

telstar



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

ISSUE 225 AUGUST 2000

Where There is a Will...

-Bruce KG2IC

Often, one of the first problems one encounters when first getting onto the HF bands is the antenna. It is now a simple matter to buy a commercially manufactured transceiver, but the antenna still remains the biggest challenge. At times it is the ability to even have an antenna, such in the case of covenant and deed restrictions, or local town ordinances. But often it is simply that newcomer lacks sufficient room to allow the installation of a decent "skyhook".

Such was my case nearly 5 years ago. I had purchased my home before I was licensed, and as such did not anticipate the need for extra land to accommodate an antenna. Nor, as it turns out, would my homeowners association permit the installation of a tower. After some pondering, and being resourceful, as we hams often are, I was able to use a large undeveloped tract of land in back of my home to erect a 160-meter loop antenna. In part thanks to the natural tree supports, I was able to secure over 500 feet of wire suspended in the air, ready to send and receive RF.

How did work? Well if you read my article last year, you know that it worked great! It was quiet on receive, as loops typically are, and radiated strapping signal with very few RFI issues. You will notice that I use the past tense in talking about my 160-meter loop, as it now no longer exists.

In the name of what goes as progress today, the developer deceived it was time to cut down all of those nasty trees that once proudly held my antenna, and turn the forest floor into a brown, muddy, soupy mess for all the neighborhood to enjoy. Aside from my new eyesore, I faced a more critical problem, critical at least for me as a ham. No antenna. No antenna equals no fun. While I was away in Maine, the contractor clearing the land had cut the wire for my antenna in half. My fault really for not removing it earlier.

So what does one do with 250 feet of wire on a piece of

August Meeting

This month's club meeting will begin at 7 PM on Thursday, August 3 at the club's Nike Base club station (1.75 miles east of Route 20 on Lakeview Road). All interested in amateur radio are invited; neither club membership nor an amateur radio license is required.

After a brief business meeting, we will have our annual mini-cookout. Hot dogs, hamburgers and soft drinks will be provided by the club. We ask the members to bring finger foods, appetizers or desserts to share.



There also will be a mini flea market, so bring your items to sell out of your car!

The meeting will be outdoors, so don't forget to bring lawn chairs to sit on. In case of inclement weather, please listen to STARS 147.090 repeater for possible information regarding rescheduling the meeting.

property that measures perhaps 160 feet in depth, by 60 feet in width? I pondered making a large loop antenna that would surround the perimeter, but quickly dismissed the idea in light of the RFI, which would be experienced by my own home, and my neighbors. The beauty of my former loop was that it was in back of my house, and the RF radiated out into the woods not scrambling anyone's TV or phone, just warming a few chestnuts and squirrels.

I thought for a bit, and then it dawned up me. (I wish that I would say it came to me as a blinding light and a flash of inspiration, but that never seems to be my case. Instead it was only after downing a good part of a pot of very black coffee one evening.) Sure my loop used to be horizontal, but it would also work in the vertical plane, in fact it would radiate irrespective of its orientation to the ground. The wire does not know or care which way it is suspended; it just

(Continued on page 4)

STARS & ARRL Memberships

Membership in STARS is open to anyone with an interest in amateur radio. A license is not required. Membership applications may be obtained by sending a SASE to Judy Levan 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 per month) plus the \$5 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 the 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 WB2EZU Memorial HF net meets at 10 AM local time on Saturdays on 3.925 MHz +/- QRM.

STARS VHF net meets at 7:30 PM on Thursdays on STARS club repeater WB2ELW 147.09/.69 output/input—PL of 107.2 Hz) except on the first Thursday of the month (club meeting night).

From Your President

August is County Fair month and when you are at the Fair do not forget to visit to Our Ham Radio Exhibit. We are still looking for volunteers to man the Exhibit, contact Keith KC2DGC or myself for available times.

Everyone that attended the July meeting held at the Ch 4 transmitter site on Center Rd in Colden seemed to have a good time. The tour went well and Clint gave a great explanation of how the whole site works. Sorry about running out of hot dogs, I thought 10 lbs would have been enough.

The Lancaster Hamfest is August 13th. It has always been a great time, and STARS will hold the drawing for our raffle during the Hamfest.

Our August 3rd meeting will be held at the Nike Base Hf station located on Lakeview Road in the Town of Hamburg. This meeting is our annual picnic. The Club supplies hot dogs, hamburgers and soft drinks. If you wish to bring your favorite summer/picnic please feel free the more the better. In the past many people have brought items to sell so if you are not selling, bring some extra money to pick up that flea that you may be looking for. Family and friends are all invited. You may want to bring extra lawn chairs with you for sitting around and rag chewing.

If you have any ideas for meeting programs for the next few months please submit them to me, we need to fill September, October and November. Remember this is YOUR Club, get involved.

Sincerely,
Gary KB2YJ
President

Shades of Grey

Submitted by Janet Lynn Ferbel

One day, a little girl was sitting and watching her mother do the dishes at the kitchen sink. She suddenly noticed that her mother had several strands of white hair sticking out in contrast to her brunette hair.

The little girl looked at her mother and inquisitively asked, "Why are some of your hairs white, Mom?"

Her mother replied, "Well, every time you do something wrong and make me cry or unhappy, one of my hairs turns white."

The little girl thought about this revelation for a while and then asked, "Momma, how come all of grandma's hairs are white?"

Florida Man Arrested For Interference To Hams

Federal authorities have arrested a Florida man and charged him with interfering with Amateur Radio operations and transmitting without a license. William Flippo of Jupiter was taken into custody July 20. The arrest is the latest chapter in a lengthening saga involving complaints of flagrant and repeated malicious interference attributed to Flippo.

Flippo already faces a \$20,000 fine levied last summer for unlicensed operation, willful and malicious interference to Amateur Radio communications, and failure to let the FCC inspect his radio equipment. The matter was referred to the US Attorney in January after Flippo failed to pay the fine, and the interference complaints continued.

Armed with a search warrant, federal marshals and FCC and FBI agents, accompanied by local authorities, took Flippo into custody. FCC agents seized items related to the alleged offenses, including radio equipment.



Flippo was released on \$100,000 bond. An arraignment on the federal charges is scheduled for July 31. One condition of his release is that he not make any radio transmissions.

Flippo was charged with four counts of transmitting without a license—each count carrying a maximum penalty of one year in prison and a \$10,000 fine--and four counts of interfering with the operations of licensed stations, which carry the same penalty.

Hams in Florida say Flippo has continued to thumb his nose at the FCC—even since being fined--and has persisted in flouting the law by interfering with local HF and repeater nets. FCC Enforcement Bureau Deputy Chief Jane Mago commended the members of the amateur community, who provided information leading to Flippo's arrest. She also thanked the US Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida and the US Marshals Service for their efforts in prosecuting the case.

The ARRL Letter 7/28/00

ARRL Volunteers Find, Fix "The Ditter"

ARRL staffers were greeted the morning of July 24 with reports of a continuous string of CW dits near 14.008 MHz--heard throughout North America over the preceding weekend. Initial reports gave conflicting beam headings of the offending signal, dubbed "the ditter." But when FCC staffer John Reiser, WQ4L, called ARRL to report his observations, things started to happen.

Reiser facilitated an FCC DF trace to the San Diego area. The ARRL San Diego Section leadership was notified, and Section Manager Tuck Miller, NZ6T, coordinated local hams in a close-range DF effort. San Diego section Official Observer Coordinator Bill Sallee, K6TWO, took several field readings. At one point, when he'd narrowed the location to within two miles, the signal abruptly disappeared. The ARRL Monitoring System also was alerted. It was confirmed that this was a normal CW signal, not a "woodpecker"-type intruder.

Dialing around the bottom edge of 20 meters early on July 26, IARU Region 2 Monitoring System Coordinator Martin Potter, VE3OAT, heard the ditter once again, this time near 14.026 MHz. Potter determined that the signal had an identical period and beam heading as the one heard earlier. He notified ARRL Headquarters, and the San Diego hams picked up where they'd left off.

Sallee's field strength readings drew him closer and closer to the coast, where the heading reversed. Sallee reports that he ultimately found the apparent source in the oceanfront community of La Jolla. He says the woman who answered the door said her husband was a ham and allowed Sallee to take a look at the station. Sure enough, a stuck dit paddle was keying a powered, unattended rig, which Sallee disabled.

Sallee theorizes that heating and cooling within the ham's uninsulated shack and a combination of corrosion in the keyer paddle's pivot mechanism and close dit contact spacing contributed to the contact's migrating to a closed position. He said the ham later told him that he'd been operating on 14.007.5 MHz on July 21 but did not return to the shack until Monday afternoon. "He remembers listening to a CW contact on 14.026 but did not transmit," Sallee said. "He then left the shack unaware that by leaving the rig on, he would fall victim to unattended transmission when the moisture and temperatures began to change."

Sallee says the ham, whom he did not identify, "was most embarrassed."

"I really felt sorry for him and assured him that public hang-

(Continued on page 4)

Grounding, Part 2

When we last talked about watering your ground stake. I forgot to add that you may want to add a cup of rock salt in the pvc pipe. This will increase your conductivity from your ground stake to the ground it's self. Be careful not to use too much salt. I did this at one QTH that I lived in 20 years ago, and it killed the grass around the pipe.

When grounding a roof top tower or a ground mounted tower, you should also consider installing a heavy duty wire. For the roof mounted tower, you should use an insulated wire so that any static build up that is discharged to the ground does not set your roof on fire. For the ground mounted tower, you can use any heavy duty non insulated wire.

You should have one continuous piece from the top of the tower to you ground stake. This way you will not have any impedance bumps in the line. Remember, lightening is looking for a quickest, shortest path to ground,; you will want to keep the bends and angles to a minimum. I have always found that using 3 eight foot ground stakes tied together is the best way to go. You may also want to bury about 40 to 60 feet of bare wire. This helps to discharge any static build up and any direct hit from the Gods. Make sure that all of your connections are clean and tight.

In closing, having a good solid efficient ground for your Ham Shack and antenna system is one of the most important projects you will need to do. Not only will you generate a better signal, but your harmonics will go to go to ground and not elsewhere in you house or neighborhood. I hope that this information will help some of you that are new to the hobby when you got to install your antenna system or towers.

Sincerely and 73's
Gary KB2YJ

"The Ditter"

(Continued from page 3)

ings were no longer in vogue," Sallee said. "He said he had learned a valuable lesson about disabling a rig that will be unattended."

Potter congratulated the ARRL Monitoring System and the San Diego field organization for what he called "a fine example of quick reaction and good, solid work" on tracking down the unintentional transmission.--Brennan Price, N4QX

Where There is a Will...

(Continued from page 1)

wants to get rid of the RF, caring not a bit which way it sends it out. Hence the creation of what I fondly term as my "Zig-Zag" loop.

Imagine if you will, a loop antenna where three sides are horizontal to the ground, but the fourth side is vertical. In fact, not just vertical, but "zig-zagging" several times from the tops of the trees, to about 7 feet from the ground. Using my trusty slingshot I was able to launch my antenna support ropes into the trees perhaps 40 feet in the air. I then attached the antenna wire to this rope, pulled it up to nearly its full height. The dangling wire was then tied off about 7 feet from the ground, and the process repeated again, resulting in a series of zigs and zags. This allowed me to fit 250 feet of wire into an area that really would have been hard pressed to allow even a quarter of that. Each 40 foot vertical excursion ate up 40 feet of wire, creating an antenna that was electrically a full wave loop on 75 meters, but physically took up very little room.

How does it work you may ask? In one word, outstanding! I was able to do my first formal check-in on the STARS Saturday morning net last week, and the signal reports were excellent. Perhaps slight decreases from the longer loop, but respectable never the less. As far as loading up with my transmatch, no problem on 75, 40 or 20 meters. I have not tried the higher bands yet, but I suspect the same results. And reception? It is very good, and quite, nearly free of all of the RF hash emitted by the numerous light dimmers, TVs, and other electric noisemakers in my neighborhood.

Is there a lesson in this? Not really, I just had some extra time and owed Terry an article. Of course that is a lesson

(Continued on page 5)

STARS Board of Directors

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Director	Paul Julyan	WB2KFL

President Gary Zanghi KB2YJ may be reached at Kb2yj@aol.com or by calling 549-8476

AMATEUR RADIO EXAMINATIONS

STARS will hold test sessions on 9/16, 10/14 and 11/11 in 2000 and 1/13, 3/10, 5/12 and 7/14 at Grace Lutheran Church (McKinley Pkwy. and Newton Road) in Hamburg. We are now in the process of finalizing dates with the church. All candidates should report to the church by 9 AM; Walk-ins are allowed, but pre-registering will reduce time at exams. For information or to pre-register for STARS tests, contact Tony Balas, Jr. KB2OUT at 992-2011 or Terry Rockhold K2OO at 656-0865.

Lancaster ARC will be holding test sessions on 9/13, 10/18, 11/15 and 12/13 in 2000 at the Aurora Middle School, Lancaster, NY. Also on 8/13/00 at the Greater Buffalo Summer Hamfest. For information on Lancaster exams, call Chuck Koester WD2AIK at 937-3592.

ARATS will be holding test sessions on 9/9, 10/7, 11/4 and 12/2 in 2000 and 1/6, 2/3, 3/3, 4/7, 5/5 and 6/2 in 2001 at the North Tonawanda Fire Headquarters at 495 Zimmerman St. For information on ARATS exams, call Vic Gadzik at 694-9738.

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

(Continued from page 4)

here, something that we can all learn from. First, when you buy a home, consider the important things, like how many trees there are for antenna supports, will the power service handle that legal limit amp you just built up, and how much space is there to install that beverage antenna you have been dreaming about for the last 10 years. Let the XYL be concerned about the other minor details like local schools, exterior color and price, you need to concern yourself with the important things! Those of us already in a home are often challenged in the amount of space we have to erect our antennas. Do not let this discourage you. Often we think we need to have large elaborate antenna arrays to enjoy the hobby, and to radiate an effective signal. Nothing could be farther from the truth. You can spend thousand of dollars on commercial antennas when a simple spool of #18 wire will at times work just as well, if not better.

Like the solution to so many other problems, return to the roots. Experiment! Whether you use my zigzag loop, a folded dipole, or other form of shortened antenna, do not give up. Too often if a "textbook" antenna cannot be erected, we give up the battle. The funny, and really delightful thing about antennas is that there is no such thing as a textbook antenna. Each and every QTH is different, and what works for your friend a few miles down the road, may

not work for you. Ground conductivities, houses, trees, and other RF reflectors and absorbers all vary with location. Get out there, try and experiment, you will be pleasantly surprised. After all, even the smallest wire can radiate and receive, and something, no matter how small, is better than nothing.

Where there is a will, there is a way!

NCVEC Advances Revised Morse Testing Standards

The National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators has voted to set up revised standards for the administration of Morse code examinations in the US. The move at the NCVEC's July 21 meeting in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, comes in the wake of the FCC's December 30, 1999, action to establish 5 WPM as the sole Amateur Radio Morse code requirement.

Under the revised standards, examinees would have to show 25 character-count solid copy on their test sheets or successfully answer seven out of 10 questions of a fill-in-the-blank quiz on the sent text. The plan would bar the use of multiple choice tests for Morse code testing.

Morse examinations would specify use of the Farnsworth method, where characters are sent faster than the overall speed and additional spaces added between characters, words and sentences. Farnsworth "character speed" would be in the range of 13 to 15 WPM at an audio pitch of between 700 and 1000 Hz. Standard 5 WPM tests with 5 WPM character speed could be administered only as a special accommodation.

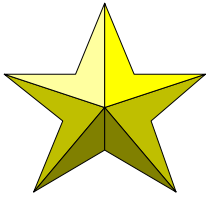
The new Morse testing standards are to be in effect by next July 1, but VECs may implement them sooner.

The ARRL Letter 7/28/00

Editor's Note:

The new Morse code testing standards discussed above are basically consistent with those which have been used by the STARS VE team for many years. At this time, we do not anticipate any significant changes will need to be made in our testing process.

Terry W. Rockhold
Telstar Editor & STARS VE Team Liaison



STARS



CLUB REPEATERS

The club repeater (WB2ELW/R) is located near Colden, NY (147.09/.69 output/input, with a PL of 107.2 Hz). Autopatch privileges are available to club members.

STARS honorary southern repeater (KE2VW/R) is in Arkwright, NY (146.67/.07 out/in, with a PL of 107.2 Hz).

The club UHF repeater is located near Colden, NY (442.325 MHz with a PL access of 107.2 Hz.)

CLUB PACKET

The STARS KE2VW BBS, located in Colden, NY is accessible on 145.61 MHz or 145.65 MHz (indirect) by typing: C BBSVW, using 1200 baud. Or connect using 19.2K baud on 441.050 MHz (direct)

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 Ave. at Hawkins Ave.) at 7:00 PM. Everyone is welcome.

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 Lakeview Road 1.75 miles east of Route 20 next to the Hamburg Town Arena. The station is operated on most Saturdays between 1 and 3 PM local time. A second club HF station is located at the Hamburg Youth Center.

CLUB WEB PAGES

The club has a home site on the World Wide Web at <http://www.wb2elw.com>

STARS

Terry W. Rockhold K200
4805 Transit Road #1903
Depew, NY 14043
(716) 656-0865
k2oo@bigfoot.com