



FEEDBACK



Warminster Amateur Radio Club Web Page www.k3dn.org

April 1998

President's Message

The recent death of Hank Hamarman (N3NID) required (per the club's constitution) an election for WARC Vice President at the March 5 General Meeting. Drex Drexler (W3ICC), after serving almost two years as the club's secretary, resigned his position (effective after the March 5 meeting) because of a teaching commitment he has for future Thursday evenings. Drex has been an excellent club secretary and a great contributor to the Board and his presence at board and general meetings will be greatly missed. Drex promises (schedule permitting) to participate in other club activities so we should still see him a lot! Congratulations to Rocky Pistilli (N3FKR) and Bill Essner (N3RAF) upon their election to WARC Vice President and Secretary. And speaking of elections, we'll be electing club officers for the fiscal year 7/98-6/99 at the May 7 general meeting- contact Steve Larson (KA3ZLY) or Marty Squicciarini (NR3Z) if you would like to be a candidate.

A sincere WARC thank you goes out to Randy Gehman (N3LJE), who is the club's new Alumni Coordinator; Burt Ludin (N3YVH) who will chair our refreshments committee; and, Alan Ash (KA3YCG) who has taken on responsibilities as co-chair for club Publicity. Members who take on leadership positions help distribute the club's workload and make it possible for WARC to accomplish its goals.

Our annual Homebrew Night (March 6 General Meeting) provided a great opportunity to see what some of our members are doing to sharpen their electronic and mechanical construction skills. Congratulations to our winners Doc Whitticar (W3GAD), Rocky Pistilli (N3FKR) and Burt Ludin (N3YNH) and everyone who brought in a project. A special thank you goes out to Burt Ludin (N3YVH) for picking out the prizes we awarded and to Al Folsom (KY3T) and Steve Larson (KA3ZLY) for giving us a chance to sample their homebrew sarsaparilla and root beer. Hank's widow Nina has asked WARC to help in the sale of his ham gear. Her wish is that we "recycle" it to those who had a connection with Hank and his ham radio activities. We will be giving WARC members the first opportunity to buy Hank's equipment at the March 5 General Meeting, at which time a "silent auction" will be conducted. Most of the gear will be on display starting at 7 PM and bids will be taken up until the start of the meeting. Winning bids will be announced right after the meeting break at 8:30 PM. See the enclosed insert for a comprehensive listing and procedures that will be followed for the silent auction.

As noted in my March message, we're getting into a very busy time of the year for WARC. Licensing and upgrade classes have started again - contact George Altemus (KA3WXV) if you want to help out by teaching or know someone who wants to join the Tuesday evening sessions. We have numerous public service events and the Lambertville Shadfest special event station that require operators. We'll need a maximum level of member participation for the Air Show and Field Day that are both scheduled the weekend of June 27/28. And, WE NEED EVERYONE to help out with Hamfest'98 in order to insure it is a safe and well run event and a financial success for the club. I hope we see every member involved in some level of participation in club activities over the next three months- there's plenty to choose from!

de, Bill; K3MFI

CLUB ELECTIONS

WARC members will elect officers (all positions) at the May 7 General Meeting. If you're interested in being on the slate, contact Steve (KA3ZLY) Larson on the club repeater, by phone (822-1511) or by e-mail (ka3zly@wa3dsp.ampr.org) by the April 2 General meeting so that your name can appear on the ballot that will be sent out with the May FEEDBACK. Nominations from the floor will also be accepted at the May 7 General Meeting. New officers assume their responsibilities July 1, 1998 and serve for one year.

BATTERY BAGS

We put together another order of "green bags" (which include 2.3 ah battery, charger, two battery clips with cigarette adapter and an unterminated fused cigarette plug) at a cost of \$15. They will be distributed at the April 2 general meeting-just in time for all those upcoming public service events! Contact Stu Simon (K2QBU) at (215) 345- 9295 if you signed up for a bag and won't be at the April 2 meeting, or if you want to purchase one (or more) and you didn't previously reserve one.

Thanks, Stu; K2QBU

ShadFest Special Event

On April 25, 1998 the club will hold a special event station in Lambertville, NJ, celebrating the area where Richard Holcombe began his Historic American Shad fishery circa 1771. We will be meeting at 8:00 am on Lewis Island, just on the other side of the New Hope/Lambertville bridge. You can see the Island as you are crossing the bridge on the left. We will operate from 10:00 am to 6:00 PM on the frequencies of 3.875, 7.250, 14.250 and 28.440. Bring the family and enjoy the festival. Contact Al Konschak for more info at 491-9941 or e-mail at Error! Bookmark not defined.

Willow Grove Air Show

On June 27 and 28, we need volunteers to help with communications. These dates coincide with field day this year so during the next couple of board and club meetings we will be soliciting ideas on how we can serve both with minimal impact.

HI to all from the Valley of the Sun

As you know I am one of the Hams who run the demonstration station at the Arizona Science Center on Wednesday Mornings from 1600-2000 UTC. Well to my surprise there is an article in April QST on page 20 showing the Center, and if you look at the last picture, there is a "old ham N7QB with the kids" was I surprised to see it. I really enjoy getting the kids on the HF. In fact, I sometimes hook up with the Class 22, Joe and his kids on 21.395, but you may find me on 20, 17, 15 or 10. We also get on RS-12 on the morning passes between those times I am in the shack. I talk back to the East coast when the Satellite is between me and the East. As you can see in the picture, the life in AZ really agrees with me and the children keep me young, Send me an E-mail and a sked and I will try to hook up with you.

73, Stan; N7QB (ex N3GEZ)

WHY WE ARE CALLED HAMS

Have you ever wondered why we radio amateurs are called HAMS? Well it goes something like this - the word ham was applied in 1908 and was the call letters of one of the first amateur wireless stations operated by some of the members of the Harvard Radio Club. They were Albert Hymen, Bob Almy and Peggie Murray.

At first they called their station Hymen-Almy-Murray. Tapping out such a long name in code soon called for a revision, and they changed it to Hy-Al-Mu, using the first two letters of each name. Early 1909 some confusion resulted between signals from HYALMU and a Mexican ship named Myalmo, so they decided to use only the first letter of each name and identified their station as HAM. In the early pioneer and unregulated days of radio, amateur operators picked their own frequencies and call letters.

Then, as now, some amateurs had better signals than some commercial stations. The resulting interference finally came to the attention of congressional committees in Washington, DC and they gave much thought to proposed legislation designed to critically limit amateur activity. In 1911, Albert Hymen chose the controversial Wireless Regulations Bill as the topic of his thesis at Harvard. His instructor insisted that a copy be sent to Senator David Walsh, a member of the committee hearing the Bill. The Senator was so impressed that he sent for Mr. Hymen to appear before the committee. Hymen was put on the stand and described how the little amateur station, HAM, was built, and he almost cried when he told the crowded committee room that if the bill went through, they would have to close up the station because they could not afford the license fees and other requirements which were set up in the bill. The debate started and the little station HAM became a symbol of all the little amateur stations in the country that were crying out to be saved from the menace and greed of the big commercial stations who did not want them around. Finally the Bill got to the floor of Congress and every speaker talked about the poor little station, HAM.

That's how it all got started. You can find the whole story in the Congressional Record. Nationwide publicity identified the station HAM with amateurs. From that time to this, and probably to the end of time, in radio, "Every amateur is a HAM"....

73 DE GORD, VE7RGJ ~ VE7RGJ. *SCBC.BC.CAN.NA Kelowna, BC, Canada (Voice Call VE7TGR)

'73, Dick; WG3S

SOME MAJOR CHANGES FOR FIELD DAY!

Some new rules go into effect this year for Field Day. The popular summertime operating event takes place each year on the fourth full weekend in June. This year, it will be June 27-28.

A major change this year is the elimination of bonus-point credit for packet and VHF/UHF contacts. Field Day stations no longer will be allowed to count contacts via digipeaters, packet nodes, or similar arrangements. Class 2A and higher Field Day stations still may operate a "free" transmitter exclusively for VHF or UHF operation (i.e., above 50 MHz) without changing their basic entry classification, but not for bonus points. "It's better than bonus points, and groups are likely to spend more time on VHF and UHF because of that," predicted ARRL Membership Services Manager Chuck Hutchinson, K8CH. As in the past, crossband and repeater contacts other than via satellite do not count for Field Day credit.

Field Day stations now can earn point credit for digital (ie, non-CW) contacts on each band. The phone, CW, and non-CW digital segments are considered separate "bands" in the Field Day rules. This means, for example, that you now may work the same station for point credit on 40 meters three times: once on SSB, once on CW, and once on RTTY, packet, or one of the TOR modes. SSB contacts count one point, and CW and non-CW digital contacts count 2 points apiece, so adding non-CW digital capability presents a real opportunity to rack up substantial additional points! "We're expecting an interesting year because of the digital modes," Hutchinson said.

The complete, official Field Day rules will appear in the May edition of QST. Basic Field Day rules have remained unchanged for several years now. The new rules undoubtedly will generate a flurry of computerized contest logging program revisions as developers scramble to incorporate the changes into their software.

Courtesy The ARRL Letter

SOLAR ACTIVITY RISES!

Solar scribe Tad Cook, K7VVV, of Seattle, Washington, reports: Solar activity took a big jump over the past week. The solar flux reached 133 on March 15--the highest since January 5, 1994. Average solar flux for the previous 90 days rose from 94 to 96, and flux values were well above this level on every day this week.

Although the March 15 solar flux was very high, the daily reported value is always for noon in British Columbia. A measurement three hours earlier that day showed the solar flux at 140.3! For the next few days look for solar flux to drop to 124, 122 and 116 for March 20 through March 22, and then down to the mid-90s before the end of the month. Flux levels should go above 100 again by April 6. Possible disturbed days are April 6 through 11, with the worst days around April 6 and 7.

This higher activity is all good news combined with the move into the spring season. Look for longer openings on higher bands, and because the length of the day is similar in northern and southern hemispheres, similar propagation conditions prevail in each hemisphere as well. When solar flux is high, 20 and 15 meters should be best during daylight, and after sundown the best conditions should be on 20 and 40 meters.

Jan Alvestad, the author of the recently mentioned Web site which compares solar cycles at [Error! Bookmark not defined.](#), wrote to comment on the material in recent bulletins concerning when the recent cycle actually started. Because the history of solar data collection is relatively short--only 22 previous cycles--he feels that the best and most objective way to plot the month-by-month cycle progress comparisons is to always start with the minimum between cycles. This is because it is difficult with so few cycles to develop a general definition.

Sunspot numbers for March 12 through 18 were 114, 115, 119, 110, 92, 81, and 102, with a mean of 104.7. The 10.7-cm flux was 101.6, 104.9, 119.6, 133, 123.9, 125.5, and 127, with a mean of 119.4. Estimated planetary A indices were 12, 13, 10, 18, 13, 7, and 4, with a mean of 11.

Courtesy The ARRL Letter

The Day the Sprinklers Sent CQ

by Steve Altig, N7IF

What an afternoon. Sending CQ with the sprinklers doesn't get a ham very far. It only gets strange looks from the neighbors, and the occasional curious earthworm. But, you need a little background.

After discussion with my wife, with retirement just a few years away, and a pending move to the country we reached the conclusion that it would be a good idea for me to rejoin the ranks of Amateur Radio Operators. I had held a General class license (WA6ISW) back in the '60s, but it had expired while I was in the Army, and then family and career became time priorities.

So, I bought a copy of Ham University(c) and began to study the code and technical elements, hoping to get my Novice license and later upgrade to General. The more I studied, the more I began to think I would try to take all the elements qualifying me for a General instead of working up to it.

The big day, March 1, 1997, arrived. There was a big crowd taking various Amateur Radio tests on this day, my day. An entire Scout troop, a group from a school, and an assortment of others, of which I was one.

"We are going to begin with the code tests, and after they begin, no one can leave the room." said the Volunteer Examiner in charge. "Who is taking the 20 wpm test?", she asked. The fellow in the seat next to me raised his hand. After some more instruction, the test began. I listened to the 20 wpm code test, copied about 1/3, and began to worry. When the 13 wpm test began I breathed a sigh of relief when words flowed from my pencil to the paper.

"Anyone want to go for one minute of solid copy," asked the Volunteer Examiner. I raised my

hand. He took my paper and began to go over it in detail. "Looks good," he said and gave my paper to the other VEs at the table. "One minute solid copy," he said. They looked up at me and looked back at the paper. After a few minutes they were also nodding and saying things to each other like, "Start here" and "Looks good" and "No problem." Then they looked at me and said, "You passed." What a relief. Element 1b passed. Now on to the technical elements. Element 2. PASSED. Element 3A. PASSED. Element 3B. Waiting and sweating. PASSED. What a feeling. Walking out with my CSCE showing completion of all required elements for a brand new General class license felt great. Now to get equipment, antennas, and all of the other necessary "stuff" to get back on the air. My license came from the FCC a few days later and I was now KC7UXA.

How things have changed! It's a long way from a Heathkit DX-40 to a modern solid state transceiver. Scary stuff! My biggest problem though was how to deal with the homeowners association restrictions on antennas. I convinced myself that a random wire antenna, nailed to the eaves of my house was the way to go.

Everything was connected. Power supply, transceiver, antenna tuner and key all ready to go. I was ready. Power on, tune the antenna and try an 80 meter CQ. Out to my shack comes my wife. "There is something wrong with the plumbing," she cries. "Come quick. The pipes are banging and crashing"

I went into the house and listened but heard nothing. She insisted they had been making horrible noises. I stood in the doorway of the house and had her key down a few times and she was right, as usual. Sounded like someone was pounding on the pipes. This was disaster. All my work and study, not to mention money, and now this.

After some thinking and discussion with other hams, it turns out the RF from the transceiver was activating the solenoids in the sprinkler system for our yard. I asked my wife to go watch the sprinklers while I transmitted. What a sight for the neighbors to see water spurting out of the sprinklers to the rhythm of "CQ CQ CQ."

In the end it all worked out and now I am back on the air and have worked 13 states in the weeks since everything came together. Oh yes, I do get the occasional "hi hi" when I tell other hams that my antenna is a random wire nailed to the eaves of my house 12 feet off the ground. But the best part is IT WORKS..

P.S. Since this story was originally written in April, 1997, the writer has upgraded to Extra and is now AB7VZ, and now has new vanity call N7IF.

Reprinted with permission from Ham Radio Online magazine, available for free on the Internet at <http://www.hamradio-online.com>