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The Monthly Newsletter of the Monongalia
Wireless Association
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Next Meeting Election of 2003 Officers

Be there – you might get elected !
Tuesday, October 15. 7:30 PM
WVU Engineering Bldg.
Room G084 (or thereabouts)



John, N8TA, and Terry, K3JT, examine the K2 QRP rig at the September meeting.

Talking about QRP

The September meeting program was by John Mori, N8TA. John spoke of the characteristics of QRP operation. He noted that 5 watts of CW power out was equivalent to 100 watts of SSB power, due to the narrow bandwidth of the CW signal and the concentration of energy that results. A wide variety of QRP kits are on the market. These range from the “Tuna Tin” transmitters to kits that are the equal of commercially manufactured transceivers. But most commercially-available rigs can be adjusted to operate at QRP (less than 5 watts) levels. QRP DX-ing works, and John said that the secret is listening, listening, listening! QRP is a common-sense approach to HF operating. Give it a try.

5-MHZ Band Proposal on Hold

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has recommended that the FCC not grant an ARRL petition for a domestic-only, secondary Amateur Radio allocation at 5 MHz. The last-minute recommendation followed hundreds of largely favorable comments and reply comments from organizations--including the ARRL--and from individuals.

NTIA has said federal agencies are making extensive use of HF for emergency services, including communications support for the

Department of Defense, the Coast Guard and Department of Justice law enforcement activities. NTIA believes the FCC's current proposal does not adequately provide for protection from harmful interference to these critical government operations primary in the band.

Gear for ARES Volunteers

ARRL has announced new gear for Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) volunteers. These are distinctive garments for use by ARES team members similar to jackets and vests worn by other public service volunteers. Available gear are vests, windbreakers and equipment bags. Windbreakers can be personalized with FIRST NAME and CALL SIGN. Orders and information are through ARRL's distributor for the gear, Barker Specialty Company at <http://www.barkerspecialty.com/arrl>

SUBMITTING INFORMATION FOR SOLID COPY

Send info for Solid Copy to Jack, WF8X@arrl.net, or Bill, WA8YCG@arrl.net no later than the 7th of month in which the information is to appear.

For Sale

Various items available on a list from Terry, K3JT. To get the list, contact Terry at k3jt@hotmail.com

Future Monroeville Computer Shows

10/05/2002-10/06/2002
10/26/2002-10/27/2002
11/23/2002-11/24/2002
12/21/2002-12/22/2002

MWA Repeaters II

Here is Part 2 of the general information on MWA repeaters. The information this month was taken in large part from ARRL web site provided by the Technical Information Service. – Norton, WD8AFJ

Operating procedures used on the MWA repeaters are very much like those used on many machines. But its worth a few minutes to listen and familiarize yourself with the procedures used by other hams. Accepted procedures can vary slightly from repeater to repeater.

Your first transmission on a repeater is as simple as signing your call. If the repeater is quiet, just say "N8XYZ" or "N8XYZ listening" -- to attract someone's attention. After you stop transmitting, you will usually hear the unmodulated repeater carrier for a second or two. This *squelch tail* lets you know that the repeater is working. Someone interested in talking to you will call you after your

initial transmission. Don't call CQ to initiate a conversation on a repeater. It takes longer to complete a CQ than to transmit your call sign. Efficient communication is the goal. You are not on HF, trying to attract the attention of someone who is casually tuning across the band. In the FM mode, stations are either monitoring their favorite frequency or not.

To join a conversation in progress, transmit your call sign during a break between transmissions. The station that transmits next will usually acknowledge you. Don't use the word "break" to join a conversation -- unless you want to use the repeater for an **emergency**.

To make an emergency or distress call over the repeater, say "*break break*" and then your call sign to alert all stations to stand by while you deal with the emergency. A further word about emergencies: Regardless of the band, mode or your class of license, FCC Rules specify that, in case of emergency, the normal rules can be suspended. If you hear an emergency call for help, you should do whatever you can to establish contact with the station needing assistance, and immediately pass the information to the proper authorities. If you are talking with another station and you hear an emergency call for help, stop your QSO immediately and take the emergency call.

To call another station when the repeater is not in use, just give both calls. For example, "N8IP this is N8XYZ". If the station does not respond, make the call again after 30 seconds or so. Two or three calls are sufficient. If the station does not answer, it is not necessary to say "Nothing heard, N8XYZ clear." You have already properly identified your station with the initial calls.

If the repeater is in use, but the conversation sounds like it is about to end, wait before calling another station. If the conversation sounds like it is going to continue for a while and you really must contact another station, then transmit only your call sign between their transmissions. After you are acknowledged, ask to make a quick call. Usually, the other stations will stand by. Make

your call short. If your friend responds, try to meet on another repeater or on a simplex frequency. Otherwise, ask your friend to stand by until the present conversation ends.

Use plain language on a repeater. "Q" codes are not necessary, save them for CW. If you want to know someone's location, say "Where are you?" If you want to know whether someone you're talking with is using a mobile rig or a hand-held radio, just ask: "What kind of radio are you using?" You get the idea.

Next time – Repeater courtesy and simplex operating.

The HF Operator

Question of the month is: "I've been listening to SSB on 20M for some months now. Several times I've heard DX stations signing with the call sign AY3L or AY7K and they reported their zone as 13. I thought that only US stations could use the AA through AZ prefix ... what gives?"

Well, that's a good question and I had to do some research on this one. These AY stations are properly licensed and are located in Argentina. Most commonly they are special event stations or contest stations. LU is the more familiar prefix for Argentina.

Amateurs in the US can be assigned AA to only AL calls per regulations outlined in the 1947 Atlantic City Conference. Blocks of call signs from AM to AZ are allotted to other countries. For example, say you hear AT3J come on ... that would be India. Spanish operators recently

used the A0 prefix for a special event that their country was celebrating.

Another fascinating topic on US call signs is that our call districts haven't always been like they are today. For example call areas of the 48 contiguous states in 1937 shows only 9 call areas (1 through 9). Virginia, now in call district 4 was part of call district 3; Western NY and PA were in call district 8. Call district 6 contained CA, NV, UT, and AZ. It wasn't until 1950 that call districts were redrawn to the current status.

When I researched the history of my call sign (W8PT) I found that it was issued to a gentlemen from Ambridge, PA in 1922. Only a few others have had this call sign since.

If anyone is interested in some of the history behind call signs there is a fascinating article in the May 1994 issue of QST (pp 54 to 59).

73, Rich, W8PT