
CQ BARS

Volume XXI Issue 06

June 2004

President's Corner

Well we're only a few days away until we hear those famous words. No, not 'Ladies and Gentlemen Start Your Engines', it's 'CQ Field Day CQ Field Day' This is CQ Field Day CQ Field Day'. We're all looking forward to an exciting weekend. We invite all of you to come out Friday afternoon to assist with setup and come around and operate on some of the bands. Don't forget that for those who are up all Saturday night will be tired on Sunday at 1:00 PM when it is time to take down and move out.

I have always thought of this as a 'safety' issue. It is dangerous enough in the best of conditions to climb towers and take them down, much less when you're very tired. So if you can't come out when we're on the air, we would appreciate all the help we can get for the take down and clean up Sunday after noon. Thanks in advance.

I want to take the opportunity to thank all of the Skywarn spotters that have been checking in to the 'net' throughout this tornado season. Special thanks to Toni and Elden who have been net controls and Phil who has spent a lot of time at the National Weather Bureau and Don who has manned the radios at fire station 5. Humility is a great commodity and you all have the right to be unsung heroes at the time of a expected tragedy, and take no public credit for what you do. Thanks to all and safe travels the rest of the season

73

Jim KA9SFW

Secretary's Column

A Reminder, Hamfest flyers are now available, but we need your help in getting them distributed. If you're planning on attending any of the area hamfests please see N9LJY and pickup a bundle of flyers to give to the various vendors (and anyone else who's interested). KA9CAI had been doing this in the past, but that's not possible now. We need to get as much exposure as possible to continue to attract the vendors who in turn attract the customer. I



also have a stack of them in case you can't catch Tom. Call me at home if you run low.

Field Day is approaching, but we also have another event that we need to plan for as well, and that's Hamfest. The time is approaching quickly. I have a lot of advance tickets that are just begging to be sold. I'll have them at the meetings. Again call me at home if you need any.

I've included a fictional letter in this issue of CQ BARS. If it doesn't scare you it should. The 2 meter machine and the 440 machine are quiet most of the time except when we have a severe weather net. I ask you, when was the last time you used it?? I hear more non members on the machines that I do members. We gotta either use the radios or risk losing the frequencies.

73's for this month

Don - N9VJV

Last Months Meeting Minutes

The meeting was opened at 19:05 hours by KA9SFW (Jim), Treasurer. Introductions followed. Officers present were: NW9V (Jim),

KB9JLB (Barb), and N9VJV (Don). Also present at the meeting were:

KA9SFW	KA9J	KC9ESE
K9JTB	NW9V	KA9ZJJ
N9OZD	W9KHX	KB9JLB
WB9PDD	N9LJY	WD9AKO
N9VJV	KC9BST	

A motion to accept the minutes as published in CQ Bars was made by KA9ZJJ (Marti), seconded by WA9IL (John) and carried.

The Treasurers report was presented by KB9JLB ((Barb. A motion to accept as presented was made by K9JTB (Bill), seconded by KC9BST (Lisa) and carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

2 meter: KA9J (Frank) reported that it's still working. No permanent repairs have been made yet.

220/440: WA9IL (John) reported that the 220 machine has been repaired and is working as a stand alone repeater. That means no bells and whistles. The 440 machine is working fine.

Net Control: No Report.

Hamfest: N9LJY (Tom) reported that f10 tables have been sold. Flyers and complementary tickets have been sent to other area clubs. WA9IL has the PA system, speakers, and banners.

Education: W9KHX (Dale) reported that there is nothing being done. NW9V (Phil) reported that WG9L (Bob) has volunteered to review the video course and consider administering it.

VE: W9KHX (Dale) reported that the last VE session produced 1 Tech and 1 Extra..

Field Day: NW9V (Phil) reported that will be using the call N9LJY, The 2003 Field day will be held at the Rock Run I & M Access on Houbolt Rd just south of I80 in Joliet. Need band chairmen by next month. Want to go 6A Plates are needed for the trailer. this year. Wireless internet access will be available. KA9ZJJ (Marti) will be getting a map up on the club web site.

Public Relations: KA9ZJJ (Marti) reported that the web site is running fine.

Skywarn NW9V (Phil) reported that this has been a busy season so far. The NWS now has an APRS station in operation. New antennas have been installed but there are problems with the coax. Hopefully it will be replaced soon. The NWS is trying to reduce the number of frequencies being monitored..

Misc.: No Report

OLD BUSINESS:

None

A motion to close old business was made by N9LJY (Tom), seconded by K9KHX (Dale) and carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

KA9JTB (Bill) donated \$20 too be used toward Field Day food.

KB9JLB (Barb) announced that she had 2 complementary tickets to the Lake County (IN) Hamfest if anyone was interested. She also had a flyer for the 6 Meter Club Hamfest.

N9LJY (Tom) announced that new written procedures have been put in the Station 5 radio room, The operator will need to make sure the information is passed to EMA. He also said that BARS will operate with Bolingbrook EMA, not ARES. The spotters are to pass the information to BARS, then to ESDA, then to County EMA.

WA9IL (John) announced that he would be willing to make DVDs of last years Field Day for a cost of \$5 each.

A motion to close new business was made by N9LJY (Tom), seconded by WA9IL (John) and seconded.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by KC9BST (Lisa), seconded by WA9IL (Lisa) and seconded.

Respectfully submitted,

CQ BARS

Don, N9VJV
Secretary

The below is a FICTIONAL letter. But could it REALLY happen?

Free Ham Radio Gear... I hadn't been on the ham bands for many years when I saw the ad in the newspaper For Sale Column. I had struggled really hard to get my ham license as a teenager. But in my adult life I got involved in other things, and the radio gear on the bench had a fine coating of dust on it from inactivity.

The ad said -- "Giving away Ham Radio Gear. You pick up. No charge. Free to a good home!" Wow I thought - This sounds too good to be true! I had just the other day thought how much fun it would be to turn the radio on and make a few contacts both local and worldwide.

So I called the number and a pleasant older voice answered. I made arrangements and went over to see this gear. The radios ranged from older tube sets to a new HF/VHF radio. I asked the ham why he didn't want any money for the gear. He just smiled and said that he could not use it anymore. I thought that he might be selling his house and moving into a retirement community where they did not allow radios. I thanked him, packed the gear in the car and rushed home to try it out.

My antenna farm was a tangled mess due to a number of frozen winter storms without repair. So I fashioned a crude antenna from a hunk of wire and stuck it to the back of one of the newer radios. I pushed the "on" button, with the intent of just listening to some HF Ham Stations, and was surprised what I heard.

There were signals there all right but not the ones I had hoped to hear. Instead the band was full of Short Wave and Data Signals. I turned to another band and heard the same thing. This is really weird I thought! Since this was one of those fancy newer HF/VHF radios, I tuned down to the 2 meter and 440 bands looking for the local repeaters. What I heard there were truck drivers and taxi cab companies talking to their dispatchers, and even a local hotel chain talking to their work crew about getting rooms ready. I thought to! myself -- no wonder the guy wanted to get rid of this equipment -- the radio only gets the scanner channels. I'm guessing that he wanted to get rid of this radio, because he didn't want to go to the expense of sending them back to the manufacturers service center.

Puzzled by what I was hearing I decided to call the old ham and ask some information on what had caused this radio to receive the local scanner frequencies in the ham band segment. Over the phone he laughed out loud and said, "No those are the ham bands all right -- or what used to be the ham bands!" "What - do you mean used to be?", I asked back.

He went on to tell me that several years ago the FCC had closed those bands to hams due to inactivity by the ham community. Those bands are now being used by land services and other business uses," he said. "You mean all the ham bands were given away?", I asked. "Don't be silly," he replied, " the FCC sold off those parcels of unused bands to the highest bidder! They simply put out a letter to all the hams saying that these bands were restricted to business only. And we were to never use these bands again under penalty of thousand of dollars in

finer."

What he told me left me dumbstruck! "So let me get this straight," I said, "you mean that the reason you gave me this equipment is because there are no longer bands to use it on!" "Yep!" he said with a laugh, "It was simply that the FCC saw all those empty ham bands as a gold mine of potential fundraising for the government. With no one using the bands, and a unresponsive and ineffective ham radio lobby, hams just literally gave those bands away to be sold off!"

As I hung up the phone I thought of all the money I already had tied up in ham radio equipment down in the basement. I had purchased both old and new sets through the years and was quite proud of my ham radio station. All that money wasted with nothing to do now, but monitor the local Burger King asking if someone wanted fries with their Whopper.

A far fetched story? Not at all! Not a day goes by that you don't read in the newspapers about the government selling off frequencies to the highest bidder! A national radio communications magazine recently had an article by a columnist saying his good byes as he was closing his column after many years. Why? Well, he explained that with all the different agencies going to trunking, the average scanner listener could no longer listen to anything interesting on the radio. That fact is time has passed and so had technology. Suddenly he found himself with no one sending him emails about interesting local frequencies that he could pass on to his readers. With all the new systems out most of the old scanner units were as useless as our old early day computers.

There is a moral to this story of course. Anyone who has been around the activity for a while can see the handwriting on the wall! Have you listened to the repeaters lately, during daytime, during drive time, or anytime at all? Remember the days when all your friends were on the radio just waiting to chat with you during the drive home or after dinner? Well, those friends are no longer on the radio anymore.

Some have said it was because their old friends had moved to other towns. Some said that their old friends got busy doing something else, and no longer had the time to talk on the radio. Some blamed it on the internet. While others decided that they just did not want to talk to the new people they heard on radio. Everyone had an excuse for no longer turning the radio on. Suddenly there was silence!

So when was the last time YOU threw out your call on the radio? When was the last time you turned on the HF radio and enjoyed the thrill talking to another land? I didn't say TYPING on the internet to another land, I said TALKING on the radio to another land! When was the last time you came to a radio club meeting, and what excuse did you have for that? Was it because you were too busy? Was it because you were afraid you would have to talk to "those new people" face to face? It seems that today we all have so many excuses no longer being active on the bands. I am sure that you have heard plenty or perhaps made up a number of them yourself.

Well, let's look at this another way! I remember a local AM talk radio broadcaster suggesting that we follow the money trail. Let's start with our side! We shelled out

money for books and tapes to learn the needed information to pass the license test. We shelled out good money for the license, for the QSL cards, for the tower, the antennas, the base radio, the mobile radio, the HT's, the new keyer, club memberships etc. Look at all the money that you have spent on this great hobby. Count it up and you will soon discover that you have a lot of time and money invested in this activity.

Now let's return to the FCC looking for a way to make a buck by selling frequencies. You know they really don't care how much you personally have spent on radio hardware! They don't care how much time you took to get that license. In fact your personal interests are the last thing they are thinking about. They are only looking at all those "empty" frequencies that they could sell to big business. Remember the 220 ham segment that was sold off to United Parcel Service a number of years ago? It will happen again -- for the right price!

But wait you say! How about the need for ham radio during National Emergencies? How about 911, and the twin towers, and the terrorists who are lurking everywhere. How about the hurricanes, the tidal waves, the tornadoes and the floods? Let's be honest folks -- when was the last time that YOU participated in any of those events? If you haven't turned on the radio in years then isn't that just another excuse. Ham Radio is going to run out of excuses one day and suddenly YOU will be the one giving all your equipment away. You may think this is all far fetched, but you would be run. Remember that there are no guarantees that the ham bands will go on forever. Especially if they are mostly empty and there is a buck to be made.

Perhaps you would like to turn on the radio and check this out for yourself? Simon and Garfunkel put out a record talking about "The Sounds of Silence." This sound is not a good sound for YOU the ham radio operator! This is the sound of the wolves at the door just waiting to pounce on your ham bands! Oops - I meant to say on the FCC frequencies that were your ham bands.

This is a wake up call! Use them or lose them! Let me repeat that again so it sinks in: **USE THOSE BANDS NOW...OR LOSE THEM TOMORROW!**

Now is the time to dust off those radios, to throw out your call, to join a radio club, to support the ARRL efforts in your behalf, to do Field Day this summer and to return to the days when you made life long friends through a great hobby.

Or you can just! leave it the way it is now. Get that newspaper ad ready for some poor ham who hasn't been on the radio for a long time. It will save you leaving those boat anchors out on the curb for the trash man!

Some articles in this issue courtesy of the ARRL Newsletter.