



FEEDBACK



Warminster Amateur Radio Club Web Page www.k3dn.org

August 1998

President's Message

The club membership made an important decision earlier this year when we decided to support two important events which fell on the last weekend in June. There was never any question that we would insure that the Air Show was properly staffed, but unlike previous years when both events fell on the same weekend, we decided NOT to run a minimal Field Day- it was MAX EFFORT for both activities!

Our most demanding annual public service communications event, the Willow Grove Air Show, provides us the opportunity to sharpen our communication skills (where the emergencies are never "simulated") and demonstrate the relevance of our hobby to the general public. Although smaller crowds and cooler weather than usual kept the number of medical incidents down, our 30-35 operators each day played an important role in directing the resources necessary to insure prompt medical attention. It was again our competent and professional use of amateur radio that allowed the military to communicate with each other and to work efficiently with civilian support services. Congratulations for a job well-done to Al Folsom (KY3T) for again taking on the primary leadership role and to all those who participated in this most important activity.

WARC's version of amateur radio's premiere operating event, Field Day, was also a resounding success. More than 40 club members participated for at least a portion of the event, and even with a smaller showing than usual (due to many of our club members helping out at the Air Show both days), set up and tear down went very smoothly. For most of the 24 hour operating period, we were able to keep 5 stations on the air simultaneously. It was another opportunity to learn things about antennas, rigs, propagation and operating practices. Whether you were a first time participant or a "veteran", you can never come away from a WARC Field Day without saying that you learned something new about ham radio. And equally important, it's a great a chance to socialize- each of us has our own reasons for participating in Field Day and all of us appreciate being around others who have a common interest. The weather was ideal for the second year in a row, the food Doc prepared was delicious, conditions on most bands were decent, no equipment was damaged and no one got injured. I'm glad so many of our members were actively involved in the test and contest aspects of Field Day'98 and our club gratefully recognizes the efforts of chairperson Doc Whitticar (W3GAD), who made sure we all were going in the same direction at the same time!

We made a concerted effort to attract hams from other clubs, ARES and RACES to give us a hand with staffing the Air Show. In the alternative, we invited them and all amateur radio operators to come out to our Field Day (a number of local clubs don't participate) and operate. As you may have guessed, the response was underwhelming. Maybe we should just deal with the reality that it's up to the club members (solely) to provide the resources necessary for WARC to meet its commitments. With everyone trying to carve out time for family, career, community and personal endeavors, there isn't much time or energy available for "fringe" activities- and that's probably how WARC events are categorized by those not affiliated with our club.

With over 135 members, I believe we should have the ability to handle the Air Show and Field Day, whether they fall on consecutive weekends (as they usually do) or the same weekend. For those who participated in either or both events, thanks for supporting the club; for those who didn't, no guilt trip is intended. I know some of you had family commitments or other reasons for not participating- none of us have the ability to make every WARC meeting and activity. What's important (and necessary if WARC is going to remain viable) is that we get enough participation to accomplish our goals and NOT burn anyone out. And we should ever forget that belonging to WARC is supposed to be fun !

As reported previously, Membership Chairperson (for the past three years) Don McCunney (N3VHU) has decided to step down from his present club duties in the next few months in order to participate more fully in our meetings (he's always "working" on club business in the back of the room!). The membership job includes processing new member applications (including WARC badges), maintaining the club database, insuring renewal of WARC and ARRL membership dues, providing labels for the monthly mailing of Feedback and responding to requests for WARC information. We already have a number of people working on the membership committee, but we need someone to be chairperson and coordinate. Please contact me or another Board member if interested in this very important club position.

Don't forget to mark upcoming August activities on your calendar- our annual family picnic on August 9th and the Middletown Grange Fair August 12-19; details on both appear in FEEDBACK.

de Bill , K3MFI

UPCOMING PUBLIC SERVICE EVENTS

Middletown Grange Fair

Wednesday, August 12th through Sunday, August 16th. Contact Frank O'Neill (N3UQP) at 699-9549 to sign up.

1998 Grange Fair August 12-19, 1998

Our next public service event is our annual participation at the Middletown Grange Fair being held from Wednesday, August 12th through Sunday, August 16th. The event will be chaired this year by Frank O'Neill (N3UQP) ; please see him at the general meeting (or give him a call at 699-9549) to sign up for either an on-site shift at our booth or to deliver local messages by

telephone from your home. Over 20,000 people attend the Grange Fair each year, which gives WARC tremendous public exposure. In addition to handling message traffic, we get lots of inquiries about ham radio, especially license preparation classes offered by our club and others in the area. Take the family to a great country fair and help represent WARC and the amateur radio community.

1998 WARC Picnic

The 1998 WARC picnic will be held on August 9, 1998 in Pavilion #9 at Core Creek Park in Langhorne, PA. This is in the same picnic grove as our previous two picnics. The picnic will start setting up around 11:00 AM and running from 12:00 Noon to 5:00 PM. The club will be providing hamburgers, hot dogs, rolls and condiments. We ask each family that comes to bring a family favorite dish to share with everyone else.

If anybody would like to bring a favorite game, volleyball net or whatever, feel free to do so. Goop has shown up the past two years as well as some model rockets.

To help get ready for the picnic, I am looking for two or three volunteers to help me pick up supplies for the picnic. With a couple of assistants, no one's job will take more than two or three hours to complete a couple of days before the picnic. If you would like to give me a hand, please call me at home (215-953-1493) send me an e-mail (mkempisty@gi.com) or catch me on the club's repeaters.

I hope to see all of you at the picnic this year.

73,
Mark - N3GNW
Tel: 215-323-2293

General Meeting Rescheduled to September 10

Because of a scheduling conflict, our September meeting will be held on the SECOND Thursday of the month. If you show up on September 3, plan on participating in the celebration marking the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Benjamin Wilson (one of the charter members of WARC) Senior Center!

WARC "For Sale Table" Returns

Members are encouraged to bring in their ham, computer and electronic treasures and place them on the For Sale Table at our general membership meetings. Items will be available for sale between 7:00 and 7:30 pm (when the meeting starts) and during our refreshment break (usually about 8:15 pm). It's a great opportunity for club members to recycle unneeded items and a welcomed return of a "WARC tradition" (from the "good old days").

I have heard about a neat site that many of you might enjoy. It allows you to specify a town (i.e. Bensalem, PA), and then gives you a birds-eye view

of that town. You can zoom in to see individual buildings and cars, etc.

See if you can find your house or office building. It is not as easy as it sounds, and you may have fun doing it. Having a roadmap at your side helps.

The pictures were taken by the government from a plane flying at 20,000 feet back around 1990 (they vary).

The site is <http://www.terraserver.microsoft.com/>

P.S. The reason I used BENSLEM as an example is because the Philadelphia Racetrack on Street Road is easily identified from the view. This helps get your bearings straight. Other places to look for might be large malls, bodies of water, airports, etc.

Have Fun

LEAGUE PROPOSES SIMPLIFIED LICENSE STRUCTURE

The ARRL has proposed a simplified Amateur Radio license structure featuring four license classes and reduced Morse code requirements for full HF access.

In approving the plan July 18, the ARRL Board of Directors said the hobby no longer needed six license classes. In their discussions, Board members emphasized that the objective was to rationalize and simplify the amateur licensing structure without reducing the requirements for any class of license.

Among its recommendations, the plan would eliminate the current Novice and Tech Plus class licenses and merge those operating privileges into a new license class equivalent to the current General ticket. The plan would replace the present named license classes with Class A, B, C, and D tickets, revise written examination requirement and content, and set 12 WPM as the highest Morse code test requirement. Most of the spectrum freed up by the elimination of the current Novice CW bands would be "refarmed" into expanded HF phone segments. Some would remain available for digital and CW, however. Announcement of the Board's plan generated a tumult of opinions pro and con within the Amateur Radio community. Comments received at League Headquarters have ranged from angry opposition to enthusiastic support, but by the end of the week in which the plan was announced, most Board members reported receiving somewhat more comments in favor than opposed.

The League has forwarded details of the plan in a letter to the FCC but will not petition for a rulemaking as it awaits public release of the Commission's own ham radio restructuring plans (see related story below). In its letter, the ARRL asked the FCC to "consider this restructuring plan as a means of modernizing and simplifying amateur radio licensing, and a means of making Amateur Radio available to more people."

Before the July meeting, the ARRL Board had twice voted down motions to consider changing the licensing structure. This time, the impending FCC rulemaking provided the impetus for the Board to issue its own plan, in time to stimulate debate on the topic and possibly serve as a counterpoint to the anticipated FCC proposals.

ARRL Board approval of the plan followed extensive discussion and debate during its recent three-day meeting. "The debate was, at times, contentious, and the result was not unanimous," said ARRL President Rod Stafford, W6ROD. The vote to approve the plan was 9 to 6. Most of those in the minority were

not opposed to simplifying the licensing structure, however, and there was sentiment for even fewer license classes.

"Some Board members preferred greater simplification; others were uncomfortable with some of the changes being proposed," Stafford observed. "However, every Board member, without exception, left the meeting knowing that each of his or her colleagues did what they believe is best for the future of Amateur Radio."

In developing its plan, the Board tied proposed reductions in Morse code requirements to corresponding increases in written examination standards. On the other hand, Board members were adamant that simplifying the structure should not come at the expense of privileges amateurs already have earned. This was the rationale to recommend granting the new entry-level Class C HF license to present Novice and Technician Plus licensees, who already have earned entry-level HF operating privileges.

Charts depicting the proposed operating privileges and licensing structure and the text of the League's letter to the FCC are available on the ARRL Web site at <http://www.arrl.org/news/restructuring/>. Members may comment on the ARRL plan via the Web or via e-mail to restrux@arrl.org.

Here are the highlights of the ARRL Board's restructuring plan:

- * The Class D license, equivalent to the current Technician class, would be the entry level ticket to Amateur Radio. Operating privileges and the written examination would remain at the same level as Technician, but the exam would be more consistent with Class D operating privileges.
- * The Class C would supplant the Novice as the entry level to HF. Under the League plan, all General, Tech Plus, and Novice licensees would become Class C licensees. The Class C ticket would convey current General privileges, but would offer bigger HF phone bands. Class C licensees would have access to another 50 kHz on 75 and 15 meters and another 25 kHz on 40 meters. To upgrade from Class D to Class C, an amateur would pass a written examination on the operational and technical qualifications required for HF operation plus a 5 WPM Morse code test.
- * All amateurs now licensed as Advanced would become Class B. The Class B would convey the privileges of the present Advanced license, but with additional phone privileges. The Class B ticket would offer an additional 50 kHz on 75 and 15 meters and another 25 kHz on 40 meters. To upgrade from Class C to Class B, an amateur must pass a more advanced written examination--similar in difficulty to the present Element 4A--and a 12 WPM Morse code exam.
- * All amateurs presently licensed as Amateur Extra Class would become Class A. The Class A ticket would convey the full privileges of the present Amateur Extra Class but, once again, with expanded phone subbands. Class A licensees would get an additional 50 kHz on 75 and 15 meters and another 25 kHz on 40 meters. To upgrade from Class B to Class A, an amateur would be required to pass the most difficult written examination in the sequence. The Advanced written test is considered the most difficult in the current exam sequence. Consistent with the practice in many other countries, no Morse code examination beyond 12 words per minute would be required for a Class A ticket.

Adoption of the simplification plan culminated some 30 months of work by the Board and embraced input from thousands of ARRL members, nonmembers, and prospective hams. The Board debated a wide variety of options including more and fewer license classes, higher and lower qualification levels, and different privileges.

Courtesy The ARRL Newsletter

SOLAR UPDATE

Solar sage Tad Cook, K7VVV, Seattle, Washington, reports: W9JJ wrote to point out that the statement in last week's bulletin that a K index of 6 was bad really only applies to HF. For VHF operators, geomagnetic disturbances often produce exciting propagation. A good VHF rule is when the K index is high to point your antenna toward the closest polar region--north in the Northern Hemisphere and south in the southern--to take advantage of auroral propagation. Estimated Planetary A indices of 37 on July 16 and again a week later on July 23 were certainly good times to listen for those gravelly auroral signals on VHF. W9JJ reported that when he lived in Wisconsin he would frequently find auroral propagation on 2 meters when the K index was only 3 or higher. When the K index was 6 it meant a solid 2 and 6-meter opening.

VHF has been producing a lot of interesting propagation lately, but not just from aurora. A lot of Hawaiian signals have been reported on the West Coast due to tropospheric ducting. WA6KLLK, K6FV and N6RZ reported hearing the KH6HME 2-meter beacon in Northern California early in the week, and later it was copied by a number of Pacific Northwest stations. KH6HME went on to fill several log pages with contacts. KJ6KO in Placerville, California has posted several .wav files of KH6HME working the 2-meter opening. You can hear them at <http://www.innecite.com/~kj6ko>

A number of stations reported 6-meter openings to Japan. JH2COZ worked K7CA in Nevada and heard many JA stations calling N5JHV in New Mexico and K7FF in California. G0JHC in Northwest England heard a VE8 6-meter beacon at S7.

Over the next week look for a rising solar flux, reaching 120 around July 28 to August 1. Flux values are expected to drop below 110 around August 7, and above 110 again after mid-August. Look for disturbed geomagnetic conditions again around July 30-31.

Sunspot numbers for July 16 through 22 were 113, 89, 76, 62, 90, 125, and 145, with a mean of 100. The 10.7-cm flux was 106.2, 100.3, 99.2, 103.6, 111.8, 110.3, and 114.1, with a mean of 106.5. The estimated planetary A indices were 37, 9, 5, 8, 6, 15, and 8, with a mean of 12.6.

Courtesy The ARRL Newsletter

Vanity update: The FCC in Gettysburg reports that it has processed vanity applications received through July 2. In a run on July 15, the FCC granted 216 call signs. Another 271 applications landed in the work in process (WIPs) stack. In a run July 22, the FCC granted 72 new call signs and 95 applications ended up in the WIPs stack. The FCC reports that all WIPs records have been processed. Courtesy The ARRL Newsletter