

### Corona Discharge Noise

Ever wonder what that "little ball" on top of your mobile antenna is there for?

Some mobile antennas are prone to corona build-up and discharge. Whip antennas which come to a sharp point will sometimes create this kind of noise. This is why most mobile whips have steel or plastic "corona balls" at their tips. But, regardless of the structure of the mobile antenna, corona build-up will frequently occur during, or just before a severe electrical storm.

The symptoms are a high-pitched "screaming" noise in the mobile receiver. The condition will repeat itself as soon as the antenna system

charges up again. There is no cure for this condition. It is described here to show that it is not of origin within the electrical system of the automobile.

Another corona phenomenon is St. Elmo's Fire, which is sometimes seen at the tips of aircraft propellers or wings, the mast of a ship, or any other metal part where there is considerable atmospheric difference of potential due to concentration of the electric field at the point of the conductor. St. Elmo's fire is beautiful as it arcs between the masts and rigging of ships at sea during stormy weather and heavy seas. It should be beautiful -- St. Elmo is the patron saint of sailors!

### ARRL Letter

### ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PRINT ... AND HAM RADIO TOO!

Ham radio got some highly visible ink March 5 in one of the nation's most prestigious newspapers--the New York Times. The article, "Ham Radio, Version 2.0, for the Silicon Era," by John Verity, appears in the Times' new "Circuits" section, on page G9.

Among those prominently mentioned in the article was AMSAT-NA Executive Vice President Keith Baker, KB1SF, who's also pictured in his shack. Baker says photographer Chris Kasson showed up at his Xenia, Ohio, home a few weeks ago and spent several hours snapping pictures of his gear, his shack, his antennas, and him. Also quoted was ARRL Advertising Manager Brad Thomas, KC1EX. ARRL Media Relations Manager Jennifer Gagne, N1TDY, worked with Verity in developing the article.

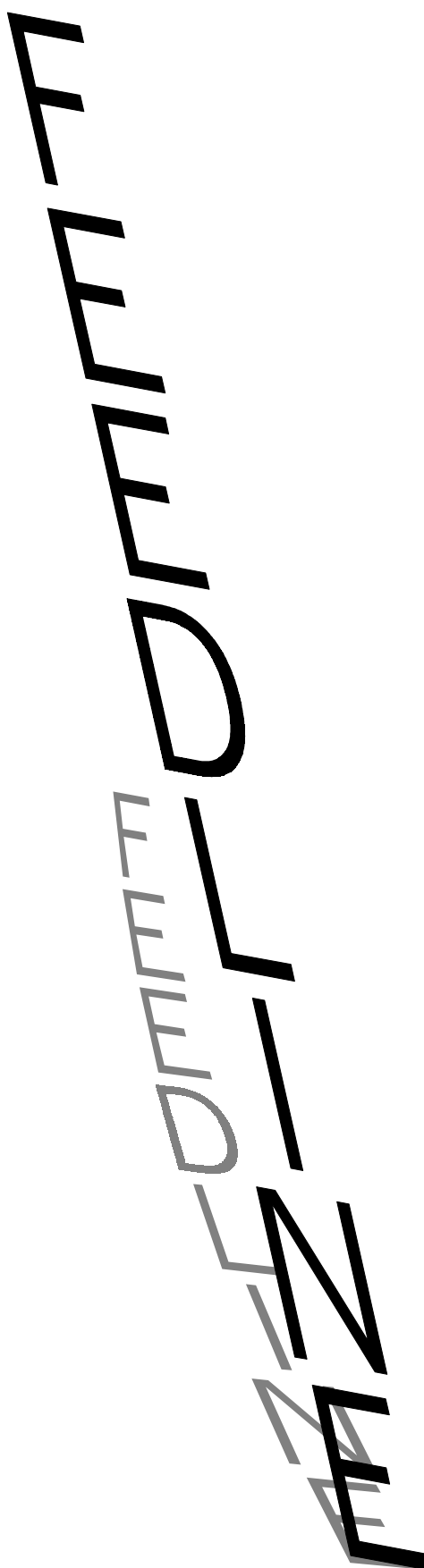
Verity's premise: "A new, digitally hip generation is sweeping into ham radio and virtually reinventing it from the inside out." He talks about how much of the hobby has become computer-oriented, reliant as much on "microchips and soft-

ware" and links to the Internet as on the more traditional hardware associated with hams. The article focuses on some of the more futuristic types of amateur activities such as satellites, although the pending Phase 3D is not mentioned.

The article included both the ARRL and AMSAT Web sites. Also mentioned were moonbounce, ATV, and SSTV. Even the Heathkit Virtual Museum <http://www.cyberventure.com/heath.html> got a plug.

Baker says the article was great publicity for Amateur Radio and for AMSAT. "Mr Verity and I spent a few hours on the telephone talking about the continuing magic of Amateur Radio and what AMSAT has done to spark new ways of telecommunication over the years," he said. Baker said Verity "was quite impressed with the ease with which we regularly communicate through our fleet of AMSAT satellites," and especially that hams can hit some satellites using an HT. "If it sparks enough interest in just one

*(Continued on page 3)*



**Bumper Sticker:**

**Sometimes I wake up grumpy;**

**Other times I let him sleep.**

## Feedline

Feedline is a member-supported publication of the Cary Amateur Radio Club and is published monthly. Deadline for submissions is the second Thursday of the month.

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## Cary Amateur Radio Club

The Cary Amateur Radio Club meets on the fourth Thursday of the month, **7:30 p.m.** in the lower level of the Christian Life Center of White Plains United Methodist Church. The June, November, and December meetings are held off-site. Call for location of those meetings.

**Next Meeting: March 26**

### 1997 Officers

|        |                 |          |
|--------|-----------------|----------|
| KE4ZEQ | Frank Lynch     | 217-1999 |
|        | President       |          |
| KE4CDI | Charles Nichols | 639-1049 |
|        | Vice-president  |          |
| K4IWW  | Will Harper     | 467-0224 |
|        | Treasurer       |          |
| W3HL   | Herb Lacey      | 467-9608 |
|        | Secretary       |          |

**HerbLacey - W3HL**

## Club Notes

### February 26, 1998

The February meeting was called to order at 7:34 p.m., by Pres., Frank, KE4ZEQ. All present introduced themselves.

Treasurer's Report - Will, K4IWW, reported: Savings, \$1,189.85; Checking, \$1,703.13; Total, \$2,892.98.

Bob, K4HA, has CARC hats for \$4 each. The rent for the 1998 Mid-Summer SWAPFEST has been paid. Saturday, July 18, is the date. Mark it on your calendar.

Note was made that Reed Whitten, AB4W, won the election for NC Section Manager. Applause.

The DX PKT Cluster is up and running at the QTH of Bob, K4HA. It is all powered by a battery/UPS setup.

Frank, KE4ZEQ, (Assistant Director, SERA, I-77 & East) reported that there is a new repeater in Raleigh. It is coordinated on 145.9 MHz, with tone access of 156.7, call: K4GWH.

## New Business

Wake Digital Communications Group (WDCG) is supposed to hold two meetings per year. Been a little lax recently. WDCG should hold a meeting both at RARSfest, April 5, and the SWAPFEST, July 18, for those interested in packet.

Will, K4IWW, suggested the need for a CARC internet homepage. Sounded good. Just need some idle talent to make it happen. The web space is available. Think about it.

Field Day Czar is Will, K4IWW. Some early assignments are: K4HA, 40m SSB; K4PB, 20/80m CW; N4AJF, VHF/UHF; N4CGD, 40m CW; W3HL, Publicity. Needed: Novice / Tech captain(s); permission to use Bond Park; food; generators; tents; computers; antennas; feedlines; rope; slingshots; sunscreen; bug spray; etc.; etc.; etc. You should get the picture, here. There is plenty of room for enthusiastic volunteers. FD is June 27-28. **PLEASE MARK IT ON YOUR CALENDAR - IN INK!!!!!!**

SWAPFEST Czar is Bob, K4HA. The Cary Community Center has been rented. However, no kitchen this year. Will have to make accommodation for the VFW Ladies Auxiliary, who host the breakfast and lunch. BTW, there are many little things that need doing for the SWAPFEST. It is time to get out the pre-publicity to magazines, etc. Will need a mailing, again. Also, will need a prize budget and prize list.

Herb, W3HL

## Terminology Tutorial

If you can see it, and it's not really there, it's

### *Virtual*

If you cannot see it, and it is really there, it's

### *Transparent*

If you cannot see it, and it's not there, it's

### *Gone!*

You can get quality merchandise at bargain prices at the **CARC AUCTION**  
March 26, 7:30 p.m.!



# HONEST!

## Tempus Fugit

Is this your last issue of FEEDLINE ?

Dues are due! That's why we call them DUES! \$9/yr. Paying by check is the best way as you have an immediate receipt.

**AlanHarp K4PB**

## DXCC card checking

The upcoming RARS hamfest is the ARRL state convention. This year there will be DXCC card checking. You may apply for an initial DXCC award or have cards checked for endorsement. This will save you from sending the cards in and avoid the risk of losing them.

If you intend to apply you can prepare your application in advance. This should include a list of the cards you are submitting as well. Applications can be pulled from the ARRL web site. You do not have to use their form. You can print your own lists as long as it has the same information.

Your list should include callsign of the station worked, the date of the QSO, and the band and mode. Cards should be listed by band. Multiqso cards listed last. If you need further help preparing a submission contact Alan, K4PB.

(via N9CGD) Lee Swanson, N4AJF, once again took the award for purchasing the most at the recent Charlotte hamfest (the most by both weight and volume)! For a while, your correspondent noticed that Lee was curtailing his purchases, and it sure was nice to see him back in his regular form!

The Charlotte fest also offered the opportunity for K4HA and N9CGD to go over to the home of Blair, AB4V. Blair says he will be able to participate in field day again this year, and hopes to see lots of Cary club members then!

(via 147.15) "How many days of the week start with the letter "T" ?

"Two."

"Wrong."

"What?"

"Four, Tuesday, Thursday, Today and Tomorrow!"

(via KM4LB) After a frustrating time trying to locate a circuit ID given to me by a customer, I resorted to "Z as in zebra, A as in alpha, S as in Sierra..."

"Whoa! That's C as in Cierra, like my wife's car."

The all-high-swapfest-prize-choozer would like your opinion on offering two nights lodging, two night's dinner, two days admission (for two) to either Shelby or Dayton (we choose) as our third prize.

Contact KM4LB with your 2 cent's worth at klimala@mci2000.com or 919 469-5129 H, 919 572-3285 W.

(via ARRL Letter) Section Managers elected. In the North Carolina Section, incumbent W. Reed Whitten, AB4W, of Cary was the winner in a three-way race. Whitten received 730 votes. Challengers Glenn Roger Allen, KD4MYE, of Wake Forest and Billy Mitchell, WB4SGA, of Mebane, polled 657 and 636 votes respectively.

Start digging out those e-e-electronic d-e-e-vices to bring to the auction on March 26. One man's trash is another man's treasure...Bill Clinton said that.

There is no fee to have your gear auctioned...the stage show alone is worth the price of admission...(\$0.00)

Hope to see you there!

CARC DUES DUE...9 bux, American.

## Technical Harassment

In our complex technical environment there are many opportunities for a competent technical individual to be the subject of technical harassment. Sometimes it can be so subtle that you may not even be aware you are being harassed. Worse yet, you may inadvertently technically harass another person by accident.

Therefore, each technical support person is asked to review the following Technical Harassment Guidelines and to report any incidences or suspected incidences of technical harassment to their immediate supervisor within 20 working minutes. If said supervisor is unavailable within the reporting window period, see form THGR1.987B.

If you are repeatedly asked the same technical question you may be the victim of technical harassment. While it is most common to be asked the question repeatedly within the same conversation, some instances have been identified of habitual technical harassment. Habitual technical harassment is not uncommon and has been known to exhibit group tendencies where members of a group may ask the same question repeatedly. Untreated, these instances of group technical harassment can continue for years.

If you are asked a technical question by a non-technical person and they do not write your answer down it is likely the question is frivolous. Most non-technical people are not capable of remembering a true technical answer for more than 30 seconds.

If you are forced into a discussion where a person uses more than three (3) buzzwords in one sentence the person is most likely a fake and you are the unwitting victim of technical harassment. One note of caution, competent technical people have been known to inadvertently use buzzwords after reading mindless drivel like PC Week or LAN Times. If the person has been known to use more common technical terms in the past such as "stuff" and "things", they are most likely victim of computer magazine brainwashing.

If during a troubleshooting session a person uses the term "trick". For example "maybe we could trick the database into thinking it has been updated". This is a sure sign of technical harassment.

If a person explains that a needed feature will be provided by a vendor and that person is nontechnical then you are at risk of being technically harassed. If you believe that person, you have definitely been technically harassed, if you don't believe them you have only been technically annoyed.

If when trying to resolve a technical problem with a product from a vendor and you are instructed to call the salesman that sold us the product you are being set up for technical harassment. It is a common reaction for a non-technical person when they have purchased technical equipment to call another non-technical person. The dialog between two non-technical people usually provides some sense of comfort that they aren't the only ones who are confused.

*(Continued from page 1)*

youngster to become a ham, then it was well worth the effort!"

Hams may raise their eyebrows when they come to the part where Verity cites 4000 W as "the legal maximum" for amateurs. Even though "it says so in the newspaper," the legal limit remains 1500 W PEP.

Seeing the article sparked renewed interest for at least one inactive ham. Leonard Spear, WA1LBC, of West Palm Beach, Florida, and Branford, Connecti-

cut, called HQ to say he's now excited about getting back into ham radio, and especially finding out more about satellites and packet radio.

Those who can't get a hard copy of The New York Times can view the article at <http://www.nytimes.com/library/tech/98/03/circuits/articles/05ham-radio.html>.

from the March 13, 1998 ARRL Letter, Amateur Radio Relay League, Newington Connecticut.

## Free Contest Logger

A free SWL logger program, SDL (Super-Duper for Listeners), is now available. SDL is a comprehensive MS-DOS HF contest logger for SWLs. It's derived from SD and shares all its relevant features. SDL offers direct support for most international contests. Some 35 country and area multiplier reference files are supplied. SDL links to Kenwood and Yaesu radios to follow band and mode changes.

It offers fast, simple logging and editing, and it tracks multipliers, dupes and points in real time. It is not designed for post-contest logging, however. SDL runs under MS-DOS or in a DOS window with Windows 3.11, 95 or NT. SDL may be downloaded from <http://ve7tcp.ampr.org/ftp/software/sd>.

SDLCHECK, a post-contest program to edit SDL files and to generate printed logs, multiplier lists, check sheets and summary sheets. An SDL reflector also is available. To subscribe, send e-mail to [majordomo@blacksheep.org](mailto:majordomo@blacksheep.org) with the message "subscribe sd-user".

## PuzzleMaster KWIZ

### Idiot Quotient Calculator

Do they have a 4th of July in England?

How many birthdays does the average man have?

Some months have 31 days, some have 30, how many have 28?

A woman gives a beggar 50 cents, the woman is the beggar's sister, but the beggar is not the woman's brother. How come?

Why can't a man living in the U.S.A. be buried in Canada?

How many outs are there in an inning?

Is it legal for a man in California to marry his widow's sister? Why?

Two men play five games of checkers. Each man wins the same number of games. There are no ties. Explain this.

Divide 30 by 1/2 and add 10. What is the answer?

A man builds a house rectangular in

Over the last year the Cary area has seen quite a number of hams exchange their calls for a "vanity" call-sign. This program allows a ham a call-sign of their choosing for a \$50 fee every ten years.

The program was implemented systematically, and recently the last "gate" opened: on December 2, 1997, the FCC allowed novice, tech, tech plus, and general licenses to get in on the fun (previous gates had allowed advanced and extra licenses to request a vanity call-sign). Of course, you still can only request a call-sign appropriate to your class: 1x2 and 2x1 call-signs are still only available to extra licensees, 2x2 call-signs to advanced and extra licensees, etc.

If you are interested in getting a vanity call-sign, use of the internet makes it easy. You might want to begin by thoroughly reviewing the FCC information on the vanity call-sign system available at <http://www.fcc.gov/wtb/amateur/vnity-faq.html> which gives lots of details about the program. Then try drawing up a list of call-signs you might be interested in. A trip to one of the many call-sign servers available on the internet will help, since you can only request a vacant call-sign: try <http://www.qrz.com>, or <http://www.buck.com> to look up the status of any given call-sign.

Next, you can file your application on FCC form 610V electronically at

shape. All sides have southern exposure. (Hint: A bear walks by the house.) Extra Credit: What color is the bear?

There are 3 apples and you take away 2, how many do you have?

I have two U.S. coins totaling 55 cents. One is not a nickel.

If you had a match and you walked into a room where there was an oil burner, a kerosene lamp, and a wood burning stove, what would you light first?

How far can a dog run into the woods?

A doctor gives you three pills telling you to take one every half hour. How long would the pills last?

<http://www.fcc.gov/wtb/amateur/vnityapp.html> which will give you a choice of two servers. Carefully fill out the application, and be sure to print a copy for your records. After submitting the application electronically you'll need to fill out an FCC form 159 and print it out.

The 159 should accompany your check (or you can use your credit card!) to the FCC at an address in PA. Note that no facility is available to send your money electronically, and that you only have 10 days to submit the funds, so don't delay on this step!

Once you have completed the electronic application and submitted the 159 together with your remittance, you'll have to wait for the FCC. No doubt you'll want to check the FCC database frequently for its recent actions: the FCC makes these available via ftp at

[ftp://ftp.fcc.gov/pub/XFS\\_AlphaTest/amateur](ftp://ftp.fcc.gov/pub/XFS_AlphaTest/amateur) and furthermore you can check individual call-sign actions using the web page at <http://www.arrl.org/fcc/fcclid.html> (where you can look up a specific call, or a specific name).

Hopefully, before long you will be sporting a new call-sign to confuse the rest of us with on the repeater!

(I'm convinced! I'm changing my call from Kilo Mike Four Lima Bravo to Kappa Mu Four Lambda Beta!)

A clerk in the butcher shop is 5'10" tall. What does he weigh?

How many animals of each sex did Moses take on the ark?

A farmer has 17 sheep, and all but 9 die. How many are left?

How many two cent stamps are there in a dozen?

What was the president's name in 1950?

(Darn! No room for the answers. Renew your membership and I'll send them in next month's FEEDLINE.)