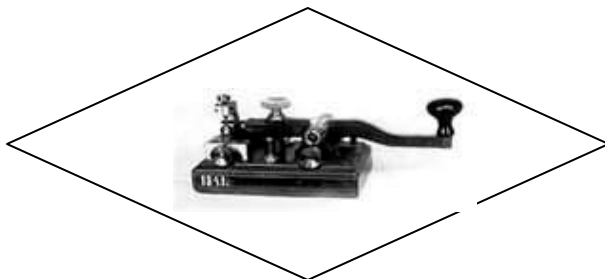


ASHTABULA COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB



July 2012



2012 OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Aaron

KB8VGD

kb8vgd@livemail.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Jack Scafuro

KC8KEB

tmscaf@gmail.com

SECRETARY

MARGE SCAFURO

KC8NAN

TREASURER

RICHARD MADISON

KC8FNJ

rmadison@suite224.net

NET CONTROL

BOB WOODWORTH

WD8PVB

wd8pvb@yahoo.com

Repeater Trustee

Congratulations!

Since the last edition of the newsletter, there has been a change of command in the club.

Our fearless leader, Mark Kelner, has moved to North Carolina. We wish him well.

The officers have appointed a new interim president in Aaron Miller, KB8VGD, to fill the void until the next election. Also appointed to new positions were Jack Scafuro, KC8KEB, Vice-President, and Marge Scafuro, KC8NAN, as secretary.

Congratulations to everyone on your new appointments!

JUST A REMINDER:

Just a reminder for those of you who have signed up, Class this Saturday, July 21, GLECC, at Gilmore Academy.

BREAKFAST

MEET US FOR BREAKFAST

WHEN: SATURDAYS, 10am

Where: EDGEWOOD DINER-

State Rd. in Ashtabula, one half mile north of Rt. 20.

Test Session

At GLECC:

New Techs or anyone else wishing to upgrade, contact Aaron, KB8VGD to make arrangements prior to the testing date.

ANDY ON THE AIR

The following dates were provided for 6 meter operations by N8FOS, Andy:

July 21-22 -CQ WW VHF

Sept 8 – 10 -ARRL SEP VHF

Sep 16 -CX Phone

Good Luck!

Surfin': Getting Weather Better

By Stan Horzepa, WA1LOU
Contributing Editor

This week, Surfin' finds out which way the wind blows -- and which way the propagation flows -- at the revamped National Weather Service website.

As hams, we seem to be more interested in the weather than average people. Besides wanting to know what's falling out of the sky and when, we follow the weather because it affects radio propagation in both a negative and positive manner depending on the weather.

As a result, I have a weather-related website open in my web browser at all times, that is, the website of the **National Weather Service**.

The service completely revamped their website and revealed the new design a few days ago. All the features that I used in the past are still there, and there are new features galore; some I have already explored, some not yet.

If you have not visited the NWS site lately, you will be pleasantly surprised, so check out weather.gov when you have an opportunity.

ACARC Emergency Communications Trailer Ribbon Cutting Ceremony*



Ribbon cutting ceremony of the new emergency communication trailer belonging to ACARC at Field Day 2012. Left to right: Marge Scafuro, Tim Price, Jake Scafuro, Mike Volesky, Jack Scafuro, Dick Madison, and Aaron Miller

Thank to the dedication and hard work of Jack Scafuro, the interior of the trailer has a very nice custom built work area with hand made cabinets, carpeted walls and custom molding.

- For more Field Day pictures, see our site at qsl.net/k8cy/



It takes more than a big-gun station to make a top operator.

The club meeting was nearly over, but Charlie hadn't uttered a single word all evening. He was sitting in the rear of the room, which was also unusual. After 15 years of attending Lakes-of-Utah Contest Club meetings with him, I knew he always arrived early and raced inside as soon as the doors opened to get a front-row seat. The unhappy frown on his face worried me the most because Charlie was a cheerful person and that scowl was so out of character for him.

I casually glanced over my shoulder again. Charlie had been one of the club founders many decades ago, long before I'd even heard of ham radio, but I'd gotten to know him rather well during my time in the club. We'd been on several committees together and had both taken part in the same club DXpedition to Aruba. I'd never really thought about his age, but he had to be in his late 70s or early 80s and maybe he was having health problems.

As soon as the club president slammed down the gavel to end the meeting, I hurried to the back of the room. Charlie was still seated and gazing quietly at his fellow hams, some of whom were already leaving while others had gathered in groups to chat. I dropped into an empty chair next to Charlie. "Hey, are you okay tonight?"

"I'm going to miss it," he said.

"Miss what?"

"Ham radio contesting."

"What do you mean? What's wrong? You aren't sick, are you?"

"No, but I guess I'm simply too old for the hobby."

"What makes you say that?"

He gave a long sigh. "There was a 160 meter contest last weekend."

"I knew about it, but I was out of town on a business trip and didn't operate. How were conditions?"

He didn't answer me but instead stared off into space. Finally he said, "I've been a ham for 64 years and have always enjoyed contesting. I have a modest station and didn't need to rank in the top-tier to have fun. I always enjoyed giving points to other people and watching signal propagation change from hour to hour."

"Me, too. So?"

“I had measles when I was a child and have been stone deaf in my left ear ever since.”

“I didn’t know *that*.” Bringing up his childhood illness wasn’t a good sign and I couldn’t imagine where he was taking our conversation.

Charlie nodded slowly. “It was before a measles vaccine had been developed. I was bedridden for weeks and nearly died. I eventually pulled through, but lost my hearing in one ear and always sat in the front row at club meetings because I couldn’t hear otherwise. I especially have difficulty when there’s background noise.”

“I always thought you sat in front because you were interested in the club programs and didn’t want to miss anything.”

He smiled. “That, too” he replied, “but the hearing in my good ear has worsened as I’ve gotten older, especially for sounds in the high-frequency range.”

“That happens with everyone. What does that have to do with you giving up contesting?”

Charlie frowned. “Something happened during the 160 meter contest last weekend that really bothered me.”

“What’s that?”

“I found a clear frequency and asked if it was in use. Nobody replied, so I called CQ and soon began working stations. I spent the next 2 hours operating on that same frequency.”

“Okay, so?”

“At about 3 AM, a weak signal popped out of the noise. The guy was slightly above my frequency, but we exchanged information and then I immediately called CQ again.”

I shuffled in my seat. “I still don’t understand the problem.”

Charlie rubbed his face and gazed into the distance. “The next morning I found an e-mail in my inbox from that weak station. The operator called me a jerk, a lid and several other names for calling CQ on *his* frequency. I looked up the guy in an online call book and it showed his photo. He’s a fairly young fellow, but a big-gun DXer with expensive modern equipment and incredible antennas.”

Charlie’s face had turned red and I thought he might be on the verge of a heart attack. “Easy, Old Man,” I said.

He nodded and took a deep breath. “I considered explaining to the guy that propagation had probably changed and caused interference when none had existed before, or maybe he could still hear me when I couldn’t hear him because his station was so superior to mine, but I didn’t do that.”

“What *did* you do?”

“I sent him an e-mail and apologized for being a jerk and a lid.”

“Oh, I wish you hadn’t done that.”

“Why not? I don’t want to ruin another ham’s fun and I don’t want to get more nasty e-mails like that one in the future. I’m probably just too old for contesting, especially with my bad hearing and modest station. I’m sure going to miss it, though. Maybe I should just quit ham radio completely.”

“Charlie, don’t do that! Lots of older hams have poor hearing and you know that people with average equipment can’t match the capabilities of those big-gun stations. Now, just imagine the impact that getting an e-mail like the one you received could have on a newcomer to ham radio, perhaps a young and inexperienced fellow trying contesting for the first time.”

“I hadn’t considered that. All I could think about was how much that e-mail had ruined my day.”

“And besides, that other guy doesn’t *own* the frequency. He could have moved if he was experiencing interference. If there was a jerk on the frequency, it wasn’t you.”

Charlie brightened a bit. “Hmmm.”

“And another thing — were you operating from your cabin in Wyoming during the contest?”

“No, I decided to stay at home this weekend and operate from here in Salt Lake City.”

“Charlie, you’re often the only Wyoming station I work during some contests and I know you provide that multiplier to many other people. You would sure be missed if you gave up contesting.”

He rubbed a hand slowly along his chin. “Well, I’ll consider that before making a final decision about quitting the hobby.”

“Please do and I sure hope you decide to remain active.”

During my drive home later that night I tried to imagine why any ham would want to ruin the enjoyment of Amateur Radio by anyone else. The ego, selfishness or anger issues that I mulled over as the possible answer reflected so poorly on the other operator that I finally gave up and concluded that his behavior was simply beyond my comprehension. Ham radio is a hobby that should be fun for *all* participants regardless of their equipment or skill level. If those unwilling to play nicely with others succeed in driving people away, the eventual result will be a few big-gun stations that quickly work each other and then spend the rest of the contest weekend calling CQ endlessly without being answered because the operators who might have replied have quit the hobby.

HOW MANY TIMES DOES THE GUY WITH ALL THE POWER THINK HE IS BETTER?