

The Parasitic Emission

Volume 36 – Number 9
September 2010

**Supporting Amateur Radio
Club Activities**

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**VHF Contesting,
Scandinavian
Style!**

ENJOY YOURSELF! It's later than you think! That's the title and the theme of a popular song from 1950. It was good advice then, and it still is today. It ranks right up there with, "Time and tide wait for no man."

Human nature being what it is, all of us are given to procrastination. I have a lot more to say about this, but I'll do that later...

For now, I'll take a moment to reflect on recent history. This is the *lucky* thirteenth issue of the revived *Parasitic Emission*. It was a year ago that I resumed publishing this monthly collection of amateur radio related trivia. In that year, a lot of worthwhile, local Amateur Radio activities have taken place.

To begin with, it has been my pleasure to report in these pages a growing number of regularly scheduled VE sessions. This activity is so important to the future of the hobby that you could call it Amateur Radio's "biological imperative."

Speaking of this newsletter, *The Parasitic Emission* has seemingly taken on a life of its own. In its original incarnation, it was the official newsletter of the Quad-County Amateur Radio Club, and served as the catalyst which brought the QCARC into existence, back in the early days, some thirty-five years ago..

This time around, one thing led to another, and this publication is now read by over 300 amateurs served by five clubs. The number continues to grow, and we are very fortunate to receive regular contributions from hams all over our region.

This month, we welcome Lars Kvant, SM7FYW who lives in Clearfield and is an active member of the Quad-County Amateur Radio

Club. Lars shares with us his experiences operating VHF contests from one of the premier European contesting powerhouses.

Amateur Radio is even more fun when you share it with others. Your local club is (or should be) your headquarters for that sharing. The number one thing that keeps people coming back to meetings is an interesting program. Every meeting should have one!

In the past year, it has been very encouraging to see a number of good presentations at the various club meetings. This is a trend that I hope will continue and grow.

Ham radio is all about communicating on the air, and there has been ongoing activity in that arena. Every club has at least one weekly net, and ARES and EmComm nets are regularly on the air throughout the area covered by this newsletter. We do our best to publish an up-to-date list in each issue.

Every year, the two biggest events on the ham radio calendar are the Dayton Hamfest and Field Day. Both were well-attended this year. Locally, I made the rounds to some of the Field Day setups, and what I saw gave me a case of the "warm fuzzies."

It's always heartwarming to see a group of hams having fun together, especially when radios, antennas and food are involved! If you've never been to a Field Day or a hamfest, please go back and re-read the first two sentences of this editorial! The day will come when you can no longer do either... and that day is closer than you think!

This issue is full of opportunities to have fun together with other hams. Make sure you don't miss out! If you read on, you will find information about your local club meetings, local nets, VE test sessions and club breakfast sessions, picnics and other get-togethers.

You can get on the air with local and regional nets, and there are several major contests to keep you busy. As the dog days of summer fade into the past, and the crisp, cool fall days fast approach, QRN from thunderstorms becomes less of a problem, and the longer nights allow band conditions on the lower bands to improve. Now is the time to work toward WAS, WAC and DXCC.

With the hot, oppressive weather is behind us, now is the perfect time to put up a new antenna or two, and get the shack ready for those long, winter nights filled with many happy QSOs.

The sun is starting come back to life after the latest solar minimum. The next five or six years should bring much DX and interesting conditions—conditions that won't reoccur for another 11 years. Let's make QSOs while the sun spots... Sorry, I couldn't resist!

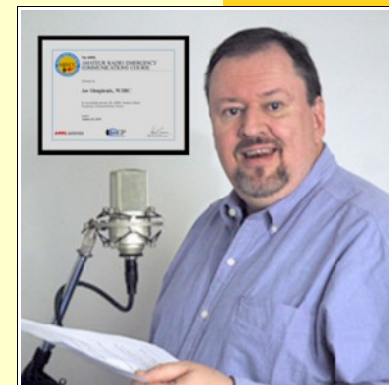
Since I was first licensed, four sunspot cycles have run their course. Four solar-maximums have come and gone, and I never took full advantage of any of them. The upcoming Solar Max in a couple years may be my last chance to work all that DX I dreamed about as a kid. When Cycle 25 peaks, seventy odd years will have passed since my birth. I don't care to guess what kind of shape I'll be in, or if Amateur Radio will be part of my life then.

You see, it really is later than we think, but we can certainly make the choice to enjoy ourselves, while we're "...still in the pink.

"The years go by as quickly as a wink.

"Enjoy yourself, enjoy yourself—it's later than you think!"

I'll enjoy myself... **On The Air!**





The Quad-County Amateur Radio Club

Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson Counties

Meeting Notices

September 17, 2010

September Meeting: 7:30 pm, Friday
September 17, Clearfield County 911 Center,
911 Leonard Street, Clearfield

September Breakfast: 9:30 am, Saturday,
September 11, Sid's Sub Shop, Old Town
Raad, Clearfield

QCARC Picnic: 1 pm, Saturday, September 11,
Curwensville Lake Campground. Talk-in
147.315R and 146.52

Minutes: August 2010

by Jeff Rowles, KA3FHV

THE MEETING WAS called to order at 7:34 PM by Doug, W3DWR. There was one guest, Joanne Jewell, wife of Don, KB3LES. One item of correspondence was received. It was an informational postcard about the Mid Atlantic VHF Conference & hamfest.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as read. The treasurer's report was read and approved on a motion by KA3FHV seconded by SM7FYD.

Old Business

The club picnic will be held on Saturday, September 11th at Lars' campsite at Curwensville Lake at 1:00 PM. (Complete information can be found in Doug's column.) Wednesday August 25th is the target date for installation of the control link at the repeater site.

New Business

Tom, W3KWT, has resigned his position as a member of the Board of Directors. Since nominations for officers and the board will open at the September meeting, it was deemed not necessary to replace Tom at this time. It was decided to make arrangements for the Christmas party to be held at Ethan's again this year.

A motion to adjourn was made by KA3FHV and seconded by KB3TOY at 7:46 PM.

Following the meeting there was a Q&A session with Clearfield County's new EMA Director, Dave McClure. Topics included the new Mobile Data Terminals being installed in the county's emergency response vehicles, the installation of a G5RV on the tower of the 911 center, password for the radio room computer, and the possibility of getting an APRS digipeater on the County tower at West Decatur.

QCARC Information

President	Doug Rowles, W3DWR ka3dwr@hotmail.com
Vice President	Lars Kvant, SM7FYW/W3 sm7fyw@hotmail.com
Secretary	Jeff Rowles, KA3FHV jrowles@earthlink.net
Treasurer	Dorothy Morrison, N3PUQ edmo1@atlanticbb.net
Executive Board	Ed Hinkle, K3EDD Joe Bitner, N3IES Rich Brnik, KB3QKR Ed Morrison, K3JE
Repeaters	N3QC 147.315+ [173.8] K3EDD 444.625+ [173.8] N3IZE 444.900+ [173.8] local
Nets	Sunday @ 1900 147.315 (Club) Sunday @ 1945 147.315 (ARES)
Web	www.qcarc.com

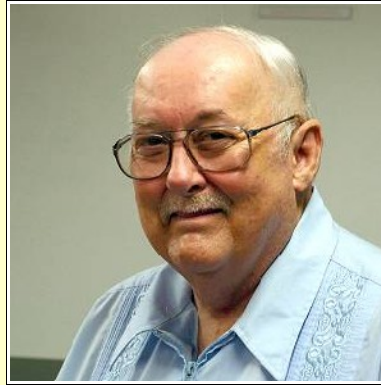
Attendance

KA3FHV, SM7FYW, KB3LES, Joanne Jewell, KB3TOY, W3DWR, K3JE, N3PUQ, WA3UFN, W3BC, KB3TAP.

Behind the Gavel

by Doug Rowles, W3DWR

IT HAS BEEN mentioned previously in this column the Quad-County members are at their best when food is involved. With that in mind here are two upcoming events which will attest to this.



The club picnic will be held on Saturday, September 11th at Lars and Kay's campsite at Curwensville Lake. This will be in addition to the club breakfast at Sid's that same morning. (What did I tell you?) Hot dogs, buns and condiments will be provided. Bring a dish to share, place settings, beverage, lawn chair, etc. Time is 1:00 PM. Talk in provided on .715 or .52.

Ethan's Café will again be the site of our Christmas Dinner. The date is December 11th at 6:00 PM. The menu will be your choice of ham or turkey with potatoes, filling, a vegetable, rolls and a tray of homemade cookies for desert. Don't forget breakfast that morning at Sid's. (Here we go again!) I have to get the number of reservations to them near the end of November.



Punxsutawney Area Amateur Radio Club

Punxsutawney and Jefferson County

Meeting Notice

September 14, 2010

September Meeting: 7 pm, Tuesday, September 14, Presbyterian Church, Findley Street, Punxsutawney

Shack Night: 7-9 pm, Tuesday, September 7 at the PAARC hamshack at the Punxsutawney Municipal Airport.

The Punxsutawney Area Amateur Radio Club **weekly net** is every Monday (Mondays that fall on a Holiday will not have a net that evening) at 7:30 PM on the 147.390 repeater (PL 173.8). In case of repeater problems, the backup repeater is the 146.715 repeater in Punxsutawney, also with a PL of 173.8.

PAARC Information		
President	Mike Miller, N3HBH n3hbh@comcast.net	
Vice President	Jim Byrne, KA3WSX jimwsx@windstream.net	
Secretary	Steve Waltman, KB3FPN kb3fpn@windstream.net	
Treasurer	Sham Hollopeter, W3QOS	
Repeaters	N5NWC 146.715- [173.8] Punxs'y N5NWC 443.475+ Punxs'y KE3DR 147.390+ [173.8] Rockton N3HAO 53.07- (-1MHz) Rockton N3JGT 147.105+ [173.8] Sigel N3GPM 444.275+ Brookv1	
Nets	Monday @ 1930 147.390 (Club) Monday @ 2000 147.105 (ARES)	
Web	www.qsl.net/k3hwj/	



Philipsburg Amateur Radio Association

Philipsburg and Clearfield County

Meeting Notice

September 11, 2010

The **September meeting** of the Philipsburg Amateur Radio Association will be held on Saturday, September 11th at 3:00 pm at Bock's Dining & Tea Room, 429 North Centre Street, Philipsburg.

Activity Report

by John Szwarc, N3SPW

In August the meeting was replaced by the annual Philipsburg Area Amateur Radio Picnic. This year it was held at Black Moshannon State Park with and everyone who attended had a great time. Lou WB3AAI was the "Grill Master" for the day and did a tremendous job with the burgers, hotdogs, and kielbasa.

Also in August PARA members assisted with communications for the Moshannon Valley YMCA Mountain Bike Race held in the Black Moshannon State Park. The park has a number of very challenging trails through heavily forested areas so the potential for crashes was significant. In addition, cell phone service was not available in most of the area. Amateur radio operators volunteering their time to help out were K3BIE Dick, N3SPW John, KB3QKR Rich, WB3EQW Mike, K3CWP Carmine and W3PRL Paul. Checkpoints were staffed at various locations on the race route and Paul provided a base station operation in case telephone contact with emergency services was required. Fortunately, only one bicycle suffered a mechanical failure and no riders were injured.

PARA members John N3SPW and Paul W3PRL are working toward establishing a new D-STAR repeater in the local area. The final piece to the puzzle is a set of duplexers. We have made arrangements to purchase a set of duplexers from a ham in Wisconsin and are awaiting its arrival. The repeater will be placed into service from a temporary location which will allow easier access while making final adjustments. Once satisfied that everything is as it should be, the machine will be re-located to a mountain-top location. The repeater will operate on 147.255+ and use the call sign W3PHB-C. Access to the D-STAR gateway (which allows you to link D-STAR repeaters) can be established by specifying the call sign W3PHB-G. PARA is receiving assistance from Travis W3TMB of the Bald Eagle Repeater Association in Williamsport on this project.

By the time this is published it is expected that PARA members will have placed a new APRS digi-peater into service. The digi is intended to provide fill-in service for Philipsburg and the surrounding Moshannon Valley area. This area currently has spotty

PARA Information		
President	John Szwarc, N3SPW jsszwarc@yahoo.com	
Vice President	Dave Runk, AA3EJ aa3ej@yahoo.com	
Secretary	Dave Runk, AA3EJ aa3ej@yahoo.com	
Treasurer	Jim Warg, N3ONE	
Liaison	Filip Cerny AB3HK, ARRL Liaison Dick Thompson, K3BIE Interclub Liaison	
Repeaters	W3PHB 146.430+ [173.8] Rt1snk Mt W3PHB 146.640- [173.8] Philipsbg W3PHB C 147.255+ [DSTAR] Under Const W3PHB 444.750+ [173.8] Philipsbg	
Nets	Saturday @ 2100 147.430+ [173.8]	
Web	www.philipsburg-ara.org	

areas of APRS coverage. The new digi will provide some much needed coverage. PARA members Filip AB3HK and John N3SPW are working on this project. The digi will use the call sign W3PHB-1.



Headwaters Amateur Radio Club

Coudersport and Potter County

Meeting Notice

September 2, 2010

October 7, 2010

September Meeting: 7 pm, Thursday, September 2 at the Charles Cole Memorial Hospital, Coudersport. Park in Section A and enter Door A, then the first room on the right.

October Meeting: 7 pm, Thursday, October 7 at the Charles Cole Memorial Hospital, Coudersport

Minutes: August 5, 2010

by Charles Scott Sharpe, KB3JVD

The meeting was called to order by Jason, K2BYL, at 7:04 PM.

Headwaters ARC Information	
President	Jason Layton, K2BYL
Vice President	James Centanni, W2IMK
Secretary	Charles Scott Sharpe, KB3JVD
Treasurer	Wayne Stahler, II, WS3PC
Repeaters	N3PC 146.685- [173.8] Coudersport K3CC 146.880- [173.8] Coudersport KB3EAR 444.300+ Coudersport
Nets	Monday @ 1900 146.685- [173.8] Monday @ 1930 28.360 [USB] Monday @ 1945 1.980 [USB]
Web	www.n3pc.com

Meeting minutes from the July meeting were read. Don motioned to accept the minutes Wayne seconded.

Treasure Report accepted by Milton motioned to accept the minutes Don seconded.

Old business:

Need to check on LBOTW and EQSL.

LBOTW did never got done. EQSL has been updated.

No one remember their emergency handbooks.

No one has filled out the Ares/Races applications. Please see Wayne if interested.

Charles to send forms when Wayne gets them to him.

Wayne is needing info from Glenn and Chris Synder

Adrian reported that he is still waiting on hardware for his repeater. -

Still in Canada

Jason spoke of a 2meter antenna that covers 140-160 Mhz dipoles. Talk to Jason if you are interested in buying a Commercial quality 2 meter antenna.

Still available. 4 element vertical collinear. Should the club get it?

Don has a 30ft 17 element 2meter yagi. He is selling it for \$200 - SOLD

Skip mentioned we should start discussing the PAQSO party. It is Oct 9th and 10th <http://www.nittany-arc.net/paqso.html>. Skip Motioned to have the party at the BFCA, Don second

Wayne will check availability. Still determining where, but the club wants to plan on doing it?

The New York QSO party is the next week end.

Oct 16th-17th <http://www.nyqp.org/>

Jason spoke about the Hospital scheduled for next month at 7pm and every month after. Park in the "A" section and come in the "A" door first room on right as you come in.

Someone will need to update the web about the meeting location.

New Business

Jason spoke to the club about the repeater acting strange.

Temperature inversion causing minimal interference.

Skip found a suspected pager issue near or at the hospital.

Don noticed that several repeaters outside of Coudy were not having the issue.

Harris has a program to help detect this kind of issue when more than 1 repeater is used.

Charles (Scott) got his Extra! Has applied for a new call. More to come via email.

The Sharpe's are relocating. A new secretary needs to be found. Webmaster needed as well. - Tom said he would help with that.

Charles gave Wayne the secure token for the EOC. Charles left secretary documents in the club file cabinet in the radio room.

14th of August is the Howard NY Hamfest. See Jim H for more information

Repeater

Wayne found a fuse gone on the power amp. He replaced the fuse on August 3rd.

Don checked out a repeater by kb8mfv. We got an estimate of about \$400 - \$800. Tom G said he would help anyway he could. There were handouts about ACS strategies.

Jim motioned for adjournment, Milton 2nd. The meeting was adjourned at 8:02.



Elk County Amateur Radio Association

Elk and Cameron Counties

Meeting Notice

September 19, 2010

September Meeting: 1:30 pm, Sunday, September 19 at the Elk County EOC, US 219 South of Ridgway.

Elk County ARA Information																			
President	Scott Logue, N3LVG																		
Vice President	Rick Wehler, N3RJH																		
Secretary	Jerry Robinson, N3RYG																		
Treasurer	Mary Lewis, N3UDN																		
ARES EC	Bob Devilling, N3SGY																		
Repeaters	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>N3NIA 147.000+ [173.8]</td> <td>Bootjack</td> </tr> <tr> <td>N3NWL 147.285+</td> <td>Ridgway</td> </tr> <tr> <td>N3RZL 442.200+</td> <td>Ridgway</td> </tr> <tr> <td>N3RZL 442.350+</td> <td>Boone Mtn</td> </tr> <tr> <td>N3RZL 144.390= [APRS]</td> <td>Ridgway</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WA8RZR 443.675+</td> <td>St Marys</td> </tr> <tr> <td>N3NIA 28.205 BEACON</td> <td>Ridgway</td> </tr> <tr> <td>N3FYD 146.805-</td> <td>Emporium</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WA3WPS 147.180+</td> <td>Emporium</td> </tr> </table>	N3NIA 147.000+ [173.8]	Bootjack	N3NWL 147.285+	Ridgway	N3RZL 442.200+	Ridgway	N3RZL 442.350+	Boone Mtn	N3RZL 144.390= [APRS]	Ridgway	WA8RZR 443.675+	St Marys	N3NIA 28.205 BEACON	Ridgway	N3FYD 146.805-	Emporium	WA3WPS 147.180+	Emporium
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N3FYD 146.805-	Emporium																		
WA3WPS 147.180+	Emporium																		
Nets	Sunday @ 2000 147.000+ [173.8]																		
Web	www.n3nia.com																		

- . . . -

Two Meter Net Schedules

by Joe Shupienis, W3BC

QCARC	1900	Sunday	147.315	T 173.8
ECARA	2000	Sunday	147.000	T 173.8
PAARC	1930	Monday	147.390	T 173.8
Jefferson Co.	2000	Monday	147.105	T 173.8
C1fd Co ARES	2100	Wednesday	147.315	T 173.8
PARA	2100	Saturday	146.430	T 173.8
Headwaters ARC	1900	Monday	146.685	T 173.8

Shorts

On Sunday, August 29, Joe, W3BC and Bryan, WA3UFN conducted an afternoon-long ARES training session at the Clearfield County EOC. Eight ARES members from four counties took part in the FEMA NIMS IS-700.a training course and also participated in a preview of the ARRL EC001 "ARECC Level 1" course material. After completing the exams online, trainees received their certificates from FEMA.

Joe has also put together a shorter presentation which is an introduction to the material but not a full training session. His 20 minute presentation is suitable for a program at club meetings. He is available to present his "ARES Training Preview" for any club or group who is interested in ARES and emergency communications.

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Attention Club Officers! *Club Connections* is the place to make your club shine! Hams all over our area are interested in reading about **your club's** activities!

Please help make this section even better by encouraging your members to submit items about your club's activities and photos of your members having fun with our favorite hobby!

We need your club's content every month, by the **fourth Monday** of the month. Please help us make this the best publication it can be! Thank you!

- . . . -

Attention all readers! Have you done something interesting lately? Do you have any interesting photos? I'm sure you do. So don't hide this information away—**spread the joy!**

Please help us all out by sending these items in for publication. There are over 150 readers

throughout central Pennsylvania who would really enjoy reading about what you're doing!

The address is:
submit@parasiticemission.com
Thank you!

- . . . -

For Sale

(1) TS-520-S Kenwood in excellent condition. Good measured output power on all bands. This is an old boat anchor but it all works. Asking price is \$285.00

(1) TS-430S Kenwood plus the AT-250 Auto Tuner, and SP 430 Matching speaker. This is a matched Kenwood set. Nice condition, everthing works well.

Asking \$590.00

Please contact W3PRL @ 814-236-1905

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Amateur Radio GPS Mystery Tour

EVERY MONTH, we present a set of GPS coordinates that are somehow related to amateur radio. Last month's coordinates were 40° 46' 25" N, 77° 57' 55" W in *The Barrens* near State College. This was the location of the Ionospheric Research Laboratory, jointly operated by Penn State and the US Navy. The callsign was KA2XPO (which is an experimental, not amateur call sign)

This month, we will visit another western Pennsylvania location, which was famous for manufacturing electronic components that helped win WW II...

September ARGMT Coordinates:
41° 40' 35" N, 78° 14' 30" W

If anyone reading this worked there, or knows interesting stories, we would all like to read about it. I'll publish everything you send!

HELLO EVERYBODY!

Most of you know my name and of course my callsign, SM7FYW, but what you don't know is that I like contesting, especially on very high frequencies.

Joe (W3BC) asked me to put together something for the newsletter about the club station that I used to visit frequently over in southern Sweden.

SK7MW is the callsign, ("mega watt" among friends, but "milli watt" among the enemy!) They are located in the very southern part of Sweden overlooking the Baltic sea. The view is spectacular, and although its a flat landscape, they are on the highest spot.

If you want to see the 360 view, go to www.sk7mw.se.

It used to be the site of Sweden's first windmill-generator in the '80s and when the

testing of it was done, they tore the turbine tower down, but they let the building stay.

A few years later, some of the guys in the club came up with the idea to "borrow" the building and the little spot of ground that belonged to the Township.

The rest was hard work, looking for equipment, such as towers, rotors and of course, antennas. "From 6 meters and up," is their motto, and at that they are very successful!

Thorleif (SM7EYW) is the driving force, but also Sven (SM7DTT), the owner of VHF-Teknik, is their antenna provider. Rune and Mogens (SM7FMX) are also very active in the maintenance and the contesting itself.

SM7DQN (Bosse) is the proud father of the *Berta* amplifiers, and is never far away either. Of course many more people are

involved, but since I haven't been there for a few years, I can just say: keep up the good job guys!

All the expense and hard work has been worth it—they have become the most successful contest station in Scandinavia.

I very much miss the *kameraderi*, when we had our cookouts on the back of the building, in the baking sun in the summers, (but not so much trying to get there in the winter!)

If there ever was a contest for seeing who had the most fun "playing" radio, then SK7MW would also take first prize!

It has even turned into a custom, that they go out and eat the "Victory dinner" the night before. That only goes to say, how much humor, friendship and confidence they all share in SK7MW.

Hope this little story, gave you a little insight into how much fun our hobby can be.



A Baltic Sunset at SK7MW



Mogens and Thorleif man the controls at the SK7MW contest station

Using the ECARA Packet Digipeater

By Pete Carr WW30

THE ORIGINAL concept was to make packet communication available for Hams around this area. Because VHF frequencies can be blocked by hills, the same as two-meter FM radio, a repeater was needed to overcome these obstacles. That has been installed on the Lee Lewis, N3NWL, tower at 100 feet using 25 watts on 145.01 MHz. Packet stations consist of a computer running terminal software that talks to the modem or TNC. The modem translates computer data into tones that are then transmitted by the radio. Even with 100 watts of power, talking from Ridgway to St. Marys would be a tough trip. The digital repeater or digipeater on the mountain top solves the problem. It hears, stores and then sends the data packets so that anyone can receive and transmit through it.

I've (done) testing with the Northwest Pennsylvania Packet Group in the Erie area. I type the message;

c w3yxe v ww30

The "c" means connect, the far-end station is w3yxe and I want to connect via "v" ww30 which is the call sign of the digipeater. When I send this message it is received by the ww30 digipeater and retransmitted to W3YXE. My packet station call sign is

WW30-1. The packet station copies the transmission and it is printed on my screen. W3YXE is usually busy so it sends a message back through the digipeater to my station saying:

W3YXE busy
Disconnect W3YXE v WW30

The packet station software runs a "mailbox" which will store incoming messages if I'm

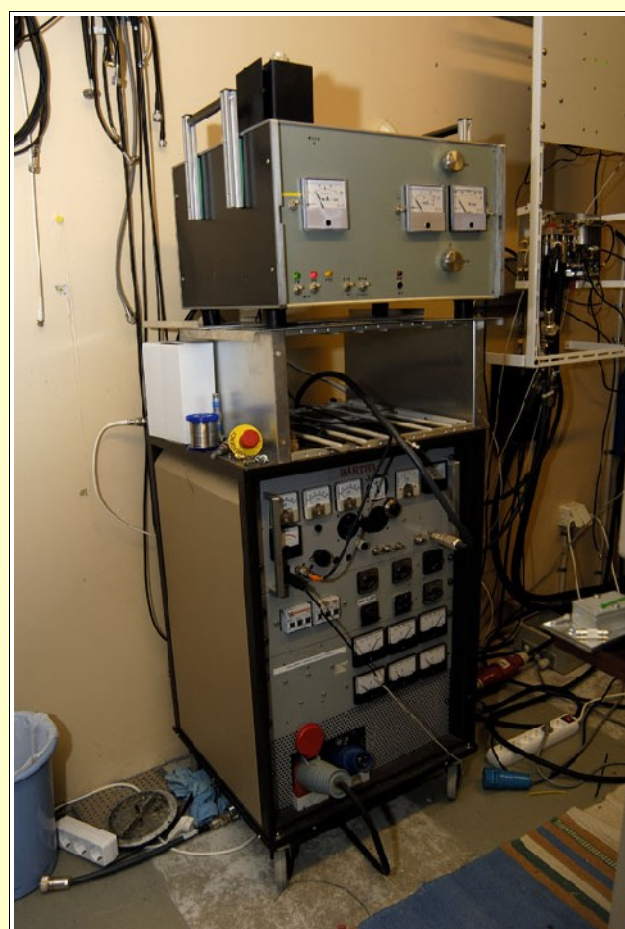
away from the station. It also has a periodic beacon message that sends my call sign and a short greeting so that band openings will spread the station information.

I called Ron Prindle, N3BXL, in Erie, PA, because I was seeing his call on the packet traffic through W3YXE. He sent me a PowerPoint document about the Erie area packet system which is affiliated with the Red Cross. Ron has been trying to broaden the coverage area for their system and was thrilled to hear that I was copying error-free data here in Ridgway, The Erie system does emergency weather bulletins and also supports APRS. At present they are upgrading some system components in the Meadville area which would be available to us here in Ridgway when completed.

The packet system is separate from APRS and also the Internet. This means that if a power emergency happens we would have a communications path out of the area that is independent of wire line or cell phones and has battery backup. Many of you may remember the tornado that ripped through the Kane, PA area and the major communications problems that hampered recovery. The advent of lap top computers and small modems that connect to two-meter mobile radios would offer valuable method of information transfer from emergency locations. Meantime, it's a fun way to communicate with local area Hams.

I've used the same packet station on 145.825 MHz to connect to the International Space Station. The software and the modem work just fine with the Space Station using 25 watts and a 5 element beam. Tracking software for the computer is InstaTrak from WWW.AMSAT.ORG. You can also print out pass schedules from the AMSAT web site.

The ARRL is the QSL manager for the Space



The SK7MW "Big Berta" 1 KW amplifiers



Awards are part of contesting, especially for the winners!

...if a power emergency happens we would have a communications path out of the area...

Station in the USA so you can get a QSL card by sending a printout of your contact to them with your card.

Packet is not the same now as it was 20 years ago. Two items have really enhanced its operation. First, the computers are far more powerful with better software. Second, modems are now equipped with firmware chips that use Digital Signal Processing (DSP) to copy data down into the noise. Chips like that are installed in the packet digipeater and enable it to hear the Erie signals error-free.

Right now I'm working to integrate the Ridgway system into the Erie system. Once that is operational I plan to hook up with the Southwest Pennsylvania Packet Group around Pittsburgh. If that is successful then the next step would be to connect to packet systems in New York State. The idea would be to have paths out of this area in those directions so that a disaster here or around us would not prevent emergency communication.

I would like to thank Lee Lewis, N3NWL, for allowing me to place the digipeater on his tower and for the use of his antenna and feedline. They are key components in making the path to Erie possible.

Shortwave Listening, Then and Now

By Pete Carr WW30

A VERY GOOD thing happened last night. The Cable TV went out about 5 PM and didn't come back on until nearly 10 PM. It's been quite a while since the last outage so it was notable.

I'd looked at a few magazines to pass the time and was bored so I went and found the old Radio Shack portable shortwave radio that is about 20 years old. The batteries were still strong and I found a flood of stations in the 6 to 7 MHz part of the band. This radio

has been to Iraq and Afghanistan as well as Japan and The Philippines and runs for weeks on 3 AA dry cells. It was a forty dollar investment in something that I've enjoyed from childhood. And now, in the depths of boredom, it rescued me again.

I was looking for BBC, the British Broadcasting Company and, instead, found China Radio International. They broadcast to the Americas in English each night at 7 PM with another program at 7 AM EDT. The program was hosted by a fellow who obviously had grown up in the USA and a lady with a somewhat pronounced Chinese accent. They did the news and some commentary and I enjoyed the program. At 8 PM they started a program to teach Chinese to us Americans so I tuned around to see what else was available. Just up the dial was a nice program from Radio Spain dealing with Spanish culture in English. I listened for a few minutes, then tuned on and found Radio Bucharest, Romania, also in English. The next several hours were only interrupted by my wife who told me the cable was back on.

Back in the 50s and 60s the Cold War was at its coldest and countries of the two ideologies were fighting for the "hearts and minds" of people across the world via shortwave radio. This is when my Dad, a high school Physics teacher, brought home a bag of parts and a cigar box and we proceeded to build a shortwave receiver. It was wired with solid wire with the cloth insulation that you could just push back to expose the end for termination. The diagram showed "ground" connections among the various tubes and, since the cigar box chassis was not metallic, we had to wire these together as well. Dad also brought home about a hundred feet of stranded wire that we strung out the back porch to a tree as an antenna. 67 ½ volt batteries and several flashlight cells were

soldered to the radio for power and, by an act of God, it worked!

The first time I heard Radio Moscow and that lady with the clipped British accent, reading the news and calling the USA all those bad things, I was hooked. I thought that Dad and I had done some "cutting edge" stuff not realizing that Radio Moscow was using several zillion watts of power into antennas that were as big as some cities! As you may remember from radios of those days, the flashlight batteries powered the tube filaments while the 67 ½ volt cells ran the plates. There wasn't a flashlight in the house that had any batteries and I was going broke buying new ones as I spent hours tuning and listening. For a grade school kid that was a magical time.

That magic remains and I always travel with the Radio Shack portable to see what I can hear around the world. While working in The Philippines I found that it was easy to hear Japan, Korea and China since they were just north of the islands over the ocean. Their "local" programs were usually not in English but some programs taught the language which was interesting. All the programs gave a glimpse of life in countries that were far different from back in the States. The daily problems of food, shelter and finding a good dentist were pretty much the same all over the world.

Then I went to the Sand.

FM stations in Iraq regularly broadcast the Muslim Call to Prayer and music that is very different from western rock 'n roll. I returned to listening to the BBC and especially enjoyed their news programs. While the BBC is like the Voice of America from the States, it doesn't push the British culture and ideals so much as deliver unbiased coverage of news and current events. That is a sharp contrast

I spent hours tuning and listening. For a grade school kid that was a magical time.

to the old Radio Moscow where every other sentence was a slam at the USA.

I passed the small moments of leisure time tuning that portable and hardly missed television at all.

About a year after the Iraq tour I went to north central Afghanistan. The location was an old Soviet air base called Bagram about 60 KM north of Kabul, the capital. It was situated in a 4000 foot high mountain valley surrounded by the Himalaya mountains. This made shortwave reception very difficult. I strung hookup wire outside the old Russian barracks to a fence and managed to get some spotty reception from Radio Havana Cuba and, of course, BBC. They had TV in the Dining Facilities (DeFacs), better known as chow halls, and also at the USO Club. Some of the bigger Day Rooms at the various detachments also had small sets with very snowy pictures that had video taped program of old sitcoms. Then there were the paperback books that were passed around as people rotated in and out of the the area. These were not terribly interesting so I wound up listening to the radio. On some nights, when the air was so clear that you could almost count to mountain tops on the moon, reception would be good to the point where amazing things happened. I remember one night listening to the AM broadcast band and hearing WOWO from Fort Wayne Indiana and WRNO from New Orleans up in the short wave bands. Those small touches of home were priceless in that barren, ugly, patch of earth.

So, last evening, I listened and remembered the places and the stations that the little Radio Shack radio and I have visited. I also thanked my Dad again, for the thousandth time, for the bag of parts that were a beginning to a wonderful part of my life.

While my wife might disagree, there are

benefits to having the cable go off occasionally. There is no Hi-Def pictures on TV that can rival the ones displayed in your mind as broadcasts describe the events of the day from places that are a world away.

And to the lady with that clipped British accent that was the announcer on Radio Moscow, all those many years ago, I trust that she has lived to eat her words!

Where's the QRN?

by Joe Shupienis, W3BC

HOW OFTEN HAVE you struggled with the QRN from distant thunderstorms on 80 and 40 meters? At night, storms up to 1500 miles away can wiggle your S-meter all the way up to the S-9 mark—and sometimes, beyond. Static that strong can wreak havoc with your ability to receive strong signals—let alone weak ones!

Well here's a website that makes locating the noisemakers a snap. Aim your web browser at <http://www.strikestarus.com/> for a real-time map of recent lightning strike activity.

Once you know where the static is coming from, you can make informed decisions about your operating. This information can be used to know how close the lightning is to your QTH, and where it is located.

If you have the luxury of a directional receiving antenna, you can use it to "null out" the heaviest activity, and possibly salvage your QSO! Otherwise, seeing what you're up against helps you make the correct decision about throwing the big switch and settling in for an evening writing *Parasitic Emission* articles... I mean settling in to watch the tube.

In any event, it's a useful website to add to your bookmarks so go check it out!

Legal Notices

The Parasitic Emission (ISSN: 2156-0080) is published monthly by Joe Shupienis, 110 Rosemont Drive, Moon Township, PA 15108

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The Parasitic Emission is published monthly for all Radio Amateurs residing in central Pennsylvania. This electronic edition is provided free of charge by email, and may also be downloaded from: www.parasiticemission.com which also makes available selected back issues, current issues and more.

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The current, online, interactive version of the calendar, which contains regional club activities and events in upcoming months may be accessed at calendar.parasiticemission.com.

You may use that calendar to enter amateur radio events of interest to local amateurs which are intended for publication, subject to review and approval.

Here's a real-time map of recent lightning activity

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 1:00pm» EmComm Training 7:00pm» QCARC 2-meter FM Net 8:00pm» Elk Co ARA Net	30 7:00pm» HARC Nets 7:30pm» Punxsutawney ARC 2 Meter Net 8:00pm» Jefferson County A.R.E.S. Net	31	01 9:00pm» Clearfield County A.R.E.S. Net	02 7:00pm» Headwaters ARC Meeting	03	04 9:00pm» Philipsburg ARA Net
05 7:00pm» QCARC 2-meter FM Net 8:00pm» Elk Co ARA Net	06 7:00pm» HARC Nets 7:30pm» Punxsutawney ARC 2 Meter Net 8:00pm» Jefferson County A.R.E.S. Net	07 Labor Day 7:00pm» Punxsutawney ARC "Radio Night"	08 9:00pm» Clearfield County A.R.E.S. Net	09	10	11 9:30am» QCARC Breakfast 3:00pm» PARA Meeting 9:00pm» Philipsburg ARA Net
12 7:00pm» QCARC 2-meter FM Net 8:00pm» Elk Co ARA Net	13 7:00pm» HARC Nets 7:30pm» Punxsutawney ARC 2 Meter Net 8:00pm» Jefferson County A.R.E.S. Net	14 7:00pm» Punxsutawney Area ARC Meeting	15 9:00pm» Clearfield County A.R.E.S. Net	16	17 7:30pm» QCARC Meeting	18 9:00pm» Philipsburg ARA Net
19 1:30pm» Elk County ARA Meeting 7:00pm» QCARC 2-meter FM Net 8:00pm» Elk Co ARA Net	20 7:00pm» HARC Nets 7:30pm» Punxsutawney ARC 2 Meter Net 8:00pm» Jefferson County A.R.E.S. Net	21	22 9:00pm» Clearfield County A.R.E.S. Net	23	24	25 9:00pm» Philipsburg ARA Net
26 7:00pm» QCARC 2-meter FM Net 8:00pm» Elk Co ARA Net	27 Parasitic Emission Submission Deadline 7:00pm» HARC Nets 7:30pm» Punxsutawney ARC 2 Meter Net 8:00pm» Jefferson County A.R.E.S. Net	28	29 9:00pm» Clearfield County A.R.E.S. Net	30	01	02 9:00pm» Philipsburg ARA Net