

SPARK

The Newsletter of the Waterbury Amateur Radio Club

The Editor's Message

Another year over and a new one just about to begin. (Sorry John Lennon for the botched quote). Will it be a memorable one for amateur radio? Will the Morse code be a thing of the past? Will amateur radio continue to dwindle in popularity? I sincerely hope that the answer is no to the last two questions.

The Morse code, a thorn in the side to many, a necessary evil to others, and a joy to others is now under discussion by many and foremost by the FCC. The 2003 WRC committee handed down a ruling that Morse code need not be a requirement for HF privileges. Already at least one nation's communications agency has ruled against the Morse requirement.

I for one believe that there is a need to keep cw around, but feel that the licensing requirements should be reviewed. The FCC has said that the amateur community should be the ones to decide the fate of Morse code requirements. To that end, the FCC has solicited comments from groups and individuals. The most important paper that has been



An ARRL Affiliated Club

WARC WEBSITE:

<http://www.qsl.net/w1las/>

put up for comment is that of the FISTS group. Their comments are strongly in favor of keeping Morse testing in the regulations. Furthermore, their comments are to revamp licensing and license classes to help keep the code alive and a vital part of ham radio.

The next group's paper that will be up for comment will be that of the ARRL. It is expected that these will be given to the FCC shortly after the New Year. These comments will likely carry more weight than any other single group. The FCC is anticipated to react most seriously to these comments.

If you have something to

Events Calendar

**WARC General Meeting -
January 19**

**Straight Key Night -
December 31**

say on these matters, please do it when the League's comment comes up. Whatever your opinion, it should be heard. Do not pass up this opportunity.

Whatever happens, ham radio will continue and cw will continue as a regular mode for many of us. I hope to hear comments from you at upcoming meetings and get-togethers.

Happy New Year to One and All!

de Steve, N1AOB

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ONE AND ALL de W1LAS!!!

New Gear for the WARC!

After Bill, W7YY applied for and received a Grant from Wal-Mart, it was voted by the Club to purchase a VHF/UHF transceiver and power supply. The new rig is a Icom IC-2720H dual bander 2m/70cm rig.

The power supply is an Astron 35 Amp unit that should have plenty of oomph for future use with other rigs.

Thanks Bill & Thanks Wal-Mart.

Minutes of the November Meeting

The November WARC General Meeting was held on November 17. The meeting was brought to order by Paul, KF2XK at 7:55 PM with the following in attendance:

Paul, KF2XK Bill, W7YY
 Ron, KA1KJZ Ron, N1AAJ
 Ed, N1YLN Craig, N1ABY
 Pat, N1YGL Loren, KB1KDD
 Steve, N1AOB

Old Business:

The Treasurer's Report was read by Ed, N1YLN and we had \$420.42 in the checking account & \$25 in cash. W1LAS fund received a donation of \$50 and \$139 was paid out to W7YY for a dual band antenna. The final figures were \$331.42 in checking and \$75 cash. The W1LAS fund has \$86 total.

New Business:

The new radio that was bought with the Wal-Mart grant was discussed. The rig is a Icom dual-band transceiver and a Astron linear 35 Amp.

power supply.

New executive officers were elected and will be installed into office on January 1:

Ron, KA1KJZ, President

Steve, N1AOB, V.P.

Ed, N1YLN, Treasurer

Phil, N1MMP, Secretary

Bill, W7YY, Master at Arms

The date for the Holiday Party was set as December 8, at 7:00 PM. The restaurant is again Maggie McFlys. Ed, N1YLN was asked to send postcards to all members to remind them of the event.

An activity night was suggested that would take place on another night besides our regular meetings. Interest was expressed in getting together to operate on the air. There was mention of running a contest or sprint.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Propagation Predictions

ARLP051 Propagation de K7RA

Declining sunspot numbers and high geomagnetic activity made rough conditions this week. Average daily sunspot numbers for the week dropped 57% from the previous week, and average daily solar flux was down by 34%. The average daily planetary A index more than tripled to 28.7.

Currently earth is inside a high-speed solar wind. The interplanetary magnetic field points north, and geomagnetic conditions would be even more active if it pointed south. The wind is from a large coronal hole, and the stream began affecting earth on December 8. There aren't any sunspots currently facing the earth, and sunspot 517 is leaving the visible solar disk, while 520

and 521 are coming around the opposite limb.

The active region that caused all the wild space weather in October and November is around sunspot 488, which is now crossing the sun's far side. Its return to the earth side should cause a rise in the sunspot and solar flux numbers. Solar flux is expected to stay below 100 until next Tuesday, December 16, and then rise suddenly from December 18-19, next Thursday and Friday.

Unfortunately, conditions should be rough for the ARRL 10 Meter Contest this weekend. Predicted solar flux values for Friday through Monday, December 12-15, are 85, 90, 90 and 95. Predicted planetary A index numbers for the same period are 40, 35, 25 and 20.

10-meter paths really need a high MUF value to sustain them, and the low sunspot numbers we're seeing now don't help. You can get an idea how conditions might differ from past years by trying some historic numbers on the W6ELprop program, mentioned frequently in past bulletins.

For this weekend, a path from California to Cleveland (W6 to W8 in the program's atlas) using a flux of 90 and K index of 4 would yield a rather narrow opening, probably only reliable from 1800-1900z. A path from Dallas to Brazil (W5 to PY in the atlas) shows a poor probability for a path (although Seattle to PY looks much better).

On the ARRL website you can sample values from past bulletins at <http://www.arrl.org/w1aw/prop/>. Looking back at 2002 to bulletin number 53, the average solar flux for Friday through Sunday of the 10-meter contest weekend was 185, and the K index must have been quite low because planetary

Propagation Predictions Cont.

A indices were 7, 11 and 9.

Using the flux value of 185 and a K index of 2, the California to Cleveland path looked fantastic from 1530 through 2330z, and the other paths looked much better as well. What a difference a year can make in a changing solar cycle. As mentioned in past bulletins, you can download the W6ELprop software free at <http://www.qsl.net/w6elprop/>.

Sunspot numbers for December 4 through 10 were 115, 88, 87, 53, 49, 23 and 46 with a mean of 65.9. 10.7 cm flux was 115.8, 111.7, 108.9, 92, 93.7, 92.2 and 89.2, with a mean of 100.5. Estimated planetary A indices were 9, 43, 22, 15, 39, 31 and 42, with a mean of 28.7.

Meeting Time / Location

Our meetings are held at 7:30 PM on the third Monday each month (except December). The location of our meetings is The Prospect Firehouse, Prospect.

From the West, take Route 84 East to Exit 23. Follow signs for Route 69 South to Prospect. Follow Route 69 South up the hill and continue until you reach the intersection of Route 68. Stay on Route 69 South and 1/8 mile past the intersection, look for the Firehouse on the right.

From the East, take Route 84 West to Exit 23. Follow the signs for Route 69 South. Proceed on Route 69 South and refer to the local directions in the previous paragraph to locate the Firehouse.

Club Officers

The present WARC officers are as follows:

President:

Ron , KA1KJZ

E-Mail -

Vice President:

Steve Stone, N1AOB

E-Mail - n1aob@arrl.net

Secretary:

Phil , N1

E-mail - **com**

Treasurer:

Ed O'Lena, N1YLN

E-Mail - n1yln@earthlink.net

Trustee:

Mark DiCorpo, WA1CRS

Master at Arms:

Bill McCasland, W7YY

E-Mail - billmarimac@wmconnect.com

Club Historian:

Mike Cousins, N1ZKX

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Webmaster:

Mike Cousins, N1ZKX

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Newsletter Editor:

Steve Stone, N1AOB

E-Mail - n1aob@arrl.net

Please contact the editor concerning SPARX mailing or e-mail address changes. (If you would prefer not to receive your copy of SPARX by e-mail, please notify me - Ed).

Membership Information

All interested hams and aspiring amateur operators are eligible for membership. Local clubs are a perfect way to learn more about the hobby, participate in events, and serve the community in emergencies. Try attending one of our meetings and ask anyone about joining! Amateurs are friendly, interested in promoting our hobby, and will be happy to answer your questions.

We meet on the third Monday evening of every month. See the information section below for meeting time and location. Membership forms are available from our Treasurer or on our website. Please Ask!

