

# Feedline



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The Voice of The Cary Amateur Radio Club N4NC

January 2004

## CARC FEEDLINE

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The deadline for submission to the Cary Amateur Radio Club FEEDLINE newsletter is the second Thursday of the month. Information should be forwarded by e-mail to the editor at w4kaz@arrl.net.

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### CARC Officers for 2004

**President** Clare Owens, N2RJB  
**Vice Pres.** --open--  
**Secretary** Keith Zeringue, W4KAZ  
**Treasurer** Herb Lacey, W3HL

### 2003 Volunteers

**N4NC Trustee :** Will Harper, K4IWW  
**Swapfest Czar:** Alf Johnson, KQ4FP  
**Field Day Czar:** --open--  
**Listserv admin:** Will Harper, K4IWW  
**Website admin:** Susan Jones, WA4AKB

### CARC Contact Information

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**Listserv:**  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/carc>

## Pheedline Phun Phacts

Kaz, W4KAZ

Happy New Year!

I hope the long absence of the Feedline has gone as largely unnoticed as its presence.

Now for any of you who might be college football fans:

# LSU #1

Sorry, I just had to get that out of my system. No, its not radio related(except that I dx New Orleans am station WWL 870 to get the games not broadcast on TV).

Now I know you USC fans feel you have been wronged with a split decision, but that certainly is not the fault of the LSU football program. I've gotta agree, USC had the best **public relations** team in the country, and **can't run the ball** effectively -- but they did have a good passing game. LSU fans knew that LSU vs USC would have been a better match up. It would have been a fun game, but fate and some misfit Forbin Project BCS computer program determined otherwise.

But if the writers had chosen, Oklahoma would have missed out on a second spanking.....by the team that got no respect.

\*\*Football opinions are those of the editor, not CARC

Be sure to make the meeting on Thursday, January 15<sup>th</sup>. The topic:Broadband over Powlines or BPL. CARC is hosting a BPL Seminar featuring Frank Lynch,W4FAL and Gary Pierce, KN4AQ. This meeting is open to the public, and will be held in Room B of the Herbert Young Community Center, at 7:31pm. This is the same location as the Swapfest, on Academy Street in downtown Cary.

Another one bytes the ether.....

## **BPL???**

Kaz, W4KAZ

Wazzat? It's the acronym "Broadband over Powerlines" aka "PLC(Power Line Communications), PLT(Power Line Telecommunications) or PLB(Power Line Broadband). Its all about providing broadband level internet service via "current-carrier" systems conducted over existing electrical power lines. There are several different technologies currently being tossed around and tested by various electrical utilities, who are quite naturally hoping to reap a new windfall from their existing infrastructure investments.

So, what's the big deal? Well, the problem with some of the proposals for BPL is RFI(Radio Frequency Interference). Since all those miles and miles of unshielded wires would make good antennas, BPL is a potential interference generator across the RF spectrum. Its also probably going to be susceptible to RF interference from licensed services.

Learn more at the Cary ARC BPL seminar on January 15<sup>th</sup>. CARC is hosting a BPL Seminar featuring Frank Lynch, W4FAL and Gary Pierce, KN4AQ. This meeting is open to the public, and will be held in Room B of the Herbert Young Community Center, at 7:31pm. This is the same location as the Swapfest, on Academy Street in downtown Cary.

Extra reading:

<https://www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/plc/#TUTORIAL>

<http://www.sunspot.net/technology/bal-interference111003,0,1018752.story?coll=bal-business-headlines>

## **CARC Holiday Dinner Held As Scheduled**

Well, this year's holiday dinner was held on schedule and on time. No ice storm, downed power lines, or trees in the roof, like 2002!

Club members and family joined for an evening of conversation and a hearty meal.

## **New Morse Code Prosign Proposed By ITU**

Kaz, W4KAZ

In keeping with the changing times, the ITU has proposed updating the morse code by using the prosign AC(the characters "A" and "C" run together (---)) to represent the "at" or "@" character used in e-mail addresses. This is expected to become official within the next year. Head's up for you traffic handlers.

Ya know, after trying that out on the key as "AC", I think its easier to think of and send as "PN". Anyone for "WR"? "ETTETE"? Auuugh!

<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2003/12/10/2/?nc=1>

## **N4PY Software Now Supports Orion**

Kaz, W4KAZ

Carl, N4PY, has now released software for control of the new Ten Tec Orion. This software can communicate with logging programs that have a "Tentec Pegasus" option. Carl also now has radio control software that supports the Elecraft K2, and his website indicates Kenwood and Icom support are "coming".

Somewhere since I last mentioned this, his software also supports using the Griffin Technology "powermate", which is a remote, user programmable knob with a USB connector(now going for only \$39). Way to go Carl! This allows folks to add the convenience of a remote tuning knob to their computer controlled radio if they are using the N4PY control software.

For more information, visit Carl's website at:  
[www.n4py.com](http://www.n4py.com)

## **MARC Anybody?**

Kaz, W4KAZ

Well, its not for me, but different strokes for different folks right? This web site has a tech link for mounting ham hardware onto motorcycles. Ya just never know when these ideas might come in handy....or have other applications.

<http://marc-hq.org/e-news/index.htm>

## **Solar Flares In Perspective**

Kaz, W4KAZ

Much ado last fall over the eruptions on the face of the sun. Here's a great article that plots the x-ray flares over recorded history. The interesting datum here is that recorded history on this information only goes back 35 years.....Now, taking the same approach to science as the global warming lobby, we would possibly conclude the sun is soon to go supernova, unless cow flatulence and SUV's are made verboten via international or judicial decree. However, 35 years of data is a diminutive sample relative to cosmologic time frames, no?

So I guess there's no real need for aluminum foil helmets just yet....(but there may be a market!!! Get yer tin beanie and sun block cream, cheap! )

Oh, the woes of living in orbit of a four percent variable star!

[http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2003/12nov\\_haywire.htm?aol688976](http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2003/12nov_haywire.htm?aol688976)

## **Noisy Shack Computer?**

Kaz, W4KAZ

Here is a suggestion that was posted on the CQ-Contest reflector that made so much sense as a quick and dirty solution, I thought I'd pass it on. If your computer power supply is generating a lot of RFI, frying bacon, or other obnoxious noises, you might be able to reduce the noise level by replacing the AC socket with a filtered socket. The part suggested by the poster(John, W0UN) is the Corcom 6EF1 (digikey part #CCM1102-ND, page 680 of digikey catalog T033). This plug replacement has a filter built in, is rated at 6 amps, and sells for a whopping 13 bucks—which might be more than you paid for the computer!

I note that these are available in the female variety.....it might make more sense to build a power cord with the filter on it. Then when the computer is upgraded, you won't need to perform the job again. Hmmm.

<http://dkc3.digikey.com/pdf/T033/0680.pdf>

## **Solder Naked—Weightless!**

Kaz, W4KAZ

Well, okay, soldering while naked is probably never a good idea....But soldering techniques in a microgravity environment might be interesting for those QRP/Hfpackers planning to buy a trip to the space station from the Russki's new space travel agency. (Maybe a contest DX-pedition? Field Day? Can I get out on 160-low-band from 120 miles up, loading up the space station's solar panels? Oooooo—the possibilities!)

Apparently, the gases that normally bubble off during a soldering job down here on terra firma at one gee might tend to stay in solution when soldering in orbit. Gravity is what causes the gases to bubble off from the solder. Perhaps Nasa will eventually give us a better solder. Now, if only I could SEE these teeny surface mount parts.....

Maybe space is the place for soldering naked after all—no solder drips! But you might want to watch out for those 700 degree blobs that you flick off the tip...."Aiiiiiiiiiiii!--HEY, Watch where you are pointing that thing!"

[http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2003/10nov\\_solder.htm](http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2003/10nov_solder.htm)