
CQ BARS

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April

2009

President's Corner

Hello all,

At last month meeting we started a discussion in regards to Field Day. We received some very valuable feedback; this is the type of feedback that the board has been truly looking for.

This years field day we are going to focus on promoting the hobby to the general public, in addition during the set up we want to provide an educational experience for current Hams; things like how to set a Beam Antenna, how to build a an inverted "V", making a dipole from scratch using a balun and a spool of wire. Our club has a wealth of knowledge, we would like to share this all our members.

This year's setup should be a fun learning experience and not a chore. At April's meeting we want to know what band/mode you want to operate. AJ (KC9JQW) suggested setting up a CW Practice station, off the air so people can get warmed up, then go to a station a potentially get your first CW contact. Another one of our members came up with the idea of putting up some informational signage explaining what is happening at that station, in regards to mode, type of equipment. Things like this are what we are looking for so we can make sure this Field Day is a valuable and fun experience for all. We would like to operate digital mode like PSK31 or even satellite. So let's figure out what gear people are willing to bring and team people up so that it's not so overwhelming being just one person. This way it allows everyone time to operate on the different bands and different modes. So lets bring our ideas to the meeting, if you can't make the meeting make sure you tell a friend so your ideas and what you want is heard.

Finally, don't forget about Hamfest, if you haven't already signed up for what you would like to do, go on the website and log in and select a group. Please email the Webmaster and you will be added to that list of your choice. Again this will take the club members efforts to make this a successful hamfest.

Thanks, Tom
BARS President

Secretary's Column



This month's column is a bit short. Where are all of our volunteers for Foield Day and Hamfest?? Those 2 events are the biggest things since the Christmas Party. They also need YOU to step up and volunteer to help. We need everyone to do a little to make them successful. Come out and enjoy Field Day, but volunteer to help with setup and stick around and OPERATE for a while. We're Amateur radio OPERATORS. Let's DO it.

Hamfest is our only fund raising event. Amateur Radio cluns don't have BAKE SALES. They have HAMFESTS. But again, it can't be done without you to help.

Help us by being a Doer, not just a spectator. You might find that you actually enjoy it.

73's for this month

Don - N9VJV

Last Months Meeting Minutes

The meeting was opened at 19:00 hours by KC9JQW (AJ). Introductions followed. Officers present were: N9VJV (Don), and KC9JLK (Marianne). Also present at the meeting were:

	N9ZMM	KB9JLB	KA9J
KC9JLK	W9WRS	WB9PDD	
W9KHX	WA9IL	KC9JQW	
KC9BST	AB9TG	K9SW	
KA9CCH	N9VJV	WA9IL	
N9VJV	N0QOB	KC9GMD	

A motion to accept the minutes as published in CQ Bars was made by KA9CCH (Levert), seconded by KB9JLB (Barb) and carried

KC9JLK (Marianne) presented the Treasurer's report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

2 meter: WA9IL (John) reported that the machine was working

220/440 WA9IL (John) reported that both the 220 and the 440 machines were working well. Echolink has been up on the 440 machine.

Sunday, May 17

9:15-10:15 -- Red Cross Forum (Room 1)

9:15-11 -- QCWA Forum (Room 2)

9:15-10:15 -- Volunteers and EmComm Forum (Room 3)

9:30-11:15 - Bicycle Mobile Forum (Room 5) 10:30-11:30 - When All Else Fails, South Carolina Is Ready (Room 1)

For more information on forums at the 2009 Dayton Hamvention, please visit the Dayton Hamvention Web site <<http://hamvention.org/forums.php>>.

'Interference Hunters' Search Country For Stray Signals

GREEN BANK, W.Va. — Of all the threats to scientific research Wesley Sizemore has stymied over the years, satellites and cell phone towers don't stick in his memory quite like the possessive old hound and its treasured heating pad.

Sizemore is an interference hunter, vigilantly pursuing stray electromagnetic signals that bedevil researchers at the National Radio Astronomy Observatory, which sits on 13,000 square miles tucked away in the nation's only radio-free quiet zone.

Radio observatories need interference-free zones like optical observatories need clear night skies.

Though buffered by ridgetops in a West Virginia mountain valley, 50 miles from the nearest town of any size, the Green Bank observatory is under an audio assault unlike any it's faced in the 50 years since Congress created the quiet zone. Wireless computers and other gadgets are cluttering the same frequencies occupied by signals from neutron stars.

Researchers, mostly looking at pulsar waves that have traveled through space for billions of years, pursue signals so weak they can be easily foiled by anything from power locks on cars to a broken wire inside a heating pad that kept a nearby dog warm in the winter.

"There was enough arcing inside the heating pad that it caught our attention," Sizemore said, again telling what he affectionately calls "that damn dog story."

Over several days, Sizemore — who has a specially equipped truck and gear that can pinpoint an interference source the size of a 50-cent piece — tracked it to a doghouse about 10 miles from the observatory.

He bought a new heating pad and all was resolved, although not necessarily amicably.

"It was a nasty little dog," Sizemore said. "He wasn't real happy with me snooping around his doghouse, put it that way."

Astronomer Scott Ranson, whose ongoing study of neutron stars has been destroyed more than once by bursts of interference, said collecting data in today's technology-dependent world is like trying to look at stars while a neighbor is shooting fireworks.

"We were completely swamped and our data was useless," he said of one particularly frustrating episode. "We didn't know where it came from. It was there for several hours over a course

of a few days."

The observatory's origins hail from the 1950s when Congress and the West Virginia Legislature created national and state radio quiet zones to protect and promote the relatively new science of radio astronomy.

While Green Bank is one of many radio telescope observatories around the world, it's unique because it features the world's largest steerable radio telescope. Completed in 2000, the ultra-sensitive scope is taller than the Statue of Liberty and heavier than a fleet of Boeing 747s, with a reflective dish that could hold 60,000 people.

"We have to have a radio-quiet environment for the radio telescope to work," assistant site director Karen O'Neil said at a recent open house at the observatory. "If we start to lose radio frequency bands, the point of having a telescope here diminishes rapidly."

The observatory goes to great lengths to prevent interference from its own grounds, adopting "Stay Quiet to Promote Science" as its motto.

Visitors must walk, bike or ride to the giant telescope in a diesel-powered bus because diesel motors rely on compression instead of spark plugs to ignite. Guests must turn off digital cameras and use film to take pictures.

Even the signals from space received by the telescope are sent to computers via fiber-optic cable rather than wirelessly to prevent interference. Inside the observatory, walls are lined with copper, and computer equipment is housed in metallic cages that block radiation and protect the telescope.

While the observatory can weigh in on the proposed placement or upgrade of any fixed transmitter within the 13,000-square-mile National Radio Quiet Zone, it doesn't have control over electronic interference from passing planes or satellites.

The 10-mile radius of the West Virginia Radio Astronomy Zone gives researchers the authority to crack down on wireless modems and speakers and cordless phones. The scientists try to be good neighbors, and residents have generally accepted the precautions taken to reduce electromagnetic noise, but some are starting to chafe against the limitations placed on their tools of the digital age.

"We feel we're a bit discriminated against because they created the zone around us," said County Commission President James Carpenter, who lives within Green Bank's extra-restricted 10-mile radius. "Our children can't have a wireless computer when everybody else in the state can have one."

Sizemore said the observatory's staff want to accommodate residents, but there may come a day when the researchers start "knocking on doors and asking people to get off their wireless devices."

"Without interference protection," he said, "we might as well close up shop and go home."

Some articles courtesy of the ARRL.