



# The Illuminator



The monthly newsletter of the Carbon Amateur Radio Club

April 2001

## Father Murgas at April Meeting!

### April Meeting

Okay, so he won't be there in person. However, the program for our next regular meeting on Thursday, April 19, at 7:30 p.m. includes a documentary on Father Murgas. Come out and learn about the radio genius that lived in our own back yard!



### From the President's Desk

By Larry, N3CR

Greetings one and all. We have lost a good one. On March 23rd, the MIR space station plunged into the South Pacific Ocean in a ball of flame. It appeared to be in six main pieces and many smaller pieces. What was designed for six years service lasted almost 13 years. Many club members had the opportunity to copy the packets from the MIR mailbox when the cosmonauts were not on FM talking to ground stations. I feel privileged to have contacted Sergei Krikalov, R0MIR, who happened to be on the first International Space Station crew. He was that cosmonaut without a country when the Soviet Union fell while he was on MIR. He holds the record for days in space. It was great to hear that all of them were able to walk off the shuttle upon landing. ISS will be on the air soon. I have not had the time to monitor daily but now that crews have changed maybe we will hear voices from space again. Some people say I hear voices all the time. They have had a few successful school contacts. Look for them soon.

Winter has been kind to us. Other than remaining one of the colder winters in recent times, we have not had the crippling weather, power outages, and

icing conditions of years past. Neither did we get the sub zero temperatures of past years. The blizzard of the century never occurred. Congressmen are looking into making weathermen in the large media markets (TV) responsible for weather alerts of major concern. This may lessen the panic of people cleaning out grocery stores two days before the predicted event. Computer models have made some weather predictors look rather foolish. Then again when one local one calls for flurries, I warm up the snow blower! Carbon recently had a weather exercise so I would feel local schools, hospitals and homes are ready for whatever spring brings.

The DX contests have brought out many callsigns we have not heard for a long time. In one week over 234 DX countries were heard or posted on the many DX Clusters. This will fill up your holes in the DX chart! NOW is the time to work them. We have seen the best of conditions for this solar cycle. There will be spikes but why sit and wait for them? Ten meters is producing good DX with most any antenna. I am hearing less DX on 10m FM but we still have time to work those stations with coat hangers. This was not the hottest solar cycle but it may still produce some Spring Equinox propagation. 15m and 17m have been doing well. 20m doesn't seem to change much, only get more crowded.

Now is the time to think about what you are doing for Field Day. Goody, K3NG, has agreed to chair the Field Day committee. Feed your ideas to him and a Field Day it shall be. The door is open for ideas and locations. Could this be the one to try some new exotic antennas in the field? Bring your ideas to the next meeting or pass them on to Goody at: [goody@fast.net](mailto:goody@fast.net).

The last meeting featured past SM, Al Breiner, W3TI. We thank Al for bringing us up to date on all the changes to our section and ARRL. We hope

they are for the better and hope Al takes a little break from his duties as SM and enjoys retirement again. The next meeting will have a video about Father Murgas. Until next time, get ready to tweak those antennas from the winter freeze and GOOD DX!

73s de Larry N3CR, Carbon ARC President



### **Net Advice**

By Larry, N3CR

The Wednesday evening nets continue to meet at 9 pm Wednesday evenings on the 147.255 MHz repeater with a link to the Eastern PA VHF Society 224.260 MHz repeater easily reachable in Carbon County and surrounding areas. Following the regular call up, we have been accepting items for sale, trade, wanted or FREE. Now is the time to sort through the shack and move out those items collecting dust. Your junk may be someone else's pet project. If you are looking for a particular item, this would be a good time to find out if it is available in the local area. The repeaters are heard along a good portion of Eastern Pennsylvania. So if you want to pick an item up within reasonable driving distance, this is the place.

Bill KC2DLR has been our net control. Should he not be able to pick up the net on the hour, feel free to jump in there and get the net started. There are a lot of people out there listening. One of the regular check-ins from among club members will be glad to help you in moving the net along. We have been looking for different voices to run the net from time to time so don't be afraid to step up to the plate. Wednesdays are not always a good night for me and rough to reach the repeater when you are tight against the Blue Mountain! If you think another time or night would be better, come to our next meeting, send a note to me, your newsletter editor, or one of the directors and the club will look into your idea. Thanks for checking into our nets. Get those batteries up to power and make sure they work. Checking into the net only takes a few minutes of your time and can mean so much. Join us.

73s de Larry N3CR, Carbon ARC President



### **Propagation**

By Larry, N3CR

Greetings All! I spoke of the peak of the solar cycle taking place in October 2000. You never would have thought about it back then. It didn't seem possible that soon. The indicators sure point to that possibility, however I also spoke of "spikes" in the propagation. We recently had one of them where the sunspots went up to 339! The solar flux was 264. This would have made it the peak. However, 24 hours later the solar flux was very much lower and so I call it a spike. It did not create any opening since the A index has been 15 or higher. I am looking at A27 as this is written. The Spring Equinox will create events not seen at any other time. The sunspots may even go higher at the spots reach the solar equator. Such events can trigger six meter band openings and often do. This is a yearly thing with only the numbers higher at the peak of the solar cycle.

What it has done is create another unwanted situation. We have seen more days with the A index over 10 and deteriorated conditions for days at end. The first band to lose DX is ten meters. This is most notable although those wishing to work weak signal DX still would be able to find some near the bottom. This also affects the 17 meter and 20 meter bands. Signal strengths of all signals are down and only the DX stations with high power will have anything of a noise free signal. With more foreign stations working 200 watts or less due to the high costs of new radios, more of these stations are relying on better antennas and receivers to make the QSOs. More countries are pushing to keep the power of ham radios down. Many cannot afford the additional costs of running KWs. The electric power crunch is hitting everyone.

All is not bad though. The current conditions have a way of enhancing the top bands. 160 meter conditions can actual become enhanced by such activity provided the noise levels are low. 75 meter band conditions can provide some increased signals prior to midnight. The conditions become long for a greater period of time with very workable signals. This is also when aurora can work its way south and give those warbling sounds. This past year we had very few days where noticeable aurora reached our area. It could still happen in the month of April.

The high numbers of short duration still will not change the fact that the solar cycle is on the slow downside. This could take two years before we all really work to get that needed QSO. I dread the thoughts but it only means you use the most antenna available and greatest power available if you want to be heard. This is where patience is the best asset if you plan to work QRP or those low, short antennas are your only assets. Enjoy the days of big signals, for those days of working stations are not far behind. I will still be out there looking for 10 meter FM DX and working Fort Worth, Texas like it was the Arctic Circle! Putting a lot of effort into 10 meter antennas will do that. Good DX to all and to all good propagation tonight.

73s de Larry N3CR



**Carbon Amateur Radio Club  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
March 15, 2001**

President Larry Lilly, N3CR, called a regular meeting of the Carbon Amateur Radio Club to order at 7:31 p.m. on Thursday, March 15, 2001. Thirteen people attended.

The minutes were read by Bob, K3PH, and approved by the members in attendance.

John, W3MF, read the treasurer's report. At the last meeting, we had a balance of \$779.38. We had receipts of \$60.00 from dues and one disbursement of \$6.80 for mailing the newsletter, leaving a total of \$832.58. The members in attendance approved the Treasurer's report.

It was noted that Andy, KB3FSV, had passed the General Class theory examination. Congratulations to Andy!

It was also mentioned that Lisa Kelley is having surgery on her hand as the result of a bad accident with a knife. The club will send her a get-well card.

There was a discussion of a possible club visit to the ARRL. Bob, K3PH, volunteered to poll the membership on what month they would like to visit, while Larry, N3CR, volunteered to check into charter bus prices.

Scott Forster thanked the club for our help in preparing for the blizzard of the century that never came. He also noted a weather exercise will take place on March 22 requiring two operators at the EOC.

Bob, K3PH, noted that Goody, K3NG, is interested in being Field Day coordinator this year. Those interested in working Field Day for CARC should contact Goody at goody@fast.net.

Lamar, N3AT, mentioned that the EPARA club is planning a group building of the New Jersey QRP Club's PSK-80 Warbler at the Monroe County Vo Tech. The cost of the Warbler is \$45. Those interested should contact Lamar at n3at@enter.net.

Al, W3TI, then presented a very entertaining talk on changes in the ARRL.

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.



**ARRL DX Bulletin**

DX Bulletin 14 ARLD014  
From ARRL Headquarters  
Newington CT April 5, 2001  
To all radio amateurs

This week's bulletin was made possible with information provided by Tedd, KB8NW, The OPDX Bulletin, QRZ DX, The Daily DX, 425DXnews, DXNL and Contest Corral from QST. Thanks to all.

**ROTUMA, 3D2.** Antoine, 3D2AG/p, continues to be QRV most days on 10 meters around 2200z and 0800z. QSL to home call.

**MALDIVES, 8Q.** Armin, HB9JBN, is QRV as 8Q7JB until April 19. Activity is on 20, 15 and 10 meters. QSL to home call.

**NEPAL, 9N.** Lawrence, 9N7RB, has been QRV on 20 meters from 0130 to 0230z. QSL via W4FOA.

**BHUTAN, A5.** Yeshey, A51AA, has been QRV on 28480 kHz from around 1100 to 1330z.

**CHINA, BY.** Zhang, BA0AA, is located in Zone 23. He has been QRV on 28015 kHz just before 1300z and then on 21025 kHz just after 1400z.

**ANDORRA, C3.** Toni, C31OF, has been QRV using RTTY on 20 meters just after 1800z.

**MADEIRA ISLANDS, CT3.** Ben, DJ8FW, is QRV as CT3AS until April 16. His activity is on 40 to 10 meters using CW, RTTY and PSK31. QSL to home call.

**TAJIKISTAN, EY.** Nodir, EY8MM, has been QRV near 18072 kHz between 0100 and 0200z and then on 24895 kHz around 1300z. QSL via K1BV.

**AUSTRAL ISLANDS, FO.** Frank, DL7FT, is QRV as FO/DL7FT on Rurutu Island, IOTA OC-050. He is usually active on 28490, 24940, 21290, 18140, and 14195 kHz. QSL to home call.

**SOUTH KOREA, HL.** Special event station D70IAF is QRV until May 25 to celebrate the opening of the new Incheon International Airport. QSL via HL1IWD.

**THAILAND, HS.** Station E29AL is QRV from Terutao Island, IOTA AS-126, until April 15. Activity is on 160 to 10 meters and 2 meters, using CW, SSB, RTTY, FM and PSK31. QSL via HS0GBI. Meanwhile, club station HS0AC has been QRV on 10 meters CW from 1300 to 1500z. QSL via G3NOM.

**CENTRAL AFRICA, TL.** Charles, TL8CK, has been QRV on 14118 kHz between 1700 and 1800z. QSL via F6EWM.

**NAMIBIA, V5.** Nick, ZS4NS, will be active as V51/ZS4NS from April 10 to 20. He plans to operate mainly on 6 meters, monitoring 50110 kHz. He may also be active on 20, 15 and 10 meters as well. QSL via N7RO.

**ANGUILLA, VP2E.** Bill, W5SJ, is active as VP2EJ until April 10. His activity is concentrated on the low bands. QSL to home call.

**ST. HELENA, ZD7.** ZD7K is QRV until April 12. QSL via GW0ANA.

**THIS WEEKEND ON THE RADIO.** The QCWA QSO Party, EA RTTY Contest, SP DX Contest and the VHF/UHF Spring Sprints are all scheduled for

this weekend. Please see April QST, page 109 for details.



### QSL Bureau Update By Larry, N3CR

At the last meeting it was brought up that there appears to be a problem with receiving QSLs from our 3 land incoming bureau. I have contacted the bureau and was put in touch with Mary, WA3HUP, the bureau manager. She has suggested visiting the web page at

<http://homestead.juno.com/wa3hup/padxa.html>.

Mary's suggestion is to keep your address current and sufficient envelopes on file with at least two attached stamps if you regularly do foreign QSLing. Send additional stamps attached with a paperclip in case more QSLs arrive at one time. Judge the number of envelopes on file by the amount of DX cards you send each year. The sorter will mark the returned envelope with the number of stamps and envelopes you have on file at that mailing.

While there are no provisions for bulk mailing, the manager has allowed bulk mailing if the assigned sorter agrees. Each sorter is assigned a letter or letters to sort. Most make at least one pickup a month from the incoming presorted QSLs for their assigned letter(s) depending on the amount of incoming cards. The sorters spend a considerable amount of time filling the envelopes from 3rd call area hams. Again, depending how many cards come in, the sorters try to go through all the envelopes and send those out that appear to be filled for the attached postage. It could be three months before your envelope is checked. Those who receive regular large mailings often have their cards sent out when they reach the two-pound limit, again, if the sorter has managed an agreement with that ham.

It is totally up to the sorter for that call letter group when and how many cards are sent. Often an envelope is kept until 15 cards or two ounces of postage can be sent out. If additional stamps are clipped to your envelope you may wait a while longer. If you do not work DX and QSL regularly, you could be looking at a long period of time before your envelope arrives, one or two mailings a year! If

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you send out frequently, you may be lucky enough to get an envelope every other month or more.

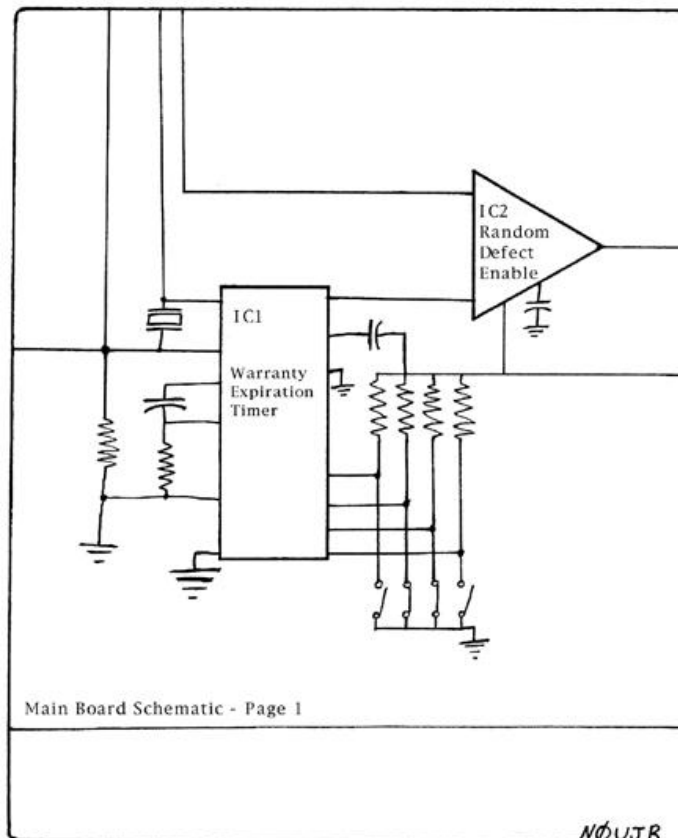
QSLs from overseas have to be handled by the outgoing bureau in that country and then shipped by boat in bulk to our incoming bureau. Unless that person sends his card directly to our bureau, it could take many months for your returned card to appear at the incoming third area bureau where sorting and resorting take place several times before it reaches your individual envelope. Bottom line is PATIENCE. The cards take time to arrive here. These are all volunteers who spend much of their time sorting our cards, sometimes a couple times a week, and make the incoming bureau work. It is a huge project and often a thankless job that we all enjoy the results.

I find it very unusual that my inquiry was the first complaint they have received on the way cards are handled. I have heard complaints from several on the irregularity of receiving bureau cards. I am still waiting weeks for cards for both callsigns that were to be sent out to "clean" my account to make run for new envelopes. I can understand the concern for our other regular DXers who every month work hundreds of stations. I would want to have those QSLs to confirm the 200 or 300 or more countries and callsigns I have worked hard at over the previous years.

**Editorial Comment.** I feel we should have patience and support the incoming bureau until something better comes along. These are volunteers who regularly take time away from ham radio and computers to put DX QSL cards in our mailboxes. It is more time than I would probably be willing to give for such a project. Yet, it is something I enjoy receiving a couple times a year. Every card has a story. No matter how common the country, I can appreciate what it took to receive that card from any source. Patience. Keep a number of envelopes on file. And check the mailbox every day. Your cards will come.

73s de Larry N3CR

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Main Board Schematic - Page 1

The real reason electronic equipment often fails right after the warranty expires.

**Check out <http://incolor.inetnebr.com/n0ujr> for other cartoons and to purchase N0UJR's book, "N0UJR and His Friends."**



## Heard Through the Grapevine...

**The club needs an EC/RO for the ARES and RACES activities. Contact Larry, N3CR, for details.**



### Carbon Amateur Radio Club – 2000-2001 Officers

President: Larry Lilly, N3CR [ka3afy@ptdprolog.net](mailto:ka3afy@ptdprolog.net)  
Vice President: Glenn O'Donnell, K3PP  
Secretary: Bob Schreibmaier, K3PH  
Treasurer: John Schreibmaier, W3MF  
W3HA Callsign Trustee: Bill Dale, WY3K  
W3HA Repeater Trustee: John Bednar, K3CT  
Public Information Officer: Bill Kelley, KA3UKL  
Skywarn Coordinator: Mike, N3XYU

### Directors

John Bednar, K3CT, Bruce Appleton, N3RXJ, Bert Rex, W3OWP

### Illuminator Staff

Editor: Bob, K3PH [k3ph@dxis.monroe.pa.us](mailto:k3ph@dxis.monroe.pa.us)

Contesting: Glenn, K3PP

DX: Bob, K3PH

Foxhunting: open

Propagation and Commentary: Larry, N3CR [ka3afy@ptdprolog.net](mailto:ka3afy@ptdprolog.net)

QRP: Lamar, N3AT [n3at@noln.com](mailto:n3at@noln.com)

Technical: John, K3CT [k3ct@fast.net](mailto:k3ct@fast.net)

Newsletter Printing, Folding, and Mailing: Bob, K3PH

### Services

W3HA Repeater: 147.255 Mhz + PL 131.8

CARC Website: <http://www.cpals.com/~elitehom/carc/>

Webmaster: Rob, KB3BYT [roomborg@ptd.net](mailto:roomborg@ptd.net)

CARC Email Reflector: see [www.gth.net](http://www.gth.net) CarbonARC list for details

### CARC Membership Information

Regular Membership is \$15.00, which includes autopatch privileges.

*All amateur radio operators are invited to join the CARC ARES / RACES net held 2:00 local time every Wednesday on the W3HA repeater at 147.255*

*Mhz + offset, PL 131.8. Any amateur radio operator or anyone with an interest in ham radio is welcome to attend our monthly meetings which occur the third Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM at the Carbon County EMA Center on Route 93 in Nesquehoning.*

Carbon Amateur Radio Club  
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