



Presidents Message

Spring is finally here and not a moment too soon. This past winter, with its record breaking precipitation, has been particularly gloomy. I just hope that the coming “April showers” are in fact showers and not downpours.

With the improving weather, we will all venture outside to fix up our yard, house, and antenna systems. The W2MMD Club site is also in need of some repairs, most importantly, the roof. We will have a roofer come out and give us his opinion on how best to stop the nagging leaks. Other work needed includes new shingles on the shed roof, new skirting around the trailer, and some cabling on the VHF tower. There will be some work parties in the near future so please come out and help.

As some of you may have heard, Harry, K2ATX, is going to Haiti to help with the reconstruction efforts there. We wish Harry all the best in his travels. Since Harry helmed several different committees in the GCARC, I will have to find other Club members to take over these positions. So I am looking for a Vice President, VEC testing chair, 4H Radio Club chair, and Hamfest chair. If you would like to take on one of these important positions please let me know.

The program for our April meeting will be Doug, WA2NPD, sharing with us some of the more interesting QSL cards he has collected over the years along with the stories that go along with them.

73, Al KB2AYU

PROGRAM FOR APRIL 7th CLUB MEETING

A power point slide program entitled Unique QSL Cards will be presented by Doug, WA2NPD. We all, more or less, collect QSL cards from the USA and from DX countries around the globe. In most cases, the card simply is evidence that we have actually made a contact with that particular station and can be used as proof of that contact for the various Awards which can be earned. Occasionally, one receives a QSL card which has some unique story associated with the card, or with the contact, or represents a particularly memorable QSO, person or occasion. WA2NPD has selected some 17 such cards (from among several thousand) and wishes to share these rather unique stories with the Club members. The program should take about 40 minutes.

Down Jersey DXing

By Bill Grim, W0MHK

March should have brought you some pleasant DX surprises with sunspots quite regularly filling out the sun's blazing surface. It was encouraging to hear some less-common call signs while tuning the bands that have been absent from availability. Sure was a pleasant change from recent years of "slim Pickens" on the high bands!

My personal HBPT (High Band Propagation Test "leisurely" working DX on 17, 15, 12, and 10 Meters since Jan. 15 this year) has grown to 79 DXCC countries on 17M, 70 on 15M, 72 on 12M, and only 10 on 10 Meters as of late March. That includes phone and CW with 12 Meters being the most surprising of the four bands for DX success!

15M and especially 17M have been great for some long haul QSOs in Asia and the Pacific with KH0, HL, HS, UN, UK, UN, VU, EY, EX, 5W, and E51 to mention a few. 17M seems to be taking on some of the characteristic of "good ole" 20M at the height of the previous cycle with "long haul" capability!

NW7US sums up April's expectations in his April CQ Magazine Propagation Column by stating, "The seasonal change plays out on HF with activity moving up from 40 Meters and down from 10 Meters." He goes on to say, "The strongest propagation occurs (in April) on paths that span both day and night. Expect 17 and 20 meter bands to offer nearly 24-hour DX to all parts of the world from locations in the low to middle latitudes." (That's us!)

VHF enthusiasts should be aware of April short-ship AURORA possibilities. Best chances according to NW7US, are when the K index is 4 and above. I consider "grid hunting" on VHF to be DXing so watch your propagation alerts and cluster spots during the month!

Our DX list for the month emphasizes Asia and Pacific prospects. Keep 20M and 17M in mind for these "gems" including "long-path" potential if conditions are particularly good. Plan ahead for some DX action from the elusive Palestine in late May. Hopefully more definitive information on the operation will be forthcoming next month. It has always seemed to be a difficult one especially for "left-coast" USA! For your DX attention in April:

| STATION | DATES | HIGHLIGHTS | RARITY | ENTITY |
|----------|--------------|-------------------------|--------|-------------|
| 9K2F | 4/1- 4/5 | IOTA-118/BIG EFFORT | 3 | KUWAIT |
| YI9PSE | 4/3-4/11 | ALL MODES/BANDS/HI PWR | 4 | IRAQ |
| 3B8MM | 4/4-4/24 | 160-10M/MAINLY CW | 2 | MAURITIUS |
| 3W6C | 4/10-4/18 | IOTA AS-185/LOW BANDS+ | 4 | VIETNAM |
| V63DX | 4/11-4/17 | JA EFFORT/ALL MO&BNDS | 3 | MICRONESIA |
| BW | 4/14-4/19 | 160-6M/MAINLY CW | 3 | TAIWAN |
| ZA/F4... | 4/15-4/24 | SSB/...FRENCH HOMECALL | 1 | ALBANIA |
| ZL7J | 4/28-5/3 | 160-10M/SSB-CW | 4 | CHATHAM IS. |
| ZS8M | 4/30-4/29/11 | COULD HAPPEN!/BE ALERT! | 5 | MARION IS. |

RATINGS: 5=MOST DIFFICULT

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9K2F

Welcome New Member

This month the Club welcomes Robert Jonas, WX2RBJ, as a new member. Robert lives in Sewell and holds a Technician Class license. Please say hello to Robert when you see him at Club functions and make him feel at home with the Club.

N2CQ in Hospital

Ken Newman, N2CQ, the Club's treasurer is in the hospital with a clogged artery in his neck. Ken collapsed in the grocery store while shopping with his wife and was rushed to the hospital where they discovered the blocked artery. Ken will be operated on the week of March 29th to open up the artery. We all wish Ken a speedy recovery from this procedure. I am sure Ken would appreciate get well cards from the Club's members. By the time you read this Ken will probably be home so please send your card to his home address, 81 Holly Drive, West Deptford, NJ 08096.

.ARRL Requests Support for S 1755

The Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Enhancement Act of 2009, Senate Bill 1755, introduced in October 2009 by Senators Joe Lieberman and Susan Collins has unanimously passed the US Senate and has been sent to the US House of Representatives for consideration and now sits in the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. The ARRL is asking its membership to contact the leadership of the Energy and Commerce committee, requesting support and action on moving S 1755 through the committee. S 1755 accomplishes the same things as HR 2160. Since S 1755 has already been approved by the Senate, moving it forward in the House will simplify the process. S 1755 points out that "[t]here is a strong Federal interest in the effective performance of Amateur Radio Service stations, and that performance must be given (A) support at all levels of government; and (B) protection against unreasonable regulation and impediments to the provision of the valuable communications provided by such stations." If enacted into law, S 1755 would instruct the Secretary of Homeland Security (DHS) to undertake a study and report its findings to Congress within 180 days on the uses and capabilities of Amateur Radio communications in emergencies and disaster relief.

For more information on S 1755, please visit the ARRL Government Relations Web page.

Thanks to the ARRL Letter for the above.

The GCARC Website

By Art Strong, K2AWS

As many of you know the club has had a well put together website for quite some time, now. Unfortunately it has fallen on hard times due to the lack of proper maintenance and updates. Harry, K2ATX, did a fine job of putting it together but he can no longer maintain it as he has been pulled away by other endeavors in his life. For those who may not know, he is currently in Haiti doing what he can in rebuilding the infrastructure that was so devastated several months ago. Therefore, in response to a call from our President to fill the slots that Harry has vacated I volunteered to take over the website to get it up to date and maintain it as it should be.

Please see Website on Page 4.

“Website” from Page 3.

To maintain the website I still need some information from Harry. I have been in contact with him in Haiti but have only received one reply to my e-mails. He has told me that electricity in itself is a luxury that few can afford and that internet access is a rarity. So as of now I am waiting for an answer to my e-mail so I can get started with my job.

So that no one gets excited and starts inundating me with things to put on the web let me say that I know nothing about running a website. In all honesty this will be a learning process for me from the ground up and I can assure all members that I will do the best I can to get up to speed as soon as possible. I have some ideas as to who to ask for some help and I will pursue that as needed. In the meantime I will be reporting any and all progress, via e-mail, to Al (KB2AYU) as it occurs. As soon as I get to the point where I can start planning on what to do with the site, rather than play catch-up, I will let the club members know so that we can really exploit our possibilities.

See you at the meeting

Sidewalk Radio

By Cory Sickles, WA3UVV

Many of us have seen or read about Sidewalk Astronomy. This is where someone sets up a telescope and some handout information on a downtown street and encourages passers by to look at the moon, planets and stars. Certainly, with all the light pollution at those locations, you can't see what you would under ideal conditions, but the average person does get the opportunity to look through a telescope and see celestial bodies better than they normally would. Plus, it makes them think about what's out there and encourages some to become astronomers, themselves.

The idea of Sidewalk Radio has come up a few times over the years. Recently, I read about the subject again in a League newsletter. It is an interesting idea but I don't know of anyone who is doing it on a regular basis. But with a little thought, it seems quite doable.

As with the astronomy model, no portable/temporary setup is going to be as effective as what we can set up at home, but even compromises can work well. HF activity on 20 meters during the day and perhaps 60 meters at night should relatively guarantee that we could make a number of voice contacts and allow others to experience talking on the radio. Although the windows are short, working some satellites with dual-band hand-helds is cool, too. The idea probably would work better in pairs, with one person as the operator and the second talking to visitors. They can swap back and forth during the demo.

The idea is still being worked out in my head, but some of our local downtowns come to mind as ideal locations. Pitman, Woodbury and Vineland all have viable and walk able downtown areas. Pitman even has Fourth Fridays and other events that draw traffic into town. Plus, we have a number of parks in the area that might be good places to set up, as the weather gets nicer.

You'll need an HF and/or a VHF/UHF radio, a good battery, small table, quick antenna and some hard copy handouts. Using technology like D-Star or IRLP, the idea of talking to another ham in Texas, London or Sidney on a handheld still has a certain “wow factor” to it.

I'm still working out the details, but if you are interested in doing something like this from time to time, let me know.

What's Old is New, Again

By Cory Sickles, WA3UVV

Amplitude Modulation, where a constant RF carrier's strength is altered by audio intelligence, was the way of voice communications many decades ago. Once SSB came into vogue, it became known as "Ancient Modulation" and was relegated to small pockets of spectrum in the 160, 80 and 40 meter bands. Usually, the folks talking here are using fairly high power, tube based gear. Normally, it is old commercial ham rigs from Collins, Johnson or Heathkit, although a few broadcast transmitters and home brew efforts round it out. Sometimes, you can even hear someone using the AM mode on his or her solid state (I'll bet you have the option) at a 40 watt or less level.

One thing is for certain, those old rigs and the added time the hams involved spend on microphones and audio characteristics, sound fantastic. While less spectrum efficient than SSB, the audio quality is superior.

Recently (very recently, in fact) Dave Benson of Small Wonder Labs released a new kit known as the Retro-75. I don't know if he'll achieve the same numbers as the Rock Mite series, but it looks like they are selling well. This transceiver kit produces a 2.5W carrier and goes up to about 8W on the peaks. The transmitter is crystal controlled with 3885 KHz (the most popular AM frequency in the 75M window) supplied and a provision for a switchable 2nd crystal. With just a few more resistors, capacitors and diodes, plus a rotary switch, channel expansion is an easy possibility.

The receiver is tunable, bringing back memories of old CB or VHF rigs from long ago. The board measures 5.25" x 3.5" and will probably take up 1.25" in height when I build mine. (It just got here.) Perhaps the best part is the kit is only \$65!

Already, many in the NJQRP club are working on theirs and an evening net/roundtable is planned. These should work well for <200 mile, local communications and NVIS antenna techniques. If you haven't built anything of substance lately, this might be a good project to try.

Turn Up the Frequency

By Cory Sickles, WA3UVV

A few weeks ago, I was tuning around 15 meters and I came across a CO2 calling CQ. Many of you immediately recognize the prefix as Cuba. Many hard core DX aficionados have worked someone there and moved on to more challenging countries. I was just thrilled that 15 was open to somewhere. (Good openings are happening more and more)

I tuned up off frequency and came back to him, noting that where he now was seemed slightly higher. By the time we had exchanged the usually info and had a short conversation, I had chased him up the band about 20 KHz. I signed and, by now, a small pileup awaited him.

While it would be easy to sit in the car with my "state of the art digital do it all" rig and be amused by the thermal drift of the other station, I have a fairly good idea of what he was using and it deserves some respect. As with all those pictures we've seen of Chevrolets and Fords from the 50's being restored and maintained out of sheer necessity, home brew and parts scrounging are still alive and well in Cuba. Please see Frequency on Page 6.

“Frequency” from Page 5.

The basic “Islander” design is tube-based and uses parts from old Russian TV’s. Since those TV’s don’t make use of silver mica, or NP0 capacitors, drift is going to be inherent in the design. This characteristic is also shared by the MFJ Cub for 17 and 15 meters, but at least we can get the parts to upgrade it. In Cuba, you work with what you have, which usually also means a carbon microphone from a discarded telephone.

Now lets be honest – how many of us have built a sideband transceiver from a TV set or two? For me, CW transmitter “yes”, DSB rig “no”. That’s why guys like that deserve some respect in the truest sense of amateur radio. As the first President Roosevelt said, “Do what you can, with what you have, where you are”.

“The Victorian Internet” by Tom Standage

By Cory Sickles, WA3UVV

I’d been interested in reading this book for some time. Recently, I discovered the Gloucester County Library in Mullica Hill had a copy. The book provides a history of how the telegraph, first as an optical implementation came to be and how it was named. It covers the various permutations of such devices, codes and how the relatively new concepts of electricity, magnetism and methods came together as a communications network that turned message transit time from weeks to hours.

While it glosses over or doesn’t cover some of the facts about whose code we really use and the battery technology of the day, it’s interesting and gives you an idea of just how “in the dark” the guys trying to develop these things actually were. For example, there seemed to be a vast ignorance of things like resistance and voltage drop in wires.

It was interesting in describing how the new technology was used in criminal apprehension, the first online wedding, the emergence of new scams and privacy issues – much like what we have experienced today. I even learned about another possible origin for the term “ham”. Overall, it’s a good read and free with your library card.



Field Day 2009
20 Meters

Summer will be here soon
and the planning for Field
Day 2010 has already be-
gun.

April Birthdays

Irma Colabrese, N2FNF
Daniel Damiano, KC2ELC
Bob Krukowski, KR2U
Thomas Little, AB2YG
Ray Metzger, AI2B
Mike Mollet, N2SRO
Whitney Myers, KB2ZTL



Crosstalk Submissions

This is your Club newsletter. Make use of it. Feel free to contribute general interest articles and ideas for articles.

All submissions, queries, comments and editorials should be addressed to Gene Schoeberlein at aa2yo@arrl.net.

Submission deadline for May issue: 4/23/2010

Club Website

<http://www.w2mmd.com>

President-Al Arrison, KB2AYU
Vice President-Harry Ewell, K2ATX
Treasurer-Ken Newman, N2CQ

Bill Blakeley, WA2ADB
Chuck Colabrese, WA2TML
Doug Gehring, WA2NP

Steve, W2TDS
Cory, WA3UVV

GCARC Officers

Recording Secretary-Harold Garron, AC2BK
Corresponding Secretary-Vinnie, N4NYY

Board of Directors

William Grimm, W0MHK
Harry Bryant, AA2W
Gene Schoeberlein, AA2YO

Trustees

Ray, WB2NBJ
Mike, N2SRO

Committees

ARES/RACES-John, AA2BN
Awards-Dave, W2YC
Budget-Steve, W2TDS
Clubhouse Site-Al, KB2AYU
Club License Trustee-Darrell, AB2E
Constitution-As needed
Crosstalk-Gene, AA2YO
Database-Ken, N2CQ
DX-Bill, W0MHK
Field Day-Vinnie, N4NYY
Hamfest-Harry, K2ATX
Historian-Marty, W2ILT
4H Liaison-K2ATX

Hospitality-Ray, WB2NBJ
Membership-Cory/Ray, WA3UVV/WB2NBJ
Nominations-Doug, WA2NPD
Programs-Doug, WA2NPD
Publicity-Cory, WA3UVV
Repeaters-Al, KB2AYU
Scholarships-Greg, WN2T
Special Services, Darrell, AB2E
Sunshine-Ray, W2RM
Technical/TVI-Cory, WA3UVV
VEC Testing-Harry, K2ATX
Website-Art, K2AWS

The W2MMD Repeaters

147.78/18 Mhz-Pitman
(CTCSS 131.8Hz)

223.06/224.66 Mhz-Sewell

447.1/442.1 Mhz-Pitman
(CTCSS 167.9Hz)

1272.4/1284.4 MHz-Pitman

GCARC Meetings

General Membership

7:30 pm 1st Wednesday every month
Pfeiffer Community Center
Williamstown, NJ

Board of Directors

8 pm 3rd Wednesday every month
GCARC Club site
Harrison Twp. 4H Grounds
1 mile south of Mullica Hill on RT77

Nets

ARES/RACES
Sunday 20:00 Hrs
(147.78/18 and
223.06/224.66
repeaters)

10 Meter- Sunday
following the
ARES/RACES Net
(28.350 Mhz)

April Meeting

Unique QSL Cards
Doug Gehring, WA2NPD

Gloucester County Amateur Radio Club
P. O. Box 370
Pitman, NJ 08071

