



The Feedline

What's There to be Excited About?

By Ward Silver, N0AX
*The ARRL Contester's Rate Sheet/
American Radio Relay League*

Like many of my readers, I've been in this hobby a long time - 35 years in a couple of weeks. Indeed, I've been a ham for a good part of my adolescence and all of my adult life. I've made many thousands of contacts, on many bands, with many places, with many pieces of gear. Once a callow and nervous Novice, I'm starting on the fifth solar cycle that's come 'round the limb of Ol' Sol. You would think that with that background, maybe I've pretty much experienced all of what amateur radio has to offer. Interestingly enough, the answer is, "Not even close!"

In fact, what I've found is that the longer a ham has been licensed, the FEWER different aspects of ham radio they are likely to use. We are creatures of habit and once formed, we tend to pertinaciously follow those habits, frequently becoming incredibly deep experts to be sure, growing narrower, relatively speaking. (Many of us also grow wider in other ways, but I digress...) It is rare individual that can lay claim to being a Renaissance Ham.

As we develop and hone our expertise, we may also find that we have explored much of what there is to explore in our chosen niches. Our hamming begins to become permeated with a sameness that leads to a quietus of "been there, done that". Does this stoic inertia sound familiar? How can this electronic ennui be excised? What is there to get excited about as modern ham radio approaches nonagenarianism?

Let me tell you about a few things that have caught my interest of late...

Digital contesting - After years and years of languishing as lightly attended events "up there" in the CW bands, RTTY contesting is the fastest growing contest mode. To be sure, it started small, but it's not small any more with digital contests nearly every weekend. The combination of excellent software and simple radio hookups make this incredibly easy to try compared to the Mechanical Ages. I do miss the smell of teletype oil, though.

VHF+ Roving - In case you haven't noticed, roving has become a huge part of VHF+ contesting. The stations that take to the grids in search of adventitious

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Dates to Remember:

Feb 11 – Membership Meeting

NKARC Directory

President

Dann Fox, KI4AVO

dfox03@fuse.net

Comm. Manager

Rick Fox, WA4QMV

rgfox77@sbcglobal.net

Club Trustee & Historian

Harold Blocher Sr., W4YWH

w4ywh@arrl.net

859-441-9595

Vice President

Greg Hatton, KG4ZTG

Feedline Editor

Mark Volstad, AI4BJ

mvolstad@fuse.net

859-689-4234

Webmaster

Robert Kluck, N4IJS

n4ijs@insightbb.com

Director at Large

Don King, AJ4DK

kingdl19406@msn.com

Net Manager

Robert Kluck, N4IJS

n4ijs@insightbb.com

Secretary

Bob Burns, AB4BK

b.burns@fuse.net

Repeaters — K4CO

147.255+ and 444.350+ Edgewood (PL 123.0), 147.375+ Walton, 146.895+ Highland Heights
The 147.255 repeater is a linked Echolink node, accessible via N4IJS-R.

Nets

N. KY. Amateur Club Net: Tuesdays, 7:30 PM on the 147.255 repeater

—WEB Site—

<http://www.k4co.org>

Membership meetings on the **2nd Monday** at 7:30 PM, Turkeyfoot Middle School, 3230 Turkeyfoot Rd in Edgewood

Board meetings: TBA

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Mark Volstad AI4BJ: 6098 Tosha Dr., Burlington, KY 41005 — Email: mvolstad@fuse.net

Top of the Tower

Hello All,

I would like to introduce myself: I am Dann Fox, the new NKARC president. This is my first term as president. For the last two years, I was treasurer, and I have been a member of NKARC for four Years.

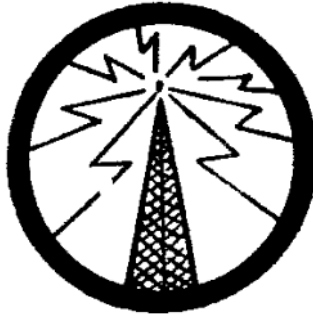
Field Day is on my mind this month, and it is time to get some planning done. No one has come forward for the Field Day committee. Please — if you are interested, please let us know. We will need someone to work on registration paperwork to send in to ARRL.

A new Amateur Radio club is born in Northern Kentucky. Dixie High School students have just recently started their own Amateur Radio club. The QSL card makes it official. If you are one of the people that helped the students pass their license exams or helped with setting up this club, you have done Amateur Radio a service. Thank You.

Here are some words from Jim Hicks, who introduced Amateur Radio in the classroom at

Dixie Heights High School:

“We now have KY4DH QSL cards. Because of your or your group’s support of the Dixie Heights High School Amateur Radio Club, and Dixie’s Radio Technology Class, I have sent you a copy of the card. It is just a small way of saying thank you so much and keeping you informed on what the class and club are doing. It should arrive in the mail in a few days. Thank you again for your continued support.”



73, Dann KI4AVO



January Net Report

If you are interested in helping the club out and expanding your Amateur Radio skill set, please take a turn at running one of our weekly nets! This is a great way to hone your radio, net control, and message handling skills in a friendly environment. If you are interested, please contact Robert Kluck, N4IJS, at (859) 426-5588 or n4ijs@insightbb.com.

| DATE | NCS | CHECKINS | TIME (MINS) | TRAFFIC |
|---------|-----------------|----------|-------------|---------|
| 1/1/08 | AJ4DK (Don) | 3 | 16 | 0 |
| 1/8/08 | KB4VKS (Mike) | 8 | 29 | 0 |
| 1/15/08 | N4IJS (Robert) | 8 | 23 | 0 |
| 1/22/08 | KG4SBG (Dennis) | 6 | 33 | 1 |
| 1/29/08 | N4IJS (Robert) | 4 | 12 | 0 |
| TOTALS | | 29 | 113 | 1 |

Mark's Mutterings

Beginnings

I'm always interested in learning how other hams entered the hobby. In my own case, the seed that eventually led to an amateur radio license was planted when, as a young lad of around ten, I discovered the magic of shortwave.

When I was growing up near Toronto, the highlight of my summer vacations were our annual trips to visit my French-Canadian grandparents on their farm in Quebec. Much of my time was spent in the house belonging to my Uncle Jacques, which was on the adjacent property. Uncle Jacques was my favorite uncle. He spoke English fluently, and was an avid outdoorsman. He was also missing one arm, which certainly added to his "coolness" factor. The second floor of his 100-year-old farm house was really a large attic, full of objects of fascination to a young boy, including a collection of old leg-hold animal traps of every imaginable size, some with bits of fur still attached.

One rainy day, I borrowed his portable transistor radio, (a Nordmende, I think) and sequestered myself in his attic to listen to it. I discovered that the radio had extra bands on it, with numbers that I hadn't seen on other radios. Well! It wasn't long before I had bleeps, buzzes, and voices in foreign languages coming out of the speaker. Even the English voices I heard had accents, and sounded as though they came from a great distance. Then I heard a foreign language that I thought I recognized, and I ran to my father with the radio in my hands. After listening for a few seconds, my dad's face lit up with a huge grin, and I knew that I had guessed correctly. I had tuned in to a Radio Norway broadcast, and my dad was eagerly listening to news from his homeland!

It wasn't until I was in my late teens that I had enough pocket money to invest in a decent shortwave receiver of my own. When we moved to a new province, I found that one of my new high school friends, Daryl Hovey, was interested in

shortwave listening, and he offered to sell me his Hallicrafters S-120 for a reasonable price. The "feature" that I remember most about that radio was its hot chassis, which seemed to vibrate under my fingers whenever I touched it. It wasn't much of a performer, but it got me hooked on DXing!



A year or two later I upgraded in a big way when I bought a museum-quality RCA AR-88LF receiver that had been advertised in the classified section of our local paper. This was a true 100-pound boat-anchor. They were built during WWII for the Canadian and British armed forces. What a wonderful radio it was! I spent countless hours chasing DX with it, basking in the warm glow of its vacuum tubes. (Unlike the one in the photo above, mine was not equipped with a cover.) I always hope to see another AR88 when I visit Dayton each spring, but I've only seen one once, and it was in a very sad state.



When I got tired of listening to broadcast stations, I tuned to the amateur bands, and thought that it might be fun to be able to talk on the radio as well as to listen. I subscribed to 73 Magazine, and made a half-hearted attempt at studying for the Canadian Amateur Radio license. I got side-tracked by microcomputers, however, which had just become affordable in kit form. This turned into a career, and it was more than twenty years before the ham radio bug bit me again, this time for good (thanks, Elecraft!).

I'd love to hear how some of my fellow club members ended up in the hobby. Drop me a note, and I'll include it in a future issue of the Feedline.

73, Mark, AI4BJ

January Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the January 14, 2008 Membership Meeting

The meeting was called to order by President Dann Fox at the Turkey Foot Middle School at 7:39 p.m.

Dann led the group in the pledge to the flag, and thanked all who attended the Christmas party.

The treasurer's report presented by Dann was approved.

Self introductions followed with 18 present.

Dann asked that a field day committee volunteers. He will try and get the same location as last year.

Free club membership has been offered to the new hams from the Dixie Heights Radio Club. Their call, KY4DH, has received over 1,000 lookups on QRZ.com

Robert Kluck stated that if there was enough interest, a weather spotting class could be offered to the club.

Dann stated that next month's program will be presented by Mark Volstad on using solar power to power an HF station. Any ideas for future programs will be gladly accepted.

Lyle Hamilton reported that three of the four VE test this evening were successful.

Mark Volstad will create a hand out for new license holders about the club.

After the meeting was adjourned, pizza was served, and Mark Volstad conducted a follow up on the kit building project.

Respectfully submitted,
Bob Burns

The February NKARC membership meeting will include a presentation by Mark Volstad, AI4BJ, on how he uses solar energy to power his portable HF station.

Please join us Monday, February 11.

Weaver's Words

Jim Weaver, K8JE
Great Lakes Division Director, ARRL
E-mail: k8je@arrl.org; Tel.: 513-459-0142

Have it Great in 2008

I wish everyone the best year ever in 2008 and may Amateur Radio be everything you have always wanted in an avocation.

The Board Meeting

Another Annual Meeting of the ARRL Board of Directors has come and gone. For me the meeting was really two meetings -- the Program and Services Committee meeting all day Thursday, and the Board meeting from Thursday evening through Saturday early afternoon. It was a short meeting as Annual meetings go. The Saturday session did not run until 4-5 PM as generally happened in the past.

The complete Minutes will be published in the April issue of QST and are to be posted on the ARRL web site so I won't discuss everything that happened. Here are a few of the highlights for your information. If you have any question, let me know.

- All officers of the Board were re-elected unanimously. The Executive Committee will have a somewhat different look.

- Effective January 1, 2009, the \$3.00 dues discount for senior citizens will be eliminated. Taken collectively, this change will permit us to keep the ARRL budget in the black. I realize that some of you may greatly dislike losing this discount; however, \$3.00 over an entire year for an individual should not be a financial burden. If this \$3 proves to be a true burden for anyone in our Division, please let me know. I may be able to help.

- The 2008 budget was approved. We remain in the black.

- SMs were given authority to make official appointment of Assistant SECs as well as Assistant DEC. De-

pending upon the size of the ARES(TM) organization in a Section, being able to make these appointments officially may prove very beneficial.

- The Ad Hoc Background Investigation Committee noted that National Red Cross has not replied to efforts to renew the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Red Cross and ARRL/ARES. As a result, the MoU with the Red Cross has expired. In spite of this, ARRL remains interested in working with RC on behalf of citizens in this country. The Programs & Services Committee will continue to attempt to resolve the issue over requirements the RC has placed on accepting volunteer help and to develop a new MoU.

ARES members are encouraged to remain open to assist RC. However, ARRL is not advising its members to agree to the complete background check RC is demanding. The decision to authorize RC to have such an intrusive background check performed is up to each amateur.

- The VHF/UHF Advisory Committee (VUAC) was initially scheduled to be disbanded at this past Annual Meeting was given an extended life. This extension is for two more years. The committee consists of a member who is appointed by each Division Director. The Committee makes recommendations concerning the VHF and UHF Awards programs.

The representative to VUAC for the Great Lakes Division is Mark Dabish, K8MD of Howell, MI. To round the picture, the GLD representative to the DX Advisory Committee (DXAC) is Kirk Swallow, W8QID of suburban Cincinnati. I thank each of these men for the time and effort they have devoted to ARRL and Amateur Radio during recent years.

- The long-standing support of ARRL for double sideband AM (AM) was re-enforced by a resolution that restated our support. The resolution was passed unanimously.

Similarly, the current 160 M bandplan adopted by the Board in 2001 was reaffirmed unanimously without change. AM, of course, is included in the 160 M bandplan.



'Nuf said?

- A new award will soon be available on 6 M. This will be the Fred Fish, W5FF (SK) award and will be available to anyone who confirms 6 M QSOs with all 488 grid squares in the 48 contiguous US states. Fred Fish, W5FF Award No. 1 will be issued posthumously to Fred Fish and presented to his wife, Lee Fish, K2FF.

With the new sunspot cycle having just begun, now is the time to begin planning to earn the Fred Fish Award.

- We will seek a Memorandum of Understanding with the Boys Scouts of America.

- Members in the northwestern part of Ohio may be familiar with the professional broadcaster who was awarded the Bill Leonard, W2SKE Professional Media Award. This is Alyssa Ivanson of WANE-TV in Ft. Wayne, IN. The award was presented to her for producing a TV special of the efforts of Emery McClendon, KB9IBW to promote Amateur Radio Military Appreciation Day.

As a result of her story, McClendon was invited to meet with First Lady Laura Bush in his effort to promote Amateur Radio.

- Committee Assignments: Vice Director Gary Johnston, KI4LA was reappointed chair of the ARRL Historical Committee. I was assigned to the Administration and Finance (A&F) Committee.

Those of you who know me will not be surprised to hear that regardless of the committee to which I am assigned, I will continue to remain aware of the many activities within ARRL. This is one reason so many of you "hired" me.

Was Amateur Radio really "dissed?"

First, please understand that my comments that follow are not promoting or opposing any of the candidates who are seeking nomination for the US Presidency. It is simply as a matter of accuracy that I am providing the URL to the TV program in which Mitch Romney sup-

posedly "dissed" Amateur Radio in 2005. The much-travelled complaint about the alleged dissing has recently resurfaced -- quite heatedly.

You now have the opportunity to view the broadcast in full context to decide for yourself if Romney is a scurrilous knave or a living saint (or in between). Go to www.thebostonchannel.com/video/5334306/index.html. This URL will take you directly to the TV clip. Obviously, have the volume on your computer turned on.

Listen to the entire clip to get the complete background to the discussion, as well as to specific statements.

Tentative Schedule

2008

Feb 10: Mansfield, OH, Hamfest - Jim & Gary

Mar 5: Miami Valley ARA Meeting

Mar 15: Bellbrook ARC Dinner

Apr 2: Lake County ARC, Painesville, OH - Jim

Apr 14: PCARS (OH) Meeting - Jim

Apr 22: Quarterly Division Cabinet Teleconference, 9 PM

May 16-18: Dayton Hamvention(TM) - Gary & Jim

Jul QST 'til noon Aug 8: Nominations for Director/Vice Director open.

Jul 10: Mahoning Valley ARA, Youngstown, OH - Jim

Jul 17-20: Board of Directors Meeting, Newington, CT - Jim & Gary

Jul 22: Quarterly Division Cabinet Teleconference, 9 PM.

Sep 21: Cincinnati Hamfest, Cincinnati, OH - Jim.

Sep 23-Oct 1: Ballots mailed for Director/Vice Director election.

Oct 28: Quarterly Division Cabinet Teleconference, 9 PM.

Nov 21, noon: Deadline for return of ballots. Ballots counted.

Nov 22 by end of day: Candidates notified of election results.



Excited, cont'd from cover

locations and routes are astounding in their capabilities. New rovers, making excellent use of their new all-band, all-mode rigs, are hitting the trail on contest weekends, too. Transverters, antennas, logging software, navigational aids, beacons - all contributing to more participants and more QSOs on more bands from more places. Now, if we could just get propagation to cooperate!

Mobile Operating - Similarly, down on the HF bands, those same radios do yeoman's work as a "shack on the dash" and put out quite a decent number of microvolts per meter. We have antennas that autotune, noise blankers that actually do, plenty of power, and the open road. To those of you that live in anti-tenna communities or risk upbraiding from RFI, welcome back! Who's the mobile?

Solar Cycle 24 - Just when we were about to give up hope, fearing another Maunder Minimum, the first baby sunspot appeared on the unblemished disk of the Sun. And there was celebration throughout the land. Of course, 10 meters, like Generalissimo Francisco Franco, is still dead, but now we know it won't be for long. Spring is here!

40 Meters - Lest anyone forget, 40 meters will be given over to its rightful owners (ahem) starting in 2009 as Amateur Radio gets its mitts on more and more of those marvelous meters. And just in the nick of time, too! Why, the stew of digital contests, salted with CW ragchewers and peppered with phone signals nearly melts the cook pot! Look for more countries to open the gates to 7100-7200 kHz, too. Will "Listening this frequency and..." become a thing of the past? We can only hope.

China and India - When 15 meters starts to open up, I am pretty sure that North American hams will be astounded at the number of new and unusual call signs in the pileups. The conditions are ripe - a growing middle class, interest in technology, governments opening the airwaves to more licensed amateurs. When the world's two largest populations begin to sprout a few amateur radio operators, there is some real potential for exciting contests!

Remote Radios - We're just an RJ-45 and CAT5 cable away from being able to operate from nearly anywhere at just about any time. What does the band sound like from, say, Samarkand? Or Tokyo? Or Johannesburg? Or Santiago? Who's on your DX contest team? Well OH-XXX and PY-ZZZ are taking 15 meters, K-AAA and JA-BBB are on 40. When do they get in? Oh, they're logging in from home! New opportunities, new problems? Sure!

And there are many more - you are probably wondering why I didn't mention any number of topics. Didn't I say I didn't know everything? See? There's lots of stuff in which to take an interest. So if your groove has started to become a rut, there's no need for you to stay stuck. Take a look around and try something new before you give up on the world's most amazing hobby!



QSL Card of the Month

Submitted by:

Robert Kluck, N4IJS

Comments:

On 13-November-2006, I upgraded from General to Amateur Extra after about 24 years of Hamming (and about 23 as General). Not sure why I waited so long, but with raising children and getting a career going, it took me until that time. And, honestly, I was very happy as a General and was enjoying the hobby immensely, but I was ready to take that next step.

This is my first contact as an Extra. Oh, how much fun it was to sign with N4IJS / AE!! There is nothing quite like that first contact after your new license or upgrade, is there?

If you have a special QSL card you would like to share, submit it to the Feedline editor, along with any comments you would like included.

ITU Zone 08 CQ Zone 05 Grid FM18gg

VIRGINIA
Prince William County

W4NF

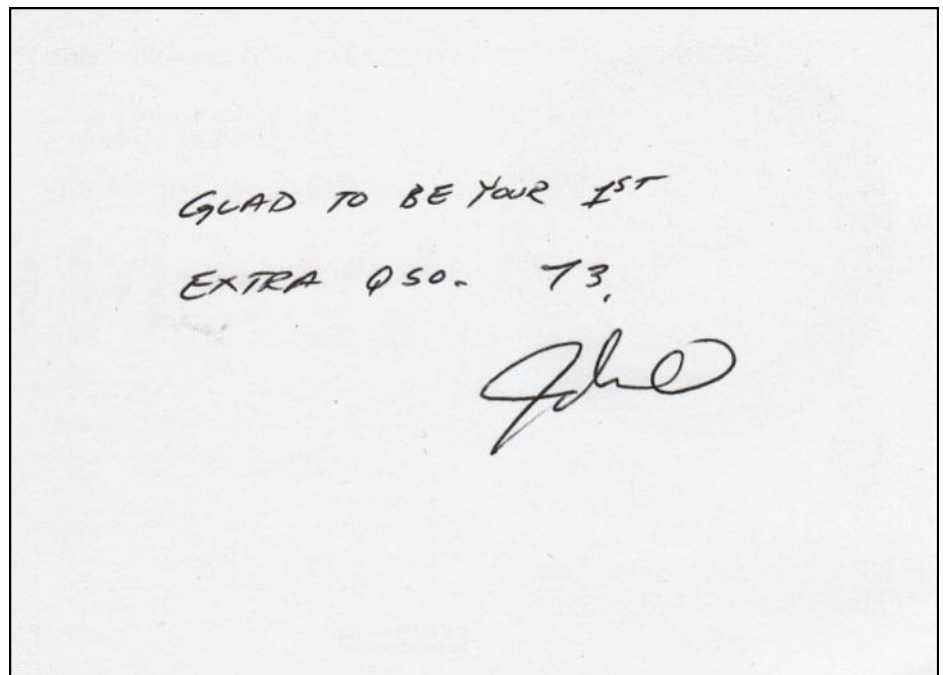

Ex. WB4NFS, WB4NFS/VP9, VP2MDO, W4NF/VP2V
DXCC VUCC 6 and 2 Meters

| CONFIRMING QSO WITH | | DAY | MONTH | YEAR |
|---------------------|-------|-----|-------|------|
| N4IJS/AE | | 18 | NOV | 2006 |
| UTC | MHz | RST | 2-WAY | QSL |
| 2228 | 7.166 | 59 | SSB | TNX |

JACK O'MARA
6913 Trumpeter Swan Lane
Manassas, VA 20112-3295
U.S.A.

LZ1JZ PRINT

John 73, Jack



Return to:
Northern Ky. Amateur Radio Club
P.O. Box 1062
Covington, Ky. 41012

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