



FEEDBACK



Warminster Amateur Radio Club Web Page www.k3dn.org

February 2001

President's Message

After numerous recounts and legal challenges, we have the results of the January election. I would like to congratulate and welcome Burt Ludin (N3YVH) and George Brechmann (N3HBT) as Directors and Jack Jones (W3NTD) as Secretary. Taking on the responsibility of being an officer is a great way of giving back to the club. You become a part of the behind the scenes activities and have a greater role in influencing the future of the club. Why not consider running for office in the June officer election?

I'm sure by now you have cleaned out your attic and basement of all those treasures for the annual auction at the February meeting. It's a fun night and a chance to support the club. Remember all proceeds for auctioned items go to the club.

That's it for now --- I have to get set up to work the January contest. See you at the meeting.

Rocky, N3FKR

February Meeting Presentation Annual Club auction

First I would like to thank Brian Taylor N3EXA and Joe Bagnick N3EMA for being our speakers at the January meeting. They gave an excellent presentation on how we can maximize our score and participation in the January VHF contest.

February is our annual club auction. Tom Michaud WA3TQJ will once again be our esteemed auctioneer. If you have any radio related items that you no longer need and would like to donate to the club for auctioning, please bring them with you. Also, do not forget to bring some cash as Tom will make sure you buy something. Sitting on your hands does not work with him! It is interesting to see some of the bidding for an item. It has been vicious in the past.

Finally, Rick from HRO in Delaware will be talking to us in March about the retailing side of amateur radio. Rick made this presentation several years ago and it was very interesting and eye opening. He will again present the side of ham radio that few of us see as well as bring along several of the newest radios.

I hope to see you at all of these meetings. Until then,

73,

Mark - N3GNW
Vice-President

New Kid On the Block

By Mark Kempisty N3GNW

You may have heard a new member of the club on the two meter repeater. He has been talking up a storm and jumping into just about every QSO at any hour of the day or night. Unfortunately, he doesn't answer if you call him directly. And his comments may not always pertain to the conversation. He has been a member of club for the past three years but only active for the past couple of months. His name... RLC-Club by Link Communications.

Several years ago the club purchased a new state of the art repeater controller to replace the aging S-Com controller on the two meter repeater. While the S-Com was working fine it was getting old and if it failed would have been difficult to repair due to scarcity of parts. In the summer of 2000 I took possession of the controller and a temporary repeater set-up from Brian Taylor N3EXA and started configuring it. Since we plan to relocate the repeater within the Warminster Township building, we decided it would make sense to install the controller before everything else moved to minimize sources of problems. This took place in early December and in the matter of a few hours we had the new controller up and running.

The RLC-Club gives us a number of new capabilities. Its scheduler and voice announcements allow it to announce meeting, net and VE session reminders. Announcements for special events such as the hamfest will also be done. There is even a small digital voice recorder built into the controller. During the course of 24 hours, the controller automatically adjusts its operation freeing George N3HBT from having to do this. It goes into PL mode from midnight to 6:00 AM and out automatically as well as our Wednesday night net. The voice responses also make it much easier for George to confirm he has entered the correct command. We have the ability to offer members an autopatch capability which the repeater committee and the Board will be reviewing shortly. A temperature sensor was installed to monitor the repeater room temperature which can get quite warm.

Currently there are several commands available to the membership. To use, key your transmitter, enter the command number and un-key. They are:

- 400 - Speak a welcome message.
- 401 - Announce current time
- 402 - Announce current date
- 403 - CW identification

If you need to reach one of the control operators on the phone, you can use one of the following:

- 411 - Call N3HBT on the autopatch
- 412 - Call N3GNW on the autopatch
- 413 - Call N3EXA on the autopatch
- 414 - Call WI3Z on the autopatch
- 415 - Call N3OZO on the autopatch

I hope all of you enjoy the new controller. Some additional features will appear in the next few months, so be on the look-out for them. If you have any questions, feel free to call me on the repeater or see me at a club meeting.

WORKING WITH PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICIALS

Public service communications performed by ARES members are based on a number of requirements. Specifically, we must be accepted by public-safety officials; once accepted, our continued ability to contribute in times of disaster

is based on the efficiency and effectiveness of our performance. While acceptance, image, efficiency and effectiveness are all important to the ongoing working relationships between amateurs and officials, it is the initial acceptance that is often difficult to achieve.

Police and fire officials tend to be very cautious and skeptical concerning those who are not members of the public-safety professions. This posture is based primarily on experiences in which well-intended but somewhat overzealous volunteers have complicated, and in some cases jeopardized, efforts in emergencies. The amateur operator or other volunteer who wishes to be of assistance must be aware of this perception.

The police have generally had their fill of "groupies" or "hangers on." They can ill afford to

tolerate frustrated individuals who have always wanted to be police officers or firefighters, but for one reason or another have never reached that objective. There seems to be an abundance of people, especially during a crisis, who will quickly overstep the limits of their authority and responsibility if they are given any opportunity to assist in an official capacity. In their zeal, such persons often inhibit the actions of trained personnel. Worse yet, they can make an already dangerous situation even more so by their reckless abandon. With rare exception, Amateur Radio operators do not fall into this category. The problem is, however, that police officers in the midst of stressful operations may have extreme difficulty in distinguishing between those volunteers who are problem solvers and those who are problem makers.

Those very few hams who behave emotionally, are overzealous in offering their services or in describing their abilities or who abuse the established limits of their authority are doing the amateur fraternity a real disservice. The typical police officer or firefighter, like the typical civilian, does not understand the vast differences among various radio services, the types of licensing involved or the high level of expertise and discipline that is characteristic of the Amateur Radio Service.

When an amateur arrives at a scene and jumps out of a vehicle with a hand-held in each fist and two more clipped to the belt, all squawking at once, officials simply don't know how to respond. They are either overwhelmed by equipment they don't understand, or so awe-struck that they try to avoid what they perceive as threatening.

How Amateur Radio volunteers are accepted depends on their establishing a track record of competent performance in important activities. This begins with convincing officials that amateurs offer a cost-effective (otherwise known as free) substitute for functions previously paid for by the taxpayer. Local radio amateurs also must demonstrate that they are organized, disciplined and reliable, and have a sincere interest in public service.

The most effective way to accomplish this is for you, as head of your communications group, to initiate the contact with public safety agencies in an official capacity. This is better than having individual amateurs, particularly outside an organized structure, making uncoordinated and poorly prepared contacts that often result in an impression that your group is disorganized.

Approach that first meeting well-prepared, and give a concise presentation of Amateur Radio's capabilities. Illustrate accomplishments with newspaper clippings, QST articles, etc., highlighting Amateur Radio public service. Discuss the existing Amateur Radio structure, emphasizing that a certain number of qualified operators will be able to respond to the public's needs.

Demonstrate the reliability and clarity of amateur gear. Nothing is more impressive than asking for a roll call on a 2-meter repeater using a hand-held radio in the police or fire chief's office and having amateurs respond with full-quieting signals from locations where municipal radios are normally ineffective. Such a demonstration several years ago convinced officials in Laguna Beach, California to ask for the assistance of the South Orange County ARES. The wisdom of this decision became evident a short time later when that seaside resort community was hit by a series of local emergencies.

Suggest specific ways in which amateurs can be of assistance. Indicate you are aware that police and fire radio frequencies are usually saturated with tactical or operational traffic in emergencies, and offer to provide an administrative frequency for use in overall management and coordination of the relief effort. More importantly, offer to demonstrate what you are capable of doing by supplying a demonstration of your communications capabilities. It is of tremendous importance that you emphasize that the services supplied by your group will free public-safety officers for other duties.

Demonstrate how easily amateurs and their equipment can interface with public-safety efforts. A perfect way to do this is to demonstrate equipment that can be made operational quickly inside the headquarters building, in a mobile command post or in field units.

Express your group's willingness to meet the needs of the sponsor or agency you are dealing with. Show a readiness to provide training to your membership. Offer public-safety officials the opportunity to have their own representatives appear before your group and provide orientation and training they feel is essential.

Finally, be realistic and objective in terms of what your group promises to provide. Be fully

prepared to keep all promises you make. Remember to be organized and competent. Once you have implemented these suggestions, be patient. The requests for your services will be forthcoming, perhaps in a volume you had not anticipated!

Grass-roots action is the name of the game when it comes to achieving effective liaison. With the proper ground work accomplished in advance, recognition among those sponsors and agencies having communications needs can be dramatically increased. It's symbiotic; these people need us, and we want to help. Now that all the necessary introductions have been made, the rest is easy, for we are indeed the experts in meeting communications requirements of every sort.

-ARRL Public Service Communications Manual

FCC Adopts Consent Decree in Amateur Interference Case

NEWINGTON, CT, Dec 21, 2000--The second amateur cited by the FCC in a 1999 malicious interference case in Pennsylvania has cut a deal with the FCC to avoid paying a \$7500 fine. The FCC this week adopted a consent decree terminating its proceeding against Michael E. Gallagher, KB1DTA (ex-KB3DHX), of West Concord, Massachusetts. In exchange for not having to pay the fine, Gallagher agreed to turn in his ham ticket and not reapply for five years. He also must stay out of further trouble with the FCC.

The Commission said Gallagher had provided financial statements supporting his claim that paying the \$7500 forfeiture would cause him financial hardship.

Barring any unforeseen circumstances, the December 18 consent decree wraps up the FCC's malicious interference investigation of Gallagher and Kornwell H. Chan, W3CI, of Dresher, Pennsylvania. Also facing a \$7500 fine, Chan worked his own deal with the FCC last year. He agreed to give up his ham ticket until 2003 and cooperated with the FCC in its investigation. In exchange, the FCC waived the fine, provided there are no further violations.

In March 1999, Chan and Gallagher each were fined in connection with malicious interference to the Phil-Mont Mobile Radio Club VHF and UHF repeaters on two occasions the previous month. Following up on complaints from the Phil-Mont club, FCC personnel had monitored interfering signals that included transmissions of classical music and a person talking with a disguised voice. FCC personnel using direction-finding gear tracked the signal to a vehicle in Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, occupied by Chan and Gallagher and equipped with amateur gear.

The FCC cited Chan and Gallagher for failing to operate "in accordance with good amateur practice," failing to identify as required, transmitting music on amateur frequencies, and willfully impeding legitimate amateur communications. According to the FCC Order adopting the consent decree, Gallagher told one of the FCC agents that he had transmitted with a disguised voice on the Phil-Mont repeater's output frequency and had not identified by call sign. The pair also reportedly had told FCC officials that Chan used Gallagher's station to transmit music on amateur frequencies. The FCC said Gallagher was "equally responsible" for transmissions made using his station.

In April 1999, Gallagher responded to the Notice of Apparent Liability, admitting making interfering transmissions and agreeing to cooperate in the investigation. He also submitted his ham ticket for cancellation.

In the consent decree, Gallagher agrees to not contest the findings of the Notice of Apparent Liability that he violated FCC rules in February 1999, although the findings may not be used against him in any current or future proceedings--provided Gallagher does not violate FCC rules or the consent decree provisions.

Chan initially attempted to use the office of US Sen Richard Santorum to help buy time in replying to the Notice of Apparent Liability. His request for an extension denied, he negotiated with the FCC to give up his Extra ticket until 2003 in lieu of paying the \$7500 fine.

Neither the FCC Order nor the consent decree mentions Chan, his role in the FCC's investigation, or the disposition of the case against him.

Hello!

I am an amateur radio operator trying to make radio contact with all

3,076 counties mobile to mobile. I need a radio contact with a mobile operator in Bucks county. Please let me know if you operate mobile HF and if we can set up a schedule to make a contact. I think 40 meters would work best, however 20 meters may also work depending on conditions. If you do not operate HF mobile, please pass this note to someone else you know who does.

Thanks and 73!

Ace N3AHA

Ashburn, VA

n3aha@countyhunter.net

Normal Operating hours are weekdays after 2200z and most weekends.

Home Phone # is 703-729-1333

Or all my pager at 1-888-434-2056, press 1 for numeric page, and enter the frequency.

Or send an email to my pager at 4342056@skytel.com and tell me the county, frequency and time/date of a schedule. Thanks!

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