

telstar



THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF STARS (SOUTH TOWNS AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY)

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Repeater Corner

This year, the club faces two high priority needs. First is the need to replace our aging 2m repeater, which serves all the members and is the focal point for our club.



Second is the need to improve the repeater's receive coverage in shadowed areas to the west and southwest. These areas are about 10% of the region covered by our repeater. Both of these needs can, and should, be taken care of this year. The only question is where to start.

I'll fill you in on what makes sense from my point of view, as one who has spent many long hours over the past year and half to improve our repeater and keep things working.

Our venerable GE Mastr Pro repeater is about 30 years old. It uses discrete transistors with tube drivers and finals. Controls and connectors are well-worn, sloppy, and touchy. Tune-up is very difficult, and dangerous because of the high voltages for the tubes. Many internal patchwork fixes have accumulated over the years.

This repeater is living on borrowed time. If it fails, it is not worth repairing--there is no manufacturer support, only a shrinking used-parts market. The manufacturer of our RC-85 controller is out of business--no help there either. Now is the time to think about replacements for both, while they are still working.

February Meeting

The February club meeting begins at 7 PM on Thursday, February 6 at the Hamburg Youth Center (Prospect Ave. and Hawkins Ave.) All interested in amateur radio are invited; neither an amateur radio license nor club membership is required.

This is going to be one of our most important meetings. We will be discussing the Board's recommendations regarding the



acquisition of a new repeater and equipment for a remote receiver. Club members will be voting to decide what we do with these important issues, so be sure to be there.

Alan Percy KB2TVT will be our featured speaker talking about Getting Started with the Internet (see article on page 3). He will be emphasizing how the Internet can benefit amateur radio operators and will do a live demonstration of several of the important features.

Repeater Codes

Due to Paul's accident (See From the President on Page 2), the repeater codes will not be changed until after the March meeting.

The 1997 repeater codes will be included with the March newsletter for those members who have renewed their memberships.

If you haven't renewed your membership for 1997, please do so as soon as possible!

★ STARS ★

STARS & ARRL Memberships

Membership in STARS is open to anyone with an interest in amateur radio; an amateur radio license is not required. Membership applications may be obtained by sending a SASE to Judy Levay N2TEZ, 120 University Blvd., Depew, NY 14043, from the newsletter editor or from board members.

Annual dues are payable on January 1 and are \$21 for a single membership, \$27 for family memberships and \$8 for a student membership (through grade 12). The dues are pro-rated on a monthly basis for new members plus there is an initiation fee of \$5 when first applying to the club. For example, a new member joining in July would pay \$10.50 (6 months X \$1.75/mth) plus the \$5.00 initiation fee for a total of \$15.50.

Applications should be returned to Judy N2TEZ along with the appropriate dues. The applications will be reviewed and voted on by the Board of Directors at their business meeting. The applications are then voted on by the general membership at the next regular club meeting.

Members should send their ARRL renewal memberships to Jack Cullum, Jr. KB2ESM, 6871 Webster Rd., Orchard Park, NY 14127 along with a check made out to STARS. No extra cost to you and STARS benefits!



Club Nets

STARS club nets are open to all to exchange information on local amateur radio activities.

STARS HF net meets at 10 AM local time on Saturdays on 3.925 Mhz +/- QRM. Net control is usually Guz WB2E2U.

STARS VHF net meets at 7 PM on Wednesdays on STARS club repeater WB2ELW 147.09/.69 (output/input). Net control is Tony KB2OUT.

STARS Swap Net meets at 7 PM on Tuesdays on STARS WB2ELW 147.09 repeater. Net control is Leo KB2TIY.

From The President

At last month's club meeting, there seemed to be some sort of misunderstanding between what was said and what was interpreted by some.

Back in November of 96 at the board meeting, we talked about the replacement of our aging 2 meter repeater "again". The day after that meeting I contacted Paul WA2IJW and asked him to research what it would take/cost to replace our 2 meter repeater and controller. Paul has spent many an hour on this project. He also looked into what it would cost/take to put in a remote receiving unit.

Paul did bring all of his findings with him to the Jan. board meeting and presented the board and club members who were present with his recommendations. The board will present the club with it's recommendation at the Feb. club meeting.

This club has some very important decisions to make but when they are all said and done STARS WILL BE No.1. As most will agree a club's repeater is it's focal point and it serves most of the members.

Keep in mind if our repeater were to go down today, we do not have a back-up ready to go; and please don't say he is just crying wolf, it could happen.

You can read more about these issues in Paul's column in this newsletter. Like I said back at the Jan meeting, you the members of this club will decide in which direction STARS goes.

February's club meeting will be a very important one in determining that direction. I would like to see as many club members as possible make this meeting to let their opinions and votes be heard.

P.S. I found out this information about Paul (WA2IJW) after I had sent my news article to Terry so I asked him to add this. I was told that Paul was in an automobile accident on Monday evening (1/27/97). Paul was hospitalized, but I was informed that he is doing well.

I know I am speaking for the whole STARS family when I say this ... HOPE YOU ARE FEELING BETTER AND GET WELL SOON

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STARS GOSSIP COLUMN

Well, the January meeting was a very nice meeting and hope all meetings will be the same. You know if you have changed your call recently under the vanity call sign program, you must send postage for your old call as well as your new call because the #2 incoming QSL card club has no way to separate your old call from your new call. They are still good for certificates also.

The various committees are getting underway, so make sure that your name is on one of them.

By the way, if anyone is interested in attending classes for upgrading your ticket, please get in touch with Vern AA2AC. He and Tony KB2OUT had classes to upgrade and seven upgraded. Hope to get a 75% upgrade in the next VE session. Vern's phone is 634-5276, and if he does not have classes, he will steer you to the place where the next classes are.

And now remember that the Nike Base club room is open Saturdays 1 to 3 PM, due to the courtesy of Rick who recently upgraded to

AB2CT as an Extra. Also as a general rule, about one hour before the opening time, please listen to the information on our repeater as dame nature plays tricks on us, and they are unable to get the snow plow up to the Nike Base.

Wish to congratulate Rick on his upgrade and glad he is interested in helping the rest of the club members also. So take advantage of this wonderful opportunity. Remember in 1997 we got 100 "T" type of license members. Let us try to cut this down and help yourself to upgrade to a higher class. You know, every four months I will give a new count and hope to have it go down in figures. Get in touch with Judy N2TEZ when you upgrade, and she will let me know. So after you finish plowing out your drive, why not spend 20 minutes to upgrade. OK???

By the way, the Hamburg Library has some nice books on upgrading from General class to Extra. Please give them a tryout.

Happy Hamming Guz WB2EZX

Getting Started on the Internet

by Alan Percy KB2TVT
February 6th Meeting Program

Have you been wondering what all the fuss is about with this thing called the Internet? Do you think that TCP/IP via PPP to your ISP is pure alphabet soup? Have you been thinking about getting "on-line", but don't know where to start?

If you have, join us for our February 6th meeting where I'll be speaking about how to get started with the Internet.

During the program I'll give a quick overview of where the Internet came from, how it works, what you can do with it, and how to get "connected"..



Some of the Amateur Radio features of the Internet are:

- * Web Pages - information resources of current events in the amateur radio hobby, other club

newsletters, hamfests, manufacturer's information on equipment, and secret "mods".

- * FCC Call Sign Servers - get access to the latest call sign assignments (and vacancies).

- * Newsgroups - an almost overwhelming amount of information on equipment, operating modes, FCC actions, and general tips.

- * Internet Phone - a way of "DXing" around to world by passing your voice through the Internet to far away repeaters. You can use your computer to join in 2 meter action during the evening drive home in San Francisco!

The program will include live demonstrations of e-mail, newsgroups, and "surfing" the web (and you won't even get wet!!) All of this with a special focus on Amateur Radio. If you're a seasoned Internet Hacker, join in the fun and bring along your favorite Web site or List server addresses. I'll be compiling a list of favorite Amateur Radio sites that we can visit during the demonstrations and eventually add to the STARS home page.

Some say the last communications invention with the same impact as that of the Internet started with "Watson, come quickly!". See you on Thursday, February 6th.

ARRL Board Meeting

The ARRL Board of Directors met in annual session, January 17 and 18, 1997, at Albuquerque, New Mexico. Here is a summary of the meeting highlights:

Responding to survey results that show that the majority of members favor retention of Morse code for HF operating privileges as an international treaty obligation, the Board decided that the ARRL will not support changing the existing treaty requirement—an issue on the WRC-99 agenda. The Board also accepted other committee recommendations regarding the international rules that govern the amateur and amateur-satellite services.



A committee proposal for modifications to the FCC amateur licensing structure is to be published shortly in QST.

Members will be invited to comment to their directors before May 31, 1997. The Board will not take action on the committee recommendations earlier than its July meeting, to afford members an opportunity for discussion and comment.

Noting the increasing number of participants in the spectrum management process, the Board created the ARRL Spectrum Forum, an e-mail roundtable for national amateur organizations, as well as regional entities and interests. The ARRL Spectrum Committee was dissolved, with the thanks of the Board.

From The ARRL Letter 1/24/97

Editor's Note: The proposal for licensing changes mentioned above have been released by the ARRL. Make sure you read them and let the ARRL know what you think.



STARS Web Page

STARS has a new World Wide Web page on the Internet. It's address is <http://www.cmp-express.com/stars>.

STARS member Marc Fruth N2UBT is the Web Master for the site and is to be highly commended for the great job that he is doing. This is a work-in-process, so stop by from time to time to see how it grows!

Thanks go to Computer Express Management, Inc. for providing us the site.

New Club Logo

The Board is interested in developing a new club logo for STARS. This could be used on club letterhead, club jackets, club hats, club tee shirts, etc.

Members are invited to submit designs for the new logo. They should be sent by February 15 to Judy Levan N2TEZ, 120 University Blvd., Depew, NY 14043.

Nike Base Club Station

Think that you can't work any exciting DX because of poor propagation? You can if you come out to STARS Nike Base Club Station.

In the last couple of weeks, we worked the Heard Island DXpedition (VK0IR), Sao Tome (S92SS) and Reunion Island (FR5DX).

Come out Saturday afternoons from 1 to 3 PM and join in on the fun!

STARS Board of Directors

President	Tony Balas, Jr.	KB2OUT
Past President	Greg Young	KE2VW
Vice President	Bob Koster	KA2WYE
Treasurer	Jack Cullum	KB2ESM
Fin. Sec.	Judy Levan	N2TEZ
Secretary	Judy Levan	N2TEZ
Director	Vern Siegel	AA2AC
Director	Gene Metzger	KE2LO

Amateur Radio Examinations

STARS will hold test sessions on 3/15/97 at Grace Luthern Church (McKinley and Newton Roads). Walk-ins should arrive by 9:00 AM and pre-registered candidates should arrive by 9:45. The tests start at 10 AM. For information on STARS test sessions, contact Norm Jones KD2KK at 824-1148.

Lancaster ARC will be holding test sessions on 2/19, 3/19, 4/16, 5/21 & 6/11 during 1997 at the Aurora Middle School Lancaster, NY. For information on Lancaster ARC exams, call Chuck Koester WD2AIK at 937-3592.

ARATS will be holding test session on 3/1, 4/5, 5/3 & 6/7 during 1997 at the North Tonawanda Fire Headquarters at 495 Zimmerman St. For information on ARATS exams, call Vern Siegel AA2AC at 693-5977 (days) or 634-5276 (nights).

Most sessions except for STARS non-hamfest exams do not allow walk-ins, so call ahead and make a reservation.

Repeater Corner

Continued from Page 1

The club bought an inexpensive, home-made backup repeater (based on a 20-year-old GE Mastr II mobile radios) a few years ago, but it is not working.

This repeater was not neatly assembled and has no documentation. To fix it, one must make a wiring diagram, disassemble it, then rebuild it. Like everyone else, my spare time is limited—I haven't had time to do this. Besides, I think the club should be better equipped than that.

My goal as repeater chairman has been to professionalize and update our repeater system. A club our size should have up-to-date, professionally-constructed commercial gear as well as good coverage.

Therefore, my recommendation is that the club buy a new Kenwood commercial repeater and a new controller from Link Communications. They can be purchased and installed in a few weeks.

The Mastr Pro/RC-85 package can be kept intact and on standby as our backup. (The RC-85 is physically built-into the Mastr Pro cabinet.)

The new controller will have real voice announcements and be much easier to program remotely by using a computer, instead of touch tones. It will also provide voice mailboxes for members when that option is purchased.

I also recommend that we start work on a project to improve repeater coverage in shadowed areas. A remote 2m receiver at the Nike base, with a UHF link to the Colden site, will fill in a lot of the west to southwest holes. However, this project will take much longer than replacing the repeater equipment at Colden. It is a lot more work.

There are more pieces to assemble and interface, and antenna work is required at both Nike and Colden. It can't be completed until spring at the earliest.

Note that with the new repeater and controller installed first, they will be in place so that the UHF link can tie into them. Otherwise, the process of tying-in would have to be done twice, once with the old repeater, then again with the new.

To accommodate both projects financially, we can trim costs by postponing a new commercial solid-state amplifier and using the old 100 watt amplifier from our ill-fated backup repeater. It requires forced-air cooling, but should work for now.

Likewise, the voice mailbox system for the controller can be added later, as funds permit. These steps, plus some fund-raising, will allow the club to satisfy both high priority needs this year.

To summarize, we can replace the repeater and controller now, and begin acquiring and assembling pieces for the remote receiver system. The remote receiver will be completed when the antenna work can be done.

This is the approach that I feel makes the most sense from all aspects: technical, financial, and schedule, plus satisfying everyone's priorities, and minimizing the level of effort required to do these jobs.

73's, Paul WA2UW



STARS



Club Repeaters

The club repeater (WB2ELW/R) is located near Colden, NY (147.09/.69 output/input). Auto-patch privileges are available to club members.

The southern club repeater (KE2VW/R) is located in Perrysburg, NY (146.971/.37 output/input, with PL access of 151.4 Hz).

The club UHF repeater is located near Hamburg, (442.325 MHz w/ PL of 151.4 Hz.)

Club Packet

The STARS KE2VW BBS is located in Colden, NY. On 145.71 MHz; C BBSVW. If that fails, on 145.61 MHz, C BBSVW. On 446.825 MHz, you can connect using 9600 baud directly to BBSVW.

Using a telephone modem you can reach the STARS KE2VW BBS by calling 537-9334.

Club Meetings

Club meetings are normally held on the first Thursday of the month at the Hamburg Youth Center (Prospect and Hawkins Aves.) at 7:00 PM. Everyone is welcome; neither club membership nor an amateur radio license is required.

Board meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month at the Nike Base Club Station at 7:00 PM and are open to all club members.

Club HF Stations

The club Nike Base HF Station (WB2ELW) is located on Lakesview Rd. 1.75 miles e. of Rte 20 next to the Hamburg Town Arena. The station is operated on most Saturdays between 1 and 3 PM local time and is a great DX station. All are welcome.

A second club HF station is located at the Hamburg Youth Center.

STARS

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