

The “Membrain”

“Dedicated to the memory of our former Publisher and Founding Member, Pete Butler, WB2B”

**A Publication of the Delaware Valley
Ragchew Club
PO BOX 8813
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Club Callsign: **N 2 H Q X** – WWW.RAGCHEW.ORG
DVRC Net: 448.0250 Tuesday at 10:00 PM EST

DVRC CLUB 2008 REPEATER FREQ'S

146.820 (- 600) Camden NJ PL = 131.8 Hz
147.210 (+ 600) Absecon NJ PL = 123.0 Hz
448.0250 (- 5.0 MHz) Camden NJ PL = 131.8 Hz

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The new Yaesu FT-2000 all mode HF Transceiver.
The unit also covers 30 kHz to 60 MHz for S W L's.

More info at www.yaesu.com

September/October 2008

Editor's Corner



By George – WA2RCB

It seems like only yesterday we were out at the FAA Radar Station in Gibbsboro in the 90+ degree heat at Field Day. Now we are looking at evening temps in the 40's and Halloween candy and Nov. Sweepstakes on HF. (CW on Nov 1-2, Phone/SSB on Nov 15-16) It's always a good time in the early Fall to check or replace your smoke detector batteries and check out your antennas for damage and regular wear now instead of when it's 20 Deg and blowing winds outside. If your coax or twin-lead (some of us still use 600 ohm twin-lead) is several Years old it may be time to replace it with fresh feed-line stock. Remember that the increasing amounts of UV in sunlight will affect the PVC jacket of coax so unless your cables are in conduit or buried it may be time to replace. Also check the connectors for weather seal against moisture. When in doubt, replace them. It's great fun to be able to operate HF or VHF/UHF with no worry when there's a foot of snow on the ground and you're nice and warm inside and nobody can drive for the snow piles. Get the antennas ready now and have fun later!

George, WA2RCB



Bud KB2JCP at DVRC Field Day 2008

HAM IN ACCIDENT: WINAPRS WRITER HURT IN BALOON CRASH

One person was killed and a well known ham radio operator critically injured in a hot air balloon crash at the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta on Friday, October 10th.

Killed in the crash was Stephen Lachendro, of Butler, Pennsylvania. Keith Sproul, WU2Z, was critically injured in the accident when the 'Wings of Wind' balloon hit powerlines near the festival grounds just North of the city.

According to news reports, there were gusty winds as the two balloonists were trying to land. From pictures taken by attendees, it appears as if the basket carrying the men caught fire after hitting the power lines, separated from the balloon envelope and fell to the ground.

Sproul who was reportedly piloting the balloon jumped some 60 feet from the burning gondola. Sproul was unconscious when he was found and was flown by helicopter to a local hospital where he was admitted in critical condition. Reports say that he suffered a broken leg and hip, punctured lungs and burns to his face.

Keith Sproul is the twin brother Mark Sproul, KB2ICI. The two are best known in ham radio circles as the co-authors of the popular WinAPRS, MacAPRS and X-APRS APRS is the multi-faceted position reporting system originally developed by Bob Bruninga, WB4APR. It allows the monitoring of real time geographical information such as the position of vehicles, the status of weather, radio direction finding and much more.

City of Manassas Takes Over BPL System from Private Company

Late last month, the Manassas, Virginia City Council voted 4-2 to assume control of the Broadband over Power Lines (BPL) service from the private company that serves approximately 675 residents. As a result of the vote, the City of Manassas will now have to use monies from an enterprise fund -- around \$110,000, in addition to the approximately \$640,000 the city has already spent on BPL infrastructure -- to fund the service and recoup the cost from the subscribers; monies in an enterprise fund come from the utility's ratepayers.

BPL technology uses the electricity grid in a city and the wiring in individual homes to provide direct "plug in" broadband access through electricity sockets, rather than over phone or cable TV lines. Because

BPL wiring is physically large, often overhead and extends across entire communities, these systems pose a significant interference potential to over-the-air radio services, including Amateur Radio.

RADIO WAVES: A NEW CYCLE 24 SUNSPOT APPEARS ON THE SUN HERALDS NEW CYCLE

Some encouraging news for DX'ers and any ham who hopes to one day work some distant contacts. What's being called a 'new-cycle' sunspot belonging to Solar Cycle 24 has shown itself near the stars northeastern limb. The new spot, now designated as SSN 1005 was reported over the weekend of the 12th and 13th making this the third time in as many weeks that a new-cycle sunspot has interrupted the year's run of blank solar activity.

The accelerating pace of new-cycle sunspots is viewed an encouraging sign by astronomers and hams alike. For radio amateurs, it seems to be saying that while solar activity remains very low, the sunspot cycle is unfolding more or less normally. In other words, we are not stuck in a prolonged solar minimum. At least we hope it's not.

More about this new sunspot and overall solar activity is on line at [www dot spaceweather dot com](http://www.dot.spaceweather.com). And remember that Spaceweather is spelled as one word. (Southgate, Spaceweather)

THE NEXT SCHEDULED RESCUE RADIO EXERCISE: NOVEMBER 8, 2008

The next Global Simulated Emergency Test will take place on Saturday, November 8th. The operation will take place from 04.00 to 08.00 UTC on and near the established emergency communications Center-of-Activity frequencies on 80, 40, 20, 17 and 15 meters. The exact frequency will be determined after the start of net operations based on band activity and local QRM.

The objectives of the test are to increase interest in emergency communications and to test how usable the Center-of-Activity frequencies are across all ITU regions. It's also meant to create practices for international emergency communication and rehearse the relaying of emergency communications messages using all modes permitted to radio amateurs world-wide..

Please remember that this is not a contest. Rather it is an emergency communications preparedness activity. A list of participating stations will also be available at www.raynet-hf.net. (Various)

RESCUE RADIO: SIMULATED QUAKE IN THE GREAT AMERICAN SOUTHWEST

A simulated emergency test centering around an earthquake near Tecopa, California, has shown the value of having a well trained corps of ham radio volunteers. Don Carlson, KQ6FM, is in Reno with more on the event and those taking part

According to news reports, the simulated emergency was set up to test emergency preparedness in Nye County Nevada. And so it was that moments after a simulated 6.2 earthquake hit, ham volunteers were on the air notifying other radio amateurs to meet immediately at the Nye County Emergency Services Operations Center .

By 7:30 a.m., volunteers were in the training room and heading out to strategic areas around town. Seventeen operators covered 7 locations in and around the town of Pahrump, Nevada located some 90 miles West of Las Vegas. Among the volunteers were Andy Gudas, N7TP and Archie Selbach, KE7IOE, who established a communications presence in Amargosa. Meantime, Richard Gamble K7RTG set up a shelter at Manse Elementary School, while Ron Daviau, KC7YMH, did the same at Rosemary Clarke Middle School. Other hams were assigned to the Pahrump Senior Center, the Nye County Sheriff's Office and the Saddle West Casino and Hotel.

Gerald Fuge, KC6ILH, is the Southern Nye County Emergency Coordinator. He directed the exercise from the emergency services communications office. That's also where Carol and Steve Bird, KE7KHD and KE7KHE who worked the radios, relaying messages from the field to other emergency organizations. For this training exercise the group was supporting the communities of Amargosa Valley, Crystal, Beatty and Tecopa, as well as Pahrump.

Press coverage in the Pahrump Valley Times praised the hams for helping to organize the exercise as well as knowing exactly how to respond in a crisis situation.

RADIO LAW: THE NEW PENNSYLVANIA AMATEUR RADIO ANTENNA/TOWER LAW

A follow-up now on the good news that Pennsylvania hams received last week. This after Governor Edward G. Rendell signed into law a bill that guarantees radio amateurs the right to erect antenna support structures up to 65 feet without the need for a Special Use Permit.

The bill passed in the Pennsylvania House with a vote of 196-1 and the states Senate with a vote of 49-1. Governor Rendell signed it on Wednesday, October 8, with it scheduled to go into effect December 8th. That's the normal 60 days after signing.

Originally called Pennsylvania Senate Bill 884 it was renamed to Act 88 after its passage. And according to the ARRL, it requires local municipalities to reasonably accommodate amateur radio service communications, and to impose only the minimum regulations necessary to accomplish the legitimate purpose of the municipality. The act also says that no ordinance, regulation, plan or any other action shall restrict amateur radio antenna height to less than 65 feet above ground level.

There is only one caveat. It says that a municipality may impose necessary regulations to ensure the safety of amateur radio antenna structures. Even so, the measure still requires that the governing body reasonably accommodate amateur service communications.

The measure was first introduced on June 1, 2007 by Pennsylvania Senator Stewart Greenleaf. He represents portions of Bucks and Montgomery Counties. (ARRL, others)

RADIO THINGS: SCOTT FYBUSH 2009 ANTENNA TOWER SITE WALL CALANDER

A photo calendar for 2009 with hams and SWL' in mind -- and broadcast Band DX'ers as well. That may be the best way to describe a rather impressive calendar that shows some very impressive transmission towers as photographed by veteran radio writer Scott Fybush.

In his travels Fybush has photographed hundreds of towers. This includes tall towers, to some downright pretty towers. He also has taken photos of funny-shaped towers like the very rare Blaw-Knox diamonds as used by Nashville's famed WSM and WLW as well as towers in spectacular

locations. Now, he is making some of his best photos as part of his own Tower Site 2009 Calendar. The Tower Site Calendar 2009 features 14 full-color, high-quality images of transmitter sites in all corners of the United States and Canada. Sites pictured include WNYM in New Jersey, KNBR in San Francisco to CFFX in Kingston, Ontario Canada to mention only a few.

More information on-line at www.fybush.com/calendar.html (RW)

Stolen Ham Gear Notice:

In a recent break-in several equipment items are missing from the ham radio shack (Room 225) in Wilson-Wallis Hall at Eastern Tenn. State Univ. Here are the items:

Kenwood TS-680S Transceiver including the companion 12-volt power supply. Kenwood TM-261A 2-meter Transceiver Alinco DR-570T Dual Band 144 and 440 MHz. Transceiver.

Jonathan Danials, K4ETC, University Amateur Radio Club Secretary/Treasurer has reported that the door to the room was found unlocked sometime yesterday (October 9th) and this morning (October 10th).

It is believed that the equipment was taken sometime after the University Amateur Radio Club meeting Tuesday afternoon (October 7th).

Please be on the lookout at hamfests and on online sites such as eBay, QRZ.com etc. Please also spread the word via local ham radio club e-mail listings and web sites. If you see anything suspicious, please contact Bob May, K4SE at mayr@etsu.edu or k4se@arrl.net.

SPECTRUM DEFENSE: "MORE WORK TO DO"

Defending and enhancing access to the Amateur Radio spectrum is the primary mission of the ARRL. According to ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ, the League has not only protected the bands, but has also added several new ones, despite exponential growth in the variety and number of radio frequency devices in the hands of consumers and businesses. "Even our most disappointing defeat -- the loss of the bottom 40 percent of the 220 MHz band some two decades ago -- gave us upgraded status, from shared to exclusive, in the remaining 60 percent of the band," he said.

Sumner said that amateurs will soon have cause to celebrate: March 29, 2009 marks the date that high-powered international broadcasting stations will be removed from the heart of the 40 meter band. "We are working with the broadcasters to make sure the change

takes place as agreed at the 2003 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC)," Sumner said. "While it's probably too much to expect 100 percent instant compliance, we know that the responsible broadcasters are preparing to move out of the 7100-7200 kHz segment -- doubling the size of the worldwide 40 meter band and making this popular band more useful than it's been in 70 years."

At the WRC in 2007, the Amateur Radio Service earned its first low-frequency (LF) allocation, 135.7-137.8 kHz; however, here in the United States, amateurs will not gain access to this new band automatically when the Final Acts of the conference take effect on January 1, 2009. "We must petition the FCC to implement the allocation, and we know the petition will not be granted without an argument -- because we've been down this road before," Sumner explained. "Twice in the past, the ARRL has sought an LF allocation. Both times our request was opposed by the Utilities Telecom Council (UTC) -- the same organization that has opposed our efforts to protect radio services from Broadband over Power Lines (BPL) interference."

Sumner recounted that the ARRL's fight against BPL interference has been going on for six years. "Last year, in the wake of Federal Communications Commission decisions that did not adequately protect licensed radiocommunication services from interference from BPL systems, the ARRL even went to court to challenge the FCC and won!" he said "On April 25, the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit confirmed what the ARRL has been saying for years about how the FCC was handling the BPL interference issue: FCC prejudice tainted the rulemaking process."

On July 9, the Court went one step further, ordering the FCC to pay the ARRL more than \$6000 toward the League's costs in pursuing the appeal. "While this is a tiny fraction of our total investment," Sumner said, "the award affirmed that -- contrary to the 'spin' the FCC had been trying to give to the Court's decision -- the ARRL substantially prevailed in its appeal."

Calling the Court's decision "a tremendous victory for radio amateurs and other licensed users of the radio spectrum -- indeed, for anyone who cares about the federal administrative process," Sumner said that the remand does not guarantee that the FCC will correct its errors. "We face another round of technical arguments," he said. "No doubt the FCC's technical staff, many of whom want to do the right thing, will remain under heavy pressure to ignore the laws of physics and give preference to wishful thinking once again. When the FCC reopens the BPL proceeding as the Court has ordered, we must leave no room for these technical issues to be settled on anything other than technical grounds. There's more work to do. It is only through the support of thousands of ARRL members and friends that we have managed to come this far."