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

February– March– April | Ground Hog Issue | 2004

New Season for TWA

Prez W3ZRQ

We are at the end of the first month of a new year as this column is ready to go to press. This year is going to be filled with many activities, some are the same and some new. One in particular is the Mid-Atlantic QSO Party, which is a new contest first to be held on May 8, and 9, 2004.



The objective is to contact as many stations in the Mid-Atlantic States that consist of Delaware, Maryland-DC, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia in as many Counties within these States as possible. The goal is to have a friendly operating atmosphere like many of us had experienced in the PA QSO Party, only on a regional level.

At the last meeting Shane KB3JFK reported our Web-Site is up and running but still needs more info. By the time you get this newsletter it should have been up-dated and running full bore. If any member has something to add sent it to Shane post haste. So far Shane has done a nice job putting the site together and deserves an Atta-Boy, maybe two. You can see his efforts at http://way.to/w3cma.

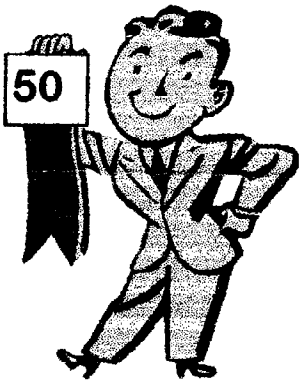
For those of you who are CW operators the ITU will recommend a new character for Morse Code as reported in CQ Magazine. Have you ever tried to send your e-mail address in Morse Code? If so, how did you send @ ? The ITU will recommend in the next several months that an A and C run together (.–.-.) to become the official Morse character for @, subject to approval by member states. I had mentioned this on the SARA net and heard many comments on why they chose AC instead of AT. Probably because AT could be mistaken for a W. Your guess is as good as mine.

Also keep your ears open for announcements when the club will have work parties to clean up the grove and resume work on the trailer in order to have everything ready for the new season. Be sure to check out the Up-Coming Events list elsewhere in this issue and mark your calendar so you don't miss any action the Club has planned this year. TWA is on the move again !

FIFTY YEARS

Editor W3TI

It was just 50 years ago a young man from Tamaqua traveled to Philadelphia on his day off from work to take his General Class amateur radio license exam in front of the Federal Communications Commission inspector, Joseph Welsh W3CT. It was that same year he sent post cards to the 10 amateurs radio operators in Tamaqua, inviting them to a gathering for the purpose of organizing an Amateur Radio Club. They responded and the first amateur radio club was organized in Tamaqua. TARC, "The Tamaqua Amateur Radio Club".



Since that point in time the club name was changed a few times to keep in step with our amateur radio environment e.g., Anthracite Wireless Association, Tamaqua Single Side Band Amateur Radio club, and now "The Tamaqua Wireless Association. Our name may have changed, yet the sole and main objective of the club is still the same. " To preserve and maintain the state of the art of Amateur Radio in the Tamaqua area ".

We were fortunate that we never lacked for a place to hold club meetings. The first meeting place was the Tamaqua Borough council room, second floor of the Citizens Fire Company on Rowe Street. Then we were invited to the Maenerchor Hall on Schuylkill avenue. After they were burned out we moved up the street to the Italian Club for a number of years. Then back to Tamaqua Borough council meeting room that moved to their present location at 320 East Broad Street. From there we got an offer to meet at the American Hose Fire company and in January 2003 moved to our present place of congregating, the East End Fire Company, East Broad Street.

From this early beginning the club was involved with the Amateur Radio Emergency Service, ARES, and responded a number of times when Tamaqua was flooded out. Members also assisted with communications during the Wilkes Barre and the Johns Town floods.

In 1982 the FCC stopped giving the Amateur exams and placed responsibility on the amateur fraternity to volunteer as examiners. Our club was the first in a four county area to organize a Volunteer Examining team and schedule examinations four times a year.

At the time of this writing the club has 16 extra class, one Advanced class, 9 General class and 5 Technician class, total of 31 members. Over the past years the club has accrued assets of over $ 2000 in radio equipment and other associated items, e.g. Ice chests, gas stoves, Micro wave oven, toaster, large electric coffee pot, a 40 volume lending library of electronic data VCR tapes, and the list goes on and on and on.

QSL Via the Bureau

In the Holiday issue of Splatter we informed you how to retrieve your incoming DX QSL cards by sending a stamped, self addressed envelope to the 3rd. Call Letter District QSL Manager. That information is correct only if you live in the FCC third call letter district.

We have club members who are from the 2nd. and 5th, district in Texas. Those members must send the SASE to the respective call districts to collect their DX QSL cards.

This is a good thing to remember, if your present call was issued in the 3rd. District and you move from your present QTH in Pennsylvania to another FCC call letter district you will have to send your SASE envelope to that FCC numbered district.

Information regarding envelopes, you can buy 6 x 9 inch envelopes at any stationery store. Some are sold in packs of ten or a box of 100, but if you decide you only need 2 or 3 at a time ye club secretary has a few hundred to donate as another club benefit . For one dollar we'll put 2 units of postage (it cost 70 cents for 2 ounces of first class mail) on each envelope and all you need do is put your call letters in the upper left hand corner and return address in the center. We'll do the rest and mail a bunch of them all at the same time via the club to the QSL Bureau. As a suggestion, send 2 or 3 envelopes at a time. The QSL bureau will inform you when they sent you the last envelope.

In the meantime don't forget to pack your outgoing QSL for shipping to ARRL QSL Bureau. Cost is still around a nickel a card.

For What it's Worth

Members attending the November club meeting had show and tell data and information on the Log Periodic antenna. The antenna used was purchased by Jim KB3FET who was confused by its odd configuration. After it was assembled at the club meeting it was stated to be highly directional and has a very high front-to back ratio, and very strong forward gain.

The antenna used in the demonstration was designed for portable work, especially Fox hunts or hidden transmitters. Antennas of this type can exhibit a forward gain as high as 6 to 8 db. Expressed in transmitter power, using your hand held HT for a Fox Hunt set in the high power position (about 4 to 6 watts). Means you are squirting anywhere from 24 to 50 watts ERP off the front of that antenna. At ten watts the Effective Radiated Power can reach as high as 80 to 100 watts.

It is very important you DO NOT point that antenna toward another person while in the transmit position. If someone in the Fox Hunt group has had open heart surgery and has a Pace Maker or Defribulator, the RF emitted could have devastating results. RF above 50 mhz has been known to stop these machines and cease functioning.

2003 Financial Report

A treasurers report is given at each club meeting after the reading of the minutes and the annual report is given at the December session. The following is a summation of how and where your annual dues donation is spent.

Balance from previous year	$ 287
Receipts of dues	$ 274
50/50 drawings	71
Other donations	66
Total receipts	$ 412
Expences	
Postage	$ 50
Secy. Supplies	12
Field Day	172
Annual Family picnic	30
Miscellaneous items	160
Total expended	$ 474

Leaving a balance at the end of year 2003 of $ 224.00



Please note— Only $ 120 was spent on plywood for a new floor in the club trailer. Roof coating and paint, paneling, floor tile and other material has been donated by members.

Receipts from the 50/50 drawings are for donation to the East End Fire Company for use of their meeting room and to the owners of the picnic grove for electric power we consume during the year. An itemized report is available for any club member to review.

The club judiciary reviewed the budget for 2004 and see no increase in postage or other expenses. Hence, the regular membership annual donation will remain at ten dollars ($ 10.00), family members two dollars ($ 2.00) and student members five dollars ($5.00).

If per chance you forgot to make your annual donation, look at the call letters on this bulletin mailing label. If they are hi-lighted in RED, you forgot.

Last year we added new members as well as a number of extra activities that turned out to be very successful in so far as member participation. Everyone is just itchin' for spring to sprung so we can have the club meetings at Weicker's Wacky Woods. And I do mean WACKY. If you haven't attended meetings lately, you're missing out on a lot of good club fun and activity.

= =

You can't build a reputation on what
you are going to do
That all comes after you do it !

What you didn't know and Were afraid to ask

A few weeks ago I had a conversation with one of our club members who had a very good question which I now present to you. "What is the maximum power level an amateur radio station is permitted ".

If you were licensed before June 1990 your answer would be 1000 watts maximum DC input to the final amplifier. Or, by multiplying the plate current by the plate voltage will give you the amplifier power in watts. Example ; 3000 volts multiplied by 300 Ma. Would be equivalent to 900 watts. That was permissible when AM modulation was king , but the rules have been changed.

The following information is copied directly from the most recent FCC part 97 rule book. As of June 1990 measurements are now taken from the PEP (Peak Envelope Power) output of your final amplifier. So how do I measure PEP ? Read on.

PEP AND POWER MEASURMENT

Peak envelope power (PEP) is the average power supplied to the antenna transmission line by a transmitter during one radio frequency cycle at the crest of the modulation envelope taken under normal operating conditions. Amateur transmitters may never be operated with a peak envelope power of more than 1500 watts.

FCC has published the following standards of measurement:

(1). Read an in-line peak-reading RF wattmeter that is properly matched to the transmission line.

Use a calibrated SWR meter. The forward reading is your power output. The FCC has yet to learn that.

(2) Or, Calculate the power using the peak RF voltage as indicated by an oscilloscope or other peak-reading device. Multiply the peak RF voltage by 0.707, square the results and divide by the load resistance. (*Usually 50 ohms*) The SWR must be 1: :1.

As a practical matter, most hams don't have any sophisticated measuring equipment to measure the way the FCC would. However your station should have a Standing Wave Ratio (SWR) reading device that will do the calculations for you and in most cases never approach the 1500-W PEP out- put limit. Most of the common amateur amplifiers are not capable of generating this much power. However, if you do have a Planet Destroyer amplifier and do operate close to the limit you should be prepared to measure your output along the lines as detailed above.

This explanation is taken directly from the latest FCC rule book. If you operate on SSB or CW at the 1500 watt PEP level, basically, you are only operating at a DC input of about 750 watts, which is the peak power, or one/half of the Peak to peak output 1500 watts. The FCC didn't give us any thing extra, matter of fact, they took 250 watts away from us and reduced our maximum output power from one thousand watts down to 750 watts limit.

Questions

When you passed your most recent amateur license exam, how much do you remember from the FCC rules and regulations section.

1. Does the FCC require a two meter repeater station to be coordinated ?
2. What are the age requirements to become a licensed amateur radio operator ?
3. What are the age requirements to become a Volunteer Examiner ?
4. What amateur band or bands is the FM mode transmission permitted ?
5. Our club has an FCC station license "W3CMA" issued to the club trustee NI3H. Can club members use that call ?
6. If I visit your amateur station and wish to contact another station using your station equipment, whose call do I use ?
7. You plan to take a trip to Canada fishing for a week. Do you need a special license or permit to operate your two meter mobile while in Canada ?
8. Canada is still an English possession. Are the rules the same if I vacation in England and would like to make contacts on their 2 meter repeaters.
9. Do I need a special permit or license to vacation in Puerto Rico ?
10. Do you have an up to date copy of FCC rules part 97. ?

Another Club Activity

Following in the footsteps of the Pennsylvania QSO party sponsored by the Nittiny Lions Amateur Radio club held in October, a similar activity motivated by Allen Huber WG3E known as the *Mid-Atlantic QSO Party* is making the scene. Plans are to hold this on the air activity on May 8 and 9, 2004.

Since our club is based on all kinds of on the air activities, we have the opportunity here to get in on the ground floor and perhaps sponsor a plaque or other award in the name of the Tamaqua Wireless Association. We received all the details and ground rules for this activity from their website and after perusing through them we see they are similar to those for the PA QSO party.

The contest objective is to contact as many stations in the Mid-Atlantic states of Delaware, Maryland - DC, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. Contact points and multipliers are made by contacts with each county .

Motion made and seconded, the members decided to go for it, we'll be starting our club activities calendar 2004 with the Mid-Atlantic States QSO party in May, followed by the June VHF QSO party.

Report and Order

A four page communication from the FCC was sent to every Amateur Radio club in the United States. The contents is a Report and Order for the first quarter of the year. *We condensed those four pages and herewith present the most important parts.*

In reviewing the file on Amateur Radio operator license listed in their computer it was noticed there was an excessively large number of amateur call letters that were either silent keys that were never cancelled nor reported to the commission or those who lost interest and are no longer active in the hobby. To weed out and eliminate this dead wood would allow for more space in part 97 of the amateur radio operators computer file listing. In order to accomplish this the following solution has been devised.

Every active amateur, General, Advanced and Amateur Extra class licensed operator in the United States will be reexamined within the next twelve months. General and Advanced class will be required to take a five word per minute Morse code test. The Extra class will be given a ten word per minute code test.

Inactive licensed operators will be given the opportunity to take the test to retain their file in the computer. All Morse code exams will be administered by an official of the FCC at a time and place to be forwarded in a later communication sent to each Amateur Radio club.

It is also considered the active amateur is well qualified and has attained sufficient operating experience so there will be no need to administer another written examination. Further noted, the greater number of Technician class operators have been licensed within the past ten years and are active on six and two meters. Hence, are exempt from taking any further exams unless they wish to upgrade to General or Extra class.

As informed above, the individual licensee will not be notified when or where to take the exam but will be left to their own recognizance to obtain the information from your Radio club.

They have devised the following system for time and place to take the exam. To check your exam date has been set up according to the first digit of your FRN number (Federal Registration Number) located on your license. The first digit is the first number on the right.

Exams will begin the First of April. If your first digit of your FRN number is 4, you will be required to take the code test some time in April. If your first digit is 6, you will take the exam in June. If number 9, it will be September and 0 zero will be October. No exams will be administered during the month of November or December. January, February, and March will be 1, 2, and 3 respectively.

I doubt if we need to go into detail what the results will be for those who do not take the exam. The commission feels that every active amateur will have been examined by April 1, 2005 and they can drop all the silent keys and inactive amateurs from their computer files. For additional information and details will be given at the February meeting of TWA , or you can call

1- 888 - FCC - ZUSA

Member Correspondence

January 28, 2004

There are times in life when some things should be said, but sometimes its not said.. I would like to take this opportunity to say what should be said . W3TI, Allen R. Breiner is celebrating his 50th year as secretary and officer of the Tamaqua Wireless Association and editor of our club bulletin Splatter.

Al also dedicates himself to Public Service as a Ham Radio Operator and as chairman of the Planning Commission for the Borough of Tamaqua. In the recent past he served for many terms as an ARRL Section Manager for Eastern Pennsylvania. But most important to me is that he is a dedicated Elmer and Teacher for Ham Radio.

I know there are many more things that could be mentioned here, but these are things as club members we see year after year. In closing I would like to say thank you W3TI for all your hours of hard work. I know what it is to be secretary of an organization. It's a lot of work. But mostly I would like to thank you for being a great teacher and a friend to all of us. We hope you have many more years of service. 73.

Ed Weicker KB3DYJ

Skunk Hunting—Amateur Radio Style

By Editor W3TI

For those who frequent our area two meter repeaters may have run across some very bad operating practices, the worst case scenario is the unidentified station who continues to break into your conversation with snide remarks and at times uses very uncouth language, the type that comes from a very illiterate and under educated person. Usually a transplant from Citizens Band radio who has never been tutored by an Elmer and believes he is still operating on 27 Mhz.

The first thing that comes into our mind is to find his location but that is not as easy as you think with just a two meter station located in our radio shack. It takes a little know how and a good mobile unit to do the job.

So what is the best way to approach such a situation. First; Do not antagonize them, don't even make comment about them. Ignore them completely and soon they will give up and go away. They love to have an audience, don't give them that choice.

On the other hand if your club has a few good operators with good transmitter hunting equipment and want to take the time to go "Skunk Hunting", this would be the proper way to pin point the location of the unidentified station..

Required Equipment

1. A topographic map of the area
2. A good magnetic compass, preferably a Military type
3. Direction Finding receiver type used for "Fox Hunts"
4. Draftsmen's Protractor

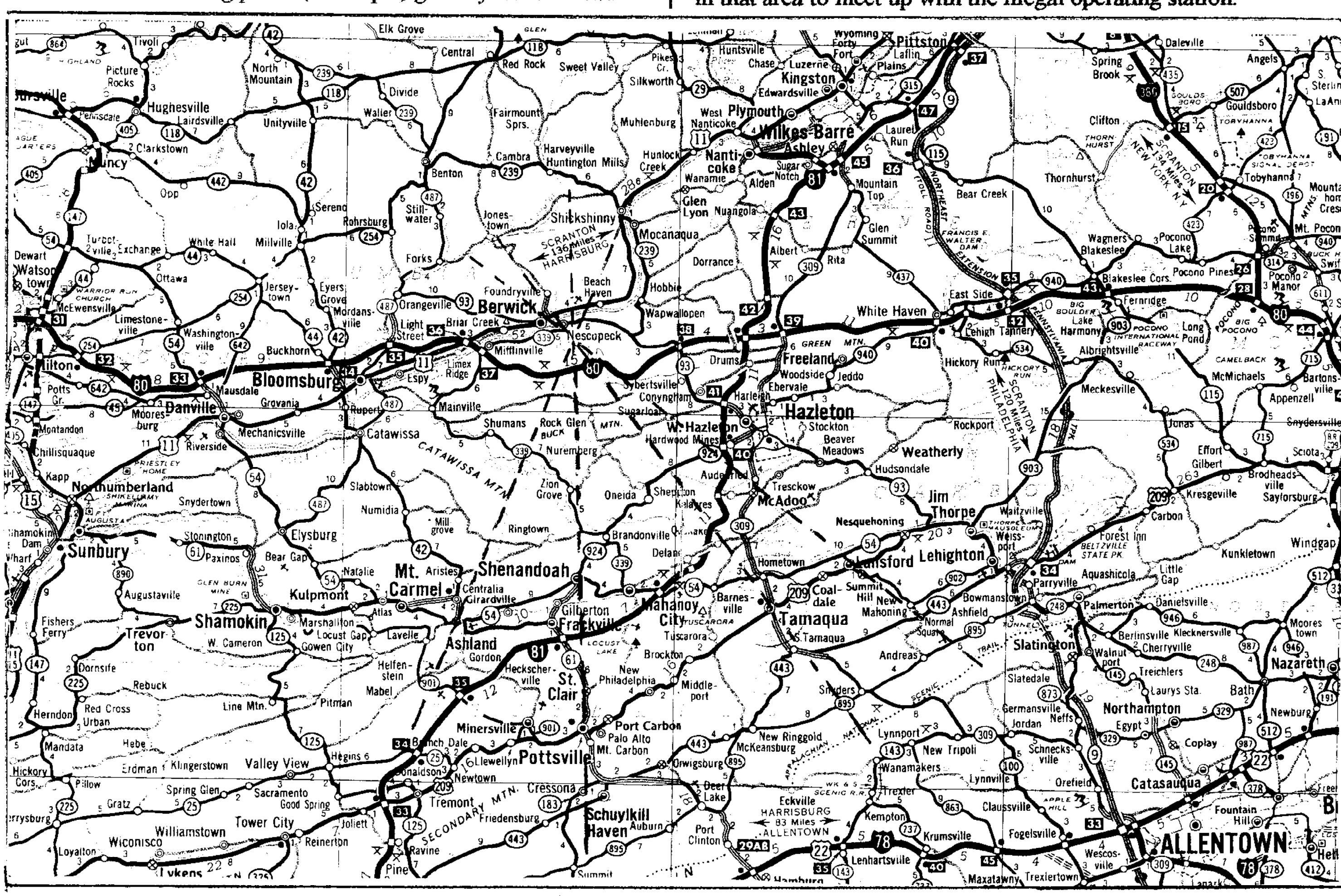
As a tool for explanation we are using a reprint from an old Pennsylvania road map with Pottsville and Tamaqua as central locations. As a starting point (Tamaqua) go for your first reading on a high elevation in your area. Use the protractor to locate the degree for each direction reading and strike a line as shown on the map. Designate North as zero on the compass and go 360 degrees in a clock wise rotation, indicating each point of the compass.

Tuning in the unidentified station for its strongest signal, turn the D.F. unit until you get a null or the weakest signal. The null should be 90 degrees from the strongest signal. Look at the direction of the antenna in reference to the compass. Your reading should be about 323 degrees but this will not tell you whether the signal is coming from in front of you or from behind you.

The second reading should be at a different location at least 10 to 15 miles from the first. Do not go to a second location that would be in line with your first reading. For example, we chose Summit Hill for our second reading. It was northwest to southeast direction or 310 degrees. This reading crossed over the previous reading. Both lines cross in the approximate area of Nescopeck and Berwick area. In order so we don't get a false reading or echo, a third reading from another location would verify the exact area where the transmitted signal is emanating from.

Another skunk hunter in Pottsville using similar equipment will have a reading almost true north at 358 degrees. Moving to another location, for example, Ashland will have a reading North-northeast or 21 degrees. Both lines of direction will cross over in the same area or close proximity of Berwick or Nescopeck.

You now have a very good idea where the unidentified station is located. It would be just a matter of minutes for a mobile unit in that area to meet up with the illegal operating station.



T W A Calendar of Events for 2004

February 20th	Monthly Meeting, 7:30 PM, East End Fire Company, Tamaqua, PA
March 6th	VE Exams, 9:00 AM, Tamaqua Municipal Building 320 East Broad Street, Tamaqua, PA
March 19th	Monthly Meeting, 7:30 PM, East End Fire Company, Tamaqua, PA
April 16th	Monthly Meeting, 7:30 PM, East End Fire Company, Tamaqua, PA
May 8th & 9th	Mid-Atlantic QSO Party, Weicker's Grove, Locust Valley
May 21st	Monthly Meeting, 7:30 PM, Weicker's Grove, Locust Valley
June 5th	VE Exams, 9:00 AM, Tamaqua Municipal Building 320 East Broad Street, Tamaqua, PA
June 12th & 13th	VHF/QSO Party, Weicker's Grove, Locust Valley
June 18th	Monthly Meeting, 7:30 PM, Weicker's Grove, Locust Valley
June 25th, 26th & 27th	Field Day 2004, Weicker's Grove, Locust Valley
July 16th	Monthly Meeting, 7:30 PM, Weicker's Grove, Locust Valley
August 7th	VE Exams, 9:00 AM, Tamaqua Municipal Building 320 East Broad Street, Tamaqua, PA
August 20th	Monthly Meeting, 7:30 PM, Weicker's Grove, Locust Valley
September 11th	Annual Members Family Picnic, Weicker's Grove, Locust Valley
September 17th	Monthly Meeting, 7:30 PM, Weicker's Grove, Locust Valley
October 9th & 10th	PA QSO Party, Weicker's Grove, Locust Valley
October 15th	Monthly Meeting, 7:30 PM, East End Fire Company, Tamaqua, PA
October 23rd	Grave Dig, Details to be announced.
October 26th	Tamaqua Halloween Parade Control
November 6th	VE Exams, 9:00 AM, Tamaqua Municipal Building 320 East Broad Street, Tamaqua, PA
November 19th	Monthly Meeting, 7:30 PM, East End Fire Company, Tamaqua, PA Nominations and Election of Officers
December 11th	Annual Christmas Party, Martha's Place, 300 Lafayette St., Tamaqua, Pa (Short meeting, installation of Officers, Special Awards and PARTY)

TWA Calendar of Events

March 6, VE Exams, Tamaqua Municipal Bldg. 9 a.m.
March 19, TWA Regular Biz meeting, East End Fire Co. 7:30 p.m.
April 16, TWA Regular Biz meeting, East End Fire Co. 7:30 p.m.
May 8-9, Mid-Atlantic States QSO Party See details inside
June 5, VE Exams Tamaqua Municipal Bldg. 9 a.m.
June 12, 13. VHF QSO Party
June 25-26-17, ARRL Field Day Exercise

Tamaqua Wireless Association
A. R. Breiner W3TI Secretary
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TIME LIMITED MAIL
MEETING NOTICE

