

All the (Amateur) news
that's fit to print

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NEXT BUSINESS MEETING: TUES. MARCH 18th,
8:00PM @ THE CLUBHOUSE.

**DON'T FORGET: CLUB DUES FOR 2008 ARE PAST
DUE. SEE PAGE 6 FOR MORE DETAILS.**



KiloWatt Harmonics

Check us out on the web: www.w3kwh.com

March, 2008

Editorial Ramblings

Well, March is finally here. We made it thru another winter season! On the plus side, it could have been worse. At least we didn't get socked with a lot of snow at once. Before you know it, the official start of spring will be here, followed by Dayton 2008, then Field Day, the PVGP, not to mention a whole bunch of hamfests and other local outdoor events that require our volunteered services. BTW, check out the hamfest listings on page 6. This is in addition to last month's listing.

Hope you were able to attend the annual WASHFest soiree, held on Feb 24 at the Castle Shannon Fire Hall. I understand they put on quite a successful show. Sorry Ye Olde Editor wasn't there; he was busy working overtime at work, building up his cash reserves for Dayton '08.

Did you work the Ducie Island VP6DX guys? They were very workable. Hope you managed to log 'em. Even at the bottom of the sunspot cycle, they managed to break the all-time DXpedition QSO record. Now, Clipperton Island is up signing TX5C. Hope you are able to put this one in your log too. On a side note; if you did in fact log them, consider sending them a little donation. Operations like this are very expensive to stage, and I think it'll help encourage future shows to rare spots when the

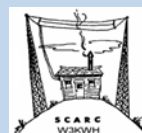
organizers know the amateur community will support their efforts. Check out the news on these and other operations on pages 2 and 3. Also, one of the biggest (and best) contests of the year is around the corner: The CQ WPX SSB Contest. Always lots of activity in this one; it's a fun contest to participate in. And, it's a great way to increase your country totals for DXCC.

BTW: Sunspot cycle 24 has officially started. Expected to peak around 2010-2011, the experts say it'll be a doozie, one of the best since records started being kept on them. So, now is the time to get your antennas and equipment upgraded and ready for the big dance when it comes.

Many thanks to those who have submitted articles over the last few months. They all help to make the newsletter interesting to read month to month. Keep 'em coming!!

Keep those pictures coming too! Lastly, thanks for all the kind comments about the newsletter that keep rolling in. Definitely, keep those coming too!!

That's all for now. Thanks for reading!!
73 de KQ3DX et al.



DX News & Views

Information gleaned from various issues of the ARRL DX Bulletin. Thanks to them for their permission to reprint.

- ♦ **UGANDA, 5X.** Nick, G3RWF will be QRV as 5X1NH from February 23 to March 22. Activity will be holiday style on 80 to 10 meters using CW, SSB, RTTY and PSK. QSL to home call
- ♦ **REUNION ISLAND, FR.** Jean Mary, F8CHM is QRV as FR5EZ from IOTA AF-016 until March 21. QSL to home call.
- ♦ **CRETE, SV9.** Willi, SV9/DJ7RJ will be QRV from February 25 to March 15. Activity will be on 160 to 10 meters using CW and SSB. QSL to home call.
- ♦ **KAZAKHSTAN, UN.** Rashad, UN/4J9M is active from here until April 23. QSL via DL7EDH.
- ♦ **OPERATION APPROVED FOR DXCC CREDIT.** The following operation is approved for DXCC credit: Bouvet Island, 3Y0E, operation from December 2007 to February 2008.
- ♦ **TAIWAN, BV.** Operator BU2ATI/9 will be QRV from the Matsu Islands, IOTA AS-113, from March 1 to 20. Activity will be on the HF bands using CW and SSB in his spare time. QSL to home call.
- ♦ **SOLOMON ISLANDS, H4.** Bernhard, DL2GAC will be QRV as H44MS from Honiara, IOTA OC-047, from March 5 to April 27. He will also be active from Lighthouse WLOTA LH-0086. QSL to home call.
- ♦ **WAKE ISLAND, KH9.** Colin, WA2YUN is QRV as WA2YUN/KH9 while on work assignment. He is active as time permits. QSL via K2PF.
- ♦ **NAURU, C2.** Dick, C21DL has been active on 160 meters between 1445 and 1540z. QSL via DJ2EH.
- ♦ **CZECH REPUBLIC, OK.** Special event station OL30SPACE is active until March 30 to commemorate Czech cosmonaut Vladimir Remek's flight into space in March, 1978. QSL via OK1TIR.
- ♦ **EGYPT, SU.** Hans, SU9HP has been active on 20 meters CW around 2000z. QSL via SC6A.
- ♦ **FALKLAND ISLANDS, VP8.** Ulli, DL2AH is QRV as VP8/DL2AH from Pebble Island, IOTA SA-002, until March 13. Activity is on 40 to 10 meters using SSB and some RTTY. QSL to home call.
- ♦ **CLIPPERTRON ISLAND, TX5.** The Clipperton Island DXpedition is gearing up. They will be active on all bands by the time you read this. They will be signing TX5C. QSL to the N7QCC ARC, Box 31553, Laughlin NV. 89028
- ♦ **EGYPT, SU.** Mustapha, DL1BDF plans to be QRV from the EARA club station SUOARA from March 11 to 19. Activity will be on all HF bands. He hopes to obtain permission to operate on 80 meters as well. QSL via SU1KM.
- ♦ **CONGO, 9Q.** Station 9Q1EK has been active on 160 meters around 0450z and 15 meters around 1000 to 1300z. QSL via SM5DJZ.
- ♦ **OPERATION APPROVED FOR DXCC CREDIT.** The following operation is approved for DXCC credit: Equatorial Guinea, 3C7Y, 2007 operation.
- ♦ **IRAN, EP.** Sadegh, EP3HF has been QRV on 15 meters around 0930z and then 17 meters around 1000z. QSL direct.
- ♦ **TOKELAU, ZK3.** Udo, DL9HCU is QRV as ZK3HC until March 16. He has been active on 20 and 17 meters at various times. QSL to home call.

KiloWatt Harmonics,
March, 2008

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Amateur Radio Club

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Ducie Island, VP6DX Wrap-Up

After 13 days, 7 hours and 37 minutes of continuous operation, the VP6DX Team on Ducie Island <<http://ducie2008.dl1mgb.com/index.php>> made their 168,723rd contact. Valeri Koursov, RA0ALM, of Krasnoyarsk, Russia, contacted the Ducie Island expedition on Monday, February 25, 2008 at 0437 UTC on 30 meters. According to documents maintained by Jari Jussila, OH2BU, this contact breaks the record for the largest number of contacts made by any radio expedition. The previous record was held since February 8-28, 2001 by the Five Star DX Association's DXpedition to the Comoros Island, D68C.

The Ducie Island DXpedition has broken other expedition records throughout the course of the DXpedition, including:

- * The largest number of RTTY contacts, previously held by the Swains Island N8S DXpedition in April 2007.
- * The largest number of SSB (voice) contacts, previously held by the Comoros Island D68C DXpedition.
- * The largest number of contacts on 40 meters, previously held by the Libya 5A7A DXpedition in November 2006.
- * The largest number of contacts on 30 meters, previously held by the St Brandon Island 3B7C DXpedition in September 2007.
- * The largest number of contacts on 17 meters, previously held by the Swains Island N8S DXpedition.
- * The largest number of contacts with North America, previously held by the Comoros Island D68C DXpedition.
- * The largest number of contacts with South America, previously held by the Peter I Island 3Y0X DXpedition in February 2006.
- * The largest number of contacts with Africa, previously held by the Rodrigues Island 3B9C DXpedition in March-April 2004.

The Ducie Island crew received inquiries about the equipment and antennas used on Ducie Island. They reported that each operating position used:

- * Elecraft K3 radio. They said "The outstanding receiver and

transmitter characteristics allowed us to run two positions simultaneously on any band -- even the very narrow 30 meter band -- with absolutely no interference. Good design makes the complex appear simple: the ins and outs of this sophisticated radio were quickly mastered by the operator team, none of whom had seen a K3 before the expedition."

- * Microham microKeyer II computer interfaces: plug in, turn on, call CQ and get to work.
- * Acom 2000, 1000 or 1010 amplifiers: quietly getting the job done without trouble. The position used on 160 meters includes an OM 2500 HF amplifier.
- * 200 W W3NQN bandpass filters from Array Solutions and 2 kW bandpass filters from 4O3A.
- * WinTest logging software running on Durabook ruggedized laptops.
- * Honda EM65is and EM30is inverter supply, gasoline generators. The operators report that the generators offer "100 percent reliability to date. The inverter system has been very tolerant of the widely varying loads presented to the generators as multiple operating positions switch between transmit (high power consumption) and receive (low power consumption), a vast improvement over previous gasoline generator designs."

The seven operating positions were divided into two sites: East (four positions) and West (three positions). The operating sites stood about 1 kilometer apart, a 15 minute walk over a coral shelf bordering the island's inner lagoon. Each site had its own WiFi network; a microwave link tied the two sites together. Sleeping tents and meals were located at the East camp.

The Ducie Island DXpedition closed down operations on Wednesday, February 27. Amateurs who had QSOs with VP6DX can check the online logs <<http://ducie2008.dl1mgb.com/online-log/index.php>>. -- Information provided by VP6DX Team



Minutes From The February 2008 Business Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 8 PM by the club president, WA3TTS, Mike. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, followed by a moment of silence for our Silent Keys and 23 members and 3 guests answered the Roll Call. The Treasurer's report was given by the Treasurer KA3YNO, Walt and was approved by the membership.

Committee Reports

Clubhouse WA3VXJ, Karl reported that N3VEF, Billy cleaned up for tonight's meeting. Billy and KA3MDN, George proposed that SCARC become an Army MARS site, which would also connect the club with FEMA and SHARES. Since there is only one other MARS site in PA, this would make our club unique and also be providing a public service. N3EQP, John moved that Billy and George make up a committee to investigate all of the ins and outs of this arrangement.

Technical Mike reported that the 6-meter amplifier was fried during the recent VHF contest and will need to be repaired.

Membership WA3BKD, Art gave the 3rd and final reading for prospective member KB3PNE, Colin who was voted into the club by the membership.

Newsletter Editor KQ3DX, Greg will print a reminder that dues are due by April, in the next 2 months newsletters as well as applications for membership.

Ways and Means WA3FWA, Joe will run the 50/50 raffle after the meeting and forward any members QSL cards to the ARRL outgoing bureau.

Contest WQ3T, David worked 32 CW QSO's from the club station during the recent 10 meter Breeze Shooters Ground Wave contest. There will be the CQ 160 meter phone contest this weekend, 2/23 & 24 and the North American QSO Party, digital (RTTY) .

Public Service KA3MSE, Lloyd said that volunteer ops are needed for the St. Patrick's Day parade.

Web Site Mike explained that the club needs hardware and a dial up line to set up a touch tone control to be able to remotely disconnect the echo link on the repeater. The necessary funds were approved for this project.

Old Business N3EQP, John announced that the library cabinet has arrived and needs to be set up in the clubhouse and that the approved books need to be ordered.

New Business KB3GMN, Carol inquired about the status of a stove for the kitchen. Karl suggested that we get a full size electric range with an exhaust hood. Karl, Carol and OM Ritchie, N3SBF will determine where the stove and hood could be placed and report their decision next meeting.

Good of the Order Karl is recovering from a recent heart attack and so he was asked to give us a run down on his stay in the hospital. He is recovering nicely and gets a month off from work for this adventure!

Motion to Adjourn by KB3NUQ, Bob.

50/50 raffle won by WA3VXJ, Karl.

Minutes submitted by Recording Secretary, WA3FWA, Joe



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The ARRL WPA Section Page

Our friend the groundhog has seen his shadow and predicted 6 more weeks of winter. At least during that time we have two hamfests to attend and prepare for better weather. The first hamfest will be on February 24 at the Castle Shannon Fire Department Memorial Hall 3600 Library Road (Route 88). This is Washfest 2008 and more details are available at [<http://www.n3sh.org/washfest_2008.htm>](http://www.n3sh.org/washfest_2008.htm). I look forward to seeing you at the hamfest. The second one will be on March 9 at Greensburg VFD Hose Co. #1 12 McLaughlin Drive. This is the Foothills ARC hamfest. Additional information for this hamfest is available at [<http://w3lww.org/Hamfest2008.pdf>](http://w3lww.org/Hamfest2008.pdf). Plan to attend and support the clubs that sponsor these events.

Several appointments have recently been made in the section, most of them in the ARES organization. The first appointment is that of Dave Heims, KA3SMF, has been appointed technical coordinator for the section. Also all four districts now have a district emergency coordinator appointed for each region. First appointment is Vic Pears, KX8V, from Mercer county is appointed as DEC of North 1. All reports from emergency coordinators in N-1 should be sent to Vic at [<kx8v_usa@yahoo.com>](mailto:kx8v_usa@yahoo.com). Don Cripe, KE3MM, of Beaver County is now the DEC of the south 1 district. All reports from S-1 should be sent to Don at [<cripe309@comcast.net>](mailto:cripe309@comcast.net). The next appointment is of Jason Bange, KB3PJF, of McKean County. Jason will be responsible for district N-2. Reports for N-2 should be sent to Jason at [<Jason_Bange@hotmail.com>](mailto:Jason_Bange@hotmail.com). Finally Drew McGhee, Ka3EJV, will handle the responsibilities of the S-2 district until someone is appointed so that Drew can continue his duties as EC for Blair County.

The records we have from HQ shows that we also are in need of emergency coordinators for the following counties: Beaver, Westmoreland, Warren, Somerset, Bedford, Fulton, Cambria, Elk, Cameron and Potter. Individuals interested in these positions or if someone is in the EC position for this county contact me for the appointment. We have found errors in the database before so it is possible you were overlooked. Anyone wanting to be considered for an appointment to one of the counties should go to [<http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/forms/fsd156.pdf>](http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/forms/fsd156.pdf) and complete the form, then save the form and email to me at [<n3mse@arrl.org>](mailto:n3mse@arrl.org). I will review and forward to the appropriate individual. The board of directors has created the position of assistant SEC and DEC. Anyone interested in these positions should also complete the form and email to me.

John Szwarc, N3SPW, has volunteered for the position of section emergency coordinator. John can be reached at [<n3spw@arrl.net>](mailto:n3spw@arrl.net). I want to thank all for their support of the ARES program as well as the NTS program. These two groups must work together to provide emergency communications in times of need. (Continued on page 7)

Local Misc. News/Stuff/Minutiae

Hamfest season is starting up again!! This one is for the Tri-State Radio Fest, **which will be held on April 20.**

Tri-State Radio Fest

Antique Radio Flea Market & Auction

Monaca, PA - Center Stage Banquet Hall

1495 Old Brodhead Rd. - PA-60 Exit 12 North

8:30 am - Noon

12 Noon: Auction by Richard Estes

Info: Regis Flaherty (724) 969-0643

Chris Wells (724) 942-1113

Ken Young (724) 843-3082

- ♦ **Pennsylvania's tower legislation is still languishing in committee. It is imperative that legislative action be taken on this important legislation before it dies in committee. Please contact your state legislators and seek their support for this legislation. For State Senators its Senate Bill - SB-884. For State representatives its House Bill - HB-1777. Please feel free to pass this information along to other Hams who may not receive Section-wide e-mail. Also recruit other interested persons to contact their state legislators asking for support on this legislation.**

Thank you all for your efforts and your concern on this issue. 73, Eric D. Olena, WB3FPL

- ♦ Also, coming up on April 27th, is the Two Rivers ARC Hamfest. This one'll be held at The Spectrum, 6001 Smithfield Street, in Elizabeth Township, (Little Boston). Admission is 5 bucks, tables are 10. VE testing is also available, but you gotta give 'em 48 hours notice. For info on the testing give 'em a call at: 412-664-1683, or shoot an E-Mail to: [<veteam@tworiversarc.com>](mailto:veteam@tworiversarc.com). For more infor on the hamfest itself, send an E-Mail to: [<hamfest@tworiversarc.com>](mailto:hamfest@tworiversarc.com)
- ♦ Congrats go out to the WASH group! I understand they had a great turnout at their annual WASHFest held on 2/24. Most, if not all of the tables were sold, lots of people showed up and a good time was held by all. The 2008 WashFest main prize winners were: **1st Prize, Kenwood TS-480SAT: Larry Staley, NX3X, Altoona, PA, 2nd Prize, Kenwood TH-D7A: George Sebeck, KA3Y GK, Grindstone, PA, 3rd Prize, SGC SG-239: Terry Churchfield, K3HKR, Pittsburgh, PA**
- ♦ The bad news: Fellow club member Karl, WA3VXJ suffered a mild heart attack prior to last month's business meeting. The good news: Karl was able to make it to the meeting, and I'm happy to report he was looking like his old self too. As a matter of fact he was able to go home from the hospital within hours of his arrival. Best wishes from the club Karl; I'd wish you a speedy recovery, but it appears (fortunately) that it is not necessary!!

Dues Are Due

Just a friendly reminder that dues for the 2008 calendar year are past due. If you have not sent in your dues for this year, stick a check or money order, made payable to SCARC in an envelope and send it to:

Steel City Amateur Radio Club

P.O. Box 281

Carnegie, PA. 15106

Better yet, if you have not been to a meeting lately, consider coming to the next business meeting and handing it to Walt, KA3YNO personally, and see the new roadway!! Tnx, 73 de KQ3DX et al.

The March Birthday Bunch

Mel, WA3RVD, 3/11

Bruce, N3GHI, 3/17

Frank "Doc", WB3DQV, 3/24

Harry, K3GJS, 3/24

Dave, AA3EE, 3/24

Mike, WA3PYU, 3/27

Best wishes go out to all our members celebrating that special day this month!



WPA Section News (con't)

Remember the WPA Phone and Traffic net meets on 3983 KHZ every evening at 5 PM. This time will change back to 6 PM with the time change on March 9.

On Saturday February 16 the Atlantic Division sponsored a club webinar to help clubs with ideas and assistance in increasing the membership for the local clubs. Many great ideas were presented by the group of panelists that served as presenters for the webinar. A thank you goes out to everyone that participated in the event. A very special thanks goes to ARRL Membership Manager - Katie Breen W1KRB and ARRL Member Volunteer and Program Department Assistant Manager - Norm Fusaro W3IZ for presenting the programs for the event. More webinar events are being planned to help various programs in the division. Copies of the presentations will be made available at a nominal fee from the division in the near future.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at upcoming hamfests and club meetings in the near future. I still have some dates available to attend your club function so contact me to schedule a talk at your club event. Also remember that Field Day 2008 is only about 4 months away.

73, John, N3MSE



Propagation

(Courtesy of the ARRL Bulletin)

Following five days of no sunspots, we saw one (number 984) on March 5 and 6, but it is fading off the west limb of the Earth-facing portion of the Sun. Solar activity is still very low. Sunspot numbers for February 28-March 5 were 12, 0, 0, 0, 0 and 13 with a mean of 3.6. The 10.7 cm flux was 70, 69.8, 68.6, 69.2, 68.4, 68.3 and 69.3 with a mean of 69.1. Estimated planetary A indices were 22, 27, 19, 8, 5, 4 and 8 with a mean of 13.3. Estimated mid-latitude A indices were 17, 18, 13, 8, 4, 3 and 7, with a mean of 10. For next week, NOAA and the US Air Force predict planetary A index of 5, 15, 15, 10, 10, 15 and 10 for March 7-13. Geophysical Institute Prague predicts unsettled to active conditions March 7, active geomagnetic conditions March 8 and unsettled conditions March 9-13. For more information concerning radio propagation, visit the ARRL Technical Information Service Propagation page <http://www.arrrl.org/tis/info/propagation.html>. To read this week's Solar Report in its entirety, check out the W1AW Propagation Bulletin page <http://www.arrrl.org/w1aw/prop/>



Website Of The Month

A monthly feature where I try to highlight websites that I hope our readers will find interesting. Ye Olde Editor's disclaimer: I have no interest, pecuniary or monetary in the websites listed here. Just trying to make for interesting reading. 73 de KQ3DX.

Our website pick for March:

The NG3K Amateur Radio Contest/DX Page,

[<www.ng3k.com>](http://www.ng3k.com)

This is a nice little page with links to many different pages of interest to the DX'er and Contester alike. You SWL enthusiasts will find this site of interest too. It has links for US and Canada AM/FM broadcast stations where you can search for a particular station. It also has a link for those interested in the history of broadcasting stations; the pioneer stations and such. You DX'ers and Contesters will find the propagation links as well as the links to different countries callbooks interesting too. You will also find a neat link that'll take you to CQ and ITU zone maps as well. Thinking about going on a DXPedition of your own? Check out the link on information on licensing abroad by OH2MCN. Here you'll find all the info necessary on getting your license in another country. You'll also find a database of online logs, so you can check and see if you've worked that rare DX station you've been chasing. If you need access to the DXCluster, there are many links to take you there. Bottom line; I'll be surprised if you don't find anything of interest here, whether it is DX'ing/Contesting, SWL related, propagation, etc.

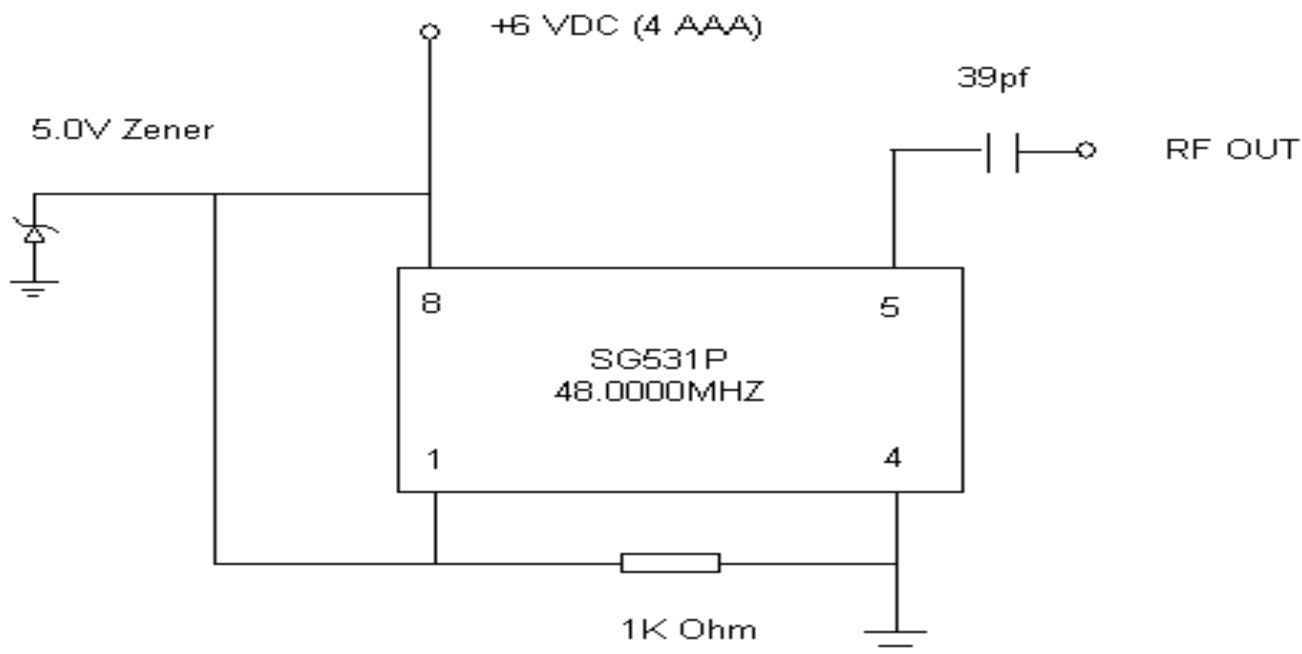
Lots of links are on this page, far too many to go into detail here. My suggestion: Check it out yourself. I think you'll find it to be quite handy, and you'll wind up bookmarking it for future use.

That's it for this month. Thanks for reading! 73 de KQ3DX



The Beginner's Help Desk

Attached is a simple harmonic marker generator useful from 48MHz through 10GHz. 73, Mike, WA3TTS



48 MHz Harmonic Oscillator SG-531P 5 VOLT ZENER B+ FOUR AAA BATTERIES

NEVER APPLY RF POWER FROM THIS OSCILLATOR DIRECTLY TO A RECEIVER ANTENNA INPUT---DAMAGE TO RECEIVER WILL OCCUR. TOTAL WIDEBAND POWER OUTPUT OF THIS OSCILLATOR APPROACHES 50MW (+17dBm). USE AT LEAST 40DB OF ATTENUATION BETWEEN THIS OSCILLATOR AND A VHF/UHF RECEIVER. SAFEST PROCEDURE IS TO USE A RUBBER DUCK ANTENNA ON THE BNC CONNECTOR BELOW 240 MHz, FOR 432 MHz AND UP. 1/2 WAVE DIPOLES OR 1/4 WAVE MONOPOLES ARE PRACTICAL ANTENNAS.

10 MINUTE WARM UP

Power measurements performed with HP-141T/8552B/8555A, Wavetek 2001A, and Bird Model 6250. February 8, 2008. WA3TTS

144.9978 MHz

431.9884 MHz

1295.9650 MHz

48 MHz + 10 dBm

96 MHz + 2 dBm

144 MHz - 2 dBm

240 MHz - 6 dBm

432 MHz - 14 dBm

912 MHz - 27 dBm

1296 MHz - 36 dBm

Typical received signal strengths on chimney mounted yagi @ 70~100ft:

144MHz S9+50, 432 MHz S9+40, 1296 MHz S7~8



W3SVJ's Goodies

The **KA3** Loveable **Nice Guy** himself. Kurt behind the controls of the “main” station. The well appointed operating desk has all of the standard ham radio accessories including a flat screen PC, SWR bridges and antenna switching gear. Power supplies and the Yaesu rotor controller keep things glowing and humming. The primary radio equipment is an FT-847 and a vintage Radio Shack 2 meter FM transceiver. The more observant reader might have noticed the “legacy” radio:

A very fine condition Collins 75A-4A of 1955 vintage.

The antenna farm, from the top down, consists of a 70 cm quad nested in a 2-meter quad with a 6 meter 3 element Yagi followed by a 4 element 5 band HF quad. The quads are by LIGHTNING BOLT, no longer (unfortunately) in business. All of the rotating antenna equipment is on a 50 foot tilt-over tower. Kurt also has a wire loop antenna about 360 feet around that covers 80 through 10 meters.



The “LEGACY” desk supporting all of the KA3LNG goodies had another ham radio life. It was Ziggy’s (W3UHM) operating position for many years. The 75A-4 was the primary receiver of Joe Ference, W3TVB. It’s nice to see these “historical” pieces, owned and used by friends now SK, still serving a useful purpose and carrying on the tradition.



“Captain Kurtie” in the command seat of KA3LNG mobile. The com-console sports an ICOM 2350 dual-bander (2/440) an ICOM 706 HF rig, a GARMIN GPS and a “portable” Mail Pouch **SPITTOON!**

A “screwdriver” antenna on the back of the manly Ford Explorer makes for a fine mobile station. (con't on next page)

W3SVJ's Goodies (con't)



Kurt's interest in ham radio started, as most of us, as a kid but he got his first ticket in 1983.

In 2007 he went for the EXTRA CLASS license and as you can see above, he was successful.

Thanks for the interview and we wish you many more years in the hobby.

Pictures by SONY, history by KA3LNG, errors by W3SVJ



FCC/ARRL Regulatory News

Information gleaned from various issues of the ARRL Bulletin. Thanks to them for their permission to reprint.

In a "Memorandum Opinion and Order" (MOO) http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-08-59A1.pdf released February 28, the FCC denied two petitions calling for General or Amateur Extra license applicants to demonstrate proficiency in Morse code. In December 2006, the FCC released a "Report and Order" (R&O) http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-06-178A1.pdf in the "Morse code proceeding," WT Docket 05-235, that eliminated Morse code testing as of February 23, 2007.

The "R&O" amended Section 97.501 to remove the telegraphy requirement. In reaching this decision, the FCC noted in the R&O that "one of the fundamental purposes underlying our Part 97 rules is to accommodate amateur radio operators' ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art, and that the Commission had previously concluded that an individual's ability to demonstrate Morse code proficiency is not necessarily indicative of his or her ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art." The FCC also noted that another fundamental purpose underlying Part 97 rules is "to enhance the value of the amateur service to the public, particularly with respect to emergency communications, and that the Commission had previously concluded that most emergency communication today is performed using voice, data, or video modes, because information can be exchanged much faster using modes of communication other than telegraphy."

The Commission therefore concluded that requiring an individual to demonstrate Morse code proficiency as a licensing requirement "did not further the purposes of the Part 97 rules." The Commission also found that this reasoning applied equally to the General Class and the Amateur Extra Class, so "it rejected suggestions that the Morse code requirement be eliminated for the General Class license but retained for the Amateur Extra Class license." (continued on page 13)

The E-Bay Report

A monthly feature where I try to highlight some of the more interesting auctions currently on E-Bay. Ye Olde Editor's Disclaimer: I have no interest, either pecuniary or monetary in any of the auctions listed here. Just trying to make for interesting reading. CUL/73 de KQ3DX

Our topic this month: E-Bay Amps and Tuners II

First up for grabs was this beautiful Alpha amp. Like everything else in life, there are Caddys and there are Yugos. Alpha amps are definitely the Cadillac of amps. This one is the Alpha Model 99. In extremely clean condition, it was well kept. This baby'll hum at 1.5KW all day long and not even burp. Complete with the manual, the original box, and even the original receipt. If you are lucky enough to own one, you know it'll be the last amp you'll ever have to purchase. Lots of activity was seen on this one. 25 bids were received, driving the final price to \$3049.99. Not bad for a late model amp considering new Alphas are going for \$5200.00.



The Alpha 99 as seen on E-Bay. A powerful desktop kilowatt-and-a-half.

I also came across some nice tuners this month. Ye olde editor is considering upgrading his HF tuner, so I am especially interested in the PalStar line of tuners. I would've liked to had the Nye-Viking MB5 tuner listed last month, but since they've been discontinued, they are getting harder and harder to find. So, I came across this PalStar AT-Auto 1500 automatic tuner. This one was clean inside and out: No scratches on the outside, and no signs of arcing on the inside. It also had the latest software upgrade available installed, and came complete with all the necessary cables,

and also the original manual. 7 bids were received for a total of \$935.00. A nice bargain for a top-of-the-line tuner. These are still in production and are selling for around \$1300.00 new at the radio candy-stores.



The Palstar AT1500 Auto-Tune Tuner as seen on E-Bay. This would look really good sitting next to that Alpha 99 amp.

Another Alpha amp I came across was this nice-looking Alpha 374A. This one is a little older. It was manufactured by Alpha when Dick Ehrhorn, W4ETO (now W0ID) was still running the operation. This one had a replacement face from Alpha installed, and it looked to be in very clean condition. Other than just a few minor scuffs on top, the owner gave it a 9.5 out of 10 cosmetically. Comes with the original manual, and the original transformer (shipped separately. Usually the transformers weigh more than the amp itself.) It had a buy-it-now price of \$1475.00, and only one bid was received for \$1000.00. But since the reserve was not met, it went unsold. Maybe this one will be up again soon.

(more E-Bay stuff continued on page 12)



The E-Bay Report (con't)



The Alpha 374 Amp as seen on E-Bay

I also came across another PalStar tuner. This time it was the AT1500BAL Balanced Line tuner. This particular model is manufactured strictly for balanced line antennas, such as ladder-line, or open wire feeder antenna systems. Perfect for those who have a multi-band dipole fed with 450 Ohm ladder line. Clean inside and out, no scratches on the case, and no signs of arcing or burning inside. 6 bids were received on this unit, and the final selling price was \$494.00. Although no longer manufactured, the current PALSTAR offering, the BT1500A is selling for about 700 bucks at your favorite radio store. Someone got a top-of-the-line tuner for a nice price.



The Palstar AT1500BAL Tuner as seen on E-Bay. This one is only for tuning balanced line antenna systems

If you wanna be my friend, just start talking about Boatanchors. I love 'em. Especially ones like this one. This is a Drake R4-C Receiver in absolutely pristine condition. This is the type of stuff that is in high demand by operators and collectors alike. This particular specimen was absolutely loaded with lots of extras. The radio was upgraded recently by Sherwood engineering with all Sherwood mods including: The switchable CF-2K/8 8-pole SSB 1st 1F filters; the INRAD 56H6.06 600Hz 6-pole 1st 1F CW filter; the FC-4 filter capacitor replacements; the AMP-4 audio amplifier; the MIX-4 solid state balanced 3rd mixer; the PD-4 Product Detector; the PS-7182 Power Supply Mod; the PTO Output Circuit Change; the 1st I.F. SSB Filter and Relay Switch Kit; the R-4C new replacement power supply board and the Custom AF/Rf Upgrade. This Drake R-4C has a total of 4 installed I.F. filters; (2 stock and 2 additional), 2 are 1st I.F. filters; (8kc stock drake and 600/6HZ INRAD; competition grade switchable) All these upgrades, including the switching, are described and illustrated on the Sherwood Engineering website as are the specs for the upgraded R-4C receiver. Also the receiver has had the cool Blue LED mod done and includes the NB-4 Noise Blanker; FL-6000 AM Filter; FL-2.3 Inrad SSB Filter; FL-1500 RTTY Narrow SSB Filter; FL-500 CW Filter; FL-250 Narrow CW Filter; and the Xtal Calibrator and Original Owners Manual. Lots of activity was seen on this one. Final price: \$1175.00



The Drake R4-C Receiver as seen on E-Bay. Rigs of this vintage in this condition are few and far between. That's why bidders go crazy over ones like this.

That's it for this month. Thanks for reading! 73 de
KQ3DX



FCC/ARRL Regulatory News (con't)

In the wake of the FCC's actions in WT Docket 05-235, two amateurs submitted separate petitions to the FCC, asking them to bring back the testing. Anthony R. Gordon, KG6EQM, of West Covina California, objected to the FCC eliminating the telegraphy examination element as an examination requirement for the Amateur Extra Class operator license. Russell D. Ward, W4NI, of Nashville, Tennessee, requested the FCC reconsider their decision for "'strictly procedural'" reasons.

Gordon asserts that "'the failure to keep the Morse code telegraphy requirement intact, at least as a required examination element for the Amateur Extra Class operator license, fails to take into consideration the significant national security implications that require retaining adequate examination safeguards to insure the viability that Morse code telegraphy provides, not only to the Amateur service, but the nation as well.'" Gordon argues that the requirement should be retained so that amateur operators can act as "a 'strategic reserve,'" because there is "no assurance that...voice or digital modes will even be operationally viable in future emergency communication environments."

The FCC was not persuaded, however, that eliminating the Morse code examination element will affect national security or emergency communications. "We agree with the commenters who point out that requiring applicants to pass a one-time telegraphy examination did not and would not guarantee a supply of skilled telegraphy operators. Moreover, nothing in the Commission's decision prevents an interested amateur radio operator from pursuing Morse code proficiency."

The FCC reiterated their prior conclusion that "an individual's ability to demonstrate Morse code proficiency does not further the underlying purposes of the Part 97 rules, i.e., to accommodate individual contributions to the advancement of the radio art and to enhance the value of the amateur service to the public. Accordingly, we deny the petition."

In the MOO, Ward states that he "encountered difficulty" in submitting his comments and reply comments to the NPRM electronically and that his filings were not posted on the ECFS (the Commission's electronic filing system) until after the deadlines had passed. He asserts that "there is no cer-

tainty that the Commission considered his comments and reply comments, that the late posting of his comments prevented others from replying to them, and that it is 'quite likely that other comments were treated improperly.'" As a result, Ward requested that the FCC "stay the proceeding, reopen the record and reconsider the NPRM after the close of the extended comment period."

The FCC claims that all comments in the ECFS "were considered before the Commission adopted the Report and Order, regardless of the how or when they were filed. Moreover, many of the 3900 comments and reply comments expressed the same view as Mr. Ward, so the substance of his views unquestionably was replied to and considered. Finally, he provides no evidence that ECFS mishandled other comments. No other party has complained that his or her comments were not received. We conclude, therefore, that reopening the proceeding for additional comments is not justified, and we deny the petition."

In summary, the FCC said neither petition asserted "any grounds for reconsidering" the decision in the Report and Order. "We believe that the actions taken therein will allow amateur service licensees to better fulfill the purpose of the amateur service, and will enhance the usefulness of the amateur service to the public and licensees."

Credits/Thanks



Thanks goes all to all those who contributed to this month's newsletter:

W3SVJ, WA3TTS, WA3FWA, KA3LNG, N3DOK,
W3WN, N3MSE, & ARRL

Thanks for your efforts. They help make the newsletter a better read for all of us.

That's all for now. CU next month with more news/features/minutiae from the world of Amateur Radio

CUL/73 de KQ3DX et al.



February 2008						
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March 2008

April 2008						
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26	27	28	29	30		

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 <i>ARRL Int'l DX SSB Contest</i>
2 <i>WASH Sun. Eve. Net</i> <i>ARRL Int'l DX SSB Contest</i> <i>DARC 10M Digital Contest</i>	3 <i>Breezeshooters Net</i> <i>RSGB 80M Club Test Data</i>	4 <i>WACOM 10M Net</i> <i>WACOM 2M Net</i> <i>SkyView Business Meeting</i>	5 <i>SCARC Social Nite</i> <i>Alleg Co. ARES Net</i>	6 <i>SkyView 2M Net</i> <i>SkyView 2M Net</i> <i>WACOM Meeting</i>	7 <i>NCCC Sprint</i>	8 <i>RSGB Commwealth Contest</i> <i>Oklahoma QSO Party</i> <i>EA PSK31 Contest</i> <i>Idaho QSO Party</i>
9 <i>RSGB Contest</i> <i>Oklahoma Q Party</i> <i>EA PSK31 Contest</i> <i>Idaho QSO Party</i> <i>UBA Spring Contest CW</i> <i>WASH Net</i>	10 <i>Breezeshooters Net</i> <i>Wisconsin QSO Party (also on 3/09)</i>	11 <i>WACOM 2M Net</i> <i>WACOM 10M Net</i>	12 <i>SCARC Social Nite</i> <i>Alleg Co. ARES Net</i> <i>NHARC Business Meeting</i>	13 <i>SkyView 2M Net</i> <i>WASH Business Meeting</i>	14	15 <i>10-10 Int'l Mobile Contest</i> <i>Russian DX Contest</i> <i>VA QSO Party</i> <i>Feld-Hell Sprint</i>
16 <i>Palm Sunday</i> <i>Russian DX Contest</i> <i>UBA Spring Contest 6M</i> <i>VA QSO Party</i> <i>WASH Net</i>	17 <i>St. Patrick's Day</i> <i>Breezeshooters Net</i>	18 <i>WACOM 2M Net</i> <i>WACOM 10M Net</i> <i>SCARC Business Meeting</i> <i>SkyView Social Nite</i> <i>2 Rivers ARC Business Meeting</i>	19 <i>Alleg Co. ARES Net</i>	20 <i>Spring Begins</i> <i>SkyView 2M Net</i> <i>RSGB 80M Club Championship SSB</i> <i>NCCC Straight Key/ Bug Sprint</i>	21 <i>Good Friday</i> <i>NCCC Sprint</i>	22 <i>BARTG Spring RTTY Contest</i>
23 <i>Easter Sunday</i> <i>BARTG Spring RTTY Contest</i> <i>UBA Spring Contest 2M</i> <i>WASH Net</i>	24 <i>Breezeshooters Net</i>	25 <i>WACOM 2M Net</i> <i>WACOM 10M Net</i>	26 <i>SCARC Social Nite</i> <i>Alleg Co. ARES Net</i>	27 <i>SkyView 2M Net</i>	28	29 <i>WASH Club Breakfast</i> <i>CQ WPX DX SSB Contest</i>
30 <i>CQ WPX DX SSB Contest</i> <i>WASH Net</i>	31 <i>Breezeshooters Net</i>					

March 2008

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April 2008

May 2008

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 WACOM 2M Net WACOM 10M Net SkyView Business Meeting	2 Alleg Co. ARES Net SCARC Social Nite	3 SkyView 2M Net WACOM Meeting	4 Montana QSO Party	5 EA RTTY Contest Missouri QSO Party Montana QSO Party QCWA QSO Party SP DX Contest
6 WASH Net EA RTTY Contest Missouri QSO Party QCWA QSO Party SP DX Contest	7 Breezeshooters Net RSGB 80M Club Champ. CW	8 WACOM 2M Net WACOM 10M Net Foothills ARC Business Meeting	9 Alleg Co. ARES Net NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint SCARC Social Nite NHARC Business Meeting	10 SkyView 2M Net WASH Meeting	11	12 Yuri Gagarin DX Contest Georgia QSO Party JIDX CW Contest EU Spring CW Sprint
13 WASH Net Georgia QSO Party UBA Spring Contest SSB Yuri Gagarin DX Contest JIDX CW Contest	14 Breezeshooters Net	15 WACOM 2M Net WACOM 10M Net SCARC Business Meeting SkyView Social Nite 2 Rivers ARC Business Meeting	16 Alleg Co. ARES Net RSGB 80M Club Champ. SSB	17 SkyView 2M Net	18	19 Ontario QSO Party Michigan QSO Party Holy Land DX Contest YU DX Contest EU SSB Spring Sprint
20 Tri-State Radio Fest WASH Net Ontario QSO Party Michigan QSO Party YU DX Contest	21 Breezeshooters Net Run For The Bacon QRP Test	22 WACOM 2M Net WACOM 10M Net	23 Alleg Co. ARES Net SCARC Social Nite SKCC Sprint	24 SkyView 2M Net	25	26 Florida QSO Party WASH Breakfast SP DX RTTY Contest
27 WASH Net Florida QSO Party Two Rivers ARC Hamfest SP DX RTTY Contest	28 Breezeshooters Net	29 WACOM 2M Net WACOM 10M Net	30 Alleg Co. ARES Net SCARC Social Nite			

**The Steel City Amateur Radio Club
(412) 787-0777**

**2M Repeater:
147.030/147.630MHz (PL 123.0)**

**70cm Repeater:
444.450/449.450MHz (PL 103.5)**

**WA3TTS Beacon: 144.300MHz
(CW)**

**ATV Repeater: 426.250MHz
(Currently off-line. Contact AA3EE
for more info.)**

**1296MHz Beacon: 1296.269MHz
(CW) 1W**



We're on the web!

www.w3kwh.com

**The Steel City Amateur Radio
Club is an ARRL-Affiliated
organization**



**Some friendly reminders: Next business meeting is
on March 18, 8:00PM @ the clubhouse. Also, don't
forget to send in your dues for the 2008 calendar
year. See page 6 for details.**



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