



## **COLUMBIA-MONTOUR AMATEUR RADIO CLUB NEWSLETTER FOR MARCH, 2008**

<http://www.qsl.net/cm-arc/>

### **NEW ID BADGES TO BE ISSUED AT OUR MARCH REGULAR CLUB MEETING**

Our RACES Officer for Columbia County, Randy, N3JPV, has some important information for us. Jim Cunningham, an official of Columbia County Emergency Management, will bring his equipment for making the new RACES ID badges to our next club meeting on March 11<sup>th</sup>. Those RACES operators who have completed two emergency operations courses, IS-100 and IS-700, will be issued a new I.D. badge. The new ID badges will be required for RACES operators who will take part in the drills or actual emergency communications. Those operators who have qualified for a new badge are:

**Bill Barnes, Larry Bezdziecki, Belina and Richard Daring, Robert Foster, Jim Hancock, Paul and William Hoops, Victor Klein, Terry Lemon, Jack McCormick, Michael Miguez, John Moyer, Dennis Nichols, Wayne Robbins, David Shack, Andrew Shecktor, Jere Vetz, Charles Wasko and Randy Kishbaugh**

#### **Special from Randy, N3JPV:**

Those whose names appear above need to attend our March 10 meeting to have their ID issued, please plan to attend. J Cunningham has no time to take pictures during the day at the Columbia County EOC. The new ID badges are important because the next PPL-SSS drill in October 2008 will be evaluated by both PEMA and FEMA.

For RACES operators who have not completed the two courses, the courses may be taken on-line. The info is on our club website:

[http://www.gsl.net/cm-arc/ARES\\_RACESDOC/2007%20Required%20RACES%20Training.pdf](http://www.gsl.net/cm-arc/ARES_RACESDOC/2007%20Required%20RACES%20Training.pdf)

Notice that if you are taking a course on-line, you must complete the course without interruption. That is, you cannot stop part way through. If you do, you must begin at the beginning once again.

If you have any questions regarding this, contact Randy, N3JPV. Randy's email is [n3jpv@arri.net](mailto:n3jpv@arri.net) and his cell is (570) 441-1896.

## **WEATHER DRILL ON MARCH 13**

This info from Randy, N3JPV:

Weather drill is March 13 Thursday 10am-2pm, we need relay stations for both VHF and HF. We will first call the net on the 147.225 repeater, Harrisburg PEMA HQ will be on HF near 3995.5 or 3987.5 147.225 145.37 and 145.11. Linda, K3BD, and myself will attend the weather briefing on March 10 Monday at 10am. Linda and Randy will be at the Columbia County EOC. Andy, N3OMA, will be our MARS liaison station from his home. Everyone is welcome to check in if you're available Thursday March 13 between 10-2.

## **PPL DINNER ON MAY 15**

Randy, N3JPV, reminds us that the PPL dinner to recognize emergency responders (including RACES volunteers) will be held on May 15<sup>th</sup>. More details will be forthcoming!

## **NEWS OF DICK, WA3PGQ, FROM SKEETER, WA3IIA**

Skeeter, WA3IIA, recently visited with Dick, WA3PGQ. Dick lived on North Market Street in Berwick for many years. Here is Skeeter's report:

In the fall of 2004 I sent out an email stating that I was selling the ham equipment of Dick Cocklin (WA3PGQ). Dick was having medical problems and had to move to Rockville Md. to stay with his sister and then eventually moved to an assisted living home. Dick was diagnosed with Picks disease, which is something like Alzheimer's disease. Dick became very unsociable and would not talk to people and had trouble remembering things.

Previously Dick lived on North Market Street in Berwick and became a ham in the early 1970's. Dicks shack was a room in the basement that was framed out and then paneled. It happened that there was a moisture problem in his basement and he always had a dehumidifier running. When I would visit Dick I could smell the mustiness in the shack. Dick spent a lot of time on the radio and sometimes slept in his shack. It turns out that there was mold growing in the wood framing and the back paneling and that the mold may have caused his medical problem. When Dick moved to his sisters house I went to collect his equipment. To get rid of the mold a contractor had removed all of the paneling, framing, and anything else that was wood or paper from the shack.

On Feb 15<sup>th</sup> my wife and I went to visit Dick (WA3PGQ) at his sisters house in Rockville Maryland. I was really surprised how much he had improved since they changed his diagnosis and medicine, it was like he never had a problem. He looks good and his mind is really sharp. He watches a lot of TV and keeps up with current events. We were talking about some of the things that we did over 30 years ago and he remembered more than I did. He still does not have an interest in ham radio, I asked if he would want a scanner to listen to the activities in their area. He was in the Air Force and liked to listen to the airliners. There would be a lot for him to listen to in the Baltimore/Washington D.C. area. I will check with his sister later and see if the scanner idea would be ok.

If anyone would like to send Dick a card or letter his address is.

Richard Cocklin

14212 Brad Drive

Rockville MD 20853

This article by Skeeter, WA3IIA

## **MEMBERS DISCUSS HF MOBILE ANTENNAS**

**Bill, K3WJH, called me and asked about HF mobile antennas. Since I had never run HF mobile, I asked several club members to share their expertise with Bill concerning HF mobile antennas. Their information**

**about mobile antennas was so good, I thought it would be a good idea to share their info with everyone. The first message below is from Vic, WA4THR:**

Hello, Bill. Bob Foster says you are planning to run HF mobile and that you were interested in antennas. I have been doing more HF operating mobile than fixed for the last 4-5 years and may be able to help. First, however, I'll say the bands right now are horrible for mobile ops because propagation is so bad. I suspect if I had started today I would be so discouraged that I might give it up. But, memories of the fun and amazing contacts I was routinely making just a couple of years ago keeps me hanging in there waiting for more sunspots.

I use a Yaesu FT-857 and a Yaesu ATAS-100 antenna presently, although I started with that same radio and a tri-mag mount with a handful of hamsticks. That original antenna setup worked, was quite inexpensive, and allowed me enough operating to whet my appetite for more. Running a remotely tuned screwdriver antenna is absolutely better, though. First, mobile antennas are pretty sharp as they are all highly loaded and small deviations from the "set" frequency start increasing SWR. Some radios, like my Yaesu, start folding back power and sometimes that isn't pretty...mine seems to actually interrupt the signal rapidly rather than making a clean reduction. A remotely tuned antenna is always available at a low SWR, eliminating that problem. Also, getting out of the car at night in a snowstorm to change bands isn't much fun. While you might start with something simple, in the long run, if you stay with HF mobile, you'll want a screwdriver-type antenna. They are expensive, and even the Yaesu, which is about the least costly, can run close to \$300 when new. I particularly like the ATAS antenna and radio interaction as you can tune the antenna without taking your eyes off the road...just press tune on the radio and it automatically adjusts the antenna up or down for minimum SWR, returning to receive when completed. This combo only requires running the coax, too, as the control voltages are sent over the coax instead of a separate cable. Finally, this antenna is quite compact and easily removable, making it less obtrusive than some.

On the negative side, all screwdrivers, and especially the ATAS series, require a VERY good ground at the antenna to work properly, and a tight DC-connection on the coax back to the radio for the Yaesu types. Most complaints that "it doesn't work" are related to a ground issue, ultimately. The ATAS is supposed to work from 7MHz to 440MHz, but use above 6m is not very good and you're better off with a separate VHF/UHF antenna, which also allows you to scan between the local repeater and HF simultaneously. Other small screwdrivers (Little Tarheel and High Sierra Sidekick) can also include 80m, but on any of these the performance below 20m is naturally restricted. I don't use 80m much anyway, so I didn't miss that except for emergency comms, but in those cases I carry an 80m hamstick with an adapter

and I can swap out the ATAS quickly. Finally, my impression of the ATAS antennas is that they are a bit more fragile than some others, and prone to some auto-tuning issues as the installation ages and connections corrode a little. Currently, I can operate mine routinely in manual mode (push up or down and watch the SWR as with other screwdrivers), but sometimes it fails to tune automatically. I keep intending to work on that issue, but bands are so poor that I just haven't gotten the round tuits lined up just right.

Let me know if you have any questions, and good luck with your installation!

=Vic=  
WA4THR

### **Now here is the response from Mike, N3BUD:**

Bill,

K3QIA, Bob, asked me to e-mail you pertaining to mobile operations. There are a multitude of antennas that work well so you need to decide what your operating habits are going to be. I have run a multitude of different ones on my vehicles. From large screwdrivers to ham sticks, each one has it's own good points and draw backs. The best performer I used was a large screwdriver antenna, the easiest was an automatic antenna tuner (AH4 was the best) and a steel whip (good 10-20 / 40 so so). I did run the antenna tuner with a manual screwdriver that worked very good 10-80 if I took the time to set the whip near the band of operation.

Do you want the capabilities to change bands on the move?

Will you want to get out of the vehicle to change bands?

Will you be interested in just a couple specific frequencies?

Do you want the big signal that comes with a bigger antenna?

Or the convenience of a small multiband?

Any garage issues to concern yourself with?

Lots to consider and mobile operation can be a challenge. Just when you think you have got it all working right something will pop up, usually a ground issue, that will change your ability to get a good SWR and at 10% efficiency you need to keep it all good to squeeze the most out you can.

I'll provide you the help/information I have if you want.

Mike Hoover, N3BUD

## Now the message from Mike, N3IRN:

HI Bill,

Hope you and your family are doing fine.

Bob Foster tells me you have an interest in running HF mobile. There are several considerations, first one is how much are willing to spend, what bands you wish to operate, and then there is the radio you wish to use. There are a lot of options as far as mobile antennas are concerned: Ham Sticks, Hustlers, and screwdrivers to name a few. The Ham Sticks and Hustlers are single band antennas, but you can buy adapters for the Hustlers to make it a tri-band. The screwdriver comes in several choices of multiple bands, like 80-10 meters, or 40-6 meters, some have 160 add on coil, and many manufacturers to choose from. Then comes the fun part of drilling holes in your truck or car to set up the antenna; more holes to get the wires thru to the cab and to the engine compartment to get the power from the 12 volt from the truck battery. I am very sure you have seen my truck configuration, I have a screwdriver antenna (the name comes from using the motor from a cordless 12 volt screwdriver like the type you can buy at home depot, so you can tune the antenna without getting out of the truck), and I can work 80 to 10 meters mobile, I also have the 160 meter coil. I use an Icom IC-706 MK and I can work 2 meters all mode as well, just with one radio (very convenient too). there are other things to take into consideration as well; and I am going to provide you with some web sites that cover everything.

Talking from experience, I have used Ham Sticks, Hustler resonators with hustler mast, and tri-band adapters, and I have been using my screwdriver for a very long time. The signal on the screwdriver antenna is phenomenal, and it tunes all bands without getting out of the car. The other antennas are single bands, there fore you have stop and get out of the car to change bands, or to retune (this could prove to be a nightmare, especially in bad weather). So if you want to work 80,40, 30,20,17,15,12, 10, and 6 meters you need 9 antennas (each one is \$28.95, that is a total of 260.55 plus shipping or tax depending where you buy them), you still need coax, and a mount. At this price, you are better off using a screwdriver antenna which usually comes ready to go except the mount.

Here are some web sites to visit

Ham Sticks® <http://www.hamstick.com/9106.htm>

Hustler Antennas [http://www.new-tronics.com/main/html/mobile\\_hf.html](http://www.new-tronics.com/main/html/mobile_hf.html)

A review on all kinds of mobile antennas by e-Ham

<http://www.eham.net/reviews/products/12>

Excellent article by Alan Applegate <http://www.eham.net/articles/14720>

Mike, N3IRN.

**And, for good measure, I asked my brother, Dick, W5TA, who lives in Texas, to share his experiences with HF mobile antennas:**

Hello Bill,

The brands of screwdriver antennas some local guys use here are the Tarheel which is marketed by WB0W ( [www.WB0W.com](http://www.WB0W.com) ), and the High Sierra ( [www.cq73.com](http://www.cq73.com) ). Both are advertised in QST. If you can afford one, they offer good performance and the ability to QSY while driving anywhere from 80 to 10 meters. Yaesu and ICOM both make small screwdriver antennas which are over priced, give poor performance, and are fragile. I told Bob how I ran skeds from

Texas to Ohio on 17 meters and my Yaesu ATAS-100 was one to two S-units below my Hustler. Then the ATAS quit on me.

If you have a rig like an ICOM 706, old FT-100, or FT-857, they have built in tuning capability for their wimpy ICOM / Yaesu screwdriver antennas. You can find interface boxes that will allow those features to work with screwdrivers made by other manufacturers.

If you are going to primarily operate one or two bands, and you don't need to switch bands often, you might try a Hustler. That is what I mainly used. They give good performance at a modest price, but (naturally) they have their limitations. One is that you have to stop the car, tilt over the antenna and change resonators to change bands. The resonators (last I knew) go for about \$30. If you only want a couple bands, that's not too much to fork out. They also have bandwidth limitations which can be quite severe on the low bands (like 10 KHz on 80 and 20 or 30 KHz on 40m). So the screwdriver is nice if you want to go from say 3700 KHz to 3990 KHz on 75m. One nice feature that they don't advertise is that they will work on 6 meters regardless of what resonator you have on the top. Any resonator will act like a trap and the lower part is a quarter wave on 6m.

If you don't mind having a bizarre looking antenna on your pickup, Hustler makes a little plate that allows attachment of 3 resonators. I have operated with that. It takes a strong base spring and some guying to prevent laying over the vertical at highway speed due to wind drag. I got lots of stares using it. It also reduces the bandwidth of each resonator and takes a lot of fiddling to get the SWR down all 3 bands on your frequency range of interest. But it does work, one of the locals here, K5OT, has won the Texas QSO Party rover category making over 1,000 QSO's with this arrangement.

If you need the "el cheapo" way out, then you can try a Ham Stick. I just have a problem believing their spiral wound fiber glass pole arrangement will perform. Some guys claim they do. I have no first hand experience with them. I also think they make a model that has banana jacks up its length where you can plug in a jumper to change bands.

So, like I told Bob, it depends a lot how much you can afford and what your style of operating is. If you just want to get on 75 meters and talk to your buddies who have a round table on the same frequency every day go with a Hustler or maybe a Hamstick. If you would like to chase DX on whatever band is open (40, 20, 17 or 15), then go for a screwdriver.

One last comment, I particularly liked operating 17m mobile. You can rag chew across the country or work some DX without the crowding and hassle you find on 20m.

I found HF mobile preserved my sanity commuting into Austin from Round Rock, Texas every day back when I was working full time. You'll enjoy it if you're on the road a lot.

Hope that helps,  
Dick Foster, W5TA

## **DUCIE ISLAND DXPEDITION – VP6DX**

The DXpedition to Ducie Island in the South Pacific Ocean was a great success. The DXpedition using the call VP6DX occurred in the month of February, and several of our club members worked VP6DX. Those club members that worked VP6DX include WC3A, N3BUD, WA3IIA and your truly, K3QIA. If you worked the DXpedition, and your call is not listed, let me know and I'll put it in the next newsletter. By the way, the DXpedition has a very extensive website with lots of information and on-line logs:

<http://ducie2008.dl1mgb.com/index.php>

## **CONDOLENCES TO TERRY, N3XTS**

We wish to offer our condolences to Terry, N3XTS, whose mother passed away recently.

## **OUR CLUB MAILING ADDRESS**

CMARC  
% Robert Foster  
1586 State Route 93  
Berwick, PA 18603

## **VE TESTING UPDATE**

Our VE team is now a "Field Stocked Team". This is a higher level of VE team since we will now automatically receive all testing materials and updates without making a request. This status was achieved due to our monthly testing schedule and Hamfest activities. We are currently the only ARRL VE testing team in our immediate area and have tested Hams from as far away as Lock Haven. Thanks to a dedicated group of volunteers, we have maintained a monthly testing schedule and give tests

almost every month before our club meetings.

## **NET CONTROL STATIONS NEEDED**

In order to be prepared to carry on emergency communications when needed, we have an ARES Net on our CMARC repeater, 147.225 +, tone 203.5. The net is activated every Tuesday evening at 7:00 p.m. local time. We need amateurs who will act as net control stations. So if you want to have some fun and be a net control station, send an E-mail to Jack, N3EUM:

[jlmccorm@jlink.net](mailto:jlmccorm@jlink.net)

Jack is an Assistant ARES Emergency Coordinator, and he is our Net Coordinator who schedules the net control stations. He will provide a script for you to read when you act as net control. Please keep on checking into the net, and encourage others to check in, too!

Jack has about eight people who act as net control stations, so the job of actually being a net control only comes around every eight weeks or so. The more people we have, the less frequently each person has to be net control, and the more people we can involve in emergency communications.

Here is the roster for the net control stations:

<b>DATE</b>	<b>PRIMARY CALL</b>	<b>CALL</b>	<b>BACKUP CALL</b>	<b>CALL</b>
<b>11/27/07</b>	<b>SAM</b>	<b>K3EAU</b>	<b>LINDA</b>	<b>K3BD</b>
<b>12/4/07</b>	<b>JIM</b>	<b>KB3ICM</b>	<b>PAUL</b>	<b>W3EGL</b>
<b>12/11/07</b>	<b>DAVE</b>	<b>WC3A</b>	<b>DENNIS</b>	<b>N3VMM</b>
<b>12/18/07</b>	<b>BOB</b>	<b>K3QIA</b>	<b>JIM</b>	<b>KB3ICM</b>
<b>12/25/07</b>	<b>NO NET</b>			
<b>1/01/08</b>	<b>NO NET</b>			
<b>1/8/08</b>	<b>DENNIS</b>	<b>N3VMM</b>	<b>JACK</b>	<b>N3EUM</b>

1/15/08	LINDA	K3BD	DAVE	WC3A
1/22/08	PAUL	W3EGL	SAM	K3EAU
1/29/08	BILL	K3WJH	JACK	N3EUM
2/5/08	JIM	KB3ICM	BILL	K3WJH
2/12/08	DENNIS	N3VMM	SAM	K3EAU
2/19/08	JACK	N3EUM	LINDA	K3BD
2/26/08	SAM	K3EAU	BOB	K3QIA
3/4/08	PAUL	W3EGL	BILL	K3WJH
3/11/08	DAVE	WC3A	DENNIS	N3VMM
3/18/08	JACK	N3EUM	DAVE	WC3A
3/25/08	BOB	K3QIA	PAUL	W3EGL

## **ARRL DX QSL SERVICE**

If you are a member of both CMARC and ARRL, we will forward your DX QSL cards to the ARRL Outgoing QSL Bureau. Just make sure I get the cards (you can give them to me at a meeting or drop your cards at my home), and as soon as I accumulate a pound of cards (about 155 cards), I will forward the cards to the bureau. There is no charge to you for this service, but I must have your ARRL membership number in order to forward your cards.

CMARC collects and sends to the bureau about eight shipments of one pound each of DX QSL cards per year. About ten club members use this service at present. The ARRL has increased the rate from \$8 per pound of QSLs to \$10 per pound. Aren't you glad we offer this service?

## **ARE YOU RECEIVING THE “CMARC MEMBERS ONLY” EMAILS????**

At the same time this newsletter was sent over the Internet, another message was sent titled “CMARC Members Only – JANUARY”. This message is only sent to people who have paid their CMARC dues. If you did not get the “CMARC Members Only” message, it means you have not paid your dues. What is in the “CMARC Members Only” Email messages? The message contains the minutes of the last meeting and a complete roster of all members of CMARC. These “Member Only” messages are sent out monthly.

In some cases, people have forgotten whether they have paid their dues. If you receive the club roster, check the first column. If you see 2008 before your name, you have paid your dues for 2008. If you are not receiving the “Members Only” monthly email, you have not paid your dues for 2008. For the present time, everyone who was a member last year will receive the “members only” for the first few months of 2008.

Please take a few minutes and send in your dues now! The next two articles describe how you can join CMARC. We would love to have you as a member! Thanks to everyone who have already sent in their dues. Don't wait! Send in your dues now! Read the next article on how to become a member!

## **MEMBERSHIP DRIVE 2008**

The membership drive for 2008 is underway! To become a member of the Columbia-Montour Amateur Radio Club, send in your membership dues:

Regular Membership ----- \$20  
Senior Membership (65 years of age or older) - \$15  
Student ----- \$10  
Associate Member (unlicensed) ----- \$5

**If you are a family member of a person with membership, the dues are \$5 less than the primary family member (or if the family member is a student, use the student membership rate).**

**To become a member, please send a check to our Membership Chairman:**

**Dave Schack  
6020 Fort Jenkins Lane  
Bloomsburg, PA 17815**

**When you send in your dues for 2008, please include the following information: Name, Call, whether you are an ARRL member, your E-mail address, and your regular U.S. Postal Service address. Remember that there is no more phone patch.**

**Please note that many people have had address changes caused by the State of Pennsylvania changing from RR and RD addresses to the new 911 addresses. Please give Dave your new address!**

**Please state whether you qualify for a discount because you are the child of a member or if you are a student. Our membership chairman, Dave, WC3A, will appreciate this very much.**

**For your convenience, a membership application has been attached to this newsletter. People on our mailing list will receive the attached application.**

**73, Bob, K3QIA  
President of the Columbia-Montour Amateur Radio Club**