



# THE TARA NEWS

Affiliate of the American Radio Relay League

Vol 20, Issue 1



October 2010

## NOT NEWS!

**Karen Smith, KS2O,  
Elected TARA President**  
Craig Wood, W2XAD,  
Voted in as Vice-President

During the June 2010 meeting a not so stunning turn of events occurred when Karen Smith, KS2O of Watervliet, NY was elected president of the Troy Amateur Radio Association succeeding Bill "Mr. Bill" Eddy, NY2U. Bill, who held the post of president of TARA until health issues forced him out of any possibility of continuing his duties as president, is now in convalescence and is expected back on the air hopefully in the near future.



Craig Wood, W2XAD, of Schenectady NY is now vice-president of the club. Beth Whiting, KC2BSC, was also elected as the club's new secretary replacing Marilyn Davis, KB2JZI, who served several years in that post. Howie Cummings, N2HIC, continues as treasurer. The board members are Ken Davis, KB2KFV

(\*12\*), Mike Styne, KC2JCJ (\*12\*), Ken Smith, WA2TQK (\*12\*), Roy Warner, N2OWC (\*11\*) and Steve Van Sickle, WB2HPR (\*11\*).

*\*denotes term expiration. The officers serve for one year.*

## T.A.R.A. "OCTOBERFEST" COMING UP ON OCTOBER 19<sup>th</sup>

**Our Annual Indoor Hamfest**

We want to remind everyone that we are gearing up for our third annual TARA "Octoberfest" on October

19, 2010 which is free for all!!!! The table space is free but sellers have to let us know if you want to reserve a table as the number of tables available is limited.



You can bring in any ham or computer related items to sell or swap!

There will be a door prize!!!! And there will be fresh hot coffee and refreshments...all free!

Please let Karen, KS20, know if you want to reserve a table and let her know if you plan to

attend this "Octoberfest". She needs to know that we have enough chairs and refreshments to go around to everyone.

We still have plenty of tables left for anyone who is interested in selling items.

Let's get the word out and let's have a good time!

## STEVE BOZAK, WB2IQU, WINS LANDMARK CASE INVOLVING USE OF HAND HELD RADIOS WHILE DRIVING

Mobile Ham Radio Operators  
Applaud Bozak's Victory

Courtesy of The Record (Dave Canfield)

TROY — In a win for enthusiasts of amateur radio technology, a City Court judge tossed out a contentious traffic ticket issued to a Clifton Park man that sparked an outcry over the airwaves.



*Judge Matthew Turner*

Steve Bozak's ticket for talking on a cell phone while driving, which was issued on Hoosick Street on May 30 as Bozak drove while speaking with others over a so-called "ham" radio, was dismissed by Judge Matthew Turner on Sept. 8. Turner agreed with the arguments of Bozak's attorney that the device was not, in fact, a cell phone.

Citing Federal Communications Commission definitions, Turner wrote in his decision that the radios, which require a user to be licensed by

the federal government, are in fact a private radio service and not the commercial one referred to in New York's vehicle and traffic law.

Bozak, a radio enthusiast for decades who owns an antenna business, had intended on fighting the ticket — which was punishable by a \$100 fine and \$50 surcharge — all the way to the end. At his first court appearance, he declined an offer to plead to a lesser parking ticket.

"I politely told him 'No, thank you,'" Bozak said. "I had every intention of just clearing this up, because it's not a cell phone. So many of the ham operators are doing the same thing."

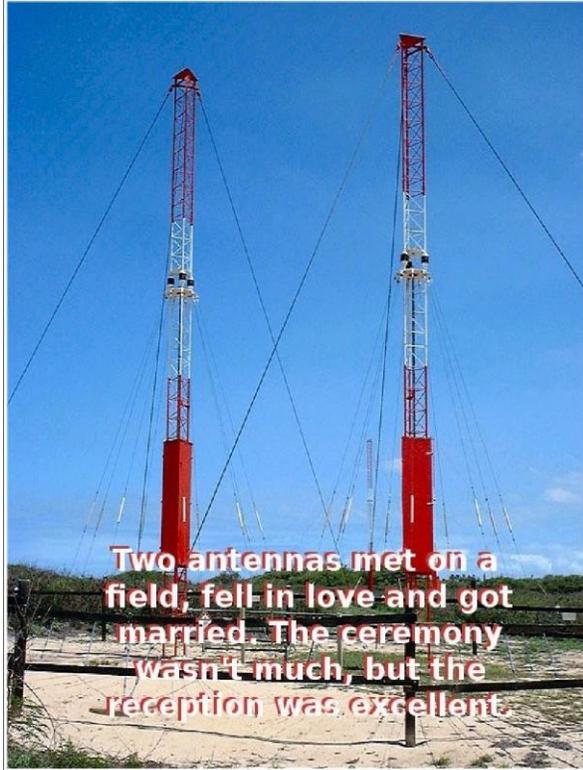
When news of his ticket hit the airwaves, many radio users expressed outrage that could be heard by anyone tuning in to the right scanner frequency. Since he's shared his victory, Bozak said he's gotten e-mails from across the country from people thanking him for "standing up for what is right."

Many of the hobbyists have the radios in their vehicles, Bozak said, and some build their own. They broadcast over the same airwaves that emergency personnel use to communicate with dispatchers, and in a similar fashion.

Bozak said he thinks more law enforcement personnel are becoming aware of the laws surrounding the devices. Just days ago, he said, a friend of his was pulled over while talking of his radio.

"As soon as he said it was a ham radio, an amateur radio, they let him go," Bozak said. "I think they've been politely educated."

The win in traffic court is also changing the dynamics of a yearly party Bozak hosts for other radio enthusiasts. This year's party will be a particularly celebratory one, he said, to mark "a big day forward for us."



Two antennas met on a field, fell in love and got married. The ceremony wasn't much, but the reception was excellent.

## EARL BULL, KB2SLE (SK)

*Editor's note: Earl was a long time and valued member of the Troy Amateur Radio Association. His graveled voice will be missed by all who heard him on our repeater. Below is from his obituary.*

Earl A. Bull, 90, died Friday, July 30, 2010 at his home. He was the beloved husband of Emma Bachteler Bull. He was proprietor and manager of Trojan Sign Displays of Troy and Watervliet for 22 years, retiring in 1976. Mr. Bull was a member of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Latham, where he was a former vestryman. He was a life member of the Evening Star Masonic Lodge #75 F&AM, Latham and was past trustee of the Latham Masonic Temple Association. **An avid ham radio operator (KB2SLE), he was a member of the Troy Amateur Radio Association, East Greenbush Radio Club, Schenectady**

**Radio Club and the Zephyrhills Amateur Radio Corporation in Florida. He also enjoyed woodworking and was proud of his carousel horse.**

## DIGIPUP

### A Linux Live CD for Amateur Radio

*Editor's note: The following article is by Joe Barr for linux.com and although as yet not of an use by this editor is published knowing it may be of use to our readership.*

Puppy Linux is a lightweight live Linux distribution that you can boot and run from a CD, USB stick, or DVD. One of its features is the ability to create specialized "pups" -- new versions of Puppy Linux geared toward a specific purpose. Digipup is one such example, with a focus on amateur radio. I spun it up, and found Digipup to be a great way to check out amateur radio utilities for Linux.

My test machine was an Acer AST-180 with a dual-core Athlon 4000 and a gigabyte of DRAM. When booting, I was offered a choice of video servers: X.org or the smaller, less advanced, but more nimble, xvesa. X.org simplified my choice by refusing to load, so I chose xvesa instead. It performed well; I was surprised at the speed of the GUI. Slow speed is the curse of all live versions of Linux, but Digipup almost made me forget that I was booting from a CD.

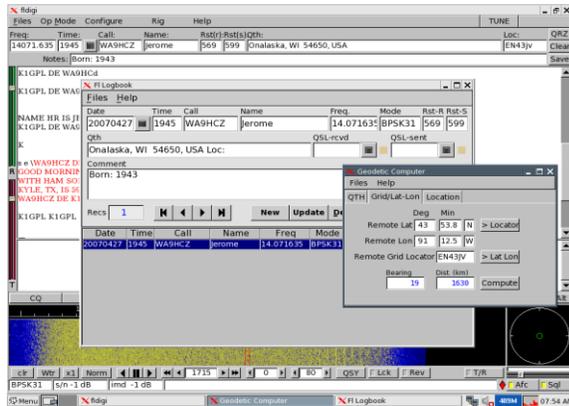
Digipup contains three of Dave Freese's (W1HKJ) most popular free software offerings for amateur radio: Fldigi, which does a great job on digital sound card modes like PSK, RTTY, MFSK, and others; Fl\_logbook, a small, fast, efficient logging program to record your contacts; and Geoid, which computes the bearing and distance between sites using either latitude and longitude or Maidenhead grid locators.

Freese also makes these programs available as

"pet" files, which is the packaging scheme used by Puppy Linux, so if you already have a Puppy live CD, you can simply download the pets and then remaster the ISO using his [instructions](#).

## Fldigi

[Fldigi](#) allows you to connect your computer to your transceiver and use its sound card to send and receive digital signals like PSK31, RTTY,



MFSK, Olivia, CW and others. For a complete rundown on this program, see the [review](#) we did a few months ago.

You'll need to configure Fldigi completely, from font to sound card to operator demographics. Probably the most important configuration item will be sound, but if you don't pick a valid font, you won't see anything you send or receive. To get your sound level set correctly, click on Menu -> Multimedia -> Zmixer and you will be able to use the Tune function in Fldigi while adjusting the volume for peak sound without any ALC deflection.

As with the newer versions of Fldigi, you have your choice of communicating with your rig using either the traditional Hamlib interface or Fldigi's own RigCAT. For some reason, I had to revert to Hamlib in order to get communications between the rig and the computer working, though I normally use RigCAT.

[Fl logbook](#) is a fast, lightweight, no-frills logger. You can use it manually, or it can work in conjunction with the Save button on

*Fldigi*, which will populate the data fields on a new contact record with the data shown in its top panel, allowing you to add a contact to your log with just a single click of a button.

Fl\_logbook also allows you to import, export, or merge log files in ADIF, MultiPSK (LO), MultiPSK (TXT), or its own .lgb format. I exported the records from [XLog](#) in ADIF format in order to import them into Fl\_logbook.

## Geoid

The third application, [Geoid](#), is a simple calculator that computes the distance between stations and shows the bearing from one to another. The bearing is helpful when you are working a rare DX call and you're not sure toward which direction to point your antenna. As you can see from this screen shot, which shows all three apps at once, one station I contacted while using Digipup is located along a bearing 19 degrees from true north from me, and is approximately 1,630 kilometers away.

## Conclusion

With Digipup, you can verify compatibility with your amateur radio rig, your logs, and your inner nature without going to the trouble of installing a Linux distribution to do so. Just plop Digipup in your CD drive, boot the system, and there you are



*ANY ROOM FOR A DRIVER??*



## HAM RADIO EMERGENCY POWER PORTABLE, WIND, SOLAR AND EMERGENCY GENERATORS BUYER'S GUIDE



*The following is an excerpt from an article entitled **Residential Standby Systems** off the HamUniverse website. The full article is at*

*at <http://www.hamuniverse.com/emergencygenerators.html>*

**E**mergency home and ham shack standby [Generators](#) can automatically restore power to

your house in about 20 seconds. When the power goes out, the generator automatically starts if it is auto starting and continues to run until power is restored or you run out of fuel. You can choose a generator that delivers enough power for the entire house (including air conditioning or at least heat during the winter) or go with a smaller unit and power a few selected circuits, like the ham equipment, refrigerator, sump pump, furnace fan or heat and several lights for basic survival plus your ham equipment under emergency power situations. It all depends on your budget and how well prepared you want to be and in the very worst situation, how long you want to live!

These all-weather [Generators](#) are installed outside the home and are wired through an automatic transfer switch usually sold separately to the main electrical panel. The use of an automatic transfer switch is required when generators are connected to home wiring.

Home standby systems can be fueled by natural gas, LP gas, diesel fuel or gasoline. Most Amateur Radio operators use the gasoline models. Many models can be connected to the home's natural gas line, eliminating the need to fill fuel tanks. Standby emergency power system capacities range from about 6,000 Watts up to 40,000 Watts and more, and start automatically-even if you are not home.

**Depending on the fuel supply**, and that is the critical phrase here, size of [Generators](#) , and the power generated, you can run for hours, days or even weeks! Your running time all depends on the amount of fuel you have either on hand or access to. Even if fuel is out there somewhere, can you get to it?

Plan on enough fuel to last under worst case emergency situations, but how do you plan the unknown? If fuel can not be obtained, then no fuel powered generator will run on air.