



Harrisburg Radio Amateur's Club Newsletter

HRAC meets the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm at HACC, Shumaker Public Safety Center, Gate 5 on Industrial Road in Harrisburg (Elmer Time starts at 6:30PM)

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From The Desk of The President.....

The bands are dead. We hear that phrase often, but just what does that mean. If you have been an amateur radio operator for a very long time, you have a different view of that phrase than a new operator.

Sometime in the 80's we experienced incredible time of HF propagation. Often we compare today's hf activity to what we had in those days. A few watts could blast your signal around the world back then. Now, not so much. Old ops will say the bands are now dead.

Today I often hear hams exclaim that the band is "wide open" and we hear someone from the west coast. It is all a matter of perspective. I was listening to ECARS today, and the net control was in Lancaster. For me, I heard him with a very weak signal, but still made contact. He was having a rough time getting check-ins. I expected a week signal from Lancaster Pa, but I all know that his signal is going somewhere. After my check-in, quite a few began jumping in and contacting net control, and relays were set up.

Ok, what am I saying here. Band conditions change, at times in a minute to minute schedule. If you are just tuning across a band and hear nothing, it is probably because you are not the only one just tuning around trying to find someone. Pick up that microphone, or key, and call CQ. Try it several times in 30 seconds, and keep it up. As someone tunes past you, you may get a contact.

Another phrase I hear is, "the band just dropped out and I lost you". What that really means is that the propagation direction and path changed. Take advantage of that change to contact another part of the world.

These days we have a tool at our command to get some idea where your signal will go. Use it to check different bands, and power/antenna combinations and see a map showing where you could contact. You will find it at this address: <https://www.voacap.com/hf/>

This time of the year, take advantage of the thermal ducting phenomena to make contacts on two meter simplex. That is a subject for another day. If you hear a distant station, weather on a repeater, or simplex, they will also hear you. Be courteous, and do not talk over each other.

73

Terry Snyder WB3BKN

September 11, 2019 Meeting Minutes

The September 11, 2019 meeting of the Harrisburg Radio Amateur's Club, Inc. was called to order at 1901 HRS by the President, Terry Snyder (WB3BKN). The usual introductions were made.

Secretary Report – Chuck (N3WL) made a Motion to accept the minutes as published; Karl (W3KBG) seconded the motion. Motion Passed.

Treasurers Report – Nick (AA3T) read the report. Karl (W3KBG) made a motion to accept the report, W3ZTB seconded the motion. Motion carried.

License Trustee – Steven (KA3PDQ) reported that there were no changes.

Equipment Trustee – All equipment accounted for and insured.

Repeater Committee – Terry (WB3BKN) reported that the new antenna for the 146.760 repeater was delivered to the site owner and was to be installed at the convenience of the site owner. The site owner experimented with a 2 antenna configuration and is awaiting signal reports.

Laurel VE Committee – Steven (KA3PDQ) reported that exam session scheduled for August 17, 2019 at HACC had 6 elements administered to 6 applicants. Next session is October 19, 2019 at HACC.

Membership Committee – Tim (W4NKC) reported we have 81 members; 54 of which are also ARRL members.

Newsletter Editor – Terry (WB3BKN), asked that complete articles in plain English with NO abbreviations and proofread should be sent to HRAC.Newsletter@gmail.com. **DEADLINE is 7 days before the end of the month.**

Web Page – No Report.

Emergency Communications – Zachary (W3ZTB) gave a report on Groups.IO on how it will benefit the Club when we need to disseminate information to everyone within the Club.

DXCC Committee – No Report

Entertainment – Terry (WB3BKN) is always in need of topics and presenters.

Hamfest Committee – WINTER HAMFEST: The Vietnam Veterans of America Building on Derry Street will be available for Hamfest. Nick (AA3T) made a motion to hold the 2020 Hamfest at the 8000 Derry St Location. Neil (N3JQM) seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Hamfeast – No Action

Field Day – A brief discussion was held on finding an alternate location for the event.

Elmer Time – None

Old Business – None

New Business – Terry (WB3BKN) – issues with the Club trailer. He said that everything in the trailer needs to be removed in order to install insulation in ceiling and walls. We also need to come up with a configuration that better distributes weight in trailer. Date, time and place TBA.

Good of the Club – None

Adjournment – With no further business Karl (W3KBG) made a motion to adjourn George (AC3EA) seconded at 1946 hours.

Respectfully Submitted

Steven Gobat, KA3PDQ

Volunteer Examiner Report

Next session at HACC on 10/19/19. For directions, please visit our club web site at <http://www.w3uu.org/license-exams/>.

Elmer Time (6:30 pm meeting night).



Upcoming Events for 2019

Watch our Facebook page “Harrisburg Radio Amateurs Club” for surprise last minute events, or Follow us on Twitter @hrac_pa

Weekly HRAC Net

The weekly information net is held every Wednesday at 8:00 PM on the 146.760 repeater, except for the second Wednesday of the month, which is the club's meeting night.

Please send any articles for the newsletter to hrac.newsletter@Gmail.com

Local area nets:

Capitol Area Traffic Net starts **Monday at 8 PM** on the South Mountain Radio Amateurs (SMRA) repeater on 146.46 (67.0 tone), 1 MHz offset.

The Combined Club ARES/RACES Net meets **Monday at 8:30 PM** on the Keystone 146.97 Repeater (Tone: 123 Hz).

South Mountain Radio Amateurs (SMRA) Net on **Monday at 9 PM** on the 145.43 (Tone: 67 Hz) repeater located in Mt. Holly Springs.

The Keystone VHF Club Digital Net on **Tuesday at 8 PM** on the York 146.97 Repeater.

The Keystone VJF Club ELMER Net on **Tuesday at 9 PM** on the York 146.97 Repeater right after the Digital net

A local FM Simplex Net runs **Thursday at 8:30 PM** on 146.55 MHz

South Central PA 10 Meter Net **Friday at 8 PM** on 28.495 MHz USB

Ham Shack Talk Net - **Monday at 9 PM** on 28.335 MHz Delaware

Lehigh Valley ARC Net - **Sunday 4:00 PM** on 28.430 MHz.
Do Drop In net - **Sunday 8:30 PM** on 28.450 MHz Penn- Mar Club net - Friday. 8:30 PM: 28.495 MHz.

10 Meter Ragchew Net - **Every evening starting 7:30PM** on 28.600 MHz

6 Meter Magicians Net from Pottstown **Wednesdays at 8:30 PM** on 50.130 USB. **At 9 PM**, they switch to 50.400 and run A.M. modulation and call themselves the Mini Boat Anchor Net.

The KVHFC 6 Meter Activity Net run by Steve Cruse, K3WHC meets on 50.140 MHz USB on **Wednesday evenings at 8:30 PM**.

Harrisburg Area Skywarn Group Net is every Wednesday night **at 9 PM** on the **145.11**.

Harrisburg Radio Amateurs Club Information net at **8pm** on **146.76 (100 hz tone)** every **Wednesday** except club meeting night, which is listed at the top of the first page of this newsletter.

MONTHLY HAM RADIO LUNCH

The last Thursday of each month there is a Ham Radio Lunch at the “Old Country Buffet” at noon (unless it is a major holiday).

This restaurant is located on Route 22 in Colonial Park in the vicinity of Value City Furniture, Costco and Home Depot.

It's a great way to meet new people!

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The following articles were provided by Karl (W3KBG) from different cited sources:

The Weather Channel Cites “Old School Tech” Amateur Radio as Storm Resource

09/30/2019

Julio Ripoll, WD4R, Amateur Radio Assistant Coordinator of **WX4NHC** at the National Hurricane Center (NHC) **explained** Amateur Radio's role during severe weather situations to interviewers from The Weather Channel (TWC). In a September 16 segment headlined as “Using Old School Tech During a Storm,” Ripoll — seated at WX4NHC — told Weather Channel interviewers Rick Knabb and Mike Bettes, that information NHC forecasters receive via Amateur Radio volunteers and spotters “sometimes fills in gaps they can't get from satellites or reconnaissance.”

Knabb recounted an occasion when he was trying to pin down information about a storm system in Central America. “The only way I was able to accurately document what happened with that system in Central America was because of data through the ham radio operators that relayed it,” he told Ripoll.

Ripoll cited the WX4NHC volunteer staff of approximately 30 radio amateurs who gather and essentially screen information gathered via Amateur Radio for weather data that may be of use to forecasters.

Pointing to the continued use of analog technology in a digital world, Bettes said Amateur Radio “may be a dinosaur, but you're not extinct.”

For his own part, Ripoll over the weekend expressed appreciation to WX4NHC, Hurricane Watch Net, and VoIP Hurricane Net volunteers for the time they donate during hurricanes and the reports they send to WX4NHC.

“Sometimes, we sit for hours listening to static. Sometimes, we receive many reports that are unremarkable. Sometimes, we receive very few reports. But then there are those times that one or two reports make a difference,” Ripoll said. He noted that NHC Hurricane Specialist Stacy Stewart cited Amateur Radio in a Hurricane Humberto **advisory**.

The advisory noted, “An Amateur Radio operator at Ports Island near the southern end of Bermuda reported a sustained wind of 75 MPH and a gust to 104 MPH during the past hour. An Amateur Radio operator in Somerset Village recently reported a sustained wind of 70 MPH and a gust to 89 MPH.” — Thanks to Julio Ripoll, WD4R

Cited from <http://www.arrrl.org/news/view/the-weather-channel-cites-old-school-tech-amateur-radio-as-storm-resource>

Radio: A Key Resource for Disasters and Homeland Security

By Lawrence D. Dietz, JD, MSS

Faculty Member, *School of Security and Global Studies*, American Military University

When people think of information sources today, they automatically jump to social media and maybe TV. Radio typically doesn't come up to the top of the stack. This is unfortunate because radio is a homeland security resource that plays a key role in communicating and informing citizens during emergencies and times of disaster.

Radio a Trusted Source for Local News and Information

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in its December 12, 2018, [Communications Marketplace Report](#), said there were 17,668 terrestrial radio stations: 4,626 AM stations, 10,867 FM stations and 2,175 Low Power FM (LPFM) stations.

The FM stations were broken down into 6,737 commercial stations and 4,130 non-commercial stations. The newcomers to the group are [LPFM stations](#) that broadcast at 100 watts to reach an area with a radius of about three and one half miles. This special class of license was established to "create opportunities for new voices to be heard on the radio." College and university radio stations typically hold an LPFM license.

FM radio transmits via a line of sight. That restricts transmissions to receiving antennas that are not blocked by objects such as mountains or skyscraper buildings. That's why FM broadcasts are most closely associated with local radio stations along with their newer, lower-powered cousins, the LPFM.

FM radio stations can be commercial, educational or community stations. A good example of community radio is [KPFZ 11.1FM](#) in Lakeport, California. This station is owned and operated by Lake County Community Radio, Inc., a [California Public Benefit Corporation](#). This means that the station is designated for charitable purposes and may not be used for the private gain of any individual.

Lakeport is located in Lake County, which has had more than its share of wildfires. These have included the Jerusalem and Rocky fires in 2015, the Clayton fire in 2016, and the Mendocino Complex and Pawnee fires in 2018.

I Served as a Red Cross Public Affairs Officer during the Mendocino Complex Fire

I didn't realize the importance of community radio until August 2018, when I served as a Red Cross Public Affairs Officer at the [Mendocino Complex fire](#), the largest wildfire in California history. My boss, the Public Affairs Chief, asked me to coordinate with the local radio station because listeners were not getting information directly from any official source. I called in to the station one evening and took any and all questions. As a result of listener interest, I was asked to come in for a formal interview the next day. On my way to the interview I stopped at two Red Cross shelters where I found about a dozen people listening to their radios. Every one of them was tuned to KPFZ.

The station's studio was located on the second floor of a two-story building in the historic downtown area. Many of the surrounding buildings were built in the late 1800s. The listener-funded station had only two phone lines, one for the studio and the other for the office. Nevertheless, the phone lines

were quite busy during my visit and one station volunteer was busily updating listeners via Facebook.

Ham Radio – An Unlikely Lifeline

Amateur radio, or ham radio as it is most often called, was the original electronic “social media” with initial contacts between radio stations taking place in the 1890s, Steve Aberle noted in [Domestic Preparedness](#).

According to the [American Radio Relay League](#) (ARRL), the nation’s largest amateur radio society, Congress passed the Radio Act of 1912 requiring radio hobbyists to be licensed. The ARRL and FCC put the number of licensed amateur radio operators in the U.S. at 760,165.

Emergency services consist of two components: the Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) and Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES).

ARES is active before, during and after an emergency; ARES is generally responsible for emergency messages. RACES is activated only during an emergency and briefly afterward if government emergency management officials feel they need additional communications support. RACES is usually deactivated shortly after the emergency is declared over.

Ham radio is viewed as a supplemental resource. It may be needed because the main commercial communications systems are either overloaded or inoperable. Operators can be employed in a wide range of situations and applications. They form a communications bridge until the main capabilities are restored.

Domestic Preparedness’ Aberle says, “Ham radio resources are available for emergency communications support to any public service agency, and can bridge interoperability gaps between served agencies on a local, tribal, and/or state level. Potential ham deployment locations include, but are not limited to, auxiliary command posts, emergency operations centers, emergency shelters, evacuation sites, fire stations, medical facilities, mobile disaster vehicles, police stations, public works sites, and volunteer intake centers.”

Ham radios are particularly useful because operators use a network of repeater ham stations as a way to communicate to other amateur operators around the world. The [Useful Repeater Data Base Tools](#) site helps operators find other ham repeaters in their own area or elsewhere.

Ham radio is not secure, which means that confidential information such as [Personally Identifiable Information](#) (PII) should not be transmitted over it. Ham radio is also not designed for high priority messages either. However, it is perfectly fine for lower priority or logistical message traffic.

Ham equipment can be as simple as a handheld transceiver or mobile devices configured to work inside vehicles or inside more sophisticated “radio shacks” housing a number of radios and antennas designed to function over a broad radio frequency spectrum.

Licenses come in [three classes](#): Technician, General and Extra. Each requires passing a multiple-choice test.

Local clubs sponsor “[Ham Crams](#)” where individuals can spend a day going over the material and then taking the test. These sessions are very intense; however, the high pass rate is a testament to the method.

Radios Have Proven to Be Resilient and Reliable Sources of Information during Disasters

Despite the advent of other mass communications and social media, radio has proven itself to be a resilient and reliable source of information during disasters and other incidents. Listeners rely on their radios to provide up-to-the-minute, detailed and accurate information about what is happening. Locally focused radio is still considered more trustworthy than other media.

Through its nationwide network of ham radio operators, the Amateur Radio Relay League is a valuable resource that can bridge communications gaps during disasters and other incidents. Ham radio operators can act as an information conduit for high priority or lower priority message traffic and help governments and other organizations serve those in need.

Cited from: [EDM Digest](#)

ARRL Thanks Official Observers as Volunteer Monitor Program is Set to Debut

The ARRL Letter on September 26, 2019

As the September 30 date for the closing of the Official Observer (OO) program nears, ARRL has expressed deep appreciation to the hundreds of volunteers who gave their time as Official Observers to help preserve the integrity of the Amateur Radio bands.

The Official Observer program has served the Amateur Radio community and assisted the FCC Enforcement Bureau for more than 85 years. The OO program is giving way to the new Volunteer Monitor (VM <http://www.arrl.org/volunteer-monitor-program>) program, established as part of a formal partnership between ARRL and the FCC. ARRL and the FCC signed a Memorandum of Understanding

(MOU <http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Volunteer%20Monitor/2019%20ARRL%20MOU%20-%20final%203-12.pdf>) earlier this year that establishes the Volunteer Monitor program as a successor to the Official Observers. The first Volunteer Monitors should be in place and ready to begin their duties this fall.

"Thank you for your dedication and service," ARRL Regulatory Information Manager Dan Henderson, N1ND, said. "It was the good work of the OOs over many years that laid the foundation for the FCC to recommend this new agreement for enforcement." The FCC proposed the program following the closures of several FCC regional offices and a reduction in field staff.

Last February, Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH, who once handled Amateur Radio enforcement for the FCC, was named to oversee the development and implementation phases of the Volunteer Monitor program.

Under the new VM program, volunteers trained and vetted by ARRL will monitor the airwaves and gather evidence that could be used to correct misconduct as well as to recognize exemplary on-air operation. ARRL will refer instances of flagrant violation to the FCC for action, in accordance with FCC guidelines, and the FCC will give priority to enforcement cases developed by the VM program.

Official Observers were invited to apply to become Volunteer Monitors, and many did. The requirements for being a Volunteer Monitor include:

- Ability to utilize state-of-the-art receiving equipment and to access no-cost remote receive sites; strong writing and communication skills
- An understanding of the importance of thorough documentation

- Basic word processing and data entry skills

- The ability to send such information, including recordings, to ARRL electronically. Applicants must also be ARRL members, have no history of FCC enforcement action, hold a Technician-class or higher license, and been licensed for at least 3 years.

Applicants underwent a training and certification program administered by ARRL and were vetted by ARRL through at least one oral interview and a preliminary evaluation by ARRL staff. Volunteer Monitors will serve 3-year terms at the pleasure of ARRL.

The objectives of the Volunteer Monitoring Program include improving and promoting knowledge and compliance of FCC Amateur Radio Service rules, extending and preserving the tradition of self-regulation and self-administration of the Amateur Radio Service by volunteers, and enabling the FCC Enforcement Bureau "to more efficiently and effectively utilize its resources in enforcing the Communications Act and Commission rules," according to the MOU.

Original Source: The ARRL Letter (Cited from: <https://www.eham.net/articles/43792>)

The following is provided from Glen (K3SWZ)

ARRL DX QSL Bureau mailing for HRAC members

I plan to make the annual mailing to the ARRL Outgoing QSL Bureau right after the New Year for HRAC members who are also ARRL members that have DX QSL cards to go out. (DX is defined as other than the lower 48 states – the QSL Bureaus don't handle stateside cards) Not sure how to correctly fill out QSL cards, let me know and I'll be happy to send you my PP presentation on the subject.

Please place the cards in prefix order according to the DXCC Country List (found on the ARRL web site in the DXCC section) and get them to me **with a current QSL mailing label or copy of same** to prove ARRL membership. You may give them to me at the November or December HRAC meeting or the November or December Ham Lunch. You may also give them to Chuck, N3WL, as I see him often. As a last resort, you may mail them to me. My address on QRZ.COM is OK. This service is provided free to all HRAC members.

NOTE: Since the ARRL *reduced* their costs associated with this service, I will be making two mailings in 2020, as in the years prior to them raising the costs significantly. Watch for announcements in the newsletter.

You may send one card or a thousand! Questions -- feel free to contact me at 717-774-1728; or k3swz@arrl.net

73

de Glenn, K3SWZ

HRAC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

MAIL TO:
Tim Lehman (W4NKC)
PO Box 453
Hummelstown, PA 17036
717-982-8550

Make checks payable to HRAC—Membership is \$15.00 (\$7.50 if over 65) per year.
Family Membership is \$25 (Hams must reside in the same household)
Dues end December 31st.

NAME _____ CALL _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

ARRL Member: Y _____ N _____ * YEAR FIRST LICENSED _____

SIGNATURE _____

I agree to abide by the guidelines of the membership and The Harrisburg Radio Amateur's Club, Inc.

Join the Gang

