

telstar



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

ISSUE 246 MAY 2002

KE2VW Repeater

Hi Folks:

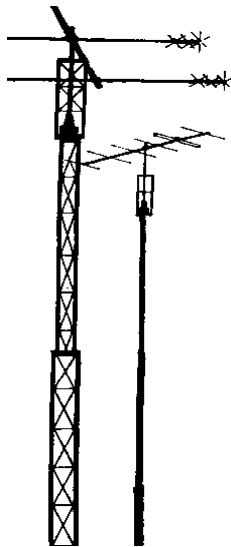
At this time I am calling for help from my fellow hams, esp. those tied in with Skywarn/ARES/RACES.

The KE2VW repeater is now down! I was running it on a borrowed amp, and during the Skywarn net the other day, I heard unusual noise.

I went out today to replace the borrowed amp, with my repaired amp, and found the SWR on the antenna lead in was off the wall! (50 watts out, with 18 watts reflected). All cables were checked, it was definitely coming from the tower. I also observed scorched strobe light control boards that had been pulled by the TV crew, as their strobes took a major hit. Since my antenna is beneath one of their strobes.. you can guess the rest.

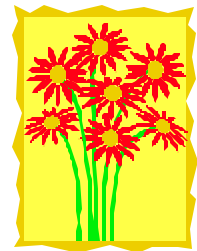
Here is what I need.. I need someone to be willing to climb (actually walk up the ladder) with me, to the 700 foot level. Once there we will disconnect the antenna, apply a dummy load, and have the ground crew test SWR.

We will then know whether it is antenna or hardline. If antenna, I will buy another (est \$1,000), and then need to hire a climber to install same (est \$2000). That will exhaust any funds I have left for the next several years, but I will be able to continue to operate the repeater. If however, it's the hardline, which would cost for the run \$3,200 (est. \$4 per foot times 800 feet), plus the cost for climbers (est \$2500 to pull the hardline), plus the cost of new pulls, fastening hard-



May Meeting

This month's meeting will begin at 7 PM on Thursday, May 2 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.



With the summer coming on, we will have many areas to discuss including Field Day, the Erie County Fair Display, hamfests, operating contests, etc.

Keith Hibbert WB2VUO will present a program about the ARRL including various programs and services and other benefits that people will receive by becoming members.

ware, grounds (est. \$500 more) would put it beyond my financial capabilities to afford these repairs, and I will be forced to permanently pull the plug on the repeater. My need right now is to get someone to climb with me. The repeater will be off the air, until we make this climb. If I am lucky, which I never am, it will be a fused connector at the antenna, that I can easily replace the day we climb... Please let me know of any experienced climbers that are willing to go up with me to determine where the problem lies.

Many of you had said if you could ever help me to call.. now I am doing just that.

Please disseminate this note through your email lists/reflectors, etc.

I need your help now!

I can best be reached via: geyoung@acsu.buffalo.edu, or ke2vw@arrl.net

73,
Greg KE2VW

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 who are joining ARRL for the first time or who are renewing their membership after a lapse of two years or more should send their ARRL membership forms 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! STARS no longer benefits from normal yearly renewals, so they should be sent directly to the ARRL.



Club Net

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 Information Net is held on the second and third Thursdays of the month at 7:30 PM on the STARS 147.090 MHz repeater (107.2 Hz PL tone needed).

From Your President

Hello Again:

This month I have to start out on an unfortunate note. As most of you know, the 147.090 repeater got locked up in transmit mode on Wednesday evening, 4-17-02.

THIS HAS BEEN CONFIRMED AS NO ACCIDENT! It was tampering. There haven't been any incidents of micro-processor problems or software glitches with the controller for the past three plus years. Suddenly someone decides that it is time to start hacking the repeater.

According to our acting repeater chairman Gary KB2YJ this is what transpired. Someone with extensive knowledge of the type of repeater we have, reset the controller so that the input ports were reassigned, which put the repeater in transmit mode with no shut off possible. Due to Gary's quick response and in-depth knowledge of the controller, an override was successfully accomplished. (A Heartfelt thanks from myself and all the members for your quick actions)

This is not the only current incident. In the last 5-6 weeks someone has been shutting the repeater off when club and non-club members were having a QSO. This tampering and abuse will not be tolerated. FCC laws apply and will be enforced. The penalties for such actions include jail time and thousands of dollars in fines. **YOU WILL BE CAUGHT!** Enough said.

On another but very important subject, again I will ask all club members to please volunteer for some committee. We need your participation in the day to day club business. At the last general membership meeting I called for members to volunteer for E.C. Fair planning, Field day Planning and a Technical repeater committee only to get about 3 responses (out of about 30 people). If there is no interest in these events and activities then just like a business we will have to cut or eliminate them!. Believe me I understand that everyone is busy with some members working two jobs. I work many weeks all 7 days 10-12 hours a day with maybe 2 days off in a month. Those that can please try to help with at least with 1 committee. Remember it's your club we need your input. THANKS

On the brighter side club membership numbers have grown in the last few months, and I expect to be at the 100-member level soon. This will hopefully bring fresh enthusiasm to the club and motivate other club members to become active. Encourage others to join or if not a amateur to become licensed.

See you at the May Meeting

73's
Bob (KA2WYE) Koster

Rochester Hamfest

The Rochester Hamfest and Computer Show combined with the ARRL Atlantic Division Convention will be held May 31 through June 2, 2002 at the Monroe County Fairgrounds, Route 15A, Rochester, NY. This is the largest hamfest in our area and is attended by many Buffalo area hams.

The outdoor Flea Market will open at 6 AM on Friday, May 31 and will run continuously all weekend. The indoor vendors in the Exhibit Hall will be open from noon to 5:30 PM on Friday, 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM on Saturday and 8:30 AM to 1:30 PM on Sunday.



Tickets are \$7.00 in advance (closes May 15) or \$9.00 at the gate. Outdoor flea market vendor permits are \$10.00 per 10' x 20' parking space. For ticket information, call (585) 538-9555 before 9 PM. For other information, call (585) 424-7184 during business hours.

The ARRL Forum with Bernie Fuller N3IFN, Atlantic Division Director and Bill Edgar N3LLR, Atlantic Division Vice Director, will be held on Saturday from noon to 1 PM at the Dome Center Room A (second floor). They will talk about what is taking place in the ARRL, the Atlantic Division and the FCC.

Scott Bauer W2LC, ARRL Western New York Section Manager will conduct a Western New York Section meeting on Saturday from 1 to 1:30 PM in the Dome Center Room B (second floor).

STARS member Judy Levan N2TEZ along with Bob Hamilton N3QOT both of the National Weather Service will present a program on the Labor Day Derecho of 1998 which resulted in damage from Western New York through Eastern New York. This will be held in the Dome Center Room 3 (Dome Floor) from 1 to 2 PM on Saturday.

Kevin Kedzierski WA2FKV of RAWNY will be giving W2RUF code proficiency tests on the Dome floor.

This year there will be a new feature. You can bring your special treasure (maximum of two items) to the hamfest Bring and Buy table. A staff member will attempt to sell your item while you enjoy the hamfest. At the end of the day, return to the table and collect your proceeds of the sale. If your item did not sell, you get to take it home. If the item sells, you receive 90% of the selling price while 10% goes to the organization for their work.

For more information, check out their web site at: <http://www.rochesterhamfest.org/>.

The Name is Clark... James & Alex Clark!

STARS members James and Clark, sons of STARS member Jay Clark KF2JY both have new vanity call signs.

James Clark (now 14 years old) whose previous Extra Class callsign was AB2MQ is now W2CIA.



Alex Clark (now 10 years old) whose previous General Class callsign was KC2IKL is now W2SPY.

Congratulations guys! Bet people are going to remember those calls!

ARRL Merchandise

With Field Day coming up, the ARRL has commemorative Pins \$5, and T-Shirts \$12.95. For anyone interested in these or any other ARRL items I'm planning to put in an order for them on May 3rd (the day after our meeting).

If you often see books, maps, hats, etc. that you want but don't want the cost of shipping, or just don't get around to putting in an order, this is a good time to do it. Shipping will be \$1 dollar per order no matter what, or how many you want. The ARRL's maximum shipping is \$10. Anything more than that collected will go to help supply food for Field Day.



I'll take final orders at the May meeting, or phone me at 947-5011 by May 2 or e-mail me at kc2gix@arrl.net. With the order placed May 3rd, it should arrive in about 5 days. If enough interest is shown, we could plan a few orders a year. Bruce KC2GJX

General Class Course

The General Class Theory Course being co-sponsored by STARS and ARATS began on March 20 at the Greenhaven Library in Tonawanda. The course is being taught by STARS & ARATS members Terry K2OO and Jim N2SKT.

19 people are currently participating in the course. For the last 7 weeks they have been studying FCC rules, operating procedures, radio wave propagation, electronic circuits and components, etc. They have 2 more nights to cover antennas and radio exposure guidelines. The class will conclude on May 20 with a VE exam.

A Quick, Cheap and Easy Kenwood Fix

It's been a little over 3 years since I acquired my Kenwood TM-V7A dual band mobile transceiver. I chose this attractive little package because of its numerous features, its ease of operation and the good reputation of its maker. You can imagine my disappointment when the rig began to fail me after just 18 months into my ownership!

As with many of their mobile radios, Kenwood includes the MC-53DM multi-function mike with the TM-V7A. This mike is a hearty and rugged creation that gets about as close as you can get to the kind of quality you'll find in commercial communications installations. I was suspicious from the beginning, however, that the plastic modular plug would eventually become a source of aggravation. It seemed that since all the manufacturers were using them in their newest lines escaping the inevitable was impossible.



Occasionally my rig began to unkey in mid sentence. When the occurrence became more frequent I jiggled my coiled cord only to have the modular plug shatter into pieces that resembled ground sugar! Try as hard as I might I couldn't find a fellow ham equipped with a crimping tool and wiring diagram to lend me for the repair. My only alternative was to buy a new mike!

This time I routed the coiled cord around the mobile mounting bracket and then to the socket. The bracket now acts as a relief taking the strain off the connector.

All went well for the next 18 months until once again, I began to experience another intermittent transmit problem. With no strain on the modular connector, there was no deterioration to cause a recurrence of the original failure. When I expressed my fear of a bad final to a fellow ham, he suggested I first check the mechanical PTT assembly of the mike. That's where I discovered the real problem!

Upon disassembly of the MC-53DM mike housing I discovered that the thumb-sized PTT button is actually the end of a longer lever that is positioned down the side of the case. There's a nipple on it's backside that presses a spongy buffer against a pushbutton switch mounted on the mike's circuit board. Evidently the buffer material lost its resilient quality and its ability to engage the PTT switch.

As a remedy I cut a piece of scrap rubber into a 1/4 inch

square about 1/16 inch thick and placed it between Kenwood's buffer material and the board mounted switch. EUREKA! Since doing this repair my rig keys all the time, every time! It remains keyed for as long as I want and unkeys when its supposed to!

If you use this fix to your Kenwood radio mike problem, make sure not to lose the tiny compression spring that fits behind the PTT lever and the internal housing. This is what causes the action to return the rig to receive when you release the PTT button.

I'll bet my original mike had the same linkage problem that developed in my second. The shattered modular connector was a secondary but simultaneous problem. In any event, a strain relief and/or a morsel of scrap rubber is a pretty cost effective alternative to buying a new MC-53DM currently priced in the AES catalog at \$79.99!

My 73,
de Dave WA2TVT

ARRL Will Process Members' License Renewals, Address Changes:

ARRL members daunted by the FCC's Universal Licensing System <<http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls>> can ask Headquarters to file their license renewal or change-of-address applications free of charge. ARRL members wishing to take advantage of this service should download Form NCVEC 605 (that's the form used by volunteer exam coordinators)



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STARS Board of Directors

President	Bob Koster	KA2WYE
Past President	Gary Zanghi	KB2YJ
Vice President	John Crawford, Sr.	KB2VWC
Treasurer	John Cullum, Jr.	KB2ESM
Finc. Secretary	Judy Levan	N2TEZ
Secretary	Keith Patterson	KC2DGC
Director	Scott Barto	KB2KOL
Director	Terri Karr	KB2TRS

AMATEUR RADIO EXAMINATIONS

STARS will hold test sessions on 5/11 & 7/13 in 2002 at Grace Lutheran Church (McKinley Pkwy. and Ne wton 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 Terry Rockhold K2OO at 656-0865.

Lancaster ARC will be holding test sessions on the third Wednesday of each month at the Lancaster ARC Club House, 525 Pavement Road, Lancaster. For information on Lancaster exams, call Peter Orendorf AB2KG 662-0096 or e-mail him at fouroz1@aol.com

ARATS will be holding test sessions on at 10 AM on 5/4 & 6/1 in 2002 at the North Tonawanda Fire Headquarters at 495 Zimmerman St. For information on ARATS exams, call Vic Gadzik K2YW at 694-9738 (evenings) or 278-3830 (8:00 AM to 4:30 PM days).

PROS will be holding test sessions at 10 AM on the third Saturday of the month at the Sardinia Historical Society Building, Savage Road off Rte. 39 in Sardinia, NY. For information, contact Pat Murray NW2I at 652-8178.

Some exams do not allow walk-ins, so call ahead and make a reservation.

ARRL License Renewals, etc.

(Continued from page 4)

from the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/fcc/ncvec605c.pdf>>, print it, fill it in and mail it to ARRL VEC, 225 Main St, Newington CT 06111.

The response of those wanting ARRL to process renewals has been very positive. For the first three months of 2002, ARRL handled 1721 applications for members--up from 514 for the same period in 2001.

The ARRL VEC staff now can process any member's FCC license application request, except for a vanity call sign application. Remember: Renewal applications may only be filed within 90 days of your license expiration date.

The ARRL Letter 4/26/02

Repeater News

To all STARS members,

As some of you know, the repeater got locked up in the transmit mode on Wednesday evening, 4-17-02. I lost count of the number of calls I received regarding the repeater status, and the complaints that it was unusable, and what I am going to do about it. After 3 hours and several phone calls I was finally able to shut it down via the phone line. At 11 pm I finally took the phone of the hook because I had to go to work a 3 am and needed sleep.

On Thursday I had my tech try to find out what happened. The input ports had been reassigned, which put the repeater in the transmit mode with no shut off.

THIS WAS NO ACCIDENT!! It was tampering. There haven't been any incidents of software glitches with the controller for the past three and a half years. NOW someone decides that it is time to start hacking the repeater. Again Thursday night during the net, someone was on the UHF repeater trying to access the controller.

Due to the number of hours I work each week, and family commitments, I am not able to continue as Repeater Chairman. I made it very clear at the meeting when Bob, KA2WYE was elected Club President that I declined to continue any and all involvement with the repeater, and that it was up to him to appoint a new chairman. I was willing to "stay on" and assist with the transition, but five months later I am still handling the duties, and no one else has been given responsibility for the repeater. If you remember I was MY decision not to run again for the office of President. It was my decision not to continue on as Repeater Chairperson. After three years it was time for me to step down and let someone else to step up and take on the duties

From this point on, if there are and questions or concerns about the repeater, I suggest you call Bob, KA2WYE at 649-7272 and relay them to him. I will no longer accept calls regarding repeater problems or issues.

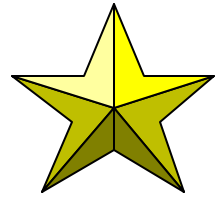
Since January 1st of this year when the agreement with our host WIVB expired, I no longer have access to the repeater site. NO ONE has been authorized access. The site manager is STILL waiting for the paperwork from the President stating who is to be admitted to the site to maintain the repeater.

I'm sorry to be like this, but with the situation this past week and the time invested in resolving the problem I feel it is time to let someone else handle the repeater duties.

Regards,
Gary KB2YJ



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 WEB PAGES

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

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 some Saturdays between 1 and 3 PM local time. A second club HF station is located at the Hamburg Youth Center.

STARS

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