SPLATTER

Feb. March. April | Ground Hog Issue | 2002

The President's Comments

By W3ZRQ

Now that 2002 is here, we start a new year of club activities. Be sure you check the new revised list elsewhere in this issue. Don't forget, if you should have any suggestions for additional activities bring them to the meeting for discussion. Activities is fuel that keeps our club running. NI3H, KB3DYJ and I plan to try a 6 meter contest on February 8 thru the 11th at my QTH. Additional operators are always welcome,



A portion of this column may hit a sore spot with some of our members, but I promise, this will be the very last time I'll mention ARRL in the "Presidents Column".

Yes ! The League is at it again. Those of you who are on line and receive e-mail by now are aware they are trying to save more money by eliminating the Section Manager news in QST. I cannot believe every amateur involved in traffic or the National Traffic System is on line with their computer, or perhaps don't even have a computer.

Each month the first thing I do when QST arrives is to look at the Eastern Pennsylvania Section News. It takes me less than 5 minutes to read that column even if the printing is small and hard to read. When ARRL decides to eliminate that column you will be required to boot up your computer, go on line and stumble through a whole bunch of crap before you eventually get to the correct location. After you scroll down and finally find the EPA Section News, read it, then click your way back out of the program to prevent your computer from crashing. By the time your through you have spent more time on the internet than you had originally intended.

"NOW THEY TELL ME THAT IS PROGRESS AND COME UP TO PRESENT TIMES". No ! I don't think so, my time is more important and too precious.

I asked W3TI, "Why was QST started anyway" ? Boy, was that a mistake when he put a pile of research in front of me. QST Issue Number 1, December 1915 was not published by ARRL but rather by Hiram Percy Maxim and Clarence D. Tuska at their own expense. Page 7 constituted the first bulletin and general information on message relaying across the United States, now known as the *National Traffic System.* Their objective was to maintain an organization called the ***American Radio Relay League***

Continued next page

What's in an Editorial

By W3TI

The format for SPLATTER has changed many times since it was first published in 1959 and since we went computerized the "Presidents Korner" and Editorial Commentary have appeared on the front page. The club president is always given space to sound off and let the members know what's he has planned for future activities.

Editorial Commentary is from the editor who types each article and makes them fit in the allotted space. What then is an editorial ? Webster defines it as an article printed in a newspaper with ideas or opinions from the editor.



One of my favorite is the column by Andy Rooney in the evening newspaper editorial page. He comes out with some real great ideas and some times I agree with him and some times I don't. BUT, they are all his ideas. He might tear the President of the United States apart with his opinion. Some times I agree with him and some times I don't.

In order for me to enter the teaching profession I had to get a college degree. One of the required courses was Philosophy which is basically the history on how some discoveries were made and their problems in doing so. It was intended to stir up the inventive mind and have you come to an answer or conclusion to each problem. In other words, an editorial with a problem and final outcome with a solution or conclusion to the problem.

Other courses were Introduction to Psychology and Educational Psychology. The introduction part explained how the human brain functioned and how it retained the memory of what was taught. The Educational course was very interesting because it gave ideas on how to get your thoughts and ideas planted in the other fellows memory

All in all, these three colleges courses are what an editorial is all about. You select a point, item or problem and mull it around until you come to a solution. That is, ***It's Your Solution.*** It may not always be the correct solution or answer and possibly cause flak, dissension or remarks to the negative.

At times an editor will stick his neck out and print an item he will regret later. At times my editorials contradicted ARRL, their Directors and even the FCC. However, each time an idea or solution was offered they were mine . To whom it may concern, if any of my editorials have been offensive in any way, I apologize.

Continued next page

TWA Officers for 2002

President Al W3ZRQ
Vice Pres. Lou KB3DED
Secy-Treas Al W3TI
Trustee Chip NI3H / W3CMA
Committees
ARES-EC-VE Bill WY3K RFI Bud KB3FSU
Antenna Crew Steve KB3FJJ Activity Mgr. Ed KB3DYJ
Awards Lou KB3DED TWA WEB Site Joe N3LBB
Club Bulletin Editor Al W3TI

Outgoing QSL Bureau

TWA DX QSL Mgr.

With the sun spot cycle in our favor the low bands are still producing excellent conditions for the DX hounds in our club. As we hammer out this issue it is still winter outside and the DX'ers in the club are receiving new batches of cards. Their next pile of outgoing cards will be ready to send out in March. Which means you should have your cards ready to hand to the club DX QSL manager at the February 15th. Meeting.

You do not need a half pound of cards to use the club outgoing QSL system. Don't forget to put one of your QST mailing labels with the cards and print the call of the DX station on the upper right hand corner on back of each card. Put them in numeric then alphabetical order, e.g., 4X4, 9Y3, CO2, DL4, EA8, etc.

If you're just starting to pile up the DX contacts you will need to have a 6 x 9 inch envelope self addressed and stamped at the incoming bureau. We have another service to club members by providing a 6 x 9 inch envelope for your incoming cards from the Third District QSL bureau. The envelope plus return mailing address stickers and two units of postage applied are available for $ 1.00 from the secretary. If you work a lot of DX you should always have at least two envelopes on file.

Presidents Korner Cont'd.

Its purpose was to organize and create a cross country, non-commercial wireless communications system consisting of experienced wireless communications operators the U.S. Government could use in the event of emergencies. The whole idea of an Amateur Radio Emergency system had its beginning with the League in 1915. Yet, the United States Government was so slow on the uptake and didn't realize this free offer until recently.

The National Traffic System as it is now was organized in 1954 by George Hart and is successfully operating to this day. The Amateur Radio Emergency Service was also one of George Hart's ideas and was organized in 1964.

The way we see it, Maxim and Tuska edited the first issues of QST to help organize the Traffic nets. QST also had commercials and adds in the first issues to help defray printing expenses. The technical articles were added later on. However, in todays issues the editors seem to have gone a bit overboard and print the most expensive Amateur Radio parts catalogue . I'll have to think twice when it comes time for me to renew my membership.

TWA VE Examiners Sked 2002

For those planning to upgrade the Tamaqua VE team has scheduled the following time and dates for exams, 9 a.m. March 2, June 1, August 3 and November 2. We have arranged to have the exams at the same location, Tamaqua Municipal Building on East Broad Street. Exam fees are same as last year, $ 10.00

Another Year Coming Up

Yes, before you know it, the year 2001 will be history and we'll be writing 2002 on our checks and correspondence. It is also the time to check back to see how much you spent last year and how much you have left over to cover the income tax for Uncle Sam.

While you're looking at capital gains and/or loss , we would like to remind you it is also time to think about your annual dues donation to Tamaqua Wireless Association. Even though costs seem to rise each year, we always seem to be able to keep our club dues to a minimum of $ 10.00. As a reminder, TWA dues are payable between October and January of each year.

The only expenses TWA encounters each year is postage for your bulletins, Field Day expenses, and the annual picnic. Holding a club auction at the picnic has helped considerably to defray additional operating expense for the year.

As a friendly reminder in case you forgot, look at the mailing label of this issue. If it is Hi-lited in yellow, you forgot. If it is Hi-lited in RED, you have a problem. Membership cards for 2002 are colored blue.

The officers and judiciary would like to thank each committee and everyone else for their participation in our club functions. There is always something new popping up at out club meetings and Wednesday nite teck sessions. You'll never know unless you come around once in awhile.

TWA Web Page

By N3LBB TWA Webmaster

Keeping in step with the times, Tamaqua Wireless Association has always been a group of progressives and been well known for being the "First" club in the area to have initiated a number of novel items. The newest and most recent idea is that of having our own Website. I have been working on all the information about our club and have designed the TWA Web Page.

The Tamaqua Wireless Association will have a web site-presence! I have been working on creating a web site for TWA and I need your input! I am looking for your favorite ham radio related web sites (call sign look up, propagation, pet projects, etc...) to include on our web site. You can help by e-mailing me your favorite links, and as always please feel free to include any suggestions you may have to spur interest to other amateurs about the hobby and above all, our radio club. My e-mail address is N3LBB@arrl.net

Might you be interested in a different activity to take up the slack time during the winter months. TWA members with 160-meter capabilities are invited to join in on "The 160 Net". We meet every night of the week at 2400z on 1.895 mHz. It's a rag chew net with a great bunch of guys from all over the country. Amateurs are invited to participate, so come join us on Top Band!

TWA Club Jackets & Caps

The group has finally decided on the club logo to put on jackets or caps. The final action will be to select the vendor who will make them for us. So far the only price we got was between 75 and 80 dollars.

Arrangements have been made to have Charles X. Block a well known local merchant attend a club meeting with samples and prices. Its your club, its your decision, the rest will have to made by you, the members.

Editorial continued

Each year since our group was organized we held nomination and election of officers. There were times when the members select to have the previous slate continue in office for another year and such has been the case with the President and Secretary position this past year.

I would like to take time to repeat the duties of the officers as written in *Article III* of our by-laws.

"The president shall preside at all meetings and conduct the same in according to the rules adopted."

"The Secretary shall keep a record of proceedings. Keep the membership records current, read all correspondence and reply where required."

During the association's September business session there was a piece of correspondence from the ARRL having reference to a number of changes and deletions in the benefits derived from being an ARRL affiliated club. A return letter of comment regarding the deletions was prepared by the secretary and submitted to the members for their comment. Contents of that letter was printed in the last issue of your club bulletin.

After weighing the pros' and cons' it seemed the majority opinion of those present were in agreement, ARRL club affiliation wasn't worth all the paper work required to maintain that club affiliation.

As secretary I was one of those on the con' side and may not have been too attentive to those who spoke on the pro' side of the issue. Yet, I recall there was very little or no retort nor comment on behalf of the Leagues side of the issue. It has been noticed, the silence of some members has become deafening, which brings up the case and point regarding that article.

I don't think *"Freedom of Speech"* has been dropped from the Constitution of the United States and still prevails at all of our club meetings. By not displaying your thoughts, saying nothing or just giving excuses does not help with the solution to anything.

"Was it proper for the secretary to read that ARRL correspondence to the club "?

Or ! Should it have been disregarded or swept it under the table and not been read or brought to the attention of the members ?

This would have been a direct violation of the duties of the club secretary. Had we done so, would you have nominated the same officers for another year ?

Are you Ready for Phase Two

In the last issue a different type of club activity was suggested and when brought before the meeting was unanimously approved. A class of instruction on *"Communications Operating during an Emergency"* is a go. Your judiciary followed thru and a date, time, and location have been set.

In order so as not to be in conflict with club meetings or holidays, ten hours of instruction will begin on Friday February 22 and held in the Tamaqua Borough Building starting at 7:30.

Instruction is broken down into five, 2 hour classes that will be held on February 22, March 1 and 22nd. ending with April 5 and final on April 26. Work sheets have been prepared in addition to an instruction manual that has been designed by W3TI and printed in time to be used as part of the course. Instruction will dwell on ;

1. How to originate, pass, and receive a radiogram message.
2. What to do—and Not do—during an emergency.
3. Operating from a fixed location, portable, or mobile unit.
4. Experience in tactical and/or simulated operations.

Those who take the course should plan to complete all ten hours. A certificate and identification tags will be given to all who complete the instruction.

Have you ever -

It's 5:30 and the XYL says supper's ready *(some call it dinner, but we have supper)* and you just get started on the mashed potatoes and gravy when the telephone rings You assume someone wants to let you know he can't attend the meeting tonight, so you answer.

As usual, it's some one selling triple pane windows, Insulated Siding and a new roof. *"Sure, I tell them, send your sales person around"*. Then comes the clincher. They ask me for my address and location. How come, they know my telephone number but don't know where I live ?

The phone rings and you pick it up on the first ring *(wrong— let it ring three times)* The person at the other end starts, *" This is Radio KDKA in Pittsburgh calling. We are havin a poll . Which ball team do you like ? Press 1 for the Frackville Dust busters, press 2 if you like etc. etc. etc.* Now, for the life of me, Why does KDKA call me all the way from Pittsburgh when I don't have any interest in baseball.

The phone rings, you pick it up. A woman's voice answers. Mr. Breiner, this is Darla from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, we're running a survey, Do you have water in you basement ? I answered, *I certainly do, both hot and cold water faucets.* The above incidents are actual telephone calls I received in the past few weeks. I learned more than 24 different ways to pronounce my name. What is this tele-marketing coming too. If it were not for having a telephone in case we need to call a doctor, I would tear all five of them out of the wall

TWA Antenna Group Report

At each meeting of TWA the Antenna group foreman gives a verbal report of their monthly activities and which members have added or made changes to their RF transducer, *antenna to you,* but have never given a report about some of their past long rang projects. With time on our hands and an extra page in Splatter to fill, we'll bring you an up date on what has transpired last year.

Year 2001 saw a lot of new sky wires being erected by the members. Sections of towers were being picked up free, just for the price of carting them home. Lucky members were KB3DYJ two sections, KB3FET three sections, KB3FSU two sections and W3ZRQ four sections. There could have been more that went unreported. Some towers were like new and others witnessed a few years of outdoor weather. In each case the recipient chose to give them a good sanding and coat of paint before any erection or antenna mounting was performed.

At a Wednesday nite Teck session in February the subject came up on how and what to use to paint these towers. KB3DYJ happens to be part owner of *Weicker's Paint Store* and suggested the following.

Depending where you plan to erect the tower should determine the final color.

1. Erecting it along side your house use the same color as the house.
2. Standing among trees or hedges, paint it green to match.
3. If the idea of camouflage was not intended, then go the usual route and finish it off with the Aluminum paint.

This is where Ed's (KB3DYJ) expertise came to light. There are two types of Aluminum paint. One will give a fair aluminum finish but after a few months will look dull or close to a zinc or lead finish. The better of the two is known as Chrome Aluminum and will maintain its brilliance a whole lot longer because as stated, it has chrome additives but is also a bit more expensive.

After scraping and sanding the rust down to bare metal will require a good primer or ground coat. Here again you must determine its type and color. If you plan to give it two coats of aluminum, then use the red primer because its base is made of zinc and lead oxide. Two coats of Aluminum will cover and override any of the red primer from showing through.

In the meantime, the tower sections acquired by W3ZRQ were laying in the back yard ready to be worked on and he made the offer to the Tamaqua Repeater group if they helped with the tower work he would allow the repeater antennas on the tower. An agreement was struck between them and by Sunday April 1, a beautiful sunny day, the Antenna crew arrived ready to attack the task of scraping, sanding, and giving the four sections of tower its first coat of primer.

The Tamaqua Wireless Association as you well know is always open to experimentation and I brought it to their attention about some of our previous experience with antennas by applying a thin coat of Mil-Spec 4936.

If you remember in previous articles we had written in the club bulletin, this was the concoction invented during world war II by Dupont in Wilmington Delaware as a water proofing material for the U.S Army to apply to their leaky tents. It was discovered later by the Army Signal corps if applied to their whip antennas, it increased the transmission range considerably

I brought this to the attention of the Antenna crew and explained that we still had a fairly good supply from our purchase at surplus in Harrisburg. Reviewing how it worked on the Field Day antennas last year by lowering the radiation resistance and increased the velocity factor by 0.053 percent. And that I had applied it to both J-pole antennas for the Tamaqua repeater which would be installed later. *The results later spoke for themselves.*

When the antenna crew was mixing the primer and Aluminum paint for the tower I made the suggestion to mix a portion of Mil-Spec 4936 in with the primer and also the Aluminum coat. My philosophy for doing so, if it increased the velocity factor on antennas and lowered the radiation resistance, then it should have a negative or opposite affect in reference to ground by a deficiency of 0.053 percent of the tower to ground resistance. In other words, it would lower the ground resistance which is registered or measured between the top of the steel tower and soil ground itself.

In other words, if sufficient Mil Spec 4936 were added to the paint it should result in zero or 100 % negative resistance shown by the tower. Each J-Pole antenna would then seem to be electrically hanging in space supported only by the Coax cable feeding them.

The Antenna crew added the Mil Spec 4936 to the primer and paint using one part to ten parts of paint and the results were greater than expected. On a bright sunny day you can only see a faint or very thin shadow cast by the tower.

TWA Calendar of Events
TWA Annual Dues – Payable October thru January
February 15, TWA Regular meeting 7:30 p.m.
February 14 – Valentines day- Buy the XYL a lollypop
Feb. 22 Birthingtons Washday
March 2, VE Exams, Tamaqua Buro 9 a.m.
March 15, TWA Regular meeting 7:30 p.m.
April 1, Easter Monday Happy Easter to all

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

TIME LIMITED
MEETING NOTICE