SPLATTER

This Bulletin is printed from time to time and distributed to the membership of the
Tamaqua Wireless Association
Tamaqua, Pa. 18252

Jan.-Feb.-Mar. Ground Hog Issue 1997

The Presidents Corner

By KB3ABY



If you read your "Splatter Early Fall issue" you saw the article "Volunteer Anyone". It mentions there how you react when asked to write an article for the "Splatter". Well, I was chosen to be your president for the coming year and was informed that aside from wielding the gavel at club meetings , appoint committees, and have my two cents into every phase and activity of the club. I was also expected to write an article for the presidents corner. So here she goes, we'll give it the Old Tamaqua High Try. (Substitute for Ole College Try)

My name is Tony, my call letters are KB3ABY . I live in West Penn Township which is eight miles south of Tamaqua. I recently acquired an ICOM 736 with which I am slowly getting aquainted. The next item will be to get an antenna in the air. I've been collecting bits and pieces for the antenna and hopefully by the time spring is here we'll be pushing some RF into the atmosphere. [Look out Albert] .We also have a two meter unit that could use an outdoor skywire .

I follow in the footsteps of a very active and outstanding leader, WY3K . I hope I am worthy of holding the gavel at our meetings . TWA also has W3TI who is secretary treasurer for the Tamaqua Amateurs for more than forty years in addition he being the Section Manager for Eastern Pennsylvania of the Atlantic Division . We also have many other knowledgeable members in our Association and need not have to look to far for answers to our varied questions

I am looking forward to associating and working with all of you with our many, many projects and activities in the coming year, Field Day, Hamfests etc. and who knows just what will crop up . May I have the pleasure of seeing all of you at our regular monthly meetings . It's not much fun presiding over an empty meeting room . To coin a phrase, Don't ask me what I can do for you, Ask yourself what you can do for the Association . 73.

Editors Note -- Tony is a bit modest with his remarks. He was originally licensed during the 1960's when the Novice license was only valid for one year. Hamus Virus returned again in 1990 when he attended our license instruction classes at the Tamaqua High school and graduated with the amateur call KB3ABY . Presently he has a General class ticket. Although not active on any ham bands he takes a great interest in all TWA functions and activities. Living in the Mahoning Valley farming area he has plenty of room for an antenna farm .

While I'm at it, our new Vice President elect, Ed W3ZHW is also a go-getter and interested in the many phases of the hobby. Keep your eyes on these two . New blood, new ideas, that is what has kept amateur radio alive and progressive in the Tamaqua area for well over forty-five years

From Where We Sit

By W3TI



attending club meetings on a regular basis lately then you could be behind in club news and happenings . However the active members and judiciary have been waiting patiently since September for the FCC to make up their minds and issue TWA a new club call letter . This all started back during early 1995 when FCC announced the possibility for clubs to get a station call . At that time we applied for a club call and in three weeks the FCC issued the club call of K B 3 B I H. Wow, what a call for CW. All the paperwork was prepared in advance with the anticipation that we would be ready to apply for a special club call when the FC C's Vanity call program went into affect.

Then the time arrived and in late September the FCC opened Gate 2 for clubs to get that call of their own choosing. It had been previously decided by the members to make application for our former treasurers call, W3CMA .Permission had been granted by Tony's widow, Nancy and all the necessary paperwork was processed and mailed with the check for $ 30.00 .

Time passes on, and on, and on , and on. October and November pass by and finally the second week of December we got a call from trustee NI3H the FCC had returned all our paperwork with request for a mess of additional answers and paperwork . Have you ever tried to obtain a copy of a death certificate after someone has been deceased for over five years ? The best we could come up with was a copy of the obituary notice from the morgue of the local newspaper office. Once again the paperwork was shuffled off to ye FCC. Again time marches on .

Back in September when FCC opened the gate for acquiring canceled or delinquent call signs our activities manager K3NYX applied for the call W3ZRQ and received it within four weeks . Other clubs in the area by now were receiving club calls of their choosing but not the Tamaqua Wireless Association .

Monday January 13 ye editor gets a call from trustee NI3H with the info that we have now received a new club call W 3 C M A had been issued to the Tamaqua Wireless Association .

Technically there was nothing wrong with our original application . There had been no indication what so ever in the FCC instructions that required a death certificate . His license had been returned a few weeks after his death and the FCC did not cancel it . I still affirm that it was an FCC problem and not ours.

Using a phrase from my Pennsylvania Dutch background, "Sometimes it wonders me " . What is so special about this call, you ask ? We plan to answer that in subsequent issues , keep tuned in .

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1997 Dues R Due

No matter where you look today it costs you money. Just to press the lever on the ole hopper runs the water meter and costs you. The same goes with every organization, it is finances that keep it going. In the case of TWA, all we need is enough for postage, Field Day and the Family picnic . Revenue to cover those expenses are derived from 50/50 drawings, donations and the annual $ 10.00 membership dues.

So what do I get for that ten bucks beside a club bulletin ? As a member you have the opportunity and advantage of the services of our Antenna erection crew. An out-going DX QSL bureau service. A discount on your ARRL membership dues. In addition to congregating as an organized trained group of professional communicators . Last year another was added , if you make any up-grade in license class the club will pay for the VE exam fee .

Back to reality. Annual dues are always due after the first of December and past due after the regular meeting of February of the following year. Take a glance at the call letters on your mailing label . If it is yellow hi-lighted you are not one of the club sponsors and if not taken care of by February 21 [next club meeting] we must inform you that the Field Day - Fire Cracker issue will be sent to you without a mailing label.

Sell - Swap - Barter

SELL MFJ 949E Antenna tuner. One Discone Antenna w/10 & 80 meter resonators. Wayne Benack KA3SID, 120 E. Ridge St. Coaldale,Pa 717-645-9834

SELL Phelps Dodge two meter Duplexer, Excellent condx. w/manuals K3NYX - Evenings 717-668-5198

SELL Limited quantity of the T-KEY keyer paddle .

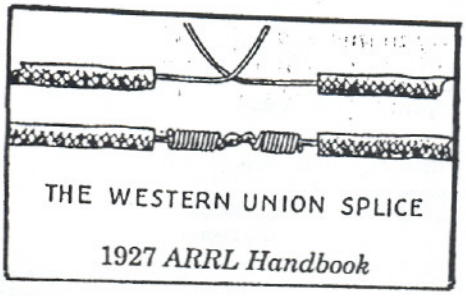
A Creative Products SAC-10 Smart Repeater controller circuit board never used with manuals. QST's back issues boxed by the year from 1954 to 1975 . Any reasonable offer . 717-668-3098 .

1997 TWA V E Sessions

Follows are the dates for VE test session given by the Tamaqua Wireless Assn VE team. All sessions start at 9 a.m. and held at the Tamaqua Municipal building 320 East Broad St. Tamaqua.

March 1, June 7, August 2 and November 1 .

No preregistration is required, all walk-ins . Come prepared with pen & pencils. Your original valid license and copies of license and copy of any CSCE's you may have. in addition with some means of personal identification. FCC 610 forms are available at the test site. For additional info call W3TI 668-3098 or WY3K 386-2384.



THE WESTERN UNION SPLICE

1927 *ARRL Handbook*

W 3 C M A

Anthony J. Sarli born during the early part of this century and parented by two Italian emigrants who became American Citizens. He answered to Tony and was reared and educated in Tamaqua , and a graduate from Stroudsburg Teachers college and by the time we got to know him he had received his masters degree in Education. Tony was fresh out of teachers college during the depression early in the 1930's and eager to apply his know-how to the Pennsylvania Educational system but openings for new teachers were very scarce

It was the era of the WPA, Works Progress Administration, a program promoted by U. S. President Delano Roosevelt . Times were tuff and this was designed to put people back to work . One of these programs was in progress in the Tamaqua area , it was summer and Tony was in dire need of some kind of employment . One day he decided to approach the head man on the WPA project and asked him for a job . The head man looked him over and asked, "What are you registered in the county, Democrat or Republican" ? Tony asked " What am I supposed to be registered " ? The WPA boss replied, "Democrat" . Tony said "I'm Democrat". WPA boss said Okay you're hired.

Tony didn't end up at the end of a pick and shovel but was put in charge of the paperwork for the county WPA records . He also was in charge of transportation, he was the county boss's chauffeur and would drive him from one project to another.

This is only one small portion that we can relate about the life as we had known him. We'll try to give you another episode in the next issue of Splatter. Keep tuned in .....

Splatter's Groundhog Report



For who knows how many years we have been printing the Groundhog Issue,but never a groundhog report on the lil' critter's annual prediction . Did you know that the Groundhog is native to North America and more so in the State of Pennsylvania. The coyote of the west is only a close relative and has a wicket howl. Our native groundhog has a very meek squeal when hurt or in danger. Back to the report.. We really don't need the lil' varmint for a prediction . Just take a walk outside on Sunday February 2 and if you cast a shadow from the sun, we'll have 6 more weeks of winter. If no shadow -- We'll have the same. First day of Spring, is in six weeks - - - -March 20 - - - -

The government has proposed a new agency -- The Federal Bureau for Reducing Bureaucracy

New From the League

By W3TI

As we enter a new year it brings forth a number of changes, not only with TWA club activities but on the National front also. If you plan to visit one of the Volunteer Examiner's sessions after the first of January you will find the cost for that exam will have been increased to $ 6.25 . Only Novice elements 1a and 2 are still free via an ARRL VEC but if you happen to take the Novice exam at a W5YI examiner you will have to pay for it. Another benny given you by the ARRL.

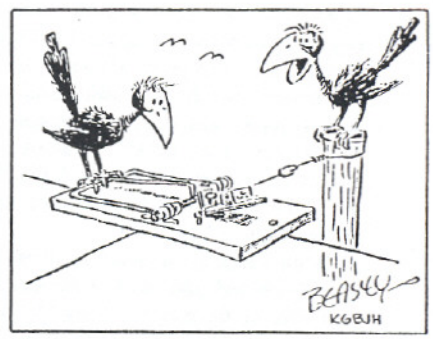
On the other hand, members of TWA have a better bargain . If you make an up-grade the club picks up the tab for the VE exam fee.

The out-going QSL bureau has increased their fee . At one time it was only a dollar for a pound of QSL's. After the first of January it has been increased to $ 3.00 per/lb. or ten cards for a dollar. Best way to send cards to be sure they get there is via UPS. Send them to ARRL QSL Bureau, 225 Main St. Newington, Ct. 06111, or let the club secretary collect them from the members and let the club send them. That way they only cost about 2 or 3 cents each . Just another club benny.

On a final note - Beginning July 1, 1997 your ARRL membership renewal shall increase . Presently it is $ 31.00 per/yr. *(we do not have the new renewal figures at this time).* BUT if your membership expires after July 1, you can still re-up at the present figures of $ 31.00 per/yr OR better yet, you can renew your membership via the club for $ 29.00 and save 2 bucks. Members over-the-hill 65 or older get the five dollar discount in addition to the clubs two dollar discount . It pays to belong ....

There are a number of Section level meetings coming up and TWA members are not excluded from attending. On April 20 a gathering of all county Emergency coordinators will be held at the Tamaqua Municipal building . If you're interested in emergency communications then that is the meeting to attend.

Arrangements have been made with Knoebels Grove to hold an Eastern Pennsylvania Section Family picnic on July 12 . Everyone is invited. We have been given Pavilion "N" for the day. Additional news and items pop up from time to time . To keep up to date you have to attend the TWA club meetings.



Ya better watch out for that - - I don't think this guy's wrapped to tight and understands the concept of a Trap Antenna !

1997 T W A OFFICERS

President Anthony Safarra KB3ABY
V. Pres. Ed Russell W3ZHW
Secy-Treas Allen Breiner W3TI
Activity Mgr. Jeffrey Kunkel KB3ACB
Chaplain Wayne Benack KA3SID
Trustee Dave Christ NI3H

E P A Hamfest Schedule

Feb.	15	Harrisburg Hamfest Oberlin, Pa.
Mar.	16	Keystone Springfest, Dover, Pa.
Apr.	12	Appalachian ARG Fredricksburg
Apr.	13	Colombia-Montour Bloomsburg
May	4	Warminster , Wrightstown Pa
May	30 June 1	Rochester Hamfest
July	4	Harrisburg, Dillsburg, Pa
July	5	Murgas Hamfest, Dallas Pa
July	13	Mid-Atlantic, Kimberton, Pa.
July	19	Jonestown Mt. Rptr, Beach Haven
July	26	Berwick Fest, Location ??
Aug.	16-17	Hamfest, York Pa
Oct.	19	Penn Wireless Assn. Newtown, Pa

Above list is as of Jan 25 and subject to change without notice

Neophyte or Old Timer

From the files of W3TI

When you lose the thrill of a QSO with a W-one or two
When the fact that you're heard in some far distant land
Just don't mean a thing to you - - -

When sending a card is a burdensome task
and a listener's card is taboo
It's time you pulled the switches and closed the shack
Cuz there's nothing left in this Ham game for you.

When you snub a beginner, when a chirp is a crime
and a QRS plea you abhor
You'd better get out'a ham radio
Because it's no fun for you anymore.

I love to be told "You're my first VE3"
Even if he just lives across the line
and the pleasure of working a chirpy OT
is a thrill to me anytime

I like to "pipe down" , send slow to a kid
and tell him his keying is fine
and when he comes out with that "Pse QSL"
believe me, the pleasures all mine.

If you want to enjoy this old radio game
just pause and think back or'e the years
Even when you hooked a seven
you thought you did fine.
And to lose him almost brought tears.

Just think back to your lid years again
and remember this is quite true
You must do unto others in this Ham Radio World
As you'd have them do unto you. 73 de W3TI

No Zeros

By W3TI

We are not referring to the WWII Japanese fighter plane but to the map of the good ole U S of A. You will notice the map below is petitioned off in districts from one (1) to nine (9). They represent our Amateur Radio call letter districts, BUT, where is the "Ø" district, there isn't any.

One of our Wednesday nite Teck sessions brought up the subject of WAS and reference was made to the ARRL map of the 50 states [**]

Have we got your attention by this time ? No ! this is not the April Fool issue of Splatter. What follows is the truth and nothing but .....

The map shown is a reprint taken from the 1922 ARRL Handbook. Price $ 1.00 . As we check out this map let's begin at the west coast. The 6th district at that time included Nevada, Utah, and Arizona . They are now a part of district 7.



District 9 was split in two and those states west of the Mississippi river, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, and Colorado were used to form the new Zero " Ø " district

The south central states of New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi maintained the same borders for district 5. Likewise, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island retained the same boundaries for district 1.

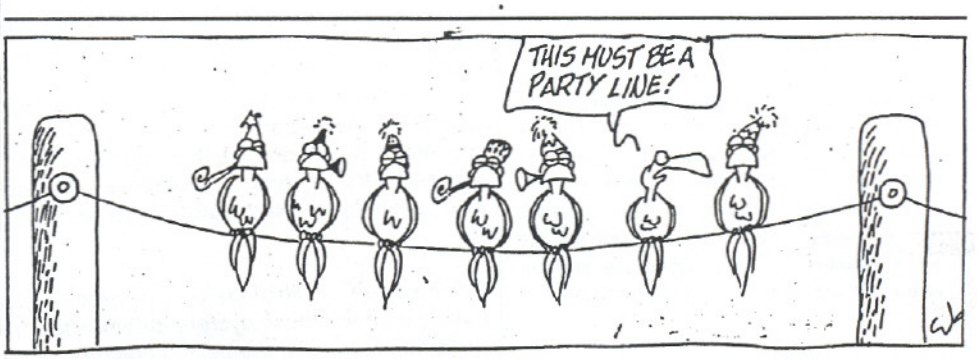
The FCC boys had a field day and really did a lob on district 2, 3, 4, and 8. In the 4th district they took Kentucky from district 9, Virginia from district 3 and added them to the 4th district.

The eighth district was a dandy. Aside from Michigan, Ohio and West Virginia it crossed diagonally through Pennsylvania and cut cross the lower south east corner of New York state. Michigan, Ohio and West Virginia was left as district 8 .

That diagonal line through Pennsylvania is none other than the Blue mountain which happens to be the Schuylkill and Berks county line to the south of Tamaqua. Yes, Tamaqua at one time was in the 8th call letter district.

Pennsylvania , Maryland, Delaware and the District of corruption was made into a whole new district right after WWII. New York and New Jersey became district 2. You won't find this information in any history books but it is in the old ARRL Handbooks prior to 1930.

[**] The maps detailed here are available FREE. Just ask your SM for a copy.



With the ARES

By WY3K

Since this is my first ARES article in the Splatter, I want to thank the Tamaqua Wireless Association for their interest in the ARES organization as well as providing me with an opportunity to promote public service within the amateur community. As a past president of TWA, you may have already detected from my Presidents Corner articles that public service in my niche in Ham Radio.

As an ARES Emergency Coordinator it is my responsibility and goal to make sure the Schuylkill County ARES organization is trained to operate in a knowledgeable and professional manner when providing any communications for public service events, or when working with Public Safety officials during emergencies. The latter being the most difficult since public safety professionals are often skeptical of our abilities, or they do not know we even exist. Equally important, it is my responsibility for making sure the ARES program in Schuylkill county is open to all radio operators, and services are available to all agencies with whom the ARRL holds formal Memoranda of Understandings. For those who are wondering what agencies utilize amateur radio communications during emergencies or disaster relief efforts, they are : American Red Cross, APCO, FEMA, National Communications System, Salvation Army and the National Weather Service. And finally, it is important that our organization maintains a close working relationship with RACES operations on a local level and within the county.

This year will be a special year for amateurs involved in any kind of public service. At a special meeting last October, the ARRL board of directors declared 1997 as the "ARRL Public Service Awareness Year". The 1997 ARRL annual convention will also have public service as its theme. Locally, 1997 is shaping up to be a promising year for the Schuylkill County ARES Organization. After a very successful table top Simulated Emergency test in October, those members that were present thought it would be a great idea to continue with that type of training on a regular basis. So it was decided to have an ARES meeting every fourth Wednesday of the month. The sessions would start at 7:30 p.m. and held in the conference room of Building and Zoning at the Tamaqua Municipal building.

The first meeting on January 22 was a hugh success, as we covered the structure of the ARES organization and our role in providing public service communications. Also discussed was the part the National Traffic system becomes involved during emergencies. Training on NTS and message handling will also be incorporated with the ARES training. Those who participated, pass the word. This training is not just for TWA members but for anyone in amateur radio who has an interest in Public Service.

Ground , or Just plain Dirt ?

By WØRPV

The ground connection for electronic equipment , particularly the radio transmitting type, can often be the most difficult part of the installation. Most people do not realize this. They move along secure in their knowledge that an effective ground has been made. Most of the time their knowledge is not tested -- which is lucky for all of us. My purpose here is to give the reader some insights on grounds and some of the things to look out for. Unfortunately this is a topic so diverse, unique to local conditions and so broad in coverage that no stack of encyclopedias can cover it all. What we can do is point out the worst potholes on the road to a good RF ground.

The following is a true story. Some years ago I had to make a hurry up trip to a South American country because their airport authority was complaining to my boss that our latest and greatest radio transceiver product was not working properly.

Arriving on the scene I attempted a translation from "It doesn't work" to engineering language I could understand. It seems the operator burned his mustache on the microphone. He also complained this radio wouldn't reach out as far as the older transceiver. I asked what had been changed and went on from there. They told me that to improve work efficiency they moved the transceiver from the ground floor to the second floor so as to be close to the dispatch services . Meanwhile I inspected the rest of the installation. There was a gallon paint can on the floor behind the desk that held the transceiver. A bare copper wire ran from the transceiver to the center of the can. Upon further inspection I see the can is packed solid with red clay, I imagine from some nearby flower bed.

What is the can for, I asked, almost afraid of what the answer might be. That is the ground senior engineer, just like it say in the installation manual. Incredulous, and asked to see the manual. Sure enough our technical writer had written that a suitable ground could be obtained by making connection to a water pipe or soil . Everybody knows that Soil is ground, eh , isn't it ?

Besides the can ground they had omitted the radials for the vertical antenna on the roof of the building. Radials were added and a heavy copper strap run down to the old ground connection against the outside wall downstairs. Now they were able to talk to aircraft over European airspace and Manual's mustache was safe from any incendiary. More than twenty five years have passed but they still remember me as that "Great Yankee engineer".

Let's see what we can learn from that story. When they were on the ground floor the ground lead was short so the inductive reactance was low and they were able to get an effective low-impedance ground. The connection was made to the water pipe entering the building. When they moved to the second floor they still used a wire for the ground but saw no advantage to the long wire so they opted for what they thought was just as good - a can full of dirt. Then by changing to a wide outside surface lowered the impedance enough to permit the system to work.

The radials also increased the efficiency and extended the range via low angle of radiation. Now the RF went out the antenna instead of coming back down the feed line to burn Manuel's mustache. The key word here is IMPEDANCE. A. C. circuits are a mite trickier than DC . But don't dispare , in this era of electronics often the best approach is empirical, when the old cut and try methods brings on the solution.

With 60 Hz. and DC, achieving a low resistance connection is mostly a matter of getting the right size hardware connected to the lowest potential point in the neighborhood. But at the higher frequencies life should be so simple. That base ball bat sized buss bar that offers a fractional ohm resistance at DC can act like a ceramic insulator given the right frequency. Did you ever see metal posts used for stand-offs ? This is common practice in microwave circuits.

For anyone except those with access to specialized test equipment, measuring the impedance of an RF ground is nearly impossible. Even if you were able to get measurements you would find it different every day due to soil conductivity and changes in the weather.

If the equipment in question can be grounded do so. There are some popular articles in ham literature showing how to improve the conductivity of a ground connection by surrounding the ground rod with rock salt or copper sulfate, theory being that it lowers the ground resistance. I'm sure it does so, as well as to pollute the environment and assure corrosion to set in on any ground conductors and connectors..

** Editors Note . This has been another in a series of articles we printed referring to having a good ground system for you shack radio gear. The ground system is just as important as having the best in antenna or sky-wire.*