU/Amperion site and requests that the Commission turn its attention to the remainder of the BPL sites which are actively causing interference to radio amateurs, including Briarcliff Manor, New York," ARRL General Counsel Chris Imlay, W3KD, wrote the Commission.

There's been no word from TXU as to its reasons for shutting down the system and removing the equipment. The test report the League included with its complaint pointed out that the interference was not confined to Amateur Radio spectrum but included additional HF spectrum. The ARRL said the system even failed to protect many of the bands that the FCC's new BPL rules require to be notched.

The Irving BPL test site is the third using Amperion BPL equipment to shut down following complaints from Amateur Radio operators. In Cedar Rapids, Iowa, last June, Alliant Energy cut short its BPL "evaluation system" after the utility and Amperion were unable to resolve ongoing HF interference to amateurs. In the Raleigh, North Carolina, area last October, Progress Energy Corporation shut down Phase II of its BPL field trial after pronouncing the test a success.

Despite an FCC inspection report to the contrary, local amateurs said Progress and Amperion had only limited success in mitigating interference on amateur frequencies in that trial. While initially saying it had no plans for a large-scale commercial rollout of BPL in its service areas, Progress later backed away from that statement, contained in a memorandum announcing the shutdown.

The ARRL formally supported Amateur Radio complaints in Iowa and North Carolina.

Energy East--a cooperative of New York State Electric & Gas and Rochester Gas & Electric--decided last summer against deploying BPL in its Western New York service area. It reportedly based its decision in large part on the high levels of radio frequency interference that an engineer and company officials observed during a visit to Penn Yan.

Last October, a BPL field trial in Menlo Park, California, where now-former FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell earlier had extolled the technology's virtues, was aborted before getting very far off the ground. The BPL demonstration was co-sponsored by Pacific Gas and Electric Company and AT&T, which said it decided to direct its business energies elsewhere.

In January, the Borough of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, decided against plans to offer broadband Internet service via BPL. The Cumberland Valley Amateur Radio Club (CVARC) spearheaded ham radio opposition to the plan in the eastern Pennsylvania community of some 17,000 residents through an informational campaign.

W

The Magic Band Six Meter Fun

Editors Note: A few weeks back, myself and Mr. Bill cornered our Pal, Chris – N2NEH and asked him if he had any interest in writing a column about 6 meters for our humble little rag. This will be the first installment of Chris' articles and we hope that everyone will enjoy them and do a little bit of experimentation on 6 meters.

Ken,
Thanks for the invite to make a few comments about 6 Meters for the TARA Newsletter. As you know, I'm one of "those 6 Meter nuts" one hears about. In fact, when I successfully re-tested to revive my Ham Ticket in 1991, the first thing I did was get right back on 6M with a Kenwood TS-60 in to a home-brew 6M vertical and a 6M home-brew full wave loop. Mr Bill had asked if it's hard to get on 6M and is there anything going on on 6M here in the Capital District.

The first one is easy...all you need is a 6M radio of any type and an antenna. I know that these are not revelations to too many people, but it really is that easy. If you don't have a 6M rig and you have a few bucks that need spending, MFJ makes an FM 6M radio for around $250 and a 6M SSB radio for about the same price. I've owned both and can say that they both work well with a limited RF output. In fact, I used my MFJ 9406 SSB 6M radio in England with rather good results. For a few dollars more, Ranger makes its model 5054 all mode 6M radio with 25 watts PEP. I used one of these little Beasties as a back pack portable and as my travel radio in Europe. I was really impressed with this radio...now I understand that Ranger is making a 100 watt version.

Another good source for 6M radios is Hamfests and even the TNT Trader Net. You never know what you'll find at either of these places. Of course, if you have the moola, you can buy any one of a dozen new radios, which have HF/6M and so on. I have a Yaesu FT-847 at home and love it. In my car I run a Yaesu Ft-857...love that one too. However, these are not starter radios.

I do not claim to be an antenna expert....but I do know what I've had success with in the home brew department. First of all, for 6M FM, a 1/2 wave antenna is about 9 ft...a 1/4 wave about 4 1/2 ft.....practical experience says to start around 54" for a 1/4 wave for vertical operation. 54" might ring a bell….It's 5/8 wave for 2M.

So if you have one of those Radio Shack 5/8 wave 2M mobile antennas, you also have a 1/4 wave 6M antenna too. In fact, most 5/8wave 2M vertical antennas work on the FM part of 6M. If you're running a 6M whip antenna inside and have it on a file cabinet or an old wash tub, or a refrigerator...that's all the counter poise you'll need. If you're paranoid about these counter poise things, just cut a piece of wire to 54' and attach it to the ground lug of your radio. For 6M SSB operation, you can't beat the 6M dipole (56" X 56"). You can even feed it directly with coax and it will work fine as long as you don't try to make it glow with RF. I do suggest the Budwig center connector for this application. Another great 6M SSB antenna is the full wave loop. Its about 20' and you can feed it directly or through a 1/4 wave 75 ohm transformer. I have a 6M full wave loop in my attic and it works very well. In fact, I've worked in to Europe with it @ 100 watts when 6M was really open a few years ago. You really might be surprised by this, but your standard HF tuner will work after a fashion on 6M too. Generally you'll need a lot of Inductance on the setting. Just tune like you usually would for any application. If you're running a bit of power, you might have to throttle back a bit to get a match. However, many times with dipoles and loops you won't need a tuner. Most of the 6M activity here in the capital District centers around 50.400 AM and 52.525 FM simplex and FM repeaters. Check out 50.400 every night about 1900 hrs local for a net there. 52.525 is the FM call frequency and we also have repeaters on 53.57(pl100), 53.41(pl100), and 53.21(pl 162.2). There is some 6M activity on SSB which centers on 50.125.

When the Spring Es season kicks in, you will be amazed what 6M can do. If you have any questions about this info, please feel free to E-mail me at: n2neh@arrl.net . Also, check out www.uksmg.org . This address will take you to one of the premier 6M web-sites in the world.

Best Regards,
Chris N2NEH

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THE TARA NEWS

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