Tamaqua Wireless Association Inc.

SPLATTER

THE AMATEUR RADIO NEWSLETTER OF SCHUYLKILL COUNTY

Since 1967 Vol. III #3 2018

OFFICERS:

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Vice President: Tom Smith KC3CRS (tswizard@pa.metrocast.net)
Secretary: Jim Shellhamer KC3DXS (kc3dxs@ptd.net)
Treasurer: Ed Boerner KB3AYY (kb3ayy@kb3ayy.com)



Schuylkill County now has linked repeaters.

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- Need Emergency Service in Schuylkill County, dial 911
- Need Amateur Radio Service, contact one of the officers above
- We are here to serve the community. If you need radio communications for an event email one of the officers above and we will gladly help you.

W3CMA Home Page:
www.w3cma.org
Facebook:
TWA Tamaqua Wireless Association
YouTube Channel:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqHQWwP6--piClV-YiiNzfA

March 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 The Chew with JD @8PM on 145.370 KB3JD	**2**	**3** ARRL SSB DX Contest
4 ARRL SSB DX Contest	**5**	**6** Schuylkill County Emergency Services Net @ 8PM on 145.370 N3RZI	**7** Round Table hosted on The TWA Repeater Network 7PM with Kevin, K3VNN	**8** Int'l. Women's Day The Chew with Roy @8PM on 145.370 W3TKR	**9** SARA Club Meeting at Schuylkill Medical Center Pottsville 8PM	**10**
11 Daylight Saving Begins	**12**	**13** Schuylkill County Emergency Services Net @ 8PM on 145.370 N3RZI	**14** Round Table hosted on The TWA Repeater Network 7PM with Tom, K3TE	**15** Club Announcements on the TWA Network @7:30PM The Chew with Kevin@8PM on 145.370 K3VNN	**16** TWA Club Meeting at The American Legion Tamaqua 7PM	**17** Saint Patrick's Day
18	**19**	**20** Spring Begins (Northern Hemisphere) Schuylkill County Emergency Services Net @ 8PM on 145.370 K3VNN	**21** Round Table hosted on The TWA Repeater Network 7PM with Kevin, K3VNN	**22** The Chew with Roy @8PM on 145.370 W3TKR	**23**	**24** World Tuberculosis Day Girardville St. Patty's Day Parade
25	**26**	**27** Schuylkill County Emergency Services Net @ 8PM on 145.370 W3TRK	**28** Round Table hosted on The TWA Repeater Network 7PM with Tom, KC3CRS	**29** The Chew with Kevin@8PM on 145.370 K3VNN	**30** Good Friday	**31**

Amateur Radio Tests

Tamaqua Wireless Association offers amateur radio test sessions four times a year. If you are unable to attend one of the regularly scheduled test sessions our VE team is available to register and conduct additional test session(s) to accommodate individuals or groups if you cannot make one of our test sessions. Please contact Bill Dale at bdalejr@ptd.net. Otherwise, **our tests start at 9AM on the dates given below. The tests sessions are at the Tamaqua Borough Municipal Building 320 East Broad Street in Tamaqua.** If you are new to amateur radio and need help, studying for the technician test, our website www.w3cma.org has a study guide posted on it or you can contact Bill and he will put you in touch with a member to help you. Just so, you know you do not need Morse code anymore. Cost is $15.00 for an FCC license that could last you a lifetime.

Test Sessions 2018

- ~~February 17th~~
- April 7th
- June 2nd
- August 4th
- November 3rd



Volunteer Examiner

Are you a VE and want to help with TWA's test session(s), are you interested in becoming a Volunteer Examiner (VE)? If you answered "Yes" to either of these questions, please contact Bill Dale. Bill has been our VE liaison for over 25 years and has the answers for you. His email is bdalejr@ptd.net. If you would like to become a VE, contact Frank D'Amato or Jim Shellhamer; these two recently received their VE credentials and would be the go to for answers. Their emails are Frank – kb2mxv@gmail.com and Jim - kc3dxs@ptd.net. We would love to see you at a test session…

REPEATERS

TWA maintains two VHF repeaters and a UHF repeater. One 2-meter repeater is located on top of the ABC High Rise building in Tamaqua the other is currently on top of the Clamtown Hill in West Penn Township. Our newest repeater is UHF. It is located on top of the Vulcan Hill near the Mountain Valley Golf Course. We are currently waiting on frequency coordination. Anyone with a valid amateur radio license can use them. We encourage repeater etiquette and limit your "kurchunking" with your call sign to a minimum please. The Tamaqua site is strictly analog FM, the Clamtown location is a Fusion repeater that can do C4FM and analog FM, the UHF is analog FM.

TWA Repeaters

146.490 / 147.490 (PL 123.0)

147.270 / 147.870 (PL 131.8)

449.775 / 444.775 (PL 131.8)

147.270 is our Fusion repeater

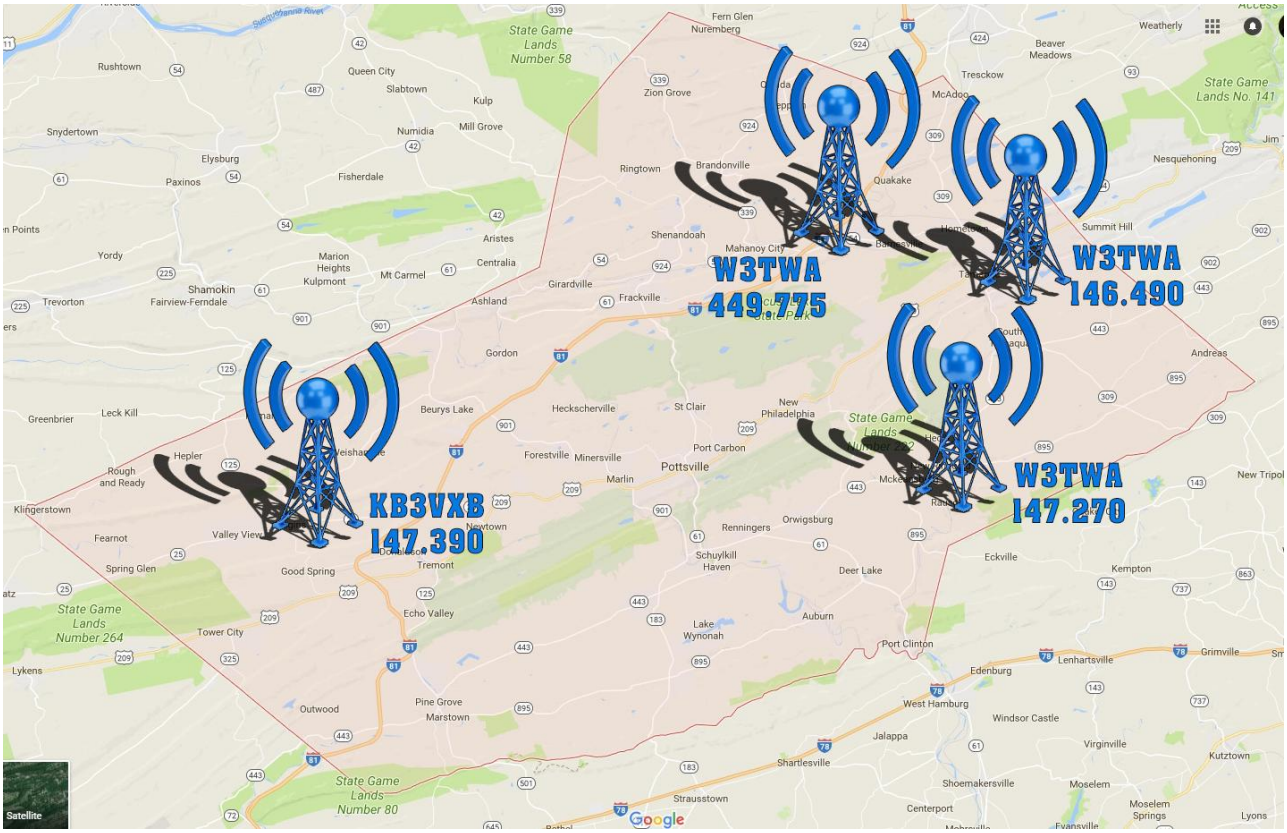
Simplex: 146.550

REPEATER FUND

We really could use your help. TWA has three active repeaters in Schuylkill County. Because of the terrain, the club installed three repeaters. Two of the three are coordinated and we are still looking for a permanent home for the 270. We are looking for support to keep the repeaters operating. **A repeater fund has been set up, please donate today.** Contact Bill, WY3K at bdalejr@ptd.net he will be glad to give you information

LINKED REPEATER COVERAGE

TWA has you covered in Schuylkill County, thanks to Frank KB2MXV for the coverage map of Schuylkill County if you are anywhere in the county now just tune to one of the frequencies below and you can talk to anyone, they are all linked. **Please pause for a second before transmitting, it takes time to turn-on all the repeaters with an RF Link**.



SCHUYLKILL COUNTY REPEATER NETWORK

Our network of repeaters links Schuylkill County with very good coverage. The repeater frequencies are listed above. Two of the three repeaters are coordinated through ARCC (Area Repeater Coordinating Council) if you feel we need to add another repeater to make our network even stronger in the county please attend a meeting and tell us about it. As you know, Schuylkill County is not flat. We are always open for better coverage in the county.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

- April 7th Amateur radio test session
- April 15th SSB Rookie Roundup
- April 18th Club Announcements @ 7:30PM on TWA's Repeater Network
- April 20th Club Meeting at The Grove 7:00PM
- May 17th Club Announcements @ 7:30PM on TWA's Repeater Network
- May 18th Club Meeting at The Grove 7:00PM
- May 18th, 19th, and 20th Hamvention 2018





- June 9th to 11th VHF Contest
- June 13th Club Announcements @ 7:30PM on TWA's Repeater Network
- June 15th Club Meeting at the Grove 7:00PM
- June 16th Set up for Field Day 2018 11AM at the grove
- June16th Kids Day
- June 20th Rain date for Field Day 2018 6PM at the grove.
- July 8th-9th IARU HF World Championship
- July 19th Club Announcements @7:30PM
- July 20th Club Meeting at the Grove 7:00PM
- August 5th - 6th 222MHz and Up Distance Contest
- August 16th Club Announcements @7:30PM
- August 17th Club Meeting at the Grove 7:00PM
- August 19th- 20th 10GHz and Up – Round 1
- August 20th Rookie Roundup – RTTY



WHAT'S NEW WITH TWA



- February's meeting was attended by the following: WY3K, KC3CRS, KC3DXS, KB3AYY, KA3FUL, N3OGG, W3OFD, WA3WIJ, KB2MXV, KB3CFV, and K3TE
- Have you noticed the "Calendar of Events" lately? It is being filled in. It is nice to see more amateur radio activity in Schuylkill County.
- On January 27th WA3WIJ, KB3AYY, KB2MXV, and K3TE went to the Mountain Valley site to swap out the duplexer. We received our coordinated frequency and the duplexer needed to be retuned. K3TE retuned the duplexer and the duplexer was reinstalled on the 28th.
- In this newsletter, Ed KB3AYY has submitted an interesting article on APRS. See below for more information.
- With progress comes challenges, this club is not immune to challenges. We were having problems with the link radio from Tamaqua to Mountain Valley and we were having transmission problems on 449.775. I would like to thank Ed, KB3AYY for fixing the Tamaqua link and Frank, KB2MXV for fixing the TX issue. Well done guys! Now we need to take care of the 27 link.
- At our club meeting, we will have a PayPal link on our website. There is no cost to us to have it. Only when someone donates money PayPal will take a percentage. Frank D'Amato said PayPal would take .73 cents if somebody would charge their dues on it.
- Bill said he received a call from Jim Munley. Jim said that he is working on the paperwork for nonprofit status.
- There was a request from St. Luke's Miners Campus to give them an idea of what they would need to get reconnected to EMA. On Saturday 2/24 WY3K, KC3CRS, KB3AYY, and N3RZI visited the hospital and in the near future, they will put a proposal together so the hospital could bet up to speed with emergency communications.
- Mark your calendars; March 24 is the Girardville parade. Volunteers are needed!

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Spring is Right around the Corner

Boy what a winter, but spring is almost here. The swings in temperature, snow, then rain and ice sure made for a messy winter thus far, but at least we didn't have the big one (yet).

With the warmer weather coming it's time to begin thinking of those tasks that need attention. Usually antennas come to mind as one of the tasks. In this month's QST there was an article about using drones to accurately position wire antennas in trees. I know in the past I have had limited success in using arrows and the sling shot method when I had to move my center fed Zepp antenna. My biggest problem is that I was trying to use two pine trees as the supporting structures. As you know, the branch spacing of these trees is rather tight and the thick needles do not give you good visibility. So, I wonder how effect a drone would be in this application. Regardless it is a novel idea that I never thought of, but possibly several of the clubs drone pilots have already attempted the task. Possibly, we can have a friendly competition this year when we string our field day antennas.

At the February meeting, Ron (KB3CFV) addressed the membership about concerns he had with the direction of the club moving forward. Although I have not had anyone come to me directly, I understand there are others that may have similar feelings.

As I stated in response to Ron's comments, TWA has always been an amateur radio organization that is open to all segments of the hobby. TWA has a rich history in providing public service, participating in the annual field day event, participating in QSO parties, conducting classes for individuals wishing to entering the hobby and conducting VE exams sessions. TWA has always acknowledged there are members who enjoy DX'ing, contesting, traffic handling, and participation in nets (both HF and VHF) or simply a specific mode of operation.

I acknowledge that recently TWA has focused heavily on the repeater system, but that should not deter any member or members from forming a committee to address issues they would like to pursue within the organization. Once again, TWA is not a club that supports only one aspect of the hobby. Recent examples were the addition of Echo Link and some experimenting with Wires X. Both modes embrace digital technology for local and DX operations.

So please present your ideas at any meeting. You might be surprised at just how many members would like to participate.

One change that was agreed upon at the February meeting was to place committee discussions at the end of the agenda. This will allow members to participate in the business portion of the meeting, but will then provide an opportunity for individuals who do not wish to participate in committee discussions to be excused.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ed (KB3AYY) for his tenure as club treasurer. As Ed stated, he has a family commitment that will be taking place that conflicts with the clubs-meeting schedule. I too had to step aside from many of the activities in the past to address family commitments. I hope you and your grandson have great success in your new endeavor.

ARRL Website

1. ARRL Suggests FCC may need to intervene to ensure effective antenna rights.
   http://www.arrl.org/news/arrl-suggests-fcc-may-need-to-intervene-to-ensure-effective-antenna-rights
2. ARRL comments on Technological Advisory Council Spectrum Policy Recommendations
   http://www.arrl.org/news/arrl-comments-on-technological-advisory-council-spectrum-policy-recommendations

New Gear

1. Yaesu is planning to bring out a new portable radio called the **FT-4XR**. More on this in the near future, but for now rumor has it that it could be the FT-2DR with a color display. Stay tuned...
2. Yaesu **FT-818**

   6W HF/ VHF/ UHF All Mode Portable Transceiver - March Availability

   https://www.hamradio.com/detail.cfm?pid=H0-016097

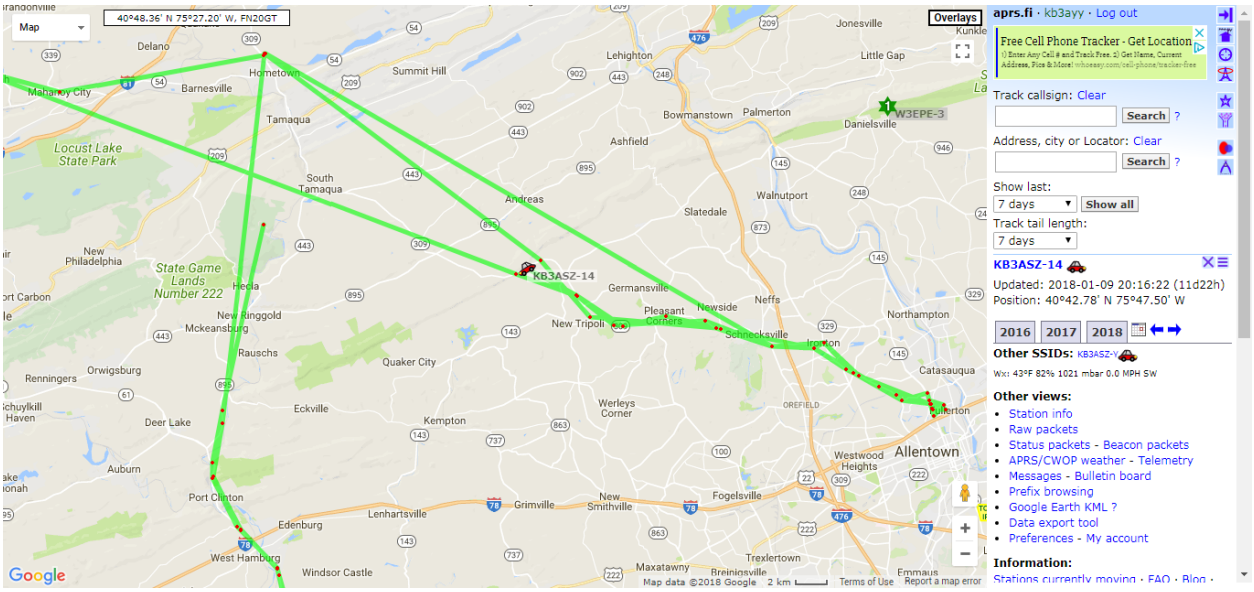
3. Stay tuned, New Year means new gear.



AUTOMATIC PACKET REPORTING SYSTEM

A P R S

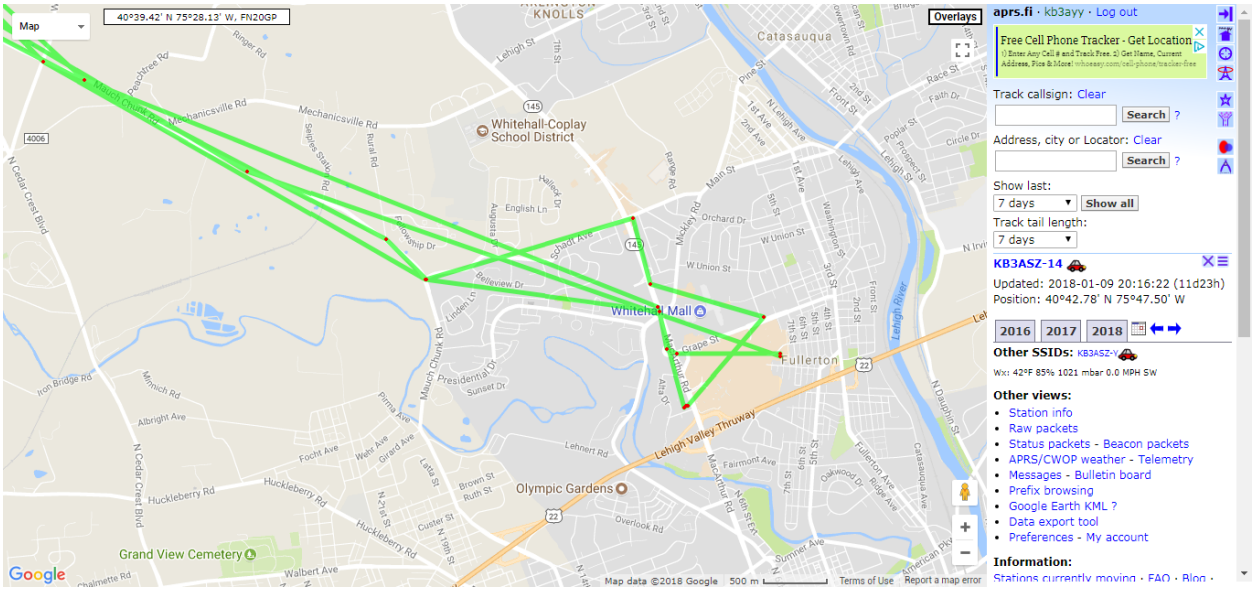
Automatic Packet Reporting System Originally known as "Automatic Position Reporting System" but renamed by its creator, APRS is an amateur radio based digital communications system for local, regional, or long-distance (as in the case of HF APRS) tactical, real-time exchange of information among all members of a net, including map based displays for situational awareness. It was developed by Bob Bruninga (WB4APR), who currently works at the United States Naval Academy. He maintains the main [APRS web page]. Capabilities APRS is used to transmit real-time information such as messages, bulletins, announcements and the locations of any stations or objects via amateur packet radio protocols. Real-time reporting of station position for mobiles is facilitated using the Global Positioning System. APRS is capable of transmitting a wide variety of data including weather reports, short text messages, and radio direction finding bearings, telemetry data, and storm forecasts. These reports can be combined with a computer and mapping software to show the transmitted data superimposed on a variety of map displays.



APRS and search and rescue.

Why use APRS for a search and rescue ops, two reasons MAPPING and TRACKING, as you can see in the picture above the wife's car has traveled a great distance in the last 7 days most important the red dots on the map is where the Yaesu FTM400drx has transmitted and left a cookie like mark, the more marks or cookies the better tracking info for the search team. The more info tells the team where they have searched and where to go next. Looking at the picture below you will see that she has traveled all around the Lehigh valley mall and Whitehall mall, now just imagine if you had 10 APRS team members side by side walking in the woods, the green line and red dots would show the search area that was covered and you can move on to a new area.

Equipment needed is a radio that is capable of APRS such as the Kenwood and Yaesu and of course software like **SARTrack** and APRSPOINT.



More on what you use APRS for is Wx tracking, there are many WX stations on APRS and weather balloons. Hot Air Balloons, Parades such as the Macy's parade and Boston Marathon are some of the events that clubs use APRS for.

You can see more at https://aprs.fi and as you look at the map you will see things like cars, planes, Wx stations, towers, houses, Red Cross, EOC (Emergency Operating center), Fire Engines, Ambulances, boats, digipeaters and more.

Of course APRS is used all around the world, the frequencies vary, but the US use 144.390, as for an event you can use any simplex frequency but `144.390 is the standard. Every call sign has a number (SSID) behind it indicating station.

-0 Primary station usually fixed and message capable
> -1 Other station, or digipeater or mobile or anything
> -2 Other station, or digipeater or mobile or anything
> -3 Other station, or digipeater or mobile or anything

> -4 Other station, or digipeater or mobile or anything
> -5 From other networks (Dstar, Iphones, Blackberry's etc)
> -6 Special event, Satellite ops, camping or 6 meters, etc
> -7 walkie talkies, HT's or other human portable
> -8 boats, sailboats, RV'sor second main mobile
> -9 Primary Mobile of all types
> -10 internet, Igates, etc
> -11 balloons, aircraft, etc
> -12 APRStt, DTMF, RFID, one-way trackers, devices, etc
> -13 Weather stations
> -14 Truckers or full time drivers
> -15 General purpose for anything

APRS is a very valuable tool, but it also can be a lot of fun just to see where your fellow ham buddies are. There is a ham that fly's around the Schuylkill county in a plane of course and it's nice to see his speed of a 145 mph and his distance was 5 mile from me so I wish I would've went outside to see if I could find him, but I never thought of it till I was writing this. - 73's, KB3AYY

ROUND TABLE NET SUMMARY

Month	Number of Weeks	Number of Check-Ins
January	5	63
February	4	32
March		
April		
May		
June		
July		
August		
September		
October		
November		
December		



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!

TWA held its first session of the New Year. Congratulations go out to all that tested, passed or did not. It was nice to offer the test and to have many pass the test. Especially in the dead of winter, below are some of the pictures. Enjoy.



In the photo above are VE Tom Smith (KC3CRS) and Anthony Baran (KC3KUC). Anthony has his general license and passed his extra license, congratulation Anthony!



In the photo above are VE Ron Creitz KB3CFV, Tim Williams and Jim Shellhamer (KC3DXS). Tim passed his technician test and is eager to get on the radio!



To the left are VE Tom Lesisko (K3TE), Karen Putt, and VE Jim Moyer (WA3WIJ). Karen walked in with no license and walked out with a general license congratulations Karen!

I apologize for not getting all the volunteer examiners in a photo. I would like to thank Ron Creitz (KB3CFV), Jim Shellhamer (KC3DXS), Kevin Marchetti (K3VNN), Jim Moyer (WA3WIJ), Frank D'Amato (KB2MXV), Tom Smith (KC3CRS), and Bill Dale (WY3K) for volunteering their time. Without you, the testing would not have taken place. – K3TE

Coordinated Frequency

Our Mountain Valley Repeater now has a coordinated frequency! Set your radio to:

449.775 -5MHz split

Tone Squelch 131.8

The Mountain Valley repeater is our main hub to link the three other repeaters in the county.



The heart of our repeater system is the Arcom controller. It was chosen because it was easy to program, it offered laptop programming. Unlike other controllers, that need to program through a DTMF keypad Arcom can be updated via a laptop. Don't get me wrong you can still program the controller with a keypad but it is easier with a computer. To the left is a picture of the controller. The controller can be purchased as a kit or Arcom will solder it for you. Our controllers are soldered by a member.



To the left is the Arcom Controller with the lid off. The "green" circuit board is the actual controller and the "blue" circuit board is the sensor board. The sensors read the AC voltage and the DC voltage and this is where the temperature is read.

MONTHLY REMINDERS FOR SARA AND 145.370

Thursday Night Chew



Roy
W3TKR



Kevin
K3VNN



JD
KB3JD

Check out the Rag Chew Crew @ 8PM on 145.370 Tone of 123.0. Stop by and bend their ear for a while. You can find these guys running the Chew every Thursday. Check them out; they would love to hear from you.

Schuylkill County
Emergency
Services NET

Check-In Every Tuesday Night

145.370 (PL Tone 123.0)

Alternate Frequency 147.345 (PL Tone 123.0)

The Net begins at 8:00 pm local time

The Net is hosted on SARA's Repeater

The Schuylkill Amateur Radio Association (SARA) meets every 2nd Friday of the month at the Schuylkill Medical Center on South Jackson Street in Pottsville. They meet at 8PM, walk in the main door and walk all the way back. Their website is http://www.vpnavy01.com/websites/sara/ for more information.

MONTHLY REMINDERS ON TWA REPEATER NETWORK

Check in every Wednesday at 7:00PM on the TWA Repeater Network. Check the schedule in the Calendar of Events to see who is running the Roundtable. We would love to hear from you! You do not need to be a member of TWA to check into the net. Any amateur radio operator can do so. We would love to hear from you!



TWA Repeater Network Frequencies:

146.490 + 1MHz Tone Squelch 123.0
147.270 + 600KHz Tone Squelch 131.8
147.390 + 600KHz Tone Squelch 82.5 – KB3VXB owned
449.775 - 5MHz Tone Squelch 131.8

Monthly TWA Club Announcements

Third Thursday of the month in March @ 7:30PM
Club announcements will be heard at this time.
Tune in to TWA's Repeater Network
If you cannot make the meeting, tune in and you will hear what will be discussed.

Until next time de K3TE – 73's