SPLATTER

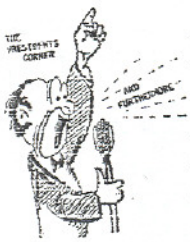
This bulletin is printed from time to time and issued to the members of the Tamaqua Wireless Association a Public Service non-profit organization

Jan.-Feb– Mar-April | Winter– Early Spring Ground Hog Issue | 2003

Can't wait till Spring

By President W3ZRQ

Another new year has arrived with a considerable amount of that white stuff we call snow, interspersed with sleet and ice. It sure was a test for our antenna systems. W3TI found out his wire stretches quite well on his 80 meter zepp, especially when it has a six inch diameter of snow and ice around it full length.



Speaking of antennas, just before the holidays my doctor wanted to insert one of those Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillators (ICD) in my chest and was given a test to see if I qualify for one. But the test results were negative and said my heart was fine. They still wanted to put that ICD in me for $ 20,000 and I refused the offer because they could not give me a straight answer to my question," What effect will my radios have on this unit". I found my answer later and now I'm glad to have refused the implant operation.

Note' If any ham ever falls into this category where the doctor tells them they need an ICD, Please see me First !

Christmas day was another test of nerves in certain areas of the county without power for a few hours, days, or even a few weeks. I had a first hand experience during the black out while driving a plow truck and as I approached the west end of Tamaqua it seemed as if I was going into a black hole, no lights what so ever except that from the head lights of the plow truck. KB3DYJ, KB3FSU and KB3GPM were without power for a little over nine hours. The cutoff line was at KB3CFV's QTH, he had power. While areas to the south of Tamaqua were without power for a few days.

A note of concern from this operator, yes I had a hand-held radio with me, but the problem, running low power, was trying to check into the Schuylkill County net. A few inconsiderate operators at the time would not acknowledge the repeater's courtesy break between transmissions and would not pause long enough for me with a low power unit. So I gave up in disgust.

Beginning January we also start with a new meeting location. Plans are in the works to take advantage of more out door activities by holding the May thru September meetings at our Field Day site, Weickers Grove. Three years ago when you elected me as president I stated, "Look out, we are going to have club activities" and so far I have been true to my word.

On a final note, just talking with some club members it seems everyone is ready for spring. Isn't it JUNE yet !

When The Lights Went

By Editor, W3TI

Yep, sooner or later it was bound to happen. Since we are located on the southern boundary of the Pocono mountains of Eastern Pennsylvania, we are subject to some pretty fierce winter snow and freezing rain storms and that's exactly what we got on Christmas Day 2002. I need not reiterate using a hundred words to tell what happened, but the members who attended the TWA "Traffic and Emergency Operating Classes" held in the early part of the year know quite well what to expect "When the Lights go out". Emergencies such as forest fires, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, freezing rain and snow storms can cause a Power failure. We all had been forewarned of the coming storm and had plenty of time to get those batteries charged before it hit and they sure did come in handy. A more serious matter was experienced in the rural areas who were dependent on power for their water supply. Those with a gas powered generator had that part covered.



Mobile operation was impractical due to the 12 or more inch snow cover. Actually, they would have been in the way of the plows and snow removal crews. South of Tamaqua and the better part of Carbon county was without power for more than 50 hours. North west part of Tamaqua had a power outage for about 8 hours. Fortunately for our part of town, we only had about six glitches when the power was off for a few minutes.

For the most part, those who participated in our Emergency instruction classes knew exactly what to do. An Emergency Net was called into operation and was there in the event some one required assistance. Unfortunately, we had a few operators who had to tie up a lot of net time with continuous rag chewin'. If some one wanted to call for help on interstate I-80 they would never have been able to contact net control due to the continuous Ratchet Jaws on the repeater. Never the less, regardless of how much we rant and rave about how poorly trained and inconsiderate some operators are, we shall still have them with us..

On the other hand our hats off to the operators who spent hours and hours on end trying to keep the net open for assistance to those stranded in the storm. Kudos and well done fellows. Lest we forget, this is only an editorial, one persons observations and not necessarily that of the members. Your comments will be gratefully appreciated.

Letters to the Editor

From Darryl Gibson N2 DIY

In the Nov/Dec. issue of The Splatter, you ran a self evaluation article titled The TWA Clique. The article included a quiz to grade ones activity level in the TWA. The article concluded with the idea that one should take up bird watching, or stamp collecting if ones score was below 75. This is very poor advice, I can't speak about stamp collecting, but potential bird watchers should be forewarned of what awaits them. Bird watching is similar to ham radio.

To get started in bird watching, you'll need a decent set of optical amplifiers, commonly called binoculars. A starter pair will cost you $50. You'll find solo bird watching boring, so you'll join a birding club. Your membership in the club will pay dividends, you'll learn there are better optical amplifiers on the market, and will enhance your birding experiences. So you upgrade to a $300 pair of binoculars.

You'll start a log, a life list of birds you've seen, and where and when you saw them. You'll put up a bird feeder, and notice that different seed mixes attract different birds. So you add more feeders and experiment with different seed mixes. Sort of like putting up antennas, but antennas don't need to be refilled all year long. You'll learn there are annual events that bring rare birds to your region. Soon you'll find yourself on a mountain top, counting hawks. It's likely your in the company of the top ornithologists in the world. You notice their amplifiers are different then yours. You marvel at the clarity and brightness of their Zeiss binoculars. Care to guess what top of the line Zeiss binos cost ? I'd trade my radio station for a pair, and come out ahead on the deal.

Of course, to play with the big boys in birding, you'll need more then good binoculars, you'll need the linear of optical amplifiers, the spotting scope. If you owned a good spotting scope you could use it as collateral for a down payment on a house.



The best binos and scopes aren't worth diddly at night, so if you want to see owls, you hunt by the full moon, or buy night vision equipment. Eventually you'll notice your log is no longer growing, so to add to your list you'll need to go on some DXpeditions. Unlike ham radio, when a birder wants to work DX, he has to get up and physically go to it.

Of course, there is more to birding than fancy equipment and DXing, there is also competition. The World Series of Birding in May, sponsored by the NJ. Audubon Society. Teams have 24 hours to identify birds, by sight or sound, the most contacts win. Sounds like Field Day doesn't it?

The World Series generates profits through participation fees, and corporate sponsorships, and the profits are donated to charities. Just like the Grave Digs! In addition to raising money, the World Series also gathers data, that is used in research on bird habitat. If someone wants to contribute to the research, but doesn't care to run around the state of New Jersey for 24 hours, they can participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count run by Cornell University. Citizen Scientists around the nation count the birds they see in their yard over a three day period, and submit it to the University.

So Mr. Editor, advising couch potato hams to become bird watchers is poor advice. Perhaps you should have suggested star gazing? Not! That's just as expensive and time consuming as birding!

TWA Officers for 2003

President Al W3ZRQ
V. Pres. Darryl N2DIY
Secy-Treas. Al W5YI
COMMITTEES
VE Coordinator Bill WY3K
TARES Bill WY3K
RFI Fred KB3FSU
Antenna Crew Steve KB3FIJ
Activities Mgr. KB2DYJ
Awards Darryl N2DIY
Club Bulletin Al W5YI
TWA Web Site Joe N3LEB

License Renewal Time

Back around 1982 when the FCC started the big shake-up with rules etc. they wanted to lighten their work load and changed the amateur radio licensing period from five to ten years. Those who renewed or just got their license at that time had to renew it again in 1992. Now take a close look at the calendar and you will notice by 2002 another ten years have passed.



There was a time past when your club secretary kept an open file of every member and when his/her license came close to expiration time, the secretary would send the member an FCC renewal form. This system fell by the way side because club members never kept the secretary informed of their next expiration date.

During the last six months ye editor received numerous telephone calls from amateurs who were hysterical and about to have a heart attack. "My license expired, How do I get it renewed". By the same token your club bulletin informed you early in year 2002 to STOP—Take a look at your license expiration date, AND YOU DID'NT listen.

Now that I got your attention, did you look at your license ? If you are up for renewal you should have listened to an earlier announcement in the club bulletin back in 1999. Every licensed amateur radio operator was requested to send their Social Security number to the FCC before the end of December 1999 and they in turn would send you a FN (File Number). If you failed to do that you will have problems getting that license renewal.

The first step, check your license. What is the expiration date ? If your license expired *for example* December 10, 2001, it is now more than a year gone by, you will need to take your FCC exams all over again. You can not get a renewal. You have one year after the expiration date printed on your license to get a renewal. If your license expired four months ago, or less than a year, then read on.

Next step. Get a copy of FCC form 605 available from the FCC, ARRL, or your Tamaqua Wireless Association Volunteer Exam team WY3K. *(Check listing of TWA Exam dates).* Complete that form with your Social Security number and send it with a copy of your expired license to the FCC in Gettysburg, Pa. The license is FREE. Do not get taken by W5YI who will renew your license for a price, somewhere around 7 bucks.

If you value that Amateur Radio license we suggest you keep abreast with what's happening. Attend club meetings and other activities. That's the best we have to offer, the TWA is there to help.

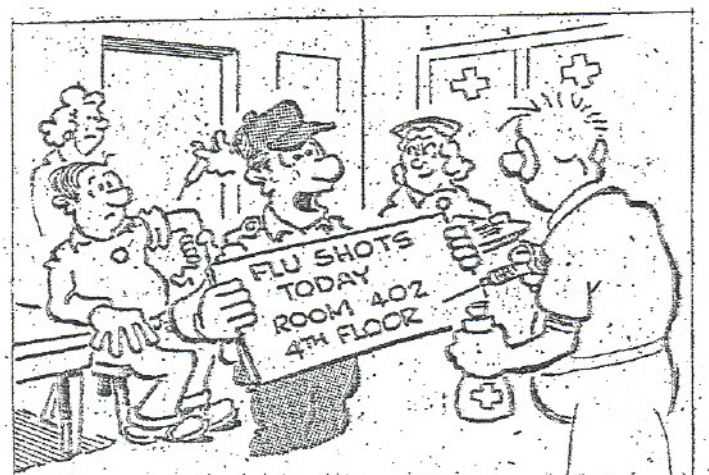
TWA Video Library



The following list of VHS video tapes are available for viewing to any club member Free. Contact the secretary for information and application.

Tapes from Nr. 1 to 23 have been donated to the association by Walter Shulz K3CQF and are in excellent condition.

1. Antenna Fundamentals, Directivity Propagation
2. Antennas (Loaded
3. RAYCAS Operation & Function # 1
4. RAYCAS Operation & Function # 2
5. ARRL Tapes # 1 (assorted)
6. ARRL Tapes # 2 (assorted
7. ARRL tapes (assorted)
8. Component Recognition / Electronic Circuit
9. Digital Techniques Tape # 1
10. Digital Techniques Tape # 2.
11. Digital Techniques Tape # 3
12. Digital Techniques Tape # 4
13. Digital Techniques Tape # 5
14. Digital Techniques Tape # 6
15. Digital Troubleshooting Tape # 1
16. Digital Troubleshooting Tape # 2
17. New World of Amateur Radio 30 min.
18. Radar Alignment
19. RAYCAS V - Maintenance
20. Semiconductors Course - Heathkit
21. Soldering & PCB Repair
22. Sperry MK-37 & UGP operation & maintenance
23. Switching Power Supplies.
24. The Men who made Radio (1992)
25. TWA Christmas Party # 1
26. TWA Christmas Party # 2 (1990)
27. TWA Field Day 1989 - Feeder Fabrication July 1989. Novice class 1989
28. Voyage to the Planets (90 min)

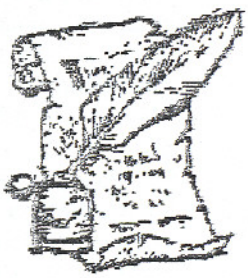


DOES THIS SIGN SAY "RADIO AMATEUR LICENSE EXAMS HERE TODAY?"

What do You Think

By W3TI Bulletin Editor

After each issue of "Splatter" is printed and mailed to our members, I take my copy, sit back in my swivel chair and read over every item again. Checking to make sure I crossed my "T's" and dotted my "T's", after which, I begin to think about "what am I going to put in our next issue ." All kind'a questions run thru my head. Did I print the information that our members want ? Were the articles timely ? Did I cover each item sufficiently ? We usually print five issues a year . Each edition has five or six pages which averages out to about 30 pages per year. At the present postage rate we could print an eight or nine page bulletin provided we had sufficient data to put into print.



When you put that all together it tallies up to a Great Big Bunch of words . But are they always the right words. Last year we were fortunate to get articles from KB3FSU, KB3DYI, comments from our president in addition to a few technical articles along with the usual balderdash from the editors column. So far this year we received some valuable information from Darryl N2DYI.

Having been editor for the club bulletin since its origin back around 1958, I never know if we print the right stuff. A few issues back I had some space left over and printed an article about, *Do you know your Fellow TWA member*. WOW, did that stir up a hornets nest. I found out the members do read our bulletin but seldom comment about it unless the information is incorrect.

Getting back to " What do you want in your club bulletin"? Readers surveys are very seldom answered or returned but I'm going to print one anyway.

Give us your evaluation on the following with a (yes) or (no)

Are the articles in Splatter interesting ? Is the type large enough to read ? Are you getting the bulletin thru the U S Mail in one piece ? Would you rather have it mailed in an envelope ? Are the technical articles to your liking ? Would you be interested in writing an article ?

All of these questions are what goes thru my mind every time it comes bulleting printing time. Got any ideas ? Any one interested in the position ? It doesn't pay anything, but print something wrong and you'll hear about it.

Hamfest Calendar

Timonium Hamfest, March 29—30
Warminster Hamfest, Wrightstown May 4.
EPA Section Convention, Bloomsburg, June 14
Mid-Atlantic Hamfest, Ki,mberton, July 13
Jonestown Mt. Repeater Asso. July 19.

Which Way Is Up

By W3TI

The meat and potatoes for this article was first prompt by a few members of our club back during the summer of 1993 when a topic of discussion came up at the Friday nite club meeting. " How do you determine True North ".

It is a known fact the magnetic north as given from a hand held compass points to the center of the earths north magnetic pole and not to the earths north center or axis upon which it turns. The center or turning axis is known as "True North".

As a point of information, when Columbus made his Atlantic crossing he used a magnetic compass. It pointed to magnetic north which at that time was located north of Greenland. Since then Mariners noticed the magnetic north moves or shifts from time to time. During the 1960's it was located by Hudson Bay in Canada. Today it's somewhere around Alaska and by the next decade will be moving toward Siberia.

What, you ask, is the North Pole of any interest to the amateur radio fraternity. For the neophyte or new comer to Ham radio, sooner of later you will be installing a tower and top it off with a Yagi beam. The first question is, where do I orient the beam for the North Pole. Do I use magnetic north or the earths global north pole axis to set the beam rotator ?

It has been general practice for years to point your Yagi True North (not the magnetic north). At this point the discussion got hot, how do we find , or were to we point to get true North or the earths North pole axis. I read a number of systems and schemes on how to determine said direction and never understood any of them.

When I was about 10 years old my dad made a sun dial and mounted it on a short pole in the back yard. He explained when the suns shadow disappeared on the sun dial it was twelve o'clock noon. Unknowingly at the time he never told me the gnomon of the sun dial had to be pointed directly north .

Bearing all those memories I came to the conclusion if we can get some means to tell us 12 o'clock noon and at the same time use the shadow of the sun, we can determine true north. Our present day ham receivers can give you that information. Tuning in WWV we get the hour, minutes, and seconds 24 hours a day continuously. When the announcer says "The time is Seventeen Hundred hours Universal Time coordinated, That is not 12 o'clock noon at your location.

With a little knowledge of algebra and geometry we come up with the following. Take a draftsman dividers draw a circle about 5 inches in diameter. Associate this with the earth being a circular, if we break it down geometrically into 360 degree for its complete circumference. Using a protractor divide the circle into 15 divisions. You should get 24 equal slots. Each slot represents the earths time zones, e.g., Atlantic Time, Eastern Standard Time, Central Standard Time etc. Every slot is 15 degrees and as the earth turns it equals out to one hour of time passing.

Information tells us the Eastern Standard Time zone begins at 75 degrees Longitude and ends at 90 degrees, that is where Central Standard time begins. Now for more figures. If 15 degrees is equal to one hour, then one degree should be equal to four minutes.

The 75th parallel of Longitude just passes right thru the center of Northeast Philadelphia and the 76th degree passes just one mile west of Tamaqua but right thru the middle of West Hazleton.

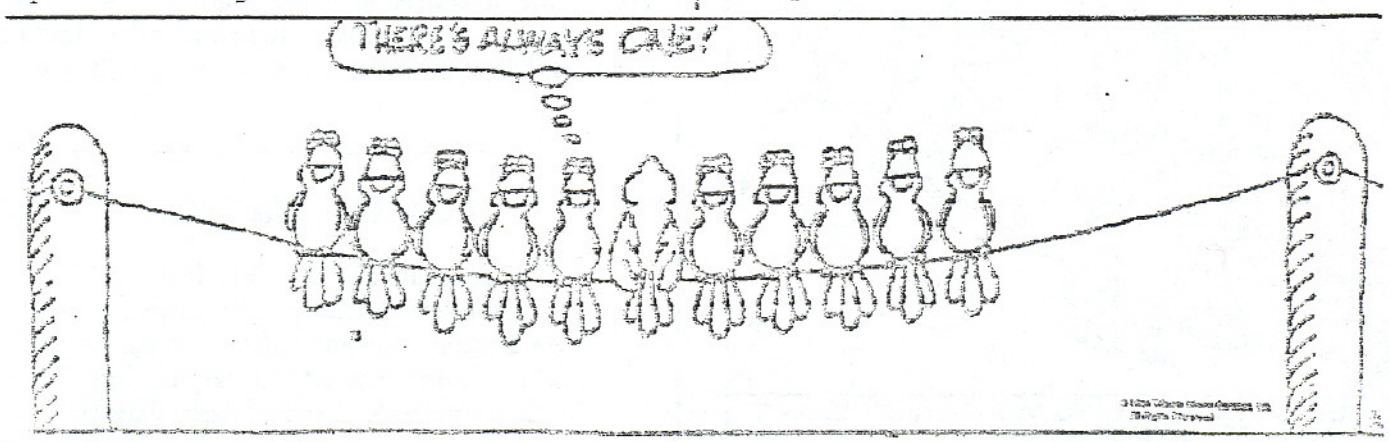
Recall one degree is equivalent to four minutes, therefore when the announcer on WWV says "It is now 17 hours four minutes Universal Coordinated time" the sun is directly over West Hazleton and the 76th. parallel of longitude. That's okay for West Hazleton but what about the rest of our area.

To catch the sun precisely at 12 noon directly overhead at various locations requires more calculating. Let's use the 75th longitude as a base to start from. If we go west you must add time. If you go east we must subtract.

Prepare yourself well in advance before 12 noon. Tune in WWV on your receiver. Drive a stake in your lawn about two feet tall. Have another stake handy. In my case I used the existing tower as my stake or shadow. From the list below, when the WWV announces that time, use a digital readout wrist watch and add the number of seconds indicated. Where the stake casts its shadow at that precise time will be true north. Drive the second stake in the shadow at that point.

QTH	UTC		
Lansford	1703	+	53 Seconds
Tamaqua	1703	+	58 Sec
West Hazleton	1704		
Mahanoy City	1704	+	4 Sec.
Pottsville	1704	+	11 Sec.
Frackville	1704	+	13 Sec

Other locations not shown above can be calculated by starting from the closest full degree of longitude.



Companionship

The following appeared in an area newspaper.

"Single black female seeks male companionship. Age and ethnicity unimportant. I'm a young svelte, good-looking girl who loves to play. I love long walks, riding in the back of your pickup, hunting, camping, fishing, I love cozy winter nights spent lying by the fire. Candlelight dinners will have me eating out of your hand. Rub me the right way and watch me respond. I'll be at the front door when you get home wearing only what nature gave me. Kiss me and I'm yours".

Call 555-6789 and ask for Daisy. The number was for the local Dog Kennel and Daisy is an 8 week-old black Labrador retriever. They got over 600 calls in one day.

What you didn't know and Was Afraid to Ask

For those of you who already have children past this age, this is hilarious. For those who have grandkids this is considered parents revenge. For those of you who have children this age, this is not funny. For those of you who have children nearing this age, this is a warning. For those who have not yet had children, this is birth control.

The following came from an anonymous mother in Austin Texas.

" Things I've learned from my children".

1. A king-sized water bed holds enough water to fill a 2000 sq. foot house 4 inches deep.
2. If you spray hair spray on dust bunnies and run over them with roller blades, they will ignite.
3. A 3 year old's voice is louder than 200 adults in a crowded restaurant.
4. If you hook a dog leash over a ceiling fan, the motor is not strong enough to rotate a 42 lb. boy dressed in Batman underwear. However, it is strong enough if tied to gallon can of paint. It will spread paint on all four walls of a 20 by 20 foot room.
5. You do not throw baseballs up when the ceiling fan is running. You have to throw the ball up a few times before you get a hit. A ceiling fan can hit a baseball for quite distance. Tennis balls work better, they bounce around the room a lot.
6. When you hear the toilet flush and the words "Uh-oh" you know it's already to late.
7. Brake fluid mixed with Clorox makes smoke, Lot'za smoke.
8. A six-year old can start a fire with a flint rock. A 36 year old man say they only do it in the movies. A magnifying glass can start a fire even on an overcast day.
9. Play Dough and Microwave should never be used in the same sentence.
10. Contrary to what they show on TV, VCR's do not eject Peanut butter and Jelly sandwiches

2003 TWA Activities

Looking ahead we have compiled a list for you to mark your calender. We tried to keep it in chronological order but at times the computer makes a blunder.

The Regular TWA meetings are at 7:30 p.m. on the third Friday of the month except December. The January, February, March and April meetings will be held at the East End Fire Company, East Broad Street, Tamaqua. The May, June, July and August meetings will be held at Weicker's grove, Locust Valley. In the event of bad Wx the meeting will be back at the East End Fire Co.

Teck nite is every Wednesday at 8 p.m.

TWA Meeting February 21, 7:30 p.m. East End F.C.
Saturday March 1, VE Exams at the Tamaqua Borough
TWA Meeting March 21, 7:30 p.m.
TWA meeting April 18, 7:30 p.m.
TWA Meeting May 16, 7:30 p.m. F.D. Site
June 7, VE Exams Tamaqua Borough at 9 a.m.
June 14, VHF QSO Party club participation
June 20, TWA meeting, 7:30 p.m. Weickers Grove
June 27/28/29 Field Day, Weickers Grove
June 30, Deadline for articles to print in Splatter
July 18, TWA Meeting 7:30 p.m. F.D. Site
August 2, VE Exams Tamaqua Borough at 9 a.m.
August 15, TWA Meeting 7: 30 p.m. Weickers Grove
Sept. 6, TWA Annual Family Picnic, Weickers Grove
Sept. 19, TWA meeting, 7:30 p.m. East End F.C.
Oct. 17. TWA meeting 7:30 p.m. Nomination of officers
Oct. 25, Annual Grave Dig
Oct 28, Tamaqua Halloween Parade
Nov. 1, VE Exams Tamaqua Borough at 9 a.m.
Nov 21, TWA Meeting, Election of officers.

Some More "Why Is Its"

I started out with nothing, and I still have most of it.
My wild oats have turned to prunes and All Bran
I finally got my head together and now my body is falling apart
Funny, I don't remember being absent minded
All reports are in. Life is now officially unfair.
If all is not lost, - Where is it ?
It's a lot easier to get older than it is to get wiser.
Some days you're the dog, some days you're the hydrant
I wish the buck stopped here, I sure could use a few
Kids in the back seat cause accidents, Accidents in the back seat cause kids.
It's hard to make a comeback when you haven't been anywhere
The only time the world beats a path to your door is when you're in the bathroom.
If God wanted me to touch my toes, he would have put them in my knees.
When I'm finally holding all the cards, why does everyone decide to play dominoes.
It's not hard to meet expenses, they're everywhere

2003 Dues Past Due

Procrastinate is not a nice word to use, but there are times when we do forget and lay aside things we should'a done and later forgot about them altogether. If you are one who has fallen into that category and not renewed your TWA membership for year 2003, please take a quick peak at your mailing address label. If your call letters are hi-lighted - you forgot.

That Wonderful Year 2002

In taking a peek at the "What's Happening" item in the September-October-November issue, we think a follow up report is in order.

The annual family picnic was a real Jim dandy. Even though it was held a few weeks later than usual, the group decided next years picnic should be held on the same weekend in September.

The September 17 Steam Electric evacuation drill went off without a hitch and the club got a BIG "Atta Boy" from the FEMA big wigs. The September 20 meeting had been scheduled to talk with the Tamaqua Lions and Chamber of Commerce. This was a bust when both sent letters they couldn't attend. This did not set to well with our group so we had our man in charge of the weather make it rain, sleet and snow the evening of the parade. Hence, the parade was cancelled. *This is known as "Tony's Revenge".*

The Grave Dig October 26 turned out to be another dandy. Not only did the Diggers get lost but so did some of our 2 meter Communications people got lost in the jungle north of Shenandoah. But a good time was had by all.

This is a Test

No, this test will not upgrade you to Extra class but will exercise the gray matter for a few minutes.

The owner of a sports car decided to change oil in the engine of his compact auto that only took four quarts. He usually buys his oil in 55 gallon drums and he has no 4 quart measure. He does have a 3 quart and a 5 quart measure. He does not want to put less that 4 quarts and does not want to put to much in.

Question, How does he get exactly four quarts from the 55 gallon drum without waste or spilling any. Yes it can be done.

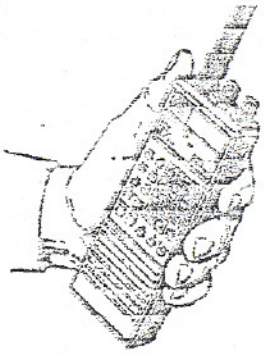
It is not always the answer that enlightens, but the question

More on that Handi - Talkie

Part 2

By WOT

We received a number of reports about updating the quarter-wave transducer (antenna system) on your Handi-Talkie. After working on a few we have an update on adding the spiral coil.



The standard alkaline battery that comes with the HT is a 7.2 volt, 600 mah. pack. Previous instructions said remove the four small screws on the top plate and two on the bottom.

We found it much simpler to set the battery pack in front of you with the charging jack and red LED facing away from you. Only remove the two small Phillips head screws on the top plate that are closest to you. They are self taping screws and remove the two small screws on the bottom of the pack marked positive + and negative –. They are machine screws, do not get them mixed up with the self taping screws.

You should be able to separate the battery case exposing the Ni-cads and negative point on the lower left corner. Solder the end of the spiral coil to that point. There should be sufficient room along the left side of the batteries for the coil. That completes the installation, slide the battery case together and be sure to put the correct screws in the right holes.

Modifications can also be made to the larger 13 volt 600 mah Nicad pack (PR-BP-7). That battery has two charging ports, one on the right, the other on the left. Place the pack so they are facing away from you. The top metal plate has 5 screws holding it in place. Remove the two closest to you, one on the right and one on the left. Don't touch the other three.

Remove the two machine screws on the bottom of the pack and two more located half way up the side and the case should come apart. Follow the previous instructions, solder the spiral coil to the negative terminal and replace the case.

Occasionally I hear the statement, *"Sorry.OM I got'a QRT my battery is going dead and my spare is shot. I have to get a new pack from Radio Shop"*. If you got the Rocks go ahead, they only cost about 45 bucks. But don't throw the old battery away. Give it to me, the Nicad cells can be replaced for less than half that price and have a perfectly good battery pack.

Do you think "Replacing Nicads" would make a good tech article for SPLATTER, ye editor must know if there is sufficient interest in replacing Nicads. There are a few tricks involved. Wat say ? Any one interested ?

My Side of the Street When the Lights Went Out

By Darryl Gibson N2DIY

Beware what you wish for. Many of us who were humming I'm Dreaming Of a White Christmas on Christmas Eve, were singing a different tune 24 hours later. Christmas morning we awoke to a snow covered landscape, what the snow concealed was the ice that had fallen overnight as freezing rain, and would lead to our future troubles.

Shortly before noon, the troubles started. Gary KA3FUL was traveling South on Rt. 61, and encountered a road closing and a detour. At the same time, another ham, traveling the opposite direction on Rt. 61, encountered the same thing as Gary did. What wasn't known at the time, was that Gary and the other ham were at the same detour/road closing. Those "two" events prompted Dale, KB3GAV, to bring up a severe weather net on the 145.370, SARA repeater. Shortly after that, the Carbon County RACES Net activated on the 147.255 CARA repeater.

By mid-afternoon the heavy snow fall started to take its toll. One by one, the towns in Carbon County lost electrical power, with the exception of Lansford and Summit Hill. Naturally, one of the first towns in Carbon County to lose power, was Nesquehoning, the location of the County's Emergency Communications Center. Things went from bad to worse, when the Comm. Centers backup generator failed to start. At that point, I checked into the Carbon County RACES Net, and fired up an HT. to monitor the Schuylkill County net.

Meanwhile, things weren't going much better for the folks in Schuylkill County, as power was lost in Coaldale, parts o Tamaqua, parts of Pottsville, and other areas of the county. About this time, Jason, KB3ICC, relieved Dale as net control on the weather net, while I continued to monitor both nets, waiting for the official call up and deployment of the Carbon County RACES net.

A few hours later, I relieved Jason as NCS of the weather net, while still waiting for the activation of the RACES net. About 2100 hours Jason relieved me as NCS, and the Carbon County RACES net stood down, as the generator at the Comm. Center had been repaired.

By 2230 hours I was bushed, signed off the nets, and got some shut eye, thinking the weather net might be in operation for the long haul, and we should think about plato0ning net control stations. I woke up at 0400, checked into the net, but all was quiet so I went back to bed. Things were still quiet later that morning, and as far as I know, the weather net wasn't reactivated.

All in all, I think everyone involved should be proud of themselves, we sensed the coming emergency, and reacted pro-actively to it. There was one complaint, a weak signal station could not check into the net due to some operators ignoring the courtesy beep on 370 repeater. I suspect this can be attributed to numerous causes:

1. Operator fatigue, monitoring three radios for 11 hours certainly put me in la la land.
2. Stations not in the affected areas, accustom to rag chewing on the repeater, doing what they are used to doing.
3. The event along with the net, was dying a natural death, most of the damage had already been reported, and new reports were few, and far between.

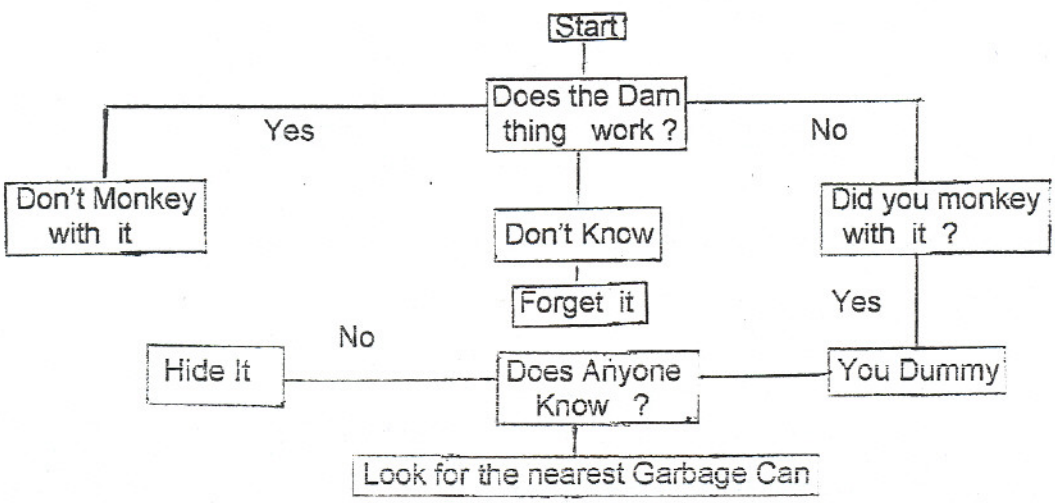
To avoid such problems in the future, I have the following suggestions:

1. Platoon net control stations in four or six hour shifts.
2. Program the repeater controller with a distinctive courtesy beep, and have the ID message, announce in voice mode, that the repeater is in emergency operation.

Also, don't let your guard down! Carbon County learned this two days later, when the Comm. Center's generator blew a radiator hose which caused the motor to seize with a broken crank shaft. I guess someone raised hell in Carbon County, since the Comm Center activated the RACES Net in under five minutes, and we deployed in less than thirty minutes. And it might be a good idea for stations involved in the net to keep a log book, the editor of your clubs newsletter might ask you to write an article, and without notes, you won't have the details to do a complete accounting of events.

With that in mind, my apologies for any errors, or omissions in this story, and for losing my notes. And I also apologize for this story being biased towards the events that occurred in Carbon County, over those that occurred in Schuylkill County.

Trouble Shooting Flow Chart



TWA Calendar of Events
February 21, TWA meeting East End Fire Company
March 1, VE Exams, Tamaqua Municipal Bldg. 9 a.m.
March 21, TWA meeting East End Fire Company
April 18, TWA meeting East End Fire Company
May 16, TWA meeting Weickers Grove 7:30 p.m.
June 7, VE Exams Tamaqua Municipal Bldg. 9 a.m.
June 20, TWA meeting Weickers Grove, 7:30 p.m.
June 27-28-29 Annual Field Day Exercise, Weickers Grove

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

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