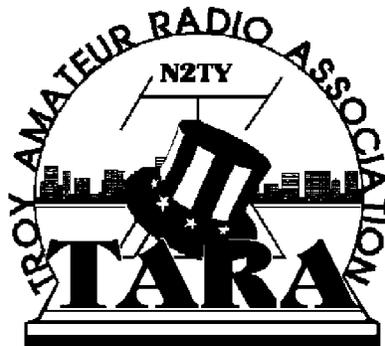


Season's Greetings!

TARA NEWS



"The Home of Uncle Sam"



Merry Christmas

Volume 9 Number 12 • A Monthly Publication of the Troy Amateur Radio Association, Inc. • December, 1998

Attention!

TARA's web site now offers you the TARA NEWS for your viewing or downloading. Come check it out at our new address!

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

Inside this Issue:

- ◆ **Field Day 1999** - *preparations continue*
- ◆ **ARRL News** - *more news on proposed licensing changes*
- ◆ **Holiday Raffle** - *get your tickets now*
- ◆ **VHF Contest** - *rules, etc.*
- ◆ **Happy New Year!!**

Annual Holiday Party

We'd like encourage each of you to please attend this month's Annual Holiday Party in Green Island, on December 15, 1998.

As usual we'll meet at the Green Island Municipal Center, at the junction of Green Street and Hudson Avenue. Starting time will be around 7:00 PM.

As a result of the special meeting there will be no regular business meeting this month.

Karen, KB2UUC, will be handling all of the food and refreshments for this party and she could use a few helping hands. If you'd like to volunteer your services to help set things up, or if you'd like to bring a few goodies, she would like to hear from you.

Karen Smith, KB2UUC
PHONE: 273-6594

Handi-Ham Night

On December 17, 1998, starting at 8:00 PM, TARA will again sponsor its Annual TNT Trader -- Handi-Ham Net. This very special net will be held on the club's 145.17/444.225 MHz repeaters.

The purpose of this net is to raise as much money as possible for the Courage Handi-Ham System. And I hope you know, too, that your generous gifts to Courage HANDI-HAMS bring a great sense of accomplishment, achievement and joy to people with disabilities.

Please do your part by joining us. Last year we raised \$1,000 on behalf of Capital District Amateurs, with over 225 check-ins. If we're going to beat this record, we're going to need your support!

Local DX'er/Contestor Retires the Key, K2SIG Rebuilds Station

A diffident sign that times are changing on the local HF scene became evident on the evening of December 7th, when K2SIG, HF contestor/DX'er announced his plans to build his new RTTY station.

Yep, it's true, John, K2SIG, has confirmed for the very first time that he'll be switching his modes of operation from SBB and CW, to RTTY. As he spoke you couldn't help but notice the exhilaration in his voice once he started speaking about RTTY. John was quick to credit Ernie Mills, WM2U, for opening his eyes to the wonderful world of RTTY communications. He explained how he was totally enthralled with this digital mode after working the RTTY keyboard at last year's Albany ARA Field Day. "I knew I was hooked when I heard those RTTY tones resonating around the Field Day site," said John.

Those of us that have known John, K2SIG, over the year's were left literally stunned by his announcement, on the 145.17 MHz repeater. "I never expected John to utter those words, and I'm still quite taken back," said Skip, KE2XF.

Throughout the evening John expounded at great length how he personally felt about SSB operations and the Morse Code. In addition John openly expressed his difficulty of copying Morse Code at 13 WPM. "It's time to retire the paddles, I've lost my edge. I've been in this hobby for a long time now and nothing means more to me right now than getting an operational station on RTTY. I just can't explain the feeling I get every time I think of busting my first 20 Meter pileup," said an emotional John.

Over the months to come, John has ambitious plans of installing a new 100' tower, with possibly 3 stacked TH7DX beams. Plus he assured us that there will be plenty of room on this new tower installation for several VHF/UHF arrays. I guess it looks like John is gearing up for the upcoming VHF/UHF season!

Editor's Note: We wish John the very best on his new endeavor. We think he'll make a wonderful addition to the digital operators of the Capital District.

Field Day '99 Preparations Continue

by Tom Remmert, N2TR - Field Day Chairman

During my recent visit to Troy, Mr. Bill and I took a little road trip to explore some sites for Field Day. No decision has been made to abandon our site at Frear Park, but we decided to take a look at some alternatives.

We looked at a couple of sites on the RPI campus. The first one is an athletic field in the middle of the campus (below 15th Street). This site is surrounded by buildings and has some nice high light towers around it. The towers have platforms at the top for maintaining the lights. These could be good antenna supports. Hopefully, a nearby building can be used for bathrooms, etc.

The second site on the RPI campus is at the east end of the campus somewhere up behind the Field House. It's near the present W2SZ radio shack. Again, it's an athletic field with some light towers around it. This site is at a higher elevation than the other site, but this would only help with VHF/UHF.

The first RPI site is a little more "out of the public eye" and thus, possibly more secure. Since it's in the middle of the campus, there would probably be more security patrols.

We also looked at Prospect Park. There are some nice sites here with good elevations and panoramic views. Access to bathrooms and security may be issues here.

Another site we visited was the state park at Peebles Island. There is a pavilion here which can be reserved. There are scenic views of the Hudson River and a fishing pier. The only downside is a rather low elevation. It's above Lock 1, so it's not quite at sea level. There are numerous trees for supporting wire antennas. Even if we don't use this for Field Day, it will be a great site for a summer meeting and/or a special event station.

The last site we looked at was the W2VS contest site. This site is still under construction, however, as long as the bathrooms are functioning by Field Day, this is a possibility. There is good elevation, some nice scenery and rumors of a BIG tower to be installed here.

If you have any other ideas for sites, please let me know. Our main concerns are antenna supports, bathrooms, security and safety.

It looks like we'll have mostly club owned equipment for use at Field Day. We should have three club owned TS-440 radios for use on HF. Hollings is working on

acquiring some VHF/UHF equipment. We may need some volunteers to build some keyers, headphone volume control boxes, etc.

We have some antennas that need to be checked out. A project for next April or May will be to assemble the HF tri-band antenna, check it out and make any necessary repairs. We have a small crank-up tower that can be used for this. This will have to be a group effort.

Please feel free to volunteer for any of these projects, even if you're not familiar with the task at hand. Remember, one of our purposes is education. Want to learn about HF antennas? Help us build or repair one! The same goes for building keyers, etc.

As most of you know, there are always several ways to get "bonus points" during Field Day. Most of the bonuses are worth 100 points (that's the equivalent of 50 CW contacts or 100 SSB contacts!). I would like someone to volunteer to take charge of the bonus points. You don't have to actually perform all the tasks, but you will be responsible for coordinating the effort. Some, such as public relations are easy, all you have to do is send out a press release to qualify. Others, such as making a satellite contact, are a little more difficult. This is a case where you would have to coordinate with a satellite guru and the chairpersons of the 10 meter and/or 15 meter stations.

We'll also be looking for a chairperson for each of the HF stations, including the novice station. We've already volunteered Hollings for VHF/UHF.

Til next month (oops, next YEAR) 73 and have fun contesting.

CQ FD
de N2TY
Field Day 1999
June 24-25, 1999

Amateur Radio Class

Ken Davis, KB2KFV, reports that everything is going extremely well with the Amateur Radio class in Green Island. This class began on October 22 and there are 11 enrolled in this class. This is the first class in 4 years that has included Morse Code training.

Instructors: KB2KFV, K2EP, WB2ZCM, W2STJ, N2TJM, N2PZP, KF2WA, AB2FO, & N2ZQF

Get Well N2EDN

One of the TARA's gang is in Boston recuperating from a recent illness. Family members on Thursday (12/10) reported that Jim might be able to come home for the holidays, if everything goes well. Please send Jim a get-well-card today!

James E. Walker, N2EDN
662 Myrtle Avenue
Albany, New York 12208

Win a 25" Color TV

TARA will begin its holiday raffle at the November meeting. This new raffle will raise funds to purchase VHF/UHF equipment to be used during Field Day or emergencies.

The Board of Directors at the November meeting approved this raffle which was presented by Hollins, N2YQW.

In addition to drafting up this new raffle Hollins, N2YQW, will head up this endeavor.

Please come join us at our next meeting and pick up a few tickets to sell. Drawing for this raffle will take place at our January meeting.

- 1st Place...25" Zenith Color TV
- 2nd Place...Entertainment Ultimate
- 3rd...A Pair of Dinner Tickets

TICKETS -- \$2.00 each or 5 for \$5.00!
Contact: Hollins, N2YQW

Shareware Picks of the Month

Christmas Icons Vol. 2

A collection of 41 .ico files that brighten your desktop with the holiday spirit. Included are decorations, candles, Frosty the Snowman, Santa, and more.

<http://www.pcworld.com/r/shw/1%2C2087%2C4286%2C00.html>

Vari-Mail

Spice up your e-mail messages with any of these 135 stationery samples, holiday themes for Christmas and Valentine's Day, and even one of the 3500 quotations from the built-in library.

<http://www.pcworld.com/r/shw/1%2C2087%2C5584%2C00.html>

WebTwin

Load an HTML file and quickly convert it to a standard Windows help file that you can use to add help text to any of your program files. The Help Compiler is already built in, so you don't need any additional software to use WebTwin.

<http://www.pcworld.com/r/shw/1%2C2087%2C5162%2C00.html>

Editor's Note:

Please try out these top shareware picks of the month. If you like them, let us know and we'll dig up a few more.



FCC PULLS GENERAL UPGRADE

The FCC has pulled back a General Class upgrade from a Kentucky ham because it says the Physician's Certification used to obtain a Morse code testing waiver "is not a valid document." The FCC notified Richard C. Lalone II, KC5GAX, of Fort Campbell, Kentucky, of its action by certified mail November 18. But the Commission stopped short of revoking his license or levying a fine.

An FCC official said that Lalone upgraded at a test session in January 1997. "The doctor's certificate was apparently forged," he said. "The doctor confirmed that he didn't sign it. It wasn't the VEC's fault." The FCC official said Lalone had "let it slip" to another amateur that the certificate was forged and that Lalone failed to answer correspondence from the FCC inquiring into the matter.

A former Texas resident, Lalone, 34, has been told he may no longer operate under General class privileges, his amateur privileges have been returned to Tech Plus, and he has been issued a new license document. The FCC said Lalone's privileges reverted to Tech Plus as of November 23.

The FCC advised Lalone that while it was not pursuing a fine at this time, he could run into problems later if he decides to renew his ticket or to upgrade. At that point, the Commission said, it might later decide to designate the issue for a hearing before an administrative law judge, "in order for the Commission to determine what, if any, enforcement action should be taken and what action to take on the application."

Rest-In-Peace

Jeffrey M. Tankersley
November 27, 1998
Watervliet, NY

We're all deeply saddened to hear of the untimely passing of Jeffrey M. Tankersley, son of William Tankersley, KC2BJC, and Joyce Christopher. Jeffrey was just 15 years old and lived in Watervliet with his mother.

*During the time of sorrow
we learn how much our
friends mean to us.*

*Your thoughtful kindness
will always be treasured
by the family.*

Bill, KC2BJC & Bev, KC2BYL

Dear Bill and TARA

*Thank you for the enrollment you
sent for Dad. Your expression of
caring and support is truly
appreciated.*

*Best
Ernie and Kathy Popp
and
Family*

*Perhaps you sent a lovely card
or sat quietly in a chair.*

*Perhaps you sent a funeral spray
if so, we saw it there.*

*Perhaps you spoke the kindest words,
as any friend could say.*

*Perhaps you were not there at all,
just thought of us that day.*

*Whatever you did to console our hearts
we thank you so much whatever the part.*

*The family of
Ernst F. Popp*

Editor's Note: The above card was received from Ernie Popp, K2EP, President of Albany ARA



ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes

Reminder: Let's all remember that Tom, N2TR, asked all of us to try some kind of a contest between now and Field Day '99. Well, here is the perfect opportunity for a lot of us to get our feet wet. If you need any further assistance, please contact our VHF/UHF Contesting Chairman, Gerald Murray, WA2IWW.

- 1) **Object:** To work as many amateur stations in as many different 2 degrees X 1 degree grid squares as possible using authorized frequencies above 50 MHz. Foreign stations work W/VE amateurs only.
- 2) **Contest Period:** Begins 1900 UTC Saturday, January 16 and ends at 0400 UTC Monday, January 17.

3) **Categories:**

(A) Single Operator: One person performs all operating and logging functions.

(1) Multiband.

(2) Single Band: Single-band entries on 50, 144, 222, 432, 902, 1296 and 2304-and-up categories will be recognized both in QST score listings and in awards offered. Contacts may be made on any and all bands without jeopardizing single-band entry status. Such additional contacts are encouraged and should be reported.

(B) Single Operator, QRP Portable: Run 10-W output or less using a portable power source from a portable location. The intent of this rule is to encourage operation from "remote" locations, not to have home or fixed stations run low power.

(C) Rover: One or two operators of a single station that moves among two or more grid squares during the course of the contest. A rover vehicle may transport only one station using a single call sign; thus a rover may not operate with multiple call signs under the family rule 7 (C). Rover vehicles must transport all the equipment, power supplies, and antennas used at each operating site. This rule is not intended to prevent an operator from using the same call sign to submit separate logs for single operator (fixed station) and rover entries. Rovers sign "rover" on phone and /R on CW after their call sign. All Rovers are encouraged to adopt operating practices that allow as many stations as possible to contact them. Rovers entering club competition must indicate the grid squares where operating sites were within their club's area, as spelled out in the Club Competition Rules. Only scores from those operating sites count toward the club's aggregate score for club competition.

(D) Multioperator: Multioperator stations must locate all equipment (including antennas) within a circle whose diameter does not exceed 300 meters (1,000 feet).

(E) Limited Multioperator: Multioperator stations that submit a maximum of four bands for score are eligible. Logs from additional bands used should be included as checklogs.

4) **Exchange:** Grid-square locator (see April 1994 QST, p 86). Example: W1AW in Newington, CT would send FN31. Exchange of signal report is optional.

5) **Scoring:**

(A) QSO points: Count one point for each complete 50- or 144-MHz QSO. Count two points for each 222- or 432-MHz QSO. Count four points for each 902- or 1296-MHz QSO. Count eight points for each 2.3-GHz-or-higher QSO.

(B) Multiplier: The total number of different grid squares worked per band. Each 2 degrees X 1 degree grid square counts as one multiplier on each band it is worked.

(C) Final score: Multiply the total number of QSO points from all bands operated by the total number of multipliers for final score (see scoring example).

(D) Rovers only: The final score consists of the total number of QSO points from all bands times the sum of unique multipliers (grid squares) worked per band (regardless of which grid square they were made in) plus one additional multiplier for every grid square activated (made a contact from). Rovers are listed in the contest score listings under the Division from which the most QSOs were made.

6) **Use of FM:** (A) Retransmitting either or both stations, or use of repeater frequencies, is not permitted. This prohibits use of all repeater frequencies. Contest entrants may not transmit on repeaters or repeater frequencies for the purpose of soliciting contacts.

(B) Use of the national simplex frequency, 146.52 MHz, or immediate adjacent guard frequencies is prohibited. Contest entrants may not transmit on 146.52 for the purpose of making or soliciting QSOs. The intent of this rule is to protect the national simplex frequency from contest monopolization. There are no restrictions on the use of 223.50 MHz.

(C) Only recognized simplex frequencies may be used, such as 144.90 to 145.00; 146.49, .55 and .58, and 147.42, .45, .48, .51, .54 and .57 MHz on the 2-meter band. Local-option simplex channels and frequencies adjacent to the above that do not violate the intent of (A) or (B) above or the spirit and intent of the band plans as recommended in the ARRL Repeater Directory may be used for contest purposes.

7) **Miscellaneous:**

(A) Stations may be worked for credit only once per band from any given grid square, regardless of mode. This does not prohibit working a station from more than one grid square with the same call sign (such as a Rover). Crossband QSOs do not count. Aeronautical mobile contacts do not count.

(B) Partial QSOs do not count. Both calls, the full exchange and acknowledgment must be sent and received.

(C) A transmitter or antenna used to contact one or more stations may not be used subsequently under any other call during the contest period (with the exception of family stations); one operator may not give out contest QSOs using more than one call sign from any one location. The intent of this rule is to accommodate family members who must share a rig, not to manufacture artificial contacts.

(D) Only one signal per band (6, 2, 1 1/4, etc) at any given time is permitted, regardless of mode.

(E) While no minimum distance is specified for contacts, equipment should be capable of real communications (ie, able to communicate over at least 1 km).

(F) Multioperator stations may not include QSOs with their own operators except on frequencies higher than 2.3 GHz. Even then, a complete, different station (transmitter, receiver and antenna) must exist for each QSO made under these conditions.

(G) A station located precisely on a dividing line between grid squares must select only one as the location for exchange purposes. A different grid-square multiplier cannot be given out without moving the complete station (including antennas) at least 100 meters.

(H) Above 300 GHz, contacts are permitted for contest credit only between licensed amateurs using coherent radiation on transmission (eg, laser) and employing at least one stage of electronic detection on receive.

(I) Marine Mobile (and Maritime) entries will be listed separately as "Marine Mobile" in the listings and compete separately for awards.

(J) Participants are reminded that the segment 50.100-50.125 MHz should be used for intercontinental QSOs only, using 50.125 MHz as a calling frequency then QSY after contact is established.

8) **Reporting:**

(A) Entries must be postmarked no later than 30 days after the end of the contest. No late entries can be accepted. Use ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes forms, a reasonable facsimile, submit your entry on diskette, upload your entry to the ARRL BBS, or send your entry to ARRL HQ via Internet.

(1) You may submit your contest entry on diskette in lieu of paper logs. The floppy diskette must be IBM compatible, MS-DOS formatted, 3.5 or 5.25 inch (40 or 80 track). The log information must be in an ASCII file, following the ARRL Suggested Standard File Format, and contain all log exchange information (band, mode, date, time in UTC, call of station worked, exchange sent, exchange received, multipliers [marked the first time worked] and QSO points). One entry per diskette. An official summary sheet or reasonable facsimile with signed contest participation disclaimer is required with all entries.

(2) You may submit your contest entry via the ARRL BBS (860-594-0306), via Internet to contest@arrl.org, or anonymous FTP to ftp.arrl.org. Send your summary sheet file (Make sure it includes all the pertinent information outlined in the official ARRL summary sheet.) and your log file following the ARRL Suggested Standard File Format.

***For Additional "Rules & Regulations" try: <http://www.arrl.org/>**

LEAGUE FILES

"RESTRUCTURING"

COMMENTS WITH FCC

Tnx: The ARRL Letter

The ARRL has filed formal comments in response to the FCC's proposed streamlining of the Amateur Radio rules. The League delivered its comments to the FCC December 1, the final day for comments in the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in WT Docket 98-143.

The League's filing promotes the ARRL Board of Directors' restructuring positions, adopted last July and fine-tuned at a special meeting in October. It also takes the FCC to task on a few points. The ARRL said the FCC's NPRM failed to contain "a comprehensive license restructuring proposal or even an overall review of license restructuring" and generally "missed the mark."

The League called on the FCC to adopt the ARRL Board's restructuring plans as the centerpiece of its streamlining efforts. Among other things, the League plan calls for eliminating the Novice and Tech Plus licenses to reduce the number of license classes from six to four. The ARRL plan automatically upgrades current Novice and Tech Plus licensees to General. The General license would become the entry-level ticket to HF. Existing Novice and Tech Plus HF CW bands would be "refarmed" to provide additional phone spectrum for General, Advanced, and Extra class licensees.

The FCC also proposed a four-tier license structure, eliminating the Novice ticket and melding existing Technician and Tech Plus licensees into a common database while allowing current Novices and Tech Pluses to retain their current operating privileges. The ARRL said the FCC was on "the right track" in proposing to eliminate the Novice ticket. But the League said its "instant upgrade" plan for Novice and Tech Plus operators is a better approach because it permits "refarming" the underutilized Novice HF subbands. The League called refarming "critical to any comprehensive license restructuring proposal."

The FCC's NPRM sought comments on the issue of Morse code testing and requirements but offered no specific proposals. The ARRL called for a reduction in the number of Morse code examination tiers from three to two--5 and 12 WPM--and changes in the written examinations to make them more relevant and with greater emphasis on current operating practices and newer digital technologies. The League also recommended that the number of written exam questions "increase incrementally" for all license classes above Technician.

The League said that Morse code should not be overemphasized in the licensing process, but should be continued as a licensing requirement above the entry level. It has proposed that General class applicants

pass a 5 WPM code test, while Advanced and Extra applicants pass the 12 WPM code test. Subsequent to release of its original restructuring plan, the ARRL Board also decided to ask the FCC to permit Technician operators to use Morse code on the General class HF CW segments without passing a specific code examination.

The ARRL said acknowledged abuses of the CW disability exemption process were an enforcement, not a testing, issue. For those claiming a disability waiver for the higher-speed CW test, the League urged testing accommodations as a preferable alternative. The League also urged an end to multiple-choice CW exams and rules specifying that a passing grade for a Morse examination be either 70 percent correct answers to 10 fill-in questions or one minute out of five of solid copy.

The League also praised the "new dawn" in amateur enforcement undertaken within the Compliance and Information Bureau by Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH. The ARRL suggested that it would be "reasonable to withhold any further [rulemaking] action on amateur enforcement" for now and let the CIB continue its work.

The ARRL's comments stressed the value of increasing participation in the hobby and making it available to more people. "By increased participation, Amateur Radio can provide even more service to the United States than it does currently, with a simpler licensing structure," the League asserted.

News Briefs

Tnx: The ARRL Letter

* This weekend on the radio: The ARRL 160-Meter Contest, the QRP ARCI Holiday Spirits Homebrew Sprint, and the TOPS Activity 3.5 MHz CW Contest are on tap for this weekend. Just ahead: The ARRL 10-Meter Contest and the Great Colorado Snowshoe Run are the weekend of December 12-13. See December QST, page 95, for details. (Complete rules for the ARRL 160-Meter and 10-Meter contests appear in November QST.)

* DC multiplier in the ARRL 10-Meter Contest: Thanks to the hospitality of the Voice of America Amateur Radio Club, the Potomac Valley Radio Club (PVRC) will activate K3VOA for the District of Columbia (DC) multiplier in the ARRL 10-Meter Contest, December 12-13. The multi-operator team will be active on both CW and SSB. Contest QSLs only go to W3LEO. Include an SASE.--W3LEO

* Vanity update: The FCC in Gettysburg reports it has processed vanity call sign applications received through November 5. In the latest run, the FCC granted 210 applications. Another 266 hit the work-in-process, or WIPs, stack for further processing.

* FCC issues warning on tower lighting: The Federal Communications Commission has warned owners of antenna structures to comply strictly with FCC antenna tower lighting and marking rules. The warning followed a recent nighttime incident in Texas where a helicopter ambulance nearly hit an unlighted radio tower. The FCC notes that tenant licensees, such as repeater owners, are secondarily responsible for tower lighting. The FCC will hold a public forum December 7, 2-4:30 PM ET (with live audio available on the Internet at <http://www.fcc.gov/realaudio/>) to examine the Year 2000 (Y2K) impact on tower lighting and lighting equipment. Forum materials will be posted to the FCC Y2K site, www.fcc.gov/year2000.

ANOTHER USE FOR YOUR PC MICROPHONE

Motorola has developed a markup language for voice applications on the Web, called VoxML. Now Web developers can embed voice commands into their Web pages as they would regular HTML tags. To use it, you will need a microphone attached to your PC to activate these segments of a Web page.

Fortunately, you don't need a special microphone, so you don't need to head to the store. Any microphone you've been using for Internet phone calls, Web broadcasting, dictation, and so on will work with VoxML. Check Motorola's home page at

<http://www.motorola.com>

for further information (and demo sites) on

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The advertisement features a central illustration of a hotel building with a palm tree, a sun, a plane, and a key. Below the building are two small inset photos: one of a couple on a beach and another of a person in a pool. At the bottom, there is an image of the 'Entertainment Ultimate' travel guide book.

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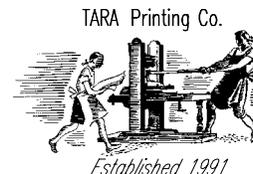
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VHF/UHF EQUIPMENT CHAIRMAN: Hollins, N2YQW.....UNLISTED

TARA NEWS

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Visit us on the Internet at:
<http://www.n2ty.org/>



"The Home of Uncle Sam"

Next Meeting: December 15, 1998
 Starting Time: 7:30 PM

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