SPLATTER

This Bulletin is printed from time to time and distributed to the members of the Tamaqua Wireless Association

Mar. April May | Ground Hog Issue | 2001

After the Smoke Cleared

By W3ZRQ President

A continuation of our previous article.



Well, a new year has arrived with everyone getting ready for new activities the club is dreaming up that will keep the months ahead quite busy. Although the weather will not allow outside activities at present, every member can start making a list of things that will need to be done as soon as the spring comes.

I, for one, have changes to be made to my antenna system. The R-5 vertical which was put up last fall will now be replaced with an R-6000 vertical which Santa put under our Christmas Tree.

As reported last issue, the R-5 was working great and the redesigned home brew tuner I made energized every smoke alarm throughout the house. After going back to the drafting board, I finally came up with a design and located components heavy enough to handle the power I put through it. So far this winter it has worked with no problem at all—AND NO SMOKE !

By the time you receive this issue we will have already started classes or about to. Yes ! W3TI was pressured into service and asked not to waist his 99 year teaching certificate. He has about 65 years left on it. So he agreed to teach an Extra Class for those of us who need to upgrade. (See elsewhere in this issue)

Another one of the activities that was discussed at the club meeting and is being scheduled for this year is VHF QSO Party in the early part of June. About 10 years ago the club had a ball operating the QSO Party. Elder members still talk about that activity and all the surprises we experienced. As plans progress we will keep you informed. So far we have a site confirmed and a lot of interest shown. Better yet ! Attend the meetings and keep abreast with club activities.

Another change this year is the relocation of our Field Day Site. Since last year, the water has been drained from the Owl Creek Reservoir and a member of the club has offered a new location. Some time early in the spring the club will be visiting KB3DYJ's picnic grove somewhere in Locust Valley to check things out and make plans for antenna locations and all that is needed for setup. At present, plans are to make it another three day affair and start setting up on Friday instead of Saturday.

For those who never look at the calendar, Field Day will be June 22, 23, and 24. Advanced reservations are never required to attend Field Day but it would be a big help for the set-up group to know in advance who they can count on and will be available to erect the antennas and arrange the stations. Head Chef, Ron, in charge of K. P. and feeding the troupes would also appreciate a head count. Anyone with an idea for this year's Field Day please share it with us. Until next issue, 73's

No One's That Perfect

TWA activity during the past year has been very commendable insofar as the members, committee chairman and officers. Each time we look back and take note of our faults and mistakes and we say, " We'll do better next time". If each project or program we participated in had always turned out 100 % perfect, no flaws, no mistakes. Then according to the laws of psychology we haven't learned or gained anything. If everything was perfect what additional knowledge would we have acquired, "Strictly Nothing". We would be just as ignorant as we were before.



*Editors note * The difference between Ignorance and stupidity. Ignorance is the lack of knowledge and can be taught. whereas, Stupidity is a lost cause*

On the other hand if we made a few blunders or something went wrong with our well laid plans and we had to stop in the middle of the stream to make corrections, then we will have learned something.

The main rule of Psychology is "We learn by our mistakes". You've heard it on the air at times when some one makes the statement, "I never made a mistake in my life ". STOP, check that persons background and you'll probably find he never did anything in order to error or make a mistake. That ancient cliché "To err is human" , there is no getting away from it.

You can put the batteries in your flash light backwards and it will still work but how many times have you accidentally put the batteries in your portable broadcast radio in reverse ? I hope you had the forethought to turn the set off before replacing them.

How about connecting the coax cables to the wrong SO-239 i.e. antenna vrs. transmitter. Or, trying to make contact with your 75 meter schedule with the rig connected to the 20 meter dipole. Better yet, how about trying to make a contact with a Florida ten meter beacon station. Or dropping the wrong antenna during Field Day.

Then there's the time when we talk into the back or wrong side of the Mic. Here we have justification. Has anyone ever seen written instructions anywhere that tells you which is the correct side of the Mic to talk into ? If you're a radio telephone operator you probably have more than one or two Microphones. How many times have you picked up the wrong one and pressed the push to talk switch and nothing happened.

The older style transmitters would key the cathode to ground for CW operation and if you accidentally had your left hand on the receiver dial *(ground potential)* and touched the bare metal of your J-38 telegraph key, you would get the surprise of your life. Just another lesson on the potential and the flow of an electric current.

Continued next page

Officers 2001

President Al W3ZRQ
Vice Pres. Ron KB3CFV
Secy-Treas. Al W3TI
Trustee Chip NI3H / W3CMA

Committees
EC ARES / RACES Bill WY3K
Antenna Crew Steve KB3FJJ
Activities Mgr. Ed KB3DYJ
Bulletin Editor Al W3TI
RFI Bud KB3FSU
VEC Bill WY3K

Volunteer Examiner Sked

Starting with the new Millennium 2001 there will be a number of changes for those who plan to take an exam for new or upgrade license. First, the VEC cost has been increased to $ 10.00. The FCC eliminated the ceiling on exam fees and left it up to the VEC to set the price. Since the Novice class is eliminated there are no Free-bees anymore.

Other changes will be made to each element in the written exam. Answers to the questions will still be from a multiple choice list. Letter and number characters for the 5 WPM code test will still be sent at 13 WPM but spaced at 5 WPM. The multiple choice list in the code test has been eliminated and the answers will have to be entered from your code test copy sheet.

The Tamaqua VE team will be available at 9 a.m. in the Tamaqua Municipal building on Saturday March 3rd, June 2nd, August 4th and November 3rd. Prior registration is not required. You must have some means of personal identification and don't forget to bring pencils for the exam and a pen to fill out the FCC 605 application. For additional info contact TWA.

President Signs CB enforcement act

President Bill Clinton signed legislation that permits the enforcement of certain FCC Citizens Band regulations by State and Local governments. Amateur Radio operators are exempt from the provisions of the law . PL 106-521. The FCC will not yield its authority to regulate Citizens Band or other radio services. In short, the measure authorizes states and localities to enact laws that prohibit the use of unauthorized CB equipment consistent with FCC regulations. This would include linear amplifiers or equipment that is not FCC certificated.

FCC licensed stations in any radio service including the a Amateur Radio service are excluded from such state or local enforcement.

Working DX

Whenever you have a QSO with a station outside the confines of the United States or with another country it is considered to be a DX contact. At present there are over 330 different countries throughout the world. The Technician who just upgraded to General class opened the door to that vast opportunity and is able to make such contacts, providing of course they have the station equipment to do so.

Such is the case with one of our club members who recently took that step. With the sun spot cycle on the rise it has become very easy to make contact with foreign countries with just a hundred watts or less and a simple dipole or vertical antenna.

It so happens our club president W3ZRQ got bit by the DX bug using a zepp antenna which tends to be more directional north and south. The vertical on the other hand is omni directional. He soon learned that a vertical antenna is a bit tricky to load but when mastered does a fantastic job pulling in the DX stations.

Then I remembered we had printed an article in the 1994 April issue of Splatter about the U.S. Signal Corp and the problem they had transmitting military information from North Africa back to England. *Note During WW-II all amateur frequencies were used by the military.*

The U S Signal Corp would copy Rummel's Afrika Corp maneuvers who operated on ten meters and then relay the data back to England on 15 meters but at times had a difficult time getting through to England.

Those of us who recall, during the war we had to make use of a lot of substitutes and the Johnsons Wax company came out with a product which was used to water proof canvas. It was found out if it was spread or wiped on telephone cables and wires prevented them from shorting out when they got wet.

The Signal Corp heard about it and decided to use the compound on their coax cables and even went so far to spread it on their mobile vertical antennas. Much to their surprise both the transmit and received signal strength increased greatly. The word was passed on to the top brass and every unit was informed to do likewise.

Our story now shifts to 1975. It was during one of our safaris to Harrisburg surplus when we came across a pallet of one quart cans marked "*Johnsons Wax* MILH-5606-A" and our eyes lit up like roman candles. That was the Military specification number the Signal Corp used in WW-II. So we purchased ten dozen cans.

The basic theory of why this concoction works, it decreases the radiation resistance of the antenna by 0.8 percent, resulting in a 5 percent increase of the Velocity Factor . Therefore giving the emitted radio signal a 15 db. gain and increases the force for it to penetrate the heavy side layer and skip zone resulting with an increase in signal strength at the receiving station.

I suggested W3ZRQ, spread some of that *Antenna Wax* on his vertical and see if it would help. Well, the rest is history. We hear the story at every club meeting how well he is working the elusive DX. If any of the members are interested the club still has twenty cans of this special *Antenna Wax*.

What is Electricity ?

By Der Perfesser Schnukelgruver

The question for this issue is; What in the world is electricity .... And where does it go after it leaves the toaster ?

We all know about the experiment if you scuff your feet across the carpet you can pick up enuff electrons to get sparks from your finger tips and if we scuffed long enough you would build up so many electrons that you would explode. But no one has ever gone that far yet.

We now live in a society who takes for granted our electric lights, radios, mixers, and many other modern conveniences, it should be known that only a few hundred years ago people did not have those conveniences. This is just as well because at that time there was no place to plug them in, because the electric outlet had not yet been invented.

An early experimenter was Ben Franklin who flew his kite during a thunder storm and picked up so many extra electrons it turned him so psychotic he began to speak in riddles like "A penny saved is a penny earned" - - and more.

There were other early experimenters like Myron Volt, Louis Amp, Hilda Watt and others. But the greatest pioneer of them all was Tom Edison. Edison was a brilliant inventor despite the fact he had very little formal education and he lived in New Jersey. He invented the phonograph in 1877 which soon found its way into thousands of American homes and it sat there until 1923 when the phonograph record was invented

Edison's supreme achievement came in 1879 when he invented the electric company. His design was brilliant. The electric company generated electricity and sent it through a wire to the customers house, but the company cleverly provided another wire so after the electricity went through the toaster they would immediately get all the electricity back.

This is the brilliant part They sell the same electricity back to the customer again. This means the electric company can sell the same batch of electricity over and over thousands of time a day and never get caught. Why, primarily because very few customers take the time to examine their electricity closely. A known fact there has been no new electricity generated since 1937 when the Hoover dam was built in Arizona. The electric companies have been reselling their electricity ever since, which is why they have so much free time to apply for rate increases. If you're interested we can tell you more about electricity in our next issue.

Is it Time Yet !

If you had to ask that question then you are probably one of our TWA members who had forgot to turn your clocks back to Eastern Standard time last October. It was also the same time we informed each member about the possibility of a change in our Bylaws part 1 and 2 of Article V.

The reason we made that change was to cope with our club expenses as they cropped up. Club activities always seem to require some expenses. In the future we'll have to budget those expenditures in accordance with the amount of dues that we receive between October and January.

TWA dues are still $ 10.00 for the year and the usual behinder-reminder will be the "yellow" hi-lited call letters on your bulletin mailing label. When the color changes to "Red" you will be placed on the clubs inactive list.

Restructuring Continues

By J. Yogi Bear WB3FQY

The recent announcement that Donner and Blitzen have elected to take the early reindeer retirement package has triggered a good deal of concern about whether they will be replaced, and about other restructuring decisions to be made at the North Pole.

This Streamlining is due to the North Pole's loss of dominance in the season's gift distribution business. Home shopping channels and mail order catalogues have diminished Santa's market share. He could not sit idly by and permit further erosion of his profit.

The reindeer downsizing was made possible through the purchase of a late model Japanese sled for the CEO's annual trip. Improved productivity is anticipated from Dasher and Dancer who summered at Harvard Business School. Reduction in reindeer will also lessen airborne environmental emissions for which the area around the North Pole has been receiving unfavorable press.

I am pleased to inform you that Rudolph's role will not be disturbed. Tradition still counts for something at the North Pole Management denies, in the strongest possible language, the earlier leak that Rudolph's nose got that way, not from the cold, but from to much booze. Calling Rudolph "a lush who was into the sauce and never did pull his share of the load" was an unfortunate comment, made by one of Santa's helpers and taken out of context at a time of year when he is known to be under executive stress.

Hence, starting with the eve of December 24th 2001, the annual North Pole delivery, from the jolly old fellow, will split the load between him, United Parcels Service and Federal Express. Since they are the slowest, a small portion will be left for the U. S. Mail Service to be delivered on the 25th.

Swap'en Shop

The Swap and Shop column is entered FREE for the our members. TWA will not be held responsible for value nor condition of items listed.

SELL Yaesu FT-101 EE with mic and manuals. 160 to 10 meters SSB & CW, 3 pair spare final tubes. Operates from 115 VAC supply or 12 VDC. An R-5 Vertical antenna for 10-12-15-17-& 20 mtrs. Complete package deal $ 400.00
Contact W3ZRQ 668-5198

SELL Yaesu FT-207-R Handi-Talkie, Leather carrying case, Yaesu charger unit with all manuals. $ 50.00
Contact W3TI 668-3098

SELL From estate of Tony KB3ABY. Simpson VOM model 260. $ 60.00 One Pair of good quality Headphones $ 25.00 Each in excellent condition Contact TWA Secretary, W3TI.

Our T W A Motto

We the Willing Led by the Unknowing
Are doing the Impossible For the Ungrateful.
We have Done So Much For So Long With So Little
We Are Now Qualified to Do Anything
WITH NOTHING

Pse QSL Via the Bureau

A TWA Member Service

This article will be of little interest to our elder members because they have already experienced the thrill a QSO with amateurs across the pond or foreign countries. But will give our newer members some information about how to get that foreign amateur to send you a return QSL card.



A radio contact with an amateur from another country is considered to be only half of the QSO. The other half of the contact is a card called a QSL , or written confirmation from said foreign amateur that he really did have a conversation with you via amateur radio. That card is proof you made a contact with him and will show proof in order to acquire a number of certificates and other awards, or better known amongst the amateur ranks as "Wall Paper".

Every amateur has their own idea for the design of a card. Many select a design or format from the QSL printers catalogue. Others design or draw up their own ideas and have them printed. There are over three-quarters of a million amateurs in the United States alone and every QSL card will be different because no two station calls are the same.

Now for the question, "How do I send my QSL to the amateur I contacted in Hamburg, Germany or Gold Coast, South Africa" ? Carrier pigeon and pony express are out of the question so we must rely on the International mail service of which the U.S. Mail is a small part. As I write this article the price of the U.S. Mail increased from 33 to 34 cents. That is only for the United States and possessions. The cost for a letter to Europe is close to a dollar. Hence, because of the inflated costs many amateurs won't be sending that QSL .

Fear not, there is always light at the end of the tunnel. Yes, there is always a solution, always a cheaper way. As a member of TWA you can send your cards via the clubs Outgoing QSL bureau. When you compile 10, 25, or more contacts fill out the QSL cards and give them to the club secretary. When we gather a pound of cards they are sent to ARRL DX Out-Going QSL Bureau.

How much is this going to cost me ? The league charges Six dollars a pound (about 150 cards to the pound) plus the cost of a parcel post package. For example; WY3K has collected 35 cards, NI3H 58, W3TI 42, KB3DYJ 15, for a total of 150 cards. Assuming the parcel post will be $ 1.50 and ARRL gets $ 6.00 for a total of $ 7.50. The cost for each member would come to; WY3K $ 1.75, NI3H $ 2.90, W3TI $ 2.10, and KB3DYJ $ 0.75 . Those cards were sent to foreign countries for Five cents each. I doubt whether you will get a cheaper service elsewhere. For final details about taking advantage of our DX QSL service contact the TWA bulletin editor.

There are many other benefits derived from belonging to an active Amateur Radio club such as TWA. The QSL service is self supporting in addition to numerous other club functions. Did you know TWA has their own Video Cassette lending library available free to the members. If you haven't attended a meeting lately you probable are out of touch and not up to date with our other club associated services and functions. We still meet every third Friday at 7:30 p.m. at the America Hose Fire Company. Bring a friend with you.

The Way I See It

By Steve KB3FJJ

Well the calendar has been changed again and the lights remain on as we settle into the New Year. The holidays often bring on a reminder of personal nostalgia and tradition as we reminisce our past, and perhaps more importantly, our future. Many will ask what we made as "New Years Resolutions ?" Remember, that oft last minute promise we make, we tend to forget shortly thereafter. I know, because I've done this more often then I would care to admit.

I'd like to make a proposal, lest we "consider" the following resolution as we continue throughout the year. "Be an Elmer" short and simple. In the beginning we all started out at the same place "The bottom". Perhaps we were more fortunate to have been given the beneficiaries of another ham's guidance? Maybe we received that little bit of encouragement to keep trying from our family and friends? For others, maybe it seemed to come "natural". Whatever the case, we all have something we can share. Be it moral support, technical, or encouragement for the new person to become involved with the hobby. The rekindling of an old fire for a seasoned member or perhaps just a personal sense of satisfaction by sharing our fortunes and yes, lest we forget our misfortunes, with those around us, who can and will learn from our experience.

As a club group, we share a special and common bond. One that is in a constant state of evolution, sometimes happy, other times sad, but always spirited and with a sense of individuality. As previously suggested, we all started at the beginning and now as licensed Amateurs and experienced trail hands, who could better lead those who are less familiar. Share your experiences, offer encouragement, and show renewed enthusiasm and may the New Year bring each of us the thrill and satisfaction similar to that of our "first contact", even if only through the eyes of another.

Tamaqua Repeater group

Last summer some of our members involved with the ARES organized a Specialty group within the Tamaqua Wireless Association and named themselves "The Tamaqua Repeater Group". They designed special bylaws with separate officers and raised a fund to operate a two meter repeater in the Tamaqua Area. The main function and purpose is for use of the Tamaqua Amateur Radio Emergency Service and other club activities..

As time went by we had the misfortune of the secretary-treasurer, Tony KB3ABY, become a Silent Key. Meanwhile, Albert WA3WGG, has been having problems with his eyesight and unable to continue as president and asked to be replaced. Therefore to continue with our plans an election would be required for replacement of these officers.

A meeting of the "Repeater Group" met on Friday January 19. In the absence of the president elect, W3ZRQ the TWA president officiated until a president and secretary-treasurer could be nominated and elected.

Steve Mahala, KB3FJJ was elected president and Ed Weicker KB3DYJ elected as secretary-treasurer. A short meeting followed with the technical committee reporting the repeater installation on top of the Tamaqua Hi-Rise building will continue in the near future, weather conditions permitting.

TWA Bylaws

A recent action taken by the club was to make certain changes in our Bylaws. As previously detailed, this was required in order to maintain a more solid financial foundation from one year to another. The changes having been read twice were accepted at the November meeting. Copies were printed and distributed to those who attended the December Christmas party. If you were unable to attend a copy is herewith attached.

We are grateful for the reaction of a number of members who responded immediately by sending their annual dues. Our radio club, yet small in numbers, has in the past accomplished much more than clubs with a large number of members. Member participation and interest in the hobby is the key word to that success.

Member Profiles

One seldom if ever thinks about how we look or appear to another person. Have you ever given some thought as to how others can remember you ? Oh Yea ! I remember him, he's .....

Nr. 1 Who is This ?

It's been some time since he attended a club meeting. He might look about 50 to 60 years young and has a great sense of humor. Extra Class license. Operates on HF frequencies and is an excellent CW operator. Is heard occasionally on 2 meters. Is very knowledgeable in radio and television repairs. Experiments a lot with amateur radio antennae. Likes to home brew a lot of his equipment and is very efficient in the use of a soldering iron.

Nr. 2 Who is This ?

Another Extra class but the only time we get to see him is when he participates with the Halloween parade and attends the club Xmas party. His culinary tastes do not include cheese of any kind. Has a pilots license but gave up flying because of the expense. At present puts all his spare cash into rebuilding antique automobiles. Is not on the air at present because the wind blew his vertical antenna down.

Nr. 3 Who is This ?

A regular "run of the mill" fellow. Never attends any of our club meetings. We have no idea where he works or what his trade or occupation. "He might even be retired ". Haven't heard him on the ham bands for decades.

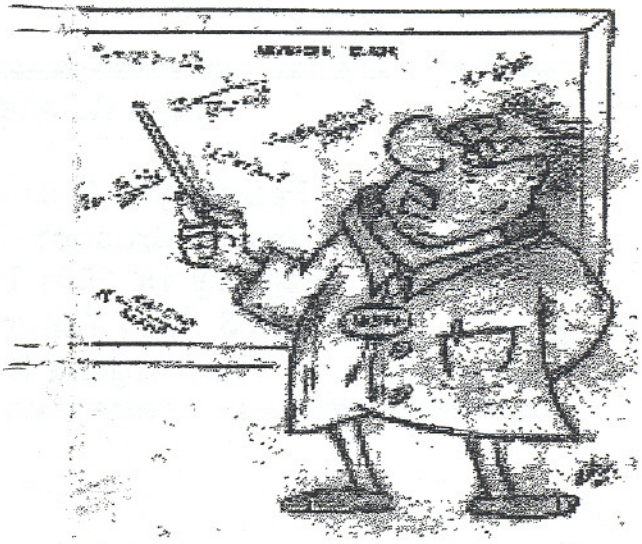
Nr. 4 Who is This ?

He works for a BIG gas company but is not a "Bubble head". An expert organizer, good radio operator, attends club meetings fairly regular. Is involved a lot with emergency communications and volunteer examining. Very active in the club as available time permits.

Off the Cuff

Progress has very little to do with speed
But much to do with direction

Goals are Dreams with Deadlines



TWA Upgrade Classes

You asked for it ! Yep, the scuttlebutt passed around was heard by your judiciary and brought before the members for further discussion.

1. Is there sufficient interest for the club to run instruction classes similar to those held a few years ago.
2. Will there be enough attendance to fill the class room.
3. Can we reserve class rooms for ten weeks.
4. Will we have instructors for such classes.

That's just for starters. It takes a whole lot more planning and preparation for TWA to sponsor such classes. Your club president and secretary talked it over with those who were at the Wednesday Teck session and it seems like we just might be able to get enough for a class. To hold a successful class we should have a minimum of 20 interested candidates. From past experience we had about 10 % drop-outs.

With the above in mind the secretary reserved the meeting room at the Tamaqua Municipal Building for ten weeks. Two hour class sessions will be held from 7:30 to 9:30 beginning Friday, February 2nd. ending April 6. Prior registration will be required and forms will be available at the Tamaqua Municipal Building and the TWA club meeting.

This <u>will not</u> be a course for beginners or for those wishing to become newly licensed. It will be mainly for those who wish to upgrade to Extra class. Suggested class room requirements, a large loose leaf note book (8 1/4 X 11 paper size) and a scientific or slide rule type electronic calculator.

No one's perfect continued

Our club, yet small in membership, has the potential and background of experienced operators. As it is expressed in an accompanying article by KB3FJJ, our club has a number of experienced members and it would be a shame for them not to share their knowledge and experience with other less fortunate. Activities for the next few months are many and our newer members would be very receptive to anything our Ole Timers could pass on. We'll see you at the next meeting.

TWA Calendar of Events

February 2, 2001 – Ground Hog Day
Extra Class Instruction First Session February 2
February 16, 2001 TWA Regular Meeting
March 3, 2001 Tamaqua VE Exams 9 a.m.
TWA Regular Meeting March 16

Tamaqua Wireless Assn.
212 Race Street
Tamaqua, Pa. 18252

TIME LIMITED MEETING NOTICE