
CQ BARS

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President's Corner

Well, I hope everyone has had a good February. I enjoyed seeing a full house at the last meeting, and visiting with you after the meeting. We have a lot on our "to do list" this year. One is the repeater situation, which is not good news for us. Illinois American water (IAW) will not repair or fix the repeater. Two, We need people to step up and become band chairman for fieldday. This will give you the opportunity to set up your station with antenna or use one of ours (hf) of course. Three is Hamfest. I will have sign up list available for the different teams that we need at the meeting. Everyone will be involved. We need a good advanced turnout, and also need a really big gate this year. Being the second year for the State Convention I hope will draw more than last year, so we have to get these teams going and make a good gate, so we maybe can buy a nice repeater.

See Ya On The Air!
Tom Ballard, N9LJY
BARS President

Secretary's Column

I keep cutting my column short to make room for more interesting news.

73's for this month

Don - N9VJV

Last Months Meeting Minutes

The meeting was opened at 19:00 hours by N9LJY (Tom). Introductions followed. Officers present were: KC9JQW (AJ), N9VJV (Don) and KB9JLB (Barb). Also present at the meeting were:

WD9IWC	N9ZMM	N9ABF
KB9JLB	KA9J	WB9PDD
KC9JQW	N9LJY	NB9R
W9KHX	W9WRS	KB9LMK

MA9SFW	KC9KQH	KA9ZJJ	
	N9OZD	WA9IQL	KM9M
	WX9WRN	KI6LBD	N9VJV

A motion to accept the minutes as published in CQ Bars was made by KB9LMK (Dale), seconded by KA9J (Frank) and carried

The Treasurer's report was presented by KB9JLB (Barb). No Approval required.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

2 meter: No Report.

220/440 WA9IL (John) reported that the 440 machine is working using a loaner repeater from N2BJ (Barry). Currently there is no PL. There is a possibility that we will be able to move the repeater to the new hospital.

Net Control: N9ZMM (Archie) reported good checkins. We were mentioned on Newline as their being 'relayed by the following'.

Hamfest: N9LJY (Tom) reported that the speaker slots (as confirmed by KB9LMK - Dale) will be added to the flyer. 4 are confirmed and 4 more are available. Confirmed include ARRL Division, EmCom/Ares, Section Manager, and DStar.

Education: No Report. Still need a volunteer to chair.

VE: K9KHX (Dale) reported that the last session had 1 pass. The next VE session will be in April. The time will be changed from 9 AM to 10 AM (until noon).

Field Day: N9LJY (Tom) reported that we need band chairs. KC9JQW (AJ) volunteered for 20, WX9WRN (Toni) volunteered for 2 Mtr and 440. WA9IQL (Elden) volunteered for 10 Mtr and Packet.

Public Relations KA9ZJJ (Marti) reported that the first draft of the flyer is ready for printing. She has sent a press release on the awards to the local papers.

Skywarn: WX9WRN (Toni) reported that the Advanced Spotter class will be in March (15th) She would like to have a spotter meeting to discuss procedures, possibly at the Levy Center.

NW9V (Phil) reported that spotter training sessions are on the NWS website. 3/18 will be held at Lockport HS at 7 PM. He distributed schedules of other classes.

OLD BUSINESS:

KC9JQW (AJ) requested that anyone having suggestions for after meeting activities to see him.



WX9WRN (Toni) asked if q winter weather net is a good idea. The general opinion was that it should be done as a standby net. Spotter training sessions are on the NWS website. 3/18 will be held at Lockport HS at 7 PM.

N9ZMM (Archie) reported that the fox hunt went well with a good turnout. The next one will be April 19.

N9LJY (Tom) read an official apology to WA9IQL (Elden) for actions taken at an earlier meeting. He was officially welcomed back into full membership.

N9ABF (Jim) has been working hard to bring the web site back into shape. A redirect like has been intermittently appearing. He requested that if you get that page that you create a screen print image and sent it to him or N9LJY (Tom).

N9LJY (Tom) reported that he's received positive feedback from the hospital to move the 440 repeater there. He will know more later. He's still working with American Water to address the damage to the repeater itself that was caused by their flooded tower base. He's been in contact with both the Village attorney and Mayor Claar.

A motion to close old business was made by NW9V (Phil), seconded by KB9LMK (Dale) and carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

N9ABF (Jim) asked for web site submissions and suggestions for improvements. Photos are still needed.

N9LJY (Tom) asked for suggestions as to how to improve the club activities. He also thanked WA9IQL (Elden) and N9ABF (Jim) for their work on the web site.

A motion to close old business was made by KB9LMK (Dale), seconded by WA9IQL (Elden) and carried.

A motion to adjourn was made by KB9LMK (Dale), seconded by WA9IQL (Elden) and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Don, N9VJV
Secretary

Thursday Night net Statistics courtesy of N9ZMM (Archie)

Here is the February 2008 Net Report:

Total check-ins: 58
Total First time: 3

Total number of Hams checking in for 2007: 157
Total number of Hams checking in for 2008: 53
Top Five check-ins for 2008:

Bryan, KC9GRH.....9
Joe, KC9ERT.....9
Bob, N9RAT.....9
Lavert, KA9CCH.....8
Marianne, KC9JLK.....7

Host with the Most:

Marianne, KC9JLK.....26 Check-ins
John, WD9IWC.....58 Check-ins
Archie, N9ZMM.....65 Check-ins

Numbers do not count the Net Controller

FCC DENIES PETITIONS TO BRING BACK MORSE CODE TESTING

In a "Memorandum Opinion and Order" (MOO) <http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-08-59A1.pdf>

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<http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-08-178A1.pdf> released February 28, the FCC denied two petitions calling for General or Amateur Extra license applicants to demonstrate proficiency in Morse code. In December 2006, the FCC released a "Report and Order" (R&O) <http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-06-178A1.pdf> in the "Morse code proceeding," WT Docket 05-235, that eliminated Morse code testing as of February 23, 2007.

The "R&O" amended Section 97.501 to remove the telegraphy requirement. In reaching this decision, the FCC noted in the R&O that "one of the fundamental purposes underlying our Part 97 rules is to accommodate amateur radio operators' ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art, and that the Commission had previously concluded that an individual's ability to demonstrate Morse code proficiency is not necessarily indicative of his or her ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art." The FCC also noted that another fundamental purpose underlying Part 97 rules is "to enhance the value of the amateur service to the public, particularly with respect to emergency communications, and that the Commission had previously concluded that most emergency communication today is performed using voice, data, or video modes, because information can be exchanged much faster using modes of communication other than telegraphy."

The Commission therefore concluded that requiring an individual to demonstrate Morse code proficiency as a licensing requirement "did not further the purposes of the Part 97 rules." The Commission also found that this reasoning applied equally to the General Class and the Amateur Extra Class, so "it rejected suggestions that the Morse code requirement be eliminated for the General Class license but retained for the Amateur Extra Class license."

In the wake of the FCC's actions in WT Docket 05-235, two amateurs submitted separate petitions to the FCC, asking them to bring back the testing. Anthony R. Gordon, KG6EQM, of West Covina California, objected to the FCC eliminating the telegraphy examination element as an examination requirement for the Amateur Extra Class operator license. Russell D. Ward, W4NI, of Nashville, Tennessee, requested the FCC reconsider their decision for "strictly procedural" reasons.

Gordon asserts that "the failure to keep the Morse code telegraphy requirement intact, at least as a required examination element for the Amateur Extra Class operator license, fails to take into consideration the significant national security implications that require retaining adequate examination safeguards to insure the viability that Morse code telegraphy provides, not only to the Amateur service, but the nation as well." Gordon argues that the requirement should be retained so that amateur operators can act as "a 'strategic reserve,'" because there is "no assurance that...voice or digital modes will even be operationally viable in future emergency communication environments."

The FCC was not persuaded, however, that eliminating the Morse code examination element will affect national security or emergency communications. "We agree with the commenters who point out that requiring applicants to pass a one-time telegraphy examination did not and would not guarantee a supply of skilled telegraphy operators. Moreover, nothing in the Commission's decision prevents an interested amateur radio operator from pursuing Morse code proficiency."

The FCC reiterated their prior conclusion that "an individual's ability to demonstrate Morse code proficiency does not further the underlying purposes of the Part 97 rules, i.e., to accommodate individual contributions to the advancement of the radio art and to enhance the value of the amateur service to the public. Accordingly, we deny the petition."

In the MOO, Ward states that he "encountered difficulty" in submitting his comments and reply comments to the NPRM electronically and that his filings were not posted on the ECFS (the Commission's electronic filing system) until after the deadlines had passed. He asserts that "there is no certainty that the Commission considered his comments and reply comments,

that the late posting of his comments prevented others from replying to them, and that it is "quite likely that other comments were treated improperly." As a result, Ward requested that the FCC "stay the proceeding, reopen the record and reconsider the NPRM after the close of the extended comment period."

The FCC claims that all comments in the ECFS "were considered before the Commission adopted the Report and Order, regardless of the how or when they were filed. Moreover, many of the 3900 comments and reply comments expressed the same view as Mr. Ward, so the substance of his views unquestionably was replied to and considered. Finally, he provides no evidence that ECFS mishandled other comments. No other party has complained that his or her comments were not received. We conclude, therefore, that reopening the proceeding for additional comments is not justified, and we deny the petition."

In summary, the FCC said neither petition asserted "any grounds for reconsidering" the decision in the Report and Order. "We believe that the actions taken therein will allow amateur service licensees to better fulfill the purpose of the amateur service, and will enhance the usefulness of the amateur service to the public and licensees."

ARRL Gearing for Up Dayton Hamvention:

ARRL EXPO returns to Dayton Hamvention, to be held May 16-18, 2008 at the Hara Arena in Dayton, Ohio. The huge ARRL exhibit area is a showcase of displays, activities and program representatives to enhance your ham radio experience. The ARRL EXPO is open to all Hamvention attendees. Meet ARRL President Joel Harrison, W5ZN, other ARRL officials, volunteers and staff knowledgeable on a wide variety of topics. Among the highlights of the exhibit space will be a card checking area for operating awards, activities for young hams, the ARRL bookstore and more. ARRL Membership Manager Katie Breen, W1KRB, is the ARRL EXPO coordinator. "We are looking at some new and exciting venues within EXPO, but I'm not ready to spill the beans quite yet! We are focusing our attention this year on the theme of technology and on Hamvention's theme celebrating ham radio fellowship -- stay tuned for more news. We sincerely thank the 2008 Dayton Hamvention Committee and their volunteers for all they do to make this a signature convention; we are so pleased to participate." Keep an eye on the ARRL EXPO Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/expo>> for updates.

FLORIDA HAMS HELP OUT WHEN NWS GOES DARK

On Tuesday, February 12, a tornado touched down in Cocoa Beach, Florida.

Unfortunately, National Weather Service (NWS) alerts failed due to problems with phone circuits. Dennis Decker, Warning Coordinator Meteorologist with the NWS in Melbourne, said two of their four transmission lines went down that afternoon around 3:30, but were back up five hours later. Messages are carried to towers via telephone, he said.

"That's a big issue when the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather alerting radio is not working," said Brevard County Emergency Management Director Bob Lay. The county went into backup mode, using the volunteer emergency alert system. The NWS activated Amateur Radio operators to help get the word out about the tornado warning. "We have ham operators to tell us when they see something," Decker said.

Dan Fisher, AI4GK, of Palm Bay, Florida, said he tried to tune into a weather frequency on his radio, but said, "I couldn't pick up anything.

The [station out of] Melbourne has a loud hum on it and nothing else."

Fisher and Emergency Coordinator for the Platinum Coast Amateur Radio Society John Weatherly, AB4ET, said the group participated in an emergency drill just last week that involved a tornado scenario. "We're there when we're needed," Weatherly

said. "We give the meteorologists a warm and fuzzy feeling of what is really happening."

Although Tuesday's storms were dwarfed by the massive 2005 hurricanes, transmitters were rendered useless in both situations. Dave Jacobs, Data Acquisitions Property Manager at the NWS office in Melbourne, said that when problems do occur, it is usually something to do with the telephone lines. "It's our Achilles' heel," he said. Jacobs oversees the radio system for Melbourne, checking its transmitters three times daily to ensure they are working.

Weather Service officials in Melbourne know the alert announcing the first tornado watch at 2:25 PM went out across the radio system. At 3 PM, when another weather alert went out, officials determined they had a problem with the Melbourne and Orlando transmitters. Jacobs said he had just listened as the computer system read the entire message in the Melbourne office, a stage in the alert process that occurs before the message reaches phone lines. He then received a telephone call from a county official saying only half of the second weather alert was broadcast. -- Information provided by Floridatoday.com

Wisconsin Tornado Response

January 7, 2008 -- A rare January EF3 tornado in Wisconsin destroyed houses and knocked out power, displacing about 160 people. The Red Cross activated Kenosha County and Racine County ARES groups to provide logistical communications at the two relief shelters in Kenosha County, as well as from a communications station at the Kenosha County EOC. Shadowing American Red Cross teams, ARES members helped relay damage assessments back to the Red Cross building in Racine.

Racine Assistant EC Alex Voss, N9RGX, said "We set up a communications network at the American Red Cross in Racine, outside of the affected area. We were ready to go when activated. I couldn't be more proud of our volunteers. We will work with the responding agencies as long as they need us. We'll take what we've learned this time and use it to improve our response in the future."

Wisconsin SEC William Niemuth, KB9ENO, reported "in Wheatland, 20 homes were destroyed. In Kenosha, six homes were destroyed." He thanked the 18 ARES and RACES members who responded. "I bet this morning that [the 18 responders] never thought they would be responding to help their community recover from an EF3 tornado by evening! But, the reality is emergency and disaster situations most always catch us by surprise. That is why we train and prepare."

Sheriff Beth concurred: "It was heart-wrenching to see how most of these people are volunteers, and they just strap on their clothes, they leave their loved ones at home and they go running to help others. -- Racine County EC Jim Markstrom, KB9MMA; Racine County AEC Alexander Voss, N9RGX; Wisconsin SEC William Niemuth, KB9ENO; David Voss, WB9USI; in the ARRL Letter

Some articles courtesy of the ARRL.