

telstar



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

ISSUE 226 SEPTEMBER 2000

Erie County Fair Report

The 161st Erie County Fair is over, and in my opinion our exhibit went over very well. We had several members from ARATS and RAWNY help out this year with manning the exhibit. With the announcement about the display on broadcast radio and over the ham bands we had a lot of traffic come to our exhibit. Over 50 people signed up for classes between the north and south towns. John N2OY set up one of our old 386 computers with a satellite tracking program, that attracted a lot of attention. KB8WCJ and N2WUT brought a more up to date version of a tracking program, radios and antennas on Saturday. After setting up they worked many stations through the birds. While waiting for the next pass Bill N2WUT was sending out ATV pictures on simplex 144.550 I think.



ARATS supplied us with a banner, applications and newsletters to help promote their Club. Ray And Brandy of East Coast Amateur Radio sent over some 73 magazines for a \$1.00 a piece. We lost of access to packet early in the week due to a power outage at the STARS node site. That was repaired by me on Friday, but Greg KE2VW reported to me that on Wednesday he took a direct lightning hit at his house that took out his entire packet system. That means the BBS and DX cluster and all incoming and outgoing services are gone, until Greg can assess the damage and make a decision whether to rebuild or not.

The Special Event stations went as well as could be expected. There was a solar flare early in the week and the HF bands were flat. The bands did start to come back later in the week though, but a little too late to do any good. This

September Meeting

This month's club meeting will begin at 7 PM on Thursday, September 6 at the Hamburg Youth Center (Prospect Ave. at Hawkins Ave.). All interested in amateur radio are invited; neither club membership nor an amateur radio license is required.

Our guest speaker this month will be Bill Edgar N3LLR, ARRL Atlantic Division Vice Director. Bill has been a STARS Member for a number of years, but we don't get to see him too often since he lives in Bradford, PA.



This is a great chance to learn more about what ARRL really does and ask any questions that you might have.

Hope to see you there!

made the contact count a little lower than in the past.

Everyone that came out to help at the Exhibit said they had a good time and want to do it again next year. IF we are going to do the Exhibit next year we will need to get started earlier in the year. This will allow the other area Clubs to take a more active roll with setting up and manning the Exhibit. There was some miscommunication and some people got left out, 'ie' Club leadership changes and some different E Mail addresses. We will have to work on this to make sure this does not happen next year. This being my first year at Chairing the Exhibit was a learning year, so I did do a self critique, next year will be better.

I would be remiss not to mention Keith KC2DGC, for manning the phones and getting volunteers to work some of the 102 shifts. Keith also helped out when we got shorthanded. Then there was John N2OY/kb2zdl/kg2oy/n2coy or what ever his call is this week. John jumped in as he always does, help out getting volunteers, worked about 15 shifts himself. John also was the mainstay in passing out tickets and setting up the Exhibit and keeping the Exhibit equip-

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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 will be off the air during this summer. The second week in September it will return on a new day—Wednesday at 7:30 PM on STARS club repeater WB2ELW 147.09/.69 output/input—PL of 107.2 Hz) It will then be on weekly on Wednesdays at 7:30 PM. Look for it then!

From Your President

As you all are reading this, summer is now officially over. I want to know when did it ever start. In all my 50 years of living this has got to have been the shortest summer season yet. I have had little or no time for antenna work, let alone a motorcycle ride or two.

Well anyway with the end of summer just as a reminder, we will start having our monthly meetings back at the Hamburg Youth Center.

This month I am very pleased to have the ARRL Vice Director of the Atlantic Division, Bill Edgar N3LLR as our guest speaker. I have asked Bill to talk about where the League is headed and what the future holds for Ham Radio. For those of you that are new to the hobby or for some of the old timers who do not belong to the League, this is a good chance



to ask, "just what does the League do for Ham Radio". The League is not just a magazine, there is a lot more that goes along with it. So why not come to the meeting and find out. By the way Bill has been a STARS Member for some time.

We also have a surprise guest scheduled for the October meeting, if you want to find out who it is, I will announce it at the September meeting. As a Post Script, at the request of the speaker for October, he will be on before the general meeting, about 7:15 PM so don't be late.

October is also the month that we take nominations for Club officers. If you want to get involved in the management of the Club now is the time to start thinking about it. As some of you know the Club supports a mail in ballot system. If you want to vote and do not think you can make the November meeting for the elections get your request for a mail in ballot to Judy N2TEZ now. If you wait until after the October meeting there may not be enough time to do the snail mail turnaround.

We will start having munchies at the meetings again, so if you miss dinner, grab a donut and a coffee at the meeting.

I hope to see you all at the meeting, lets pack the house.

Sincerely,
Gary KB2YJ
President

STARS VE Exam Rescheduled

Due to a scheduling conflict, STARS VE exam which was originally announced for September 16 has been rescheduled for September 23. It will begin at 9 AM at the Grace Lutheran Church (McKinley Parkway at Newton Road. For more information, or to pre-register, call Terry Rockhold K2OO at 656-0865 or Tony Balas KB2OUT at 992-2011 or e-mail Terry at k2oo@bigfoot.com

STARS VHF Net Returns On New Night

STARS VHF net will be returning to the air waves on Wednesday, September 13 at 7:30 PM on STARS club repeater WB2ELW (147.09/ .69 MHz output/input—PL of 107.2 Hz). It will then be on weekly on Wednesdays at 7:30 PM. Check it out!

Erie County Fair Report

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ment running. Also on set up day, there was Judy N2TEZ, Ken N2ZSV and myself.

In closing I personally wish to thank everyone that helped out this year and here is to a better next year.

Sincerely,
Gary KB2YJ
President



Editor's Note

It is with a sad heart that I prepare the newsletter this month. Earlier this week (August 29), my black-and-tan cocker spaniel, Amy, passed away from kidney failure. She had been my companion for 17 years. Born in Ohio like myself, Amy endured the heat and humidity of Miami and the snows of Buffalo that were over her head! She only gave me love in return. She was a great little dog, and I will miss her very much.

Terry K2OO

Radio Swap Board Reminder -Check it Out!

Excuse this blatant commercial advertisement...

The Western New York Radio Swap Board is a great place to list and find gear for sale or trade.

Often in the summer months our attention turns to the local hamfests, but don't forget the Swap Board!

With many of the local Swap Net closed down for the summer months, the Board is a great to sell, buy, and swap radio parts, accessories, even radio books! In the past, other amateurs have sold towers, antenna systems, tubes, even complete stations!

Be sure to give it a look, and post some of that extra stuff lying about. Get a few dollars in your pocket BEFORE the next hamfest!

The URL is <http://hamgate.sunyerie.edu/phorum31/list.php?f=4> (Editor's Note: Per Karl N2NJH, the Swap Board can also be reached at <http://swap/hamgate/net>.)

Thanks to Karl N2NJH for his efforts in setting up the board, and we now return you to our regularly scheduled programming....

73,
Bruce KG2IC

Dayton 2000

Part I

By Bruce KG2IC

Amazing what \$250 will buy you nowadays! How about a Heathkit DX-100 transmitter, and a clean National NC-300 receiver? Yes, you can still find bargains out there; just don't look for them on Ebay. This pair was found sitting under a bench in a fellow amateurs shack. When I bought the pair in March I had no idea what they were destined for, I just wanted some fun gear to play around with. Little did I know that these two dusty boatanchors would somehow make their way to the Dayton Hamvention.

You may recall the 1st "AM Festival Station" at the 1999 Rochester, NY Hamfest. The station consisted of a "loaned" Collins KW-1 transmitter and a R-390A. At the end of the two-day event, our group had logged page after page of contacts. Perhaps almost important as on-air contacts was the positive effect that the station had on those off the air, those just walking by. Introducing many to a mode forgotten by some, undiscovered by others. You may wonder why we chose to use the moniker "AM Festival Station" rather than more traditional "Special Event". Tom W2KBW gets the credit for coining the phrase. It was our feeling that the term special event denoted more of a contest atmosphere, whereas the term "Festival" made one think of all that we enjoy about AM operation, the fun, good fellowship, and pleasant atmosphere.

Since the first "AM Festival Station" at the 1999 Rochester, NY hamfest, it had always been in the back of my mind to host such an event at that Mecca of all hams, the Dayton Hamvention. Drawing well over 30,000 amateurs from all over the world, Dayton would be the supreme showcase for AM operation. To my knowledge AM had never been represented there, despite the event hosting special event stations each year. After a few tentative inquiries to the Hamvention folks the plan was hatched. We had hoped to use the Collins KW-1 transmitter that Tim WA1HLR had so graciously lent us for Rochester, but discovered that alas that had been recently returned to its rightful owner. I then considered dragging out one of my trusty T-368s, but for reasons that I will detail later that also became moot.

I shared my idea for a Dayton AM station with the AMI president Dale KW1I. Dale was enthusiastic about the project and went to work on his end to make contact with the Hamvention people. Using email, Dale and I worked to develop the concept of the station, how we wanted it to sound and look. In consideration of the distance we would be moving equipment, Dale from New Hampshire, and myself from Buffalo, we agreed to go with the "KISS" principle, and to model it after a very simple 1960s era station.

About 3 weeks before the event I received an ominous email

from Jim Graves, the chairman of the Dayton Hamvention. It seems that our "contact" had not fully cleared the station with Jim. Jim was understandably concerned about our operation inferring to the other two special event stations, and to the public address system. Seeing our once in a lifetime opportunity slipping down the drain, I did my best to assure Jim that we intended to be "good citizens", and would not interfere with operations, and in the event we did, we would cease operations at once. Jim turned out to be a real gentleman, and not only approved the station, but become a supporter, sending over Hamvention media personal to cover the event. One condition that we did agree to was to limit our power to 100 watts, which meant goodbye T-368 and hello DX-100.

While awaiting a space assignment I had begun to work on the DX-100, replacing its heavily damaged cabinet with a nice Bud black crackle enclosure, carrying out WA1HLR's audio mods, and doing some serious on-air operational testing at all hours of the night. In the process I really began to respect the construction of the transmitter, and realized how often overlooked it is. With some simple audio mods, a few resistors and capacitors, the old DX-100 can sound very respectable.

Next on the list was my \$125 National NC-300. I see now why the previous owner had been so willing to part with it. Despite it's great cosmetic condition, it had horribly distorted audio. A quick check of the tubes showed that at sometime during it's life the previous owner had installed incorrect tube substitutions. A quick call to my friend Art KC2CAE turned up all the tubes that I needed, and a half hour of bench time and the old National was purring away cranking out audio into the matching National speaker.

Dale and I had hoped for a nice homebrew transmitter to show off for the event, but with no volunteers, the DX-100

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STARS Board of Directors

| | | |
|----------------|--------------------|--------|
| President | Gary Zanghi | KB2YJ |
| Vice President | Rick Doherty | KD2QV |
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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 9/23, 10/14 and 11/11 in 2000 and 1/13, 3/10, 5/12 and 7/14 in 2001 at Grace Lutheran Church (McKinley Pkwy. and Newton Road) in Hamburg. . 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

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and NC-300 were pressed into duty. A Heathkit antenna tuner, modified for built-in T/R switching by Jerry N2QLS, rounded out the station. A D-104 microphone added the classic look and worked great with the DX-100.

Our last concern was the antenna. Without any foreknowledge of the terrain around our assigned space, Dale and I prepared for the worse. I wrote to Barker and Williamson requesting a donation of their wonderful folded dipole that had been developed for military use some 20 years ago. Jeff Engel was kind enough to donate the antenna to the cause, and share with me the recent history of B&W. (Yes they still make coil forms)

The days slowly clicked by and finally the date was at hand. The AM Festival Station was loaded into the minivan for the trip out to Dayton. When we arrived at the Hamvention late Thursday evening, I was greatly surprised to see that Dale KW1I had the antenna already in place. A fabulous antenna it was! A 130-foot inverted "V" at 30 feet, fed with 250 feet of balanced line. Dale had somehow managed to install and erect the antenna supports, feedline and ropes by himself prior to our arrival!

I will let Dale relate in his own words the story of this "strapping" antenna. "The Hamvention authorities had

given us guidelines covering the installation of our AM station. We had to limit our transmitter to 100 watts, the antenna could not be attached in any way to the vendor tent structure and we would have to shut down if we caused interference with the public address system. When I surveyed the site late on Wednesday afternoon several possible antenna scenarios were possible. I had enough equipment to put up a dipole or a center loaded vertical with ground system. I decided to set up a 130 ft doublet on a grassy strip next to the flea market vehicle exit. This site was far removed from the public address speaker wiring and it was fenced off which would keep away vehicle or pedestrian traffic. The major drawback was the 200+ feet wide parking lot that separated the antenna from the station. I used a three-mast support arrangement so that I would have an inverted "V" configuration. I needed a strong center support to take up the strain of one end of the 230-foot run of ladder line over the parking lot to a light pole near the vendor tent. I lashed a fourth mast with a pulley on top to the light pole near the tent. For the antenna center support I used a large diameter mast with two guy points. I wanted the center mast to be up 35 ft. but the wind was bad and I was single handing the antenna installation. I battled with the wind and had the tower go over too many times to count. When the wind took it away, I had it close enough to a tree so the masting always had a soft landing. After it went over it took 5-10 minutes to set up for the next attempt because all the guys and uphauled had to be sorted out. Finally I went with only 30 ft. and got it up during a lull in the wind. The heavy duty stakes I bought the day before at Fair Radio came in handy because it was necessary to have quite a bit of tension on the guys to keep the feedline from sagging over the parking lot. Late afternoon Thursday I checked out the system with my Elmac AF-68 and PMR-8. The New England and Western New York AMers with the rest of the equipment arrived within minutes of each other shortly after the antenna checkout was complete. It was almost like we planned it! The antenna came down a lot easier than it went up, but it still took a couple of hours to pack it all in the van. Next year I hope to apply a little engineering to the mast erection so that I can use a small mast to pull up the larger mast. The extra height will not change the signal much, but it will make the antenna installation visible from almost everywhere in the flea market!"

With the antenna already in place, we hurriedly unloaded the van, and set about getting the station on the air. The NC-300 was soon filling the tent with rich AM audio, and a small crowd had gathered around. The DX-100 was then fired up to test our new antenna; it loaded up on 75 and 40 meters like a charm. If anyone ever needed convincing of the practicality of balanced wire feed, this was the place for demonstration. We could never have enjoyed such a wonderful antenna had we used coax in place of the balanced feedline.

See October Telstar for conclusion of Dayton 2000!



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

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