SPLATTER

October November December | Autumn Early Winter | 2001

ARRL is at It Again

By W3ZRQ TWA Prez

A few years ago we made the prediction regarding the downfall of ARRL, now it has come to pass and seems more of a reality than a prediction. Individually, those of us in the club who are members of the League know what benefits you get by belonging to that organization, besides getting a monthly issue of QST, there are very few other benefits but will not detail them by number in this article. I'm sure those of us who were members years ago and dropped out had your reasons. (which I have a pretty good idea why you did)



I am also a member of another organization called the AMA (Academy of Model Aeronautics) which I am required to belong in order for me to fly my Radio Control models at flying fields located in State Parks and other sanctioned private fields. Granted, I do pay nine ($9.00) dollars more for membership than ARRL but that can be justified, as I will later explain.

I could compare item for item of what benefits each organization offers but that would fill this page so we'll only hack away at one item to talk about.

1. ARRL (offers) an insurance plan where you can insure your equipment for an outrageous cost for each hundred dollars worth of your valued equipment. When the league first instituted that program years ago it was one dollars per hundred which I could afford at that time. Now, if you could afford it, you have to pay $ 2.25 per 100 in addition to an extra five bucks filing fee for the insurance company. It costs more now because they have to train someone to punch the computer keys. This is pretty salty to insure your equipment and it does not include your tower or antennas, nor property damage and liability.

2. The insurance plan for the AMA covers you with liability up to two and a half million dollars for each occurrence if you cause damage to life or property. Now you ask for how much? It is included in your membership and you don't pay extra for it.

I talked about ARRL membership benefits, now I'll expound about our ARRL club affiliation and what benefits are derived from it. Other than saying, **"Hey we are an ARRL Affiliated club"**, I know of no other benefit than if a member pays their dues through the club, the club gets $2 of it. **NOW THE ARRL HAS TAKEN THAT AWAY FROM US!** So what other bennies do we really have, **NONE.**

I will not go into it any further here, **LOOK ELSEWHERE IN THIS ISSUE** for further explanations. Please read it and come to the **next meeting** so we can discuss this. Air your opiions. Maybe it's time for us to secede from the union !

All you Ever Wanted To know about Traffic Nets

Editors comment

When Amateur Radio started during the 1900's the main objective was to devise a system of amateur stations so they could pass or relay messages from one to another until the message reached its destination. As radio equipment improved and greater transmit and receiving distance were achieved, the need for relay stations began to decline.



This "Relay" system known as the "National Traffic System" or NTS still exists to this day. NTS is broke down into "Regional Nets" corresponding to each call letter district such as 1st, 2nd, 3rd. Etc. Each regional net is then broken into each state represented by that district. For example, the 3rd. District will have a separate traffic net for Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania on 75 and 80 meters.

Pennsylvania has Eastern and Western Pennsylvania nets on 75 and 80 meters. Each metropolitan area or county of Eastern Pennsylvania usually have their own local club or county net that operate on 2 or 6 meters.

So how does the NTS system work ? Station (A) in Wilkes Barre has a message for Tucson, Arizona and passes it to station (B) who is the representative to the Eastern Pennsylvania section net. Station (B) passes the message to station (C)who is a representative from 3rd. Region net. Station (C) meets and passes it to station (D), the representative from the 5th. Region. Some time later station (D) checks into the Tucson 2 meter net and passes the message to the station closest to the addressee. The message left Wilkes Barre at 6 p.m. and is passed through 5 stations and is delivered to the person in Tucson by 10 p.m.

For a net to be qualified as a member of this National Traffic System the net or group must have people who check into the net that know how to handle traffic and are willing to receive messages. The net must have a net manager and reliable representatives to go to the State and regional nets in order to clear any traffic received or sent. A net also requires each station to remain on frequency until the net is QNF, free or ended. There is no such thing as " This is WX5XX in and out ". Why call into a net just for someone to hear their call letters. That station is just taking up a lot of net time and space.

If the net specifies itself as an Emergency net, then the net manager is required to send a monthly report for each session to the County Emergency Coordinator and Section Emergency Coordinator.

In prior articles we stated, been there, seen that, done that and as a former net organizer, net manager, net control and now just member of a legit traffic net we thought we would pass this tidbit of advise to whatever, who or whom ever it may be of interest.

New Item for TWA

Old timers know all about the various certificates available for licensed amateurs but our newer members may not know about DXCC, WAS, WBE WAZ and many, many others. At one time every one of those certificates were available free to amateurs. Then ARRL changed the rules and made them free to ARRL members only. Now they changed the rules again and members even have to pay for those certificates.

Well, TWA has come up with a different offer, a different certificate and it will be FREE to qualifying club members.

Tamaqua Wireless Association has designed a DXL and WAD award. The best thing about these awards is, ***They're Free.*** Yes, free to every TWA member. Another good thing about them, they do not require QSL cards to qualify for them.

ARRL has the DXCC which requires you to have worked 100 or more foreign countries and supply a QSL card for proof of each contact. The DXL is going to be a whole lot different and requires you to make contact with only 50 foreign countries and all you need is a copy of your station log verifying that you made the contact.



The WAD award is for making two way contact with all ten United States call districts, i.e, zero to 9 . Special endorsements will be provided for KC4USA, KG4, KH6, KL7 and PK4 or additional U.S. possessions as required.

The DXL award will be granted to any TWA member who has made two way contact with any fifty (50) foreign countries. Satellite or space stations will count toward the country who owns the communications unit.

1. A QSL card verification will not be required for any TWA awards. Verification for each contact must be shown in the station log, e.g. Date/time, call letters, RST, QTH and name of the operator contacted

2. There is no time limit. Stations who are portable or mobile are credited for the district or country they are operating from, e.g. W3TI / 5 would count as the fifth district. W3TI / VE3 would count as a Canadian contact.



3. Any communications mode of operation listed in the FCC Part 97 of the Amateur Radio rules and regulations will be permitted.

4. A committee of three (3) appointed by the club president will act as the TWA awards committee. The results of that committee will be final.

The first thing which comes to mind will be cheating to get that coveted certificate. Presently ye editor has been awarded more than 95 various certificates, awards and a number of trophies and plaques. I cherish each and every one because I worked hard to get them and was truthful on how they were acquired. If one has to cheat in order to say "I got WAD or DXL" award, it will lay on their conscience and theirs alone whether they got it the easy way or the hard way.

The New 60 meter Amateur Band

From ARRL News Letter

A petition has been filed by ARRL that could result in a new high-frequency band for US amateurs. The ARRL asked the FCC to allocate 5.250 to 5.400 Mhz. To the Amateur Service on a domestic secondary basis.

As proposed, amateurs General class and higher would be permitted to operate phone, CW, data, image and RTTY on the new band running maximum authorized power.

The 150 khz. allocation at 5 Mhz could relieve substantial overcrowding that periodically occurs on 80 and 40. If the new band is approved hams would have to avoid interfering with current occupants of that portion of the spectrum.

160 Meter Band Plan Proposal

The ARRL adopted a revised band plan for 160 meters based on a proposal from the 160 meter Band Plan committee. The plan adopted sets aside a segment for digital modes from 1.800 mhz, maintains CW operation for the entire band and recommends a lower limit of 1.843 for SSB operation and offers QRP and SSB calling frequencies at 1.810 and 1.910 mhz.

Vanity Call Sign Fees Drop

The FCC says the fee for a new or renewed Amateur Radio vanity call sign will drop to $12 on September 10. Applications received on or after that date will be subject to the new fee. The current vanity call sign fee is $14.

The FCC proposed the lower fee last March in a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for the Assessment and Collection of Regulatory Fees for fiscal year 2001. The FCC has estimated that 8000 applicants will apply for vanity call signs in the current fiscal year. There are still quite a number of "W" and "K" call signs available. To find out what is still available drop a line to the FCC at Gettysburg for the list

This is quite a drop in the cost of the vanity call sign. The original cost was $ 50.00 and later it dropped down to $ 46.00 and then to $ 35.00, now $ 14.00 to $ 12.00. *"I wonder if the drop in Wall Street stock market has something to do with it".*

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Did'ja Ever Notice

Just about every one of those 4 million dollar a year sports people when interviewed on the "Tube" have a problem with the English language. Did'ja ever notice they can't complete a statement unless they add *"Ya know" ?* And they continue to use that term during the whole interview. They seem to think everyone is as educated as they are.

Then we have those who can't end a sentence or statement unless they add " *An duh"* . I have never been able to comprehend the meaning for such an ending, It always wonders me, "an duh" what. It this the New English being taught in our Universities today ? I'm not a perfectionist in English but I'm glad I got my degree 30 years ago

Tamaqua Halloween Parade

I guess it's been traditional, for more than thirty-five years the Tamaqua Radio Amateurs have supplied communications for the annual Tamaqua Halloween parade. We have been utilizing the parade as a practice net type set-up for use in case of a local emergency. This practice has provided us with training for many different problems which required on-the-spot decisions. Not only for the parade control station , but also for those in the field where direct contact is made with the marchers and parade units.



This year we'll have the addition of the Tamaqua two meter repeater which will be an asset with greater coverage for those using flea powered hand-held units. Last year the control unit was changed to a different location with the station equipment on the ground floor. This was a much better system to relay the information to the judges. Each year we gain additional knowledge using available antennas and equipment on hand. That is exactly the way it would be in the event of a real emergency.

Even though we have the addition of a repeater, we shall also use the secondary channel of communications. Our new members will be paired up with those who have had previous experience. If you do not have a portable or Handy-talkie we'll provide one for you. If you want a fun night and gain some real on-the-spot communication experience. This is the time and place to get it.

The parade will be held October 30. Set up time starts at 5:30. Every one meet behind the Tamaqua Borough building around five o'clock for assignment and parade unit lists. A hot lunch and refreshments are served at the Tamaqua Elks club following the parade. Please dress according to weather forecasts. Rain date will be Wednesday the 31st.

New Tamaqua EMA Director

Members of the association who were in attendance at the last club meeting had chance to meet and speak with Jim O'Connor, our newly appointed Emergency Management Agency Director for Tamaqua Borough.

Jim spoke briefly about his new appointment and noted his plans are to work with our clubs ARES emergency radio system and has included us with his program. Allen Breiner W3ZRQ will retain his appointment as the local Communications Officer.

The Communications Officer W3ZRQ informed the group the 75 meter antenna at the Borough building is in need of much repair. After discussion, it was decided 75 meters has been neglected so many time by the State EMA and no longer practical and shall be taken down and scrapped. A new two meter vertical antenna has been ordered and will be installed on the rear of the Borough building as a secondary two meter communications channel.

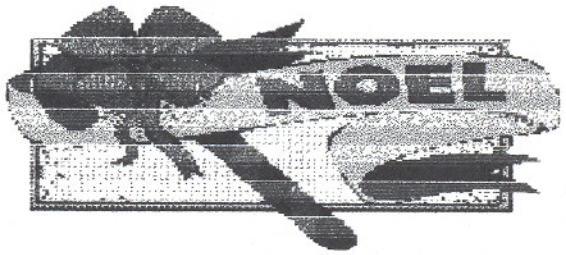
Election of Officers

Nominations and election for United States President and other National leaders is over, However, nominations for officers in TWA will be held at the October 19 meeting and election of officers will be at the November meeting.

Our By-laws state when there are no nominations for any office at the October meeting , nominations for that office can be opened again at the November session.

The present slate consists of the folling officers;.

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



Annual TWA Xmas Party Saturday December 8

The Grand finale of TWA activities for the year 2001 will be held again at "Marthas Place" restaurant on Lafayette Street, Tamaqua. As previous years, this is no special dress up event, come as you are and order from the menu. We do request that you let us know in advance by December 2nd if you plan to attend so we can give Martha a head count for place settings.

TWA QSL Bureau

With the upswing of the sun spots and DX coming thru on 20, 15, and 10 meters lately, some of our newer members are really choppin' up the ether and accumulating a backlog of QSL's. Starting in January the club's *out-going* QSL service will start up again.

A few issues back we gave you the details on how it works. If you want to save sum bux on postage bring your cards to the February meeting along with one of the mailing labels from your QST. By that time we should have built up a pound or more of cards and the club will take care of them for you.

Regarding your incoming DX cards you must have an SASE on file with the third district QSL Bureau. The TWA secretary has a supply of 9 x 6 envelopes and as an extra service to our members, he will donate them for that purpose. We'll stick your club mailing label on the envelope with 3 units of postage for the small price of one dollar per envelope. The club will mail them to the third district QSL bureau. In order that the bureau has extra envelopes on hand when the cards come in I usually send three envelopes at a time . One thing to remember, if they don't have your envelope on file your incoming QSL's are thrown in the circular file.

Is it Worth the Effort ?

Secretary TWA W3TI

We just received a letter from the league which outlines a whole new program regarding the benefits derived from being an ARRL affiliated club. In 1955 there were many benefits a club got from the league but as time went on they got less and their meaning dwindled until there was only one our club really benefited. That was, "*I said "was"*, the only item listed our club and members used and took advantage, the two dollars discount when you renewed your league membership via the club secretary.

In 1960 league membership cost $ 10.00 a year. Renewing your membership thru the club saved you 2 bucks. Since 1982 league membership jumped from $18.00 dollars to the present rate of $ 39.00 and as noted in our reply to the leagues letter, the 2 dollar discount has been scratched. Which means, our league affiliation has no benefits what so ever to our members.

It can be seen the cost of living and inflation of the economy have been just cause for the price increase, but they never increased the 2 dollar discount. Now they eliminated it altogether. Read on— Our letter of response - -

American Radio Relay League
Newington, Ct. 06111
Sirs:

We are in receipt of your letter of September 1st regarding changes in the Benefits for League affiliated clubs and in response submit comment. The Tamaqua Amateur Radio group has been an affiliated club since 1955 when it was organized. Noted, at that time there were numerous benefits available to a club and its members. Between 1959 and 1972 Eastern Pennsylvania elected me as their SCM (renamed SM) and again elected for three terms from 1996 to 2001. For 19 years I have been affiliated with upper level League politics, however, there were times when we disagreed with a number of items set forth by the Directors.

League affiliated club benefits have changed considerably since 1955 but the one most beneficial to our members was the $ 2.00 discount on membership renewals. I retrieved a copy of the affiliated club application from my files and noted each item, followed by comment.

1. ARRL Club Presidents Workbook. *Our club president hasn't received one of those for the past eight years. We assume this was another saving set down by the directors.*
2. Receive a free copy of the leagues annual report. *Likewise, we haven't seen one of those for some time.*
3. ARRL sponsored liability and equipment insurance. *When first initiated the insurance was a good idea but they priced themselves right out of the ball park for a small club.*
4. Referrals of prospective amateurs to the club. *Over 90 % of those referrals were out of our area.*
5. $ 5.00 commission for recruiting new ARRL members. *New members took advantage of the savings. NOW DEFUNCT.*
6. Free lists of amateurs in a specific area. *You only listed league members. We get a complete list from the Amateur Radio Call book CD disc.*
7. Free mailing labels or list of ARRL members. *We can get them all from the Call Book*
8. $ 2.00 discount for every ARRL membership renewal. *Our members took advantage of this benefit and now you dropped it, tst – tst.*
9. Only affiliated clubs are eligible for participation in the gavel competition in ARRL contests. *That was only beneficial to a large club. Small clubs don't even have a chance.*
10. 50 % discount on club advertisements in QST. *Again, only good for large clubs that run a hamfest.*

Having run through the gamut of all the benefits, and since you have discontinued the two dollar discount for member renewals, we see no benefits what so ever by being League affiliated. The latest acts by the directors have just driven another nail in the coffin for ARRL.

The Amateur Radio operators of Tamaqua, Pennsylvania have been a league affiliated organization since it was organized 64 years ago and continue to look toward an active and progressive future, however we cannot see the same for the American Radio Relay League.

Vy 73, W3TI TWA Secretary

We bring this subject to your attention because it will be discussed in depth at the September club meeting. It's just another straw that has broken the camel's back. Your opinion will be greatly appreciated. See you at the meeting.

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TWA Committees

Antenna Crew KB3FJJ Chrm.
Activities Mgr. KB3DYJ
EC & ARES WY3K
Club Bulletin W3TI
RFI Team KB3FSU
VE Team WY3K

The Tamaqua Wireless Association holds regular monthly meetings on the third Friday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the American Hose Fire company, Mauch Chunk street, Tamaqua. Anyone interested in Amateur Radio is welcomed to attend. The Club bulletin "Splatter" is printed about four times a year and distributed to its membership.



Are You Prepared

Old Sol made its début at the usual time that morning in mid-August and by 1400 hours (UTC) the sky was covered by large dark threatening clouds and soon after all H - - - broke loose. Thunder and lightening like you never seen or heard before. Yes ! It was the fore runner of a Hurricane.

Having had previous experience with similar storms, a few of the club members called each other on their local two meter repeater and began phase one of the emergency alert system. The net control informed operators to stand by in case of power failure or a secondary channel of communications was required by the local EMA.

What follows after that is ***"Any thing "***, and we do mean any thing. Reports of a tree blown down across wires or a school bus stranded, or the depth of the Schuylkill River, "You name it". Although the members would not be asked to clean up the tree limbs or pick up the stranded students in the school bus, their expertise would be used to help dispatch other emergency units to the sight and relay other important information to the EOC, Emergency Operations Center.

The previous three paragraphs are just the scenario of a typical emergency where amateur radio operators come to the aid of their community. The elder members in the Tamaqua Wireless Association have experienced such matters and would like our newer members to share in that experience by taking part in a course of instruction on emergency training for *"Just In Case"*.

It was noted at the August club meeting information was received that ARRL is implementing an emergency communications training program that can be taught by any certified teacher. And our TWA's certified instructor made inquires about the details. Upon receiving the paper work and course outline it was noticed they use the same text taken from the Emergency Coordinators handbook which is precisely what TWA had used for instruction in our last class two years ago..

Now for the good part ! If TWA would sponsor a class using the ARRL's new format, (1) the club would have to supply the class room, (2) each student pay ARRL a registration fee of $ 20.00 per league member, (3) The best part about this program, ARRL asks each student to purchase their text book for $ 10.00 . Ten years ago they gave the same manual free just for the asking. (4) Then comes the clincher, after you complete the course each student has to shell out $ 10.00 more for the examination. ARRL gets forty bucks a student and TWA does all the work. Something seems a bit unbalanced here.

Why should an amateur radio operator who is interested in volunteering their service to the public need to pay for such training. An instruction course can involve a number of simulated emergencies and can be taught without shelling out forty dollars a member. Out club has experienced operators who can teach such an emergency operating class free of charge.

Therefore, we ask, are there ten or more members *(20 Max)* willing to set aside a few Friday evenings for such training. Training manuals will be made accessible at no cost to each candidate and we'll have no problem getting a suitable classroom. Pass the word around and we might be able to set things in motion for a winter or early spring club activity. A little extra training or learning never hurt anyone. Best of all , it will not cost you anything but a few hours of your time.



TWA Calendar of Events
TWA Regular meeting September 21, 7:30 p.m.
VE Exams November 3. Tamaqua Municipal Bldg. 9 a.m.
TWA Regular meeting Oct. 19, Nominations, 7:30
Tamaqua Halloween Parade Oct.30 , 5:30
TWA Regular meeting Nov. 16. Election. 7:30 p.m.
TWA Annual Christmas Party Dec. 8 at 6 p.m.
HAMFESTS
Del-Lehi Hamfest Sept. 15, Schnecksville, Pa.
R.F. Hill Hamfest Oct. 21. Sellersville. Pa.

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

TIME LIMITED
MEETING NOTICE