

ANDY MATSKO / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Jim Munley, of Lost Creek, talks on a ham radio Saturday during the annual field day held at Schroeder Family Farms in Barnesville.

Amateur radio enthusiasts hold annual field day event

BY JOHN E. USALIS
STAFF WRITER

BARNESVILLE — "Amateur radio" or "ham radio" began more than a century ago, but even after all that time with technological advancements, hobbyists still play a significant role in keeping communications available during major emergencies.

From 2 p.m. Saturday to 2 p.m. today, the annual Field Day 2019 is being held by the Tamaqua Wireless Association Inc. at Schroeder Family Farms near Barnesville. A group of ham radio enthusiasts gathered with their amateur radio equipment for the 24-hour event that has been held in different locations in the county over the years.

When the weather cooperates, as it did Saturday, the event is held outdoors. Visitors are allowed to attend and learn more about amateur radio and get the chance to be on the air under the guidance of a certified operator from the club.

During Field Day, amateur radio operators hold demonstrations, give talks to community groups and take part in other activities to raise awareness about amateur radio. During this annual event, thousands of amateur radio operators and clubs in the United States and North America will set up radio stations in parks, community centers and other remote locations for the purpose of gaining proficiency in operating under austere conditions should an emergency occur.

TWA public relations contact Jim Munley, of Lost Creek, said the 24-hour event is also a competition among ham radio clubs around the country, with each trying to contact as many different stations as possible.

Munley said being part of the amateur radio hobby has the important aspect of assisting in providing the communications to other areas when an emergency occurs.

"It's actually more than a hobby," Munley said. "We have an emergency service network where we meet every Tuesday

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Area School District to use grants ogy to improve classroom, education

"It's not just about, 'Here's a device, now you're smart.' It's about how to integrate that technology into the classroom with instruction and with their curriculum."

Ray Kinder Jr.
Superintendent

technology. Through the $1.1 million grant, the district would also be able to hire someone to work on educating with faculty, staff, students and administrators.

"It's not just about, 'Here's a device, now you're smart.' It's about how to integrate that technology into the classroom with instruction increase and provide access to our students."

School board President Larry Wittig said the district would develop new programs for which the devices can be used.

"We're also looking at trying to find ways for our kids in Tamaqua to be able to see things outside of Tamaqua, whether it's information, whether it's experiences, or access during after school hours. These are all things that we are looking to provide to students that we can't necessarily provide to them right now," Kinder said.

The second grant, he said, seeks to improve students' motivation through gaming.

"When you first hear that, you think we're going to have kids come in and play Madden football," he said, referring to a video game. "Gaming is changing dramatically from what we grew up with."

Kinder said it would serve as a motivator for some students to attend school.

"Very much the same way as, 'Maybe I don't like to come to school that much, but I like to be on the basketball team,' or 'I don't know about biology, but I sure like to play in the band,'" he said.

Student attendance, he said, is directly related to academic achievement.

"We're very fortunate to have this type of opportunity for our students," Kinder said.

The Morgan Foundation carries on the philanthropic work of the founder of J.E. Morgan Knitting Mills.

In an unrelated matter, the board appointed director Daniel Schoener to a one-year term as treasurer and

lows: 10:30 a.m. July 4, 1:30 p.m. July 14 and 27, 9:30 a.m. Aug. 4, 1:30 p.m. Aug. 8 and Sept. 2. Kayaks, paddles and personal flotation devices will be provided; maximum weight capacity is 275 pounds, according to a park release. Registration is required by signing up at the park office prior to the event or via phone at 570-467-2506 or in person. No online or fax registration will be taken. Participants can send checks for $10 payable to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Class will be canceled in the event of inclement weather. People who have their own equipment will be able to participate for $3 per person. Participants will meet at the boat rental building at Tuscarora State Park. Children must be at least 12 and each child must be accompanied by an adult.

Deer Lake

Bacon Palooza, a breakfast brunch buffet at the Deer Lake Pub to benefit the Orwigsburg Area Free Public Library, will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. today with all menu items having bacon. Tickets are $20 each and can be bought in advance at the library to be able to pick from the "Pink Pig of Prizes." People can win T-shirts, bacon and eggs, beverages or bacon-themed items. For more information, call 570-366-1638.

Frackville

St. Joseph the Worker Roman Catholic Parish will hold its annual parish festival Aug. 2-4 at St. Ann's Grove, North Line Street (behind St. Ann Church). The event will feature homemade ethnic food, a theme basket auction, raffle drawing and live entertainment with Broken Spell from 7 to 10 p.m. Aug. 2, Another Side from 7 to 11 p.m. Aug. 3 and Tom Davis from 1 to 4 p.m. Aug. 4. Festival hours are 3 to 10 p.m. Aug. 2, noon to 11 p.m. Aug. 3 and noon to 5 p.m. Aug. 4. All are welcome.

Ringtown

Registration for the 2019 annual Ringtown Community Yard Sale has begun. Local residents who plan to participate are asked to register at the Ringtown Area Public Library, 132 W. Main St., to be included on the yard sale map. The $5 registration fee will allow the library to promote and advertise the yard sale throughout the region. The 2019 yard sale will be held on July 20, as always, the third Saturday in July. For more information, email the library at ringtownlibrary@epix.net.

Shamokin

The Shamokin and Coal Township Public Library, 210 E. Independence St., has myriad Summer Quest activities on tap, including Eddy Ray's Magic Program at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday; AM intro to STEM/STEAM activities at 10:30 a.m. July 3; CE Exotics at 10:30 a.m. July 10; games and activities at 10:30 a.m. July 17; Zoo America at 10:30 a.m. July 24; and End of Summer Quest Party with The Balloon Guy at 10:30 a.m. July 31. For more information, call the library at 570-648-3202.

Shenandoah

The revitalization group Downtown Shenandoah Inc. will have a meeting regarding the Shenandoah Heritage Day Parade of Nations at 1 p.m. Monday in its downtown center at 116 N. Main St. All ethnic groups are invited to attend. For more information, call DSI at 570-462-2060.

Sheppton

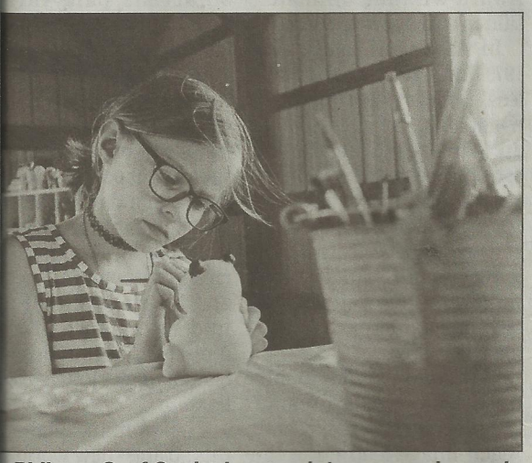
Officials have issued another reminder for East Union Township



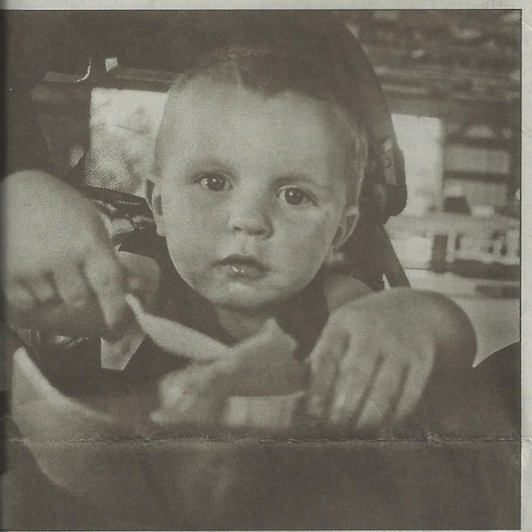
ANDY MATSKO / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

en, makes an Italian ice for Ronald Kramer, 5, cen-ner, 7, both of Schuylkill Haven, on Saturday during Island Park in Schuylkill Haven.

benefits Make-A-Wish



a Philyaw, 8, of Orwigsburg, paints a ceramic panda at the Brush Strokes stand.



n Strausser, 2, of Schuylkill Haven, eats his Italian from the Little Jimmy's.

RADIO: Annual field day held

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night no matter what, even on Christmas and New Year's Day."

All ham radios operate on direct current, Munley said, though alternating current can also be used through an inverter. When an emergency occurs and electrical power is interrupted, a gel cell or other type of battery is used.

Visiting the site was Schuylkill County Emergency Management Agency Director John Matz, who is a licensed operator.

"First of all, the amateur radio community has always been very community oriented," Matz said. "Within the county, we refer to it as our 'auxiliary communication system,' which is the same way the state does. We have at our center some amateur equipment, so we have the capability of using our repeaters around the county. We also have UHF, which is ultra high frequency, and HF, which is high frequency."

Matz said the radio enthusiasts in the county have been important when emergencies strike.

"We have utilized amateur operators during times of crisis going on in the county, and that could be simple as the 911 system going out in certain parts of the county," he said. "They also assist us in exercises that we do not only in Schuylkill County but across all of Pennsylvania. They'll stand up for any of the nuclear power plant drills. It's important. It's something that is utilized a lot of times during the parades, such as in Girardville and Tamaqua, for that auxiliary communications system. It is very beneficial. Normally, what we'll do is work through the two clubs in the county, Tamaqua Wireless and the Schuylkill Amateur Repeater Association.

Matz said there is an effort to bring in new people interested in amateur radio.

"Additionally, we have been trying to spark extra interest, and we've been pretty successful through the efforts of the emergency coordinators out in Porter Township and Tower City," he said. "They've run two classes on becoming operators and then follow through on testing. They've actually increased their numbers out there by about a dozen, which is beneficial to the local, because, of course, all disasters are local. When something happens in the county and with my small staff, we rely heavily on the local coordinators, and amateur operators can supplement those local coordinators. They're civic-minded, but they're also technologically savvy. Being able to have an extra set of eyes and ears out there saying 'Here's what's going on in my part of the county' is important."

One of the newest club members is Jeff Coleman, of Middleport, who became serious about the hobby after his father, William "Bill" Coleman, passed away about two years ago.

"For him, it was a lifelong hobby ever since he was a teenager," Coleman said. "He always tried to get me into the hobby, but I never did good taking the tests, so I just flunked out of them and gave up. Once he passed away, I pushed myself to get into it with the goal of taking over his call sign. I had to reach the same class (of operator) in order to do that. Now I'm getting interested even though I have no clue what I'm doing, but I'm interested. I'm learning as much as anybody else starting the hobby."

For more information about amateur radio and about becoming a TWA member, contact Munley at 570-462-3683.

Contact the writer: jusalis@republicanherald.com; 570-628-6023



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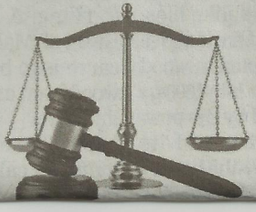
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