Sidebands

The Newsletter of the EAST GREENBUSH AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

www.egara.club

May 2020

Club Elections Bring Leadership Changes

Tom Scorsone Completes Two Decades of Service as President

April's membership meeting brought with it the traditional election of club officers, but in an untraditional way. For the first time ever, the election was held on the air using the club's 147.270 repeater -- all as the result of the coronavirus outbreak which forced the cancellation of the club's regular in-person meetings.

But despite the unusual circumstances, the election went smoothly with Bryan Jackson, W2RBJ, being elected the club's new President, taking the reins from Tom Scorsone, KC2FCP, who decided not to run for re-election after serving 19 years in the post. Tom now becomes President Emeritus and will continue to provide guidance and advice to the officers and the board.

Also elected were Don Mayotte, KB2CDX, as Treasurer, while Nick Field, KD2JCR, was reelected as Vice President and Steve VanSickle, WB2HPR, was returned to the post of Secretary. All of the candidates ran unopposed and were elected by acclamation. Board members, who serve three year terms, will be elected next year.

Tom presents a VHF/UHF radio to a new ham following a club VE session. Giving away radios to new hams was one of the many innovative ideas he had as the club's long-time President.

"I deeply appreciate the opportunity to serve the club as its President," said Jackson. "I look forward to building on the solid foundation created by Tom Scorsone. We're fortunate that he will still be available to provide us with guidance and direction in the days ahead -- and we're grateful for his two decades of service to the club."

In This Issue

May Meeting Teleconference Planned

With social distancing still expected to be in place next month, EGARA's May membership meeting is being planned to take place using an interactive Internet meeting program.

Don Mayotte, KB2CDX, is heading up the project and expects to use a program such as Zoom or Skype for the teleconference. ENY Section manager John Fritze has purchased a subscription to Zoom, which allows up to 100 users to participate at the same time. The subscription is available for free to clubs that wish to use it for their meetings.

Club members will receive further instructions by email as the May 13th meeting date approaches. A computer with an Internet connection and video/voice capability will be required to participate.

Next Membership Meeting - Online - May 13, 2020

Wouxun Steps Up as Major Hamfest Sponsor

Amateur Radio manufacturer Wouxun has join with EGARA to become its biggest sponsor of Hamfest 2020. By special arrangement, the company has provided the club with a dozen VHF/UHF HT radios and accessories to be given away at the club's Hamfest, which is now scheduled for August 29th. Ten of the radios include the latest DMR capabilities.

"We have been very fortunate that the head of Wouxun, Mr. Danny Chan, has been so supportive of our club," said Club President Bryan Jackson, W2RBJ. "He has included the company's latest model, the KG-UVN1, among those he sent. H even had them especially engraved with 'Hamfest 2020' on the cases."

Wouxun is a major world supplier of radio equipment and also manufactures a wide-range of business communication systems. Now in its 20th year, the company boasts the most advanced production facilities in the industry in order to meet the ISO9001 standard.

Jackson said he is now working with the company to enhance its English language instruction manuals. "Written English has often been a challenge for overseas companies and Wouxun was very interested in developing a partnership that would improve there manuals for the U.S. market, as well as those in other English language countries."

He added that an advertisement he created for the company's new KG-UVN1 is now being distributed on the company's website.

2020 Hamfest Sponsors

What Is Replacing Shortwave?

By Ruxandra Obreja, Chairman of Digital Radio Mondiale

Analog shortwave will celebrate about 100 years of existence in 2028 when many hope 5G will have been properly defined, tested and applied, though broadcasting is low on its long list of perceived advantages.

It's true that shortwave was typically a medium of the Cold War that peaked in 1989 and that afterward its listenership dwindled. Many international broadcasters gave up on it as the post-war transmitters got rustier and the energy bills kept mounting.

After all, when budget cuts are needed, no transmitter will go on strike or write to the press, as happened when the BBC World Service tried to unsuccessfully close its Hindi shortwave transmissions in 2011. In 2020 these broadcasts stopped, when committed BBC Indian listeners, writers and thinkers who opposed it in 2011 did not protest too much.

The slow death of shortwave has been blamed on the Internet and satellite. As technology and content are inextricably linked, shortwave created its type of content that is no longer favored by the savvy FM listener, Internet user and cellphone obsessed.

WHAT HAPPENED?

First, came the great partnership of international broadcasters with local FM stations. International programs could be suddenly heard in big cities in very good sound quality. The drawback was that the programs were often very short, often scheduled at unreasonable hours.

"Radio should address each and every one in cities and far away rural communities, whether to inform, entertain or alert to emergency situations."

Branding was also an issue for the big international broadcasters now piggybacking on a local station with its own identity. There was also the danger that the local station could object to this partnership for political or content reasons and drop the international program at very short notice.

A screenshot of Dream software showing the technical evaluation of a DRM signal (BBC transmission) received from a transmitter located in Singapore.

In some European cities, international broadcasters have also become local ones as they have gone on DAB multiplexes, more of a prestige move than an audience growing measure.

Most of these international broadcasters are streaming and throwing their lot with another 30,000 or more stations that listeners have to choose from but only if they have electricity, a laptop, an Internet connection and sometimes the patience to cope with buffering.

So, shortwave and its long-range advantage were replaced mainly by the one-to-one sophisticated Internet and the cheaper, clearer but very local FM or the DAB+ option in band III, in this way undermining the very essence of their wide coverage and appeal.

At first, it might seem that these are cheaper and more modern options. But, in reality, energy-hungry FM and the multiplexed DAB+ are not that cheap either. Streaming uses an expensive digital electronics setup for something that broadcasting, as one-to-many, can do more cheaply, preserving the anonymity of the user, an advantage that is becoming increasingly relevant in many societies.

NEW REALITY

The greater danger of replacing wide-range coverage with local broadcasting is a different one, though: Radio that should address each and every one in cities and far away rural communities, whether to inform, entertain or alert to emergency situations, becomes patchy and leaves those, who need it most, out of range.

-continued on page 4 -

DMR -- The Future of Shortwave?

Some international and powerful public and state broadcasters still opt for wide-range coverage, however. One example is China, which might be still pursuing its local digital broadcasting version but to give full coverage on the roads and in the areas between large cities, it has opted for DRM shortwave.

China National Radio broadcasts 80 hours a day from five existing and upgraded sites with seven or eight transmitters sending shortwave DRM to most areas of North China, East China, South China and Southwest China. Russia is also airing DRM in shortwave over huge areas of Siberia.

India has three DRM shortwave transmitters and is looking at increasing this number for national and international reach. There is also interest in Indonesia and renewed questions are coming from Brazil that has been using analog shortwave to cover mainly its Amazonian region.

Vanuatu, a small country in the Pacific, has recently gone for DRM shortwave to save lives in disaster situations by using its integrated emergency warning capability. And a site in the United States has recently started broadcasting in DRM the popular Radio Marti programs toward central and Latin America.

It thus appears as if a few big up and coming countries are rediscovering the value of shortwave radio, unlike much of the Western international broadcasters who dropped it 10 or 20 years ago.

TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE?

DRM was the big hope for shortwave when the excellent engineers with vision first invented it. In its digital variant, DRM, shortwave becomes a new modern platform using up-to-the minute coding, which produces a very clear sound. In effect, DRM shortwave is like FM over very large areas. More than one good audio channel is available and can be accompanied by data and other digital services.

In digital shortwave the energy bill is cut drastically as compared to the analog invoice, and the new transmitters are very efficient. Even the not so old transmitters can be upgraded. Some broadcasters saw these opportunities and went this route while patiently waiting for receivers to become available and affordable.

Now together with the extra shortwave DRM transmission services we are seeing the rise of DRM receiver solutions (with shortwave support as well) from countries like China, India, Germany, the United Kingdom and France.

Some of these solutions are inexpensive and energy-efficient designed to serve a whole community by using a digital shortwave station receiver disseminating the broadcast via Wi-Fi.

Therefore, today shortwave is positioned differently. While the interest of most Western countries has waned, other parts of the world have stuck with the platform and are adapting it for their own use.

In fact, we are at a point where shortwave may just be ready to turn the corner, especially if digital shortwave can be made available in cars. Surprisingly, electric cars might be better suited to receiving the digital signal than the current cars on the road.

Questions remain though: Is it too little, too late for shortwave?

Or is this a new digital platform that we should simply call “digital radio” and that we can confidently and courageously embrace and use?

See related story on page 9

On the Beam
News & Notes

A Note About Field Day From Hudson Director Ria Jairam, N2RJ

At the time of this message, there have been no rules changes to Field Day. The Programs and Services Committee has considered the issue and has decided to not make any changes. I am disappointed, especially since there could have been rules that encouraged social distancing.

With that said, the show must go on. I sincerely hope everyone who wishes to participate in Field Day is able to do so, even if you are operating from home.

I will still advocate for common sense changes, but as it is, there is not much support in the PSC for it.

Regarding site visits - unless there is a significant positive change to the CoViD-19 situation I will not be visiting Field Day sites this year. But if you wish, we can meet virtually via your favorite video conferencing application (We have Zoom, Skype, Jitsi, Facebook and Facetime) or you can send us a short video of your field day operation and we'll put it up on YouTube and our other social media. Or just send us photos and we'll put them up.

WARREN COUNTY RADIO CLUB HOLDS DRIVE UP TEST SESSION

While the coronavirus outbreak has forced cancellation of many VE exam sessions, the Warren County Amateur Radio Club, W2WCR, found a way to give their amateur Radio licensing test while still observing safe social distancing. In a nutshell, they held a "drive-in" test session on April 5th.

Test candidates were sent emails with information on the location and instructions on how the test would be conducted. Each applicant remained in their car, while a low-powered FM transmitter was used to guide them through the testing process by communicating to them over the radios in their cars.

Examiners were also set up at a safe distance to observe the applicants during the tests to ensure there was no use of cell phones or cheat sheets. Meanwhile, VE examiners were set up at tables that were spaced a safe distance apart. Masks and gloves were used by the VEs as a safeguard while handling the test answer sheets and other paperwork.

The Warren County club coordinated the testing session with the ARRL to ensure that the unique drive-in session would meet ARRL testing standards.

You can see how they did it on YouTube: https://youtu.be/kcT0P3LhPU8

EGARA April Meeting Minutes

- The April meeting of the EGARA was called to order at 7:00 PM by Secretary Steve VanSickle, WB2HPR via the 147.270 repeater for EGARA's first on-the-air meeting. A total of 18 members checked into the meeting net, one member monitored the repeater and one listened via telephone patch.
- The March meeting was canceled due to concern with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The monthly treasurer's report was given by Treasurer Bryan Jackson, W2RBJ. Dues are still being accepted and can be paid by check or Paypal via the club website. Bryan reported the clubs fiscal balance has not changed significantly since last month. We have purchased 12 radios for hamfest prizes.
- Election of Officers: Six nominations for officers posts were received – two individuals declined. The slate of candidates was approved by one vote cast by the secretary Steve, WB2HPR following a second to the motion by Bill, K2WML. The newly elected officers are: President: Bryan Jackson, W2RBJ; Vice President: Nick Field, KD2JCR; Secretary: Steve VanSickle, WB2HPR; and Treasurer: Don Mayotte, KB2CDX. T om Scorsone, KC2FCP is the first EGARA President Emeritus, having served the club as President for two decades.
- New/old business: Bill Leue, K2WML reported that the Freihofer run was canceled and the Corporate Challenge is in peril of cancellation. Bryan, W2RBJ announced the change of date for the hamfest to August 29th. Also, Bryan reported that additional prizes have been received, with a total amount exceeding $3,000 and additional sponsors are being contacted.
- Peggy Donnelly, KD2LMU has volunteered as liaison between ARES/Connect and EGARA so as to ensure the club is properly credited with its public service activities;
- Bryan commented that the future of Field Day 2020 is in question. There is no clearly defined plan on the club's participation yet and that it is awaiting word from ARRL HQ. He has also written an article for QST showcasing EGARA's "New Ham Kit" which is distributed to newly minted hams at our VE sessions. Publication date to be announced.
- Don Mayotte, KB2CDX, is working on an Internet delivery platform for next month's EGARA meeting. Several members have some familiarity with these systems. Tom Woodson, N4PXB was able to participate in the Pensacola, FL club's meeting at the same time via ZOOM. Dave Gillette, KC2RPU was able to use SKYPE to participate in a recent meeting as well. Further details will be distributed by mail prior to the May 13th meeting.
- A plaque honoring Tom Scorsone, WC2FCP's 19 years of service as EGARA President will be awarded at our next face-to-face meeting. "Congratulations, Tommy!"
- Nick, KD2JCR, announced that a Skywarn class will be conducted On April 22nd and 29th. More details are on the web at: www.weather.gov\aly\skywarn.
- Informals: Bob Stark, KA2EXK made the trip back from Florida, but was faced with many challenges in his attempt to return home due to the current pandemic. Welcome back, Bob!
- Tom, KC2FCP has located a source for the new Echolink equipment for the 270 repeater.
- Lastly, Bill, K2WML said he misses going to the meetings and the camaraderie.
- The on-the-air meeting was concluded at 7:30 pm.

--de Steve VanSickle WB2HPR / Secretary

The Corona Virus is Here – Now What???

With the current spread of the covid-19 pandemic, and the stay-at-home policies in place – what to do? Well, we're ham radio operators and we operate our radios! So when things have been up-ended, we need to adapt to the new way we conduct our lives. Maybe we have been steadfast HF operators – so why not give the VHF bands a try? Maybe some informal QSOs on the club (or other) repeaters. Or, if you spend a lot of time on 2m FM, why not fire up the HF equipment and make a few rag chews on 40? Or work some DX stations.

Or, perhaps you always wanted to brush up on your CW skills --- tune in the W1AW cw practice sessions – you'll find the schedule in QST or online at ARRL.org. With a bit of practice, you'd be surprised at how easily you can boost your CW proficiency – maybe earn a certificate to boot.

Or if you haven't built any equipment in a while, there are numerous kits available. Also, there are many available Arduino and Raspberry Pi projects for ham radio – and others that are not. At any rate, you'll find hundreds of instructional videos on YouTube. And -- speaking of things "digital" – you might consider exploring a new digital mode such as PSK-31 or WSJT. Another idea is station automation. You can interface your PC with your HF rig or add a SDR dongle for spectrum display. Or automate your logging with a software program, as a logbook is essential if you want to chase those operating awards!

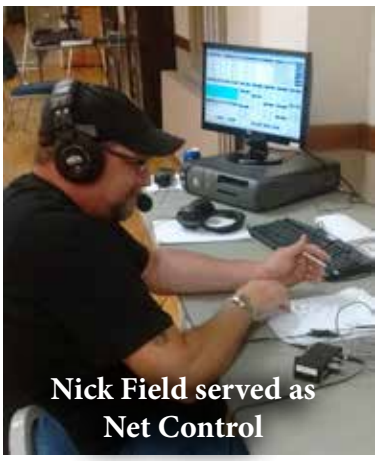
Getting back to operating options – check into the local RACES or ARES nets. Or sign up with ARES Connect and get involved with local emergency response organizations. Both organizations are designed to help the general public in times of emergency. So be prepared and program your radio for the local nets. And have a "go" kit handy – or update your existing one.

There are many facet of the ham radio hobby – from low band Dxing to satellites, and participating in public service communications. With ham radio, there are many ways to harness your skills and engage your mind –- and provide some level of distraction from the stress of the invisible threat of the corona virus.

Stay safe, be well – enjoy ham radio! 73! -- de Steve VanSickle, WB2HPR

Monthly EGARA Roundtable Keeps Members in Touch

A new monthly Roundtable using the club's 147.270 repeater kicked off on April 22nd, with 14 members checking in to provide updates on their activities during the Coronavirus pandemic which has kept many at home. The successful trial run was the idea of EGARA Vice President Nick Field, KD2JCR, who also served as Net Control.



Nick Field served as Net Control

"I was very pleased with the number of members who participated," he said. "With our in-person meetings on hold for the foreseeable future, it's great to be able to stay in contact and keep each other up-to-date. I look forward to having more members join in during out next on-air Roundtable."

The current plan is to have the Roundtable on the fourth Wednesday of each month, alternating with the club meetings that are held on the second Wednesday. The next one is scheduled for May 27th at 7 pm.

During the April Roundtable a variety of topics came up. In addition to each member providing a brief update on what's been keeping them busy, there were also discussions about antennas, ham gear, and digital communications.

"It was great that members were able to help each other with their ham radio questions," Nick said. "Our repeater network is one of our club's biggest resources. I look forward to working with other EGARA members to find other innovative ways to put it to work."

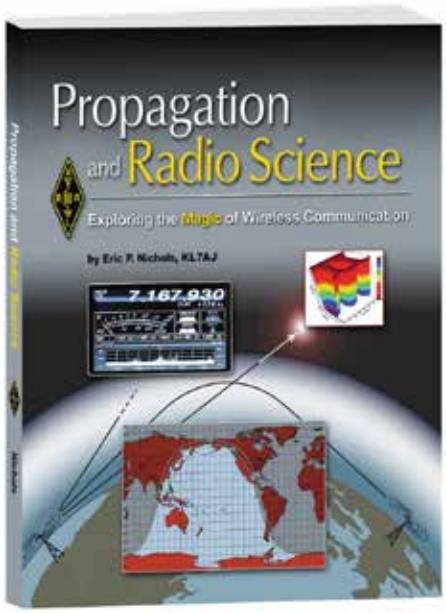
Wonders of the Ionosphere

By Steve VanSickle, WB2HPR

During a recent early evening QSO on 75 meters, several comments were made about the changes in propagation – which seemed to occur at the same time each night. In reality, these changes were caused by changes in solar radiation - as night followed day with the earth's rotation.

As the earth turns on its axis, and night approaches, the direct effects of the solar flux diminish, and the ionization in our upper atmospheric regions begins to diminish. These ionization changes, in turn, have a profound effect on the composition of the ionosphere's various layers. For instance, the D layer is dispersed, allowing MW and HF signals to travel to our F1 and F2 layers, allowing local, and then long distance propagation to occur.

The changes can be so abrupt that in a matter of seconds, local skywave contacts are greatly attenuated, and long distance (skip) conditions prevail, until sunrise the next day. Then, with an increase in solar radiation, the F2 and F1 layers recombine, and the D Layer is reformed, limiting MW and HF signals to mainly ground wave and direct wave paths.



This cycle of ionospheric movement and recombination repeats, and you will observe a direct correlation with the day/night cycle. Sometimes, these changes occur so quickly, it seems that someone is throwing a switch when the "band goes long" – meaning that our signals are no longer being reflected by the F1 layer, but rather the F2.

The degree of solar flux is affected by the sun spot cycle; generally speaking, the greater number of sunspots, the greater the flux. We are just seeing the beginning of cycle 25, and based on historical records, we are projected to see a peak in sun spots in about 5 -6 years. So, in other words, the effects of day /night propagation will be ever greater than now.

It is interesting to observe this phenomenon, and much time and expense has been devoted to the field. The March 2020 issue of QST has some information regarding ionospheric studies starting in early 20th century to the present. Much remains to be learned, and the scientific community continues to expand our knowledge. There are also many reference works that you can study to help understand how our ionosphere behaves.

One excellent book Propagation and Radio Science, an ARRL publication, offers a detailed explanation of radio propagation, and is a good aide to understanding how radio signals travel. Also, the ARRL Antenna Book, Ch.23, offers 38 pages of detailed information, along with an extensive bibliography to help you expand your knowledge base.

The next time you are on the HF bands, and you notice that the signal paths begin to change, thank the sun, and its profound effect on our planet and our radio waves.

'Til next time – 73 and good DX!

Russia Returns to Shortwave Broadcasting with DMR

Russia has resumed Digital Radio Mondiale broadcasts on shortwave. The country originally aired the Voice of Russia via DRM a few years ago. The new service is tentatively called Radio Purga ("Radio Blizzard"). The target area is the Chukotka region of the Russian Far East. Analog shortwave transmissions once served the area, but those ended in the early 2000s when the broadcaster left analog shortwave.

Chukotka is vast and the target audience only numbers a few thousand. Thus, shortwave is the only practical way to reach the population. The transmitter site, Komsomolsk Amur, used to broadcast Voice of Russia's analog programming and is now being used for the DRM program.

NEW SERVICE

The new service is a joint project between the government in Chukotka and the Far Eastern regional center of the Russian Television and Radio Broadcasting Network.

Using DRM for Radio Purga has several advantages over analog shortwave. Radio Purga over DRM, for example, offers a static-free and higher fidelity signal. Studies have shown that DRM is just as reliable as analog shortwave over this distance via single-hop transmission.

The broadcaster is considering transmitting two audio programs from a single DRM transmitter. This is something analog shortwave can't do. It's also planning on using DRM's ability to transmit short text message or a type of RSS feed (Journaline). DRM transmissions also use only a quarter of the power that analog transmissions do.

"We have in these remote places 2,000 residents who need to be provided with communications services … the Northern Sea Route also requires attention," said Roman Kopin, the governor of Chukotka, last spring when the project was initiated, according to a Russian press report. In addition to mariners on the Northern Sea Route, the audience includes geologists, miners, reindeer herders and hunters.

The Voice of Russia will use shortwave DMR to once again reach residents who live in remote areas such as Siberia

Test transmissions started in August via different DRM modes and bandwidths to trial "hardware setup and determine signal acceptability," with the goal of covering over 95% of the area. Programming consists of a music loop and has been heard as far away as the United States. Currently, broadcasts are still carrying out transmission tests but regular programing is expected to begin sometime in the next few months.

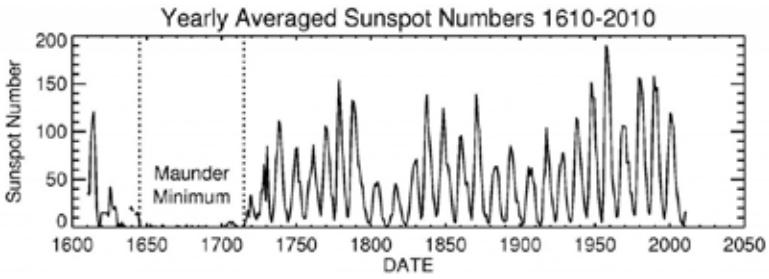
One of shortwave's greatest strengths has always been its ability to communicate to hard-to-reach locations. Radio Purga's audience is spread over an immense, remote region. The resumption of shortwave via DRM will provide the population with a communications lifeline in both audio and text.

The History of Ham Radio: Freaks

Chris Codella, W2PA, author, John Pelham, W1JA, editor, Phil Johnson, W2SQ, editor

(Editor's note: By special arrangement with the authors, Sidebands is pleased to present this multi-part series on the history of ham radio. Subsequent chapters will be published in future monthly editions of the newsletter)

The uneven, partly unpredictable nature of radio wave propagation continued to fascinate hams during and after the war. The solar cycle had peaked around 1917, just in time for hams to miss it because of the war shutdown. Now, with the next solar minimum little more than two years away, hams had just gone through the first winter season of prime-time operating since the reopening—and had begun to notice some peculiarities and marked differences in signals from when they last listened.



Solar cycle history – from NASA's Web site

In late December 1919, radio was blacked-out again—but this time it was nature's doing, not a government edict. Strangely, the shorter wavelengths were dead despite the fact that 600-meter signals were still "pounding in." No stations further than about 100 miles away could be heard. A QST editor later wondered whether there could have been any connection with the "cosmic disturbances in progress at the time." The idea was confirmed early the following year. Hams observed that a particularly severe radio blackout had immediately followed an intense and widespread auroral display. Both were evidently caused by a solar flare on 21 March 1920, and had brought message handling to a complete halt. While stations "inside the daylight range" were unaffected, no one further away could be heard and the air was unusually quiet. Conditions gradually returned to normal after a day or so.

There were other oddities too. Aside from the blackouts, hams sometimes experienced greatly increased static during winter, the season when quiet was usually the norm, along with other erratic behavior of the "operating weather." The League collected opinions and theories about the causes of these anomalies, no matter how unlikely. One amateur claimed to have heard signals fade away during a lunar eclipse. He asked, was it a coincidence or was it the same effect some claimed to have heard when the planets were on the same side of the sun? But the QST editor endorsed a theory being proposed by many scientists that the main cause for the disruptions was sun spots. It was perhaps the first reference to the phenomenon in QST.

ARRL Traffic Manager J. O. Smith asked whether the phenomena of natural signal variations were not really "fading" at all, but actually enhancement, since signals that could not be heard in daytime became detectable at night. He was right, but he also repeated a mistaken observation that signals were stronger on nights following a cloudy day than after a sunny day, and then disproved it by noting that the increase did not occur evenly or proportionally for all stations and in all directions. Selective enhancement seemed to have a directional or distance dependence, with fading occurring more quickly or slowly according to where the far station was located. He concluded that this must be due to ground effects as well as atmospheric ones, and noted the existence of "pockets" where, if you were in one, you could work far-away stations easier than intermediate distance ones—for example, New England to the Midwest, compared with New England to New York City. He called for observations from amateurs so that these things could be studied collaboratively.

Charles A. Lowry of Toronto wrote a two-page letter on fading phenomena, also commonly referred to as freaks or swings. He had spent a long time monitoring 600 meters during the summer and fall of 1918 at a British naval station on the southeastern coast of Nova Scotia (specified as "somewhere about" 43N, 65W, which is actually off the coast). He reported several cases of fading he heard on signals coming from naval vessels and stations from a variety of locations including the midwestern US, the Caribbean, and places to his north. The strange variations usually began around 5:00 p.m. and changed in nature through the night, ending around 8:00 in the morning. To accompany his monitoring he logged the weather at several locations and in doing so disproved any connection or correlation to weather conditions.

- continued on page 11 -

History of Ham Radio...

He also observed stations fading out completely at his location while simultaneously fading in at another. Thoroughly fascinated, he puzzled, "How, I ask you, do NAJ's sigs miss Detroit, Cleveland and Buffalo and yet come in strong and clear at a station 1500 miles from him and in a straight line over their heads?"

Striving to answer that question, hams would lead the world into the unanticipated, unexplored landscape of the short waves.

The League proposed that amateurs should make use of the upcoming summer months to collect data on so-called fading phenomena in a systematic, scientific way.

Still viewing it as a problem rather than an indicator of new abilities, they would seek an explanation for it, hoping to find a "remedy." For example, groups could use several receivers located at equal distance but in different directions from the transmitter, and then could detect directional effects on signal strength. Division managers could arrange a regular schedule of transmissions and collect reception reports.

In fact, the Radio Section of the Bureau of Standards had requested the ARRL's help in a similar study and arrangements were being made to accommodate. The League's capability for organizing, collecting and analyzing reports in such a test far outclassed the Bureau's. "The request of the Bureau constitutes another governmental recognition of the value of our A.R.R.L., and we are proud and happy to be of service. Let us do our level best for them," wrote Warner.

"QSS" was proposed as the new Q-signal abbreviation for fading phenomena.

A month later, featuring a glamorous woman wearing headphones on its cover, QST carried the announcement of an ambitious set of QSS tests. Stations across the country would transmit "an arbitrary QST" according to a schedule to be published in July. Anyone interested in participating could receive these transmissions and keep track of fading phenomena over time, then report their observations.

The results would be analyzed by a group at ARRL, and as Warner explained, "it is hoped and expected that valuable and intensely interesting information will be forthcoming. Thus is what the radio game most needs right now—reliable information on the subject. Attempts to correct it can have no chance unless based on a knowledge of the problem, and this we hope to develop." Just as there was hope for a cure for strays (static), surely freaks could be done away with too, through study, understanding, and ingenuity.

A test plan came together that included a procedure to help standardize observations and reporting. Transmitting stations would send a complete alphabet five times at a speed of 18 wpm. Receiving stations would then record the strength of the signals for each letter according to the "well-known Eccles scale, running from 0 to 9."

Collaborating with the Bureau of Standards, the League developed a QSS test reporting form which members could replicate for themselves. They were still so convinced that the phenomena had something to do with the weather that a section of the report form was devoted to recording the weather conditions in a standardized way.

The huge analysis job would be divided up and handled by each of the 17 divisions in the League's Operating Department. Amateurs were instructed to send reports to their home division's Fading Committee (FC) or that of the division where the transmitter was located, if different.

Members responded with enthusiasm – the announcement generated the highest level of interest the editors of QST had ever seen for a cooperative operation. The tests would be done for the Bureau of Standards with participants chosen from among ARRL members because of their location. The ARRL also "enlarged upon the idea" and was arranging for similar tests in each Division.

No Compromises

There's no compromises with Wouxun's KG-UVN1 Dual Band DMR Digital Two Way HT radio!

Whether you're looking to run DMR or analog, the KG-UVN1 has you covered. It's feature-packed with all the benefits of a high-end Digital Mobile Radio that also keeps your analog connections -- all in one portable handheld transceiver!

The Wouxun KG-UVN1 works with other makes and models of DMR radios with both Tier I & II compatibility -- as well as compatibility with existing analog systems on the supported UHF and VHF Amateur Radio bands.

Add to that 3072 channels, 250 zones, and a whopping 160,000 contacts -- and the full radioid.net contact database is preloaded! The KG-UVN1 has CTCSS/DCS, digital encryption, channel scan, group scan and text messaging. It also features VOX, a full DTMF keypad, programmable multi-function side keys, and much, much more.

The KG-UVN1 offers high-end functionality throughout, including independent programming in VFO and channel modes, Private Call, Group Call, All Call, ARTS function, tail elimination, menu encryption, menu hide, and stun/kill/activate options. Plus, it has solid, rugged construction that puts it in the same league as commercial class radios for performance, reliability and durability.

Wouxun's KG-UVN1
Big Performance, No Compromises

wouxun®

Visit www.WOUXUN.com for full details and specs, plus the full line of accessories!

Hamvention QSO Party Set for Saturday, May 16

The Hamvention QSO Party, a sort of virtual Dayton Hamvention®, will take place on the HF bands on May 16th, which would be on the Saturday of the now-canceled event.

"Let's celebrate the many years we have all had at the Great Gathering we call Hamvention," said an announcement over the signatures of Tim Duffy, K3LR, and Michael Kalter, W8CI.

The Hamvention QSO Party will be a 12-hour event, from 1200 UTC until 2400 UTC on May 16. Operate CW or SSB on 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, and 10 meters, exchanging signal reports and the first year you attended Hamvention. If you have never attended Hamvention, send "2020." Designated members of Hamvention's host, the Dayton Amateur Radio Association (DARA), will activate DARA's W8BI. Participants can add 10 points for each band/mode contact with W8BI (12 available).

Post scores (number of contacts) to 3830scores.com within five days of the event. An online certificate will be available to print. No logs will be collected. N1MM Logger+ has provided a user-defined contest module for the event. More information is on the N1MM Logger+ website at: https://n1mmwp.hamdocs.com/

ARRL Suggests Taking a Creative Approach to Field Day 2020

This year, Field Day promises to be a unique iteration of this annual event, with many individuals and groups coming up with new and interesting ways to adjust their approach. As an event, Field Day is structured to be versatile and can be adapted for any situation. EGARA is still considering how to participate and will discuss it during its May meeting.

Many groups have asked how they can adjust their Field Day planning to address social-distancing guidelines that may be in effect in many areas of the country, as gathering at their traditional Field Day site may not be feasible or safe. Instead of participating in a group event this year, consider operating as a Class B, C, D, or E station, utilizing your own call sign.

ARRL will include club names for all participating stations in the published results, so the efforts of your club's members can be acknowledged. While we will not publish an aggregate club score, seeing the name of your club associated with various individual member's results is certainly a way to highlight your club's activity.

Possibilities include having an intra-club competition among members, seeing who can make the most contacts during the event. You can award prizes or distribute certificates at a club meeting. This can be a fun way to bolster the activities of individual club members, even though they cannot all gather together at the same location this year.

Another is to set up a Field Day Challenge with rival clubs in neighboring communities. See how many members of each club get on the air from their own stations and participate in the event. In addition to "bragging rights," perhaps certificates to the top-scoring individual entries in each category can be presented as part of this inter-club camaraderie.

One club is planning to conduct its Field Day as a 4A club group, with participants spaced to comply with social distancing guidelines within the required 1,000-foot-diameter circle and operating individual stations. This club also plans to set up a "Get on the Air" (GOTA) station. The club's plan is to have the GOTA coach at the Field Day site, while GOTA operators participate via remote link. Another club is planning to set up a remote-controlled station at its usual Field Day site, with club members taking turns controlling the station from their homes. The club is developing a schedule that outlines when each member of the club will be at the helm via the remote link.

Whatever approach, it will be important keep up to date with the current guidelines issued by local and state health agencies that may impact Field Day operations.

CALENDAR

May 13, 2020 - 7 pm - Monthly club meeting by teleconference. Details to be emailed.

***Canceled!* May 16, 2020 - FCC Exam Session** - Canceled due to closure of East Greenbush Library.

May 27, 2020 - 7 pm = EGARA Roundtable on 147.270

Re-scheduled - EGARA Hamfest - Moved from may 9th to August 29th.

Pro Tip: Stay Dry!

Here's a great tip using those oh-so-helpful silica gel packets that often come in things like electronics packaging or even boxes of shoes.

Keep your gadgets dry while traveling by tossing a few packets into a Ziploc bag.

If any of your techie devices accidentally get wet, stick them in the bag and allow the silica gel to work its moisture-fighting magic.

Get water on your HT, cell phone or camera?

First remove the battery, then place the device in the Ziploc bag with the gel packs and leave it overnight.

With any luck, your electronics will be in working order again come morning.

Just be aware that silica gel is harmful if swallowed, so keep it away from kids and pets!

For Sale

- **1-1 Balun (New still in wrapper) $29.00 (originally $39.95)**
- **Bury Flex Coax (2 pieces 65' and 75') $32.00 and $37.00 (Original price 1.00 a ft)**
- **MFJ-936b Magnetic Loop 80 – 10 (Almost brand new) $200.00 (original $300.00)**

Contact Fred at acwiz@twc.com

- **Arrow Model 52-S4** - 4-Element 6 Meter Yagi antenna in good condition. $75.00

For above, contact Steve at: svansick@nycap.rr.com

- **Daiwa CN 103 L SWR power meter,** covers 140-525 mhz. Asking $30.
- **Jetstream JTWXHF SWR/watt meter,** covers 106-60 mhz. Asking $30.
- **Yeasu HM-34 Speaker Mic,** Asking $10.00.

Contact Walt Snyder at: n2wjr@earthlink.net

Gear to Sell, Swap or Buy?
Send your listing to W2RBJ@Outlook.com

Mark Your Calendar
Hamfest
August 29th

The East Greenbush Amateur Radio Association

Organized in 1998, by Bert Bruins, N2FPJ, (SK) and Chris Linck, N2NEH, the East Greenbush Amateur Radio Association, an ARRL affiliate, is committed to providing emergency services, educational programs, and operating resources to amateur radio operators and residents of the Capital Region of New York State. The club station is W2EGB. The club also has several VHF and UHF repeaters open to club members and the public.