

CAARA NEWS



Cape Ann Amateur Radio Association
Gloucester, Massachusetts
APRIL 2023 EDITION



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Brandon- NQ1W

Spring is here, and the CAARA service event schedule is starting. These events are so important to CAARA's community service mission; to help get radio amateurs the experience necessary for handling other public service and safety communication needs for our community; and to raise funds for the club. Our first events are:

- April 2nd: YuKanRun Fool's Dual race
- April 16th: 5k race in Newburyport (tentative)
- April 30th: Half marathon in Gloucester

There are positions along the race routes and two slots for cars with mobile communications capabilities for each event. Please contact Chris W1TAT@outlook.com or Fred WA1ESU@comcast.net to volunteer and to get on the community service mailing list. Volunteering for even one event is helpful to ensure we have coverage.

We are starting to bring back food events at the clubhouse, trying for one breakfast and a couple of coffee and donuts gatherings each month. We thank Bill Morris W1WMM for taking the lead on these. Please be generous in your donations to the club at these events to cover the costs and provide funding for our club house operations.

In addition to the new equipment already added to the main room of the club, we are about to add a new model learning station with a typical radio and digital communication setup for modern hams who are just getting into HF communication. This will help us facilitate more demos and courses after it is in place. Our education space is starting to come together nicely!



Also with the new equipment, we can start having a movie night at CAARA! If you are interested in leading this initiative, please let me know at president@caara.net. This would be so much fun if we have a volunteer to lead it!

I'm looking forward to a great spring season at the CAARA clubhouse. I hope to see you there.

Regards,

Brandon Hockle NQ1W

President Cape Ann Amateur Radio Association

THE EMCOMM MINUTE

So as you know I operate HF portable and I bring a 120 amp hour lead cell flooded battery with me to power my HF rig. So last month I showed you one way to extend the operating time of battery power by using a battery booster which allows you to run a HF rig at 13.8 volts as the battery voltage drops to 11 volts during usage. This month I will show you another way to extend your operating time of your battery. This month I will do a review of the Renogy 100 watt, 12 volt solar panel briefcase system.



This solar panel briefcase system comes with two 50 watt panels and a 20 amp smart charge controller. The solar panels are monocrystalline and encased in glass. The panels and the solar charge controller are completely waterproof. The solar panels and the glass are encased in a heavy duty metal trim and the angle of the panels can be adjusted easily by turning a knob on the back stands. The solar charge controller is really advanced as it can charge lead acid flooded batteries, AGM and Gel cell batteries and 4 different type of Lithium Ion batteries. The whole solar panel kit comes wrapped in a heavy duty solid black canvas case to protect the glass panels as you can see in the photo.

CAARA Newsletter
Cape Ann Amateur Radio Association
6 Stanwood Street
Gloucester, MA 01930

CAARA Newsletter is a monthly publication of the Cape Ann Amateur Radio Association (CAARA).

It is the policy of the editor to publish all material submitted by the membership provided such material is in good taste, relevant to amateur radio and of interest to CAARA members, and space is available. Material is accepted on a first come, first serve basis. Articles and other materials may be submitted by internet to Jon at jpcrockport@gmail.com . If possible, material should be in Word format. Material may also be submitted as hard copy to Jon-K1TP or any Club Officer.

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Jon Cunningham- K1TP Editor
Dean Burgess- KB1PGH Reporter

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Welcome to CAARA:

CAARA, an ARRL affiliated club, operates the 2 meter W1GLO repeater on 145.130 MHz with antennas located on the ATT cell tower in the Blackburn Industrial Complex in Gloucester Massachusetts. It has an average effective radius of 60 miles, and serves Eastern Massachusetts, Cape Cod, Rhode Island, Southern New Hampshire, and maritime mobile stations.

CAARA also operates the W1GLO repeater on 224.900 located at the CAARA clubhouse.

The 443.700 repeater is now on the ATT cell tower in the Blackburn Industrial Complex with greatly enhanced performance running in fusion mode and linked to 10 other repeaters in the New England area.

The Association is one of the few amateur radioclubs that has its own clubhouse. Located at 6 S tanwood Street in Gloucester, with a variety of HF stations with beam, vertical, or G5RV antennas.

Amateur radio exams are held on REQUEST at the CAARA clubhouse. Anyone who is considering a new license or an upgrade, is welcome to test with us. Currently pre-registration is necessary. Contact the head of our VE team Bill Poulin- WZ1L if you have any questions about monthly testing.

Monthly member meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month at noon except for July and August.

Each Sunday evening at 9:00 PM, the club operates a 2 meter fm net on 145.130. This is an open and informal net which disseminates club news and prepares operators for emergency communications work. All are invited to check into the net as club membership is not a requirement.

The club is open most Tuesday's from 5- 8PM for CAARA members and interested parties to stop by and socialize, as well as use the extensive collection of ham radio gear.

This newsletter is published under the auspices of the Cape Ann Amateur Radio Association (CAARA), However, all content is the work of individual contributors and may contain ideas, opinions or views not necessarily shared or supported by the CAARA Board of Directors or the membership.



When you go to fold it back up the panels have two heavy duty clips to hold them together and a spring loaded metal carrying handle. The briefcase weighs 27 pounds so its not that bad to

carry.

As you can see I gave it a test run by charging a AGM battery I have. It took just a couple minutes to unfold it and set it up. Just make sure that you have the battery hooked up to the charge controller alligator clamps first before opening up the solar panels so you don't have a short if you cross the clips. It does have a 10 amp fuse in line which was blown when I first went to use it. So get a couple extra 10 amp fuses and put them in the battery clamp bag that comes with it.

As you can see on the photo of the smart charge controller it has a nice LCD read out with all the information you need to know such as the charging status and voltage. It can also read out amperage out. This system puts out just about 6 amps of charge power for a lead acid battery or AGM battery.

The smart charger can also do a float charge on batteries. You can see the two buttons on it where you can switch between what battery type you have and between voltage and amperage. The cables going to the battery to the charge controller are quick disconnects. I really like the build quality of this solar panel kit. The metal surrounding the glass is very well built and the hinges are not flimsy. This solar panel system would be great for any disaster preppers out



there. As well as anyone who camps or has a RV. The price of solar panels has come down quite a bit as well and their efficiency has improved so now is the time to buy.

Renogy makes this system into a 200 watt version as well for those who have a multi battery set up. I will certainly be using this to top of my battery in my HF portable field ops. I paid \$200 for this on sale on



Amazon. The price has gone up a bit so be on the look out for sales. They also have A 200 watt version of this if you have a bigger battery system. If you are interested in solar power for portable HF ops take the time to shop around.

You'll have to decide what size panels and output you need. There are so many options out there including solar panel systems that roll up into neat little packs. These solar panel systems are a great idea for those who wish to "Go Green" and "Off the grid" on powering their ham radios.

I just think it's really neat that we live in a time where we have this technology to get free electrical power from the sun. Plus with a battery backed up by solar power it's a hell of a lot quieter than a generator and less RFI and EMI from a generator going to your HF rig.

It's interesting to think that these solar panels use the energy from photons emitted by the sun to knock loose electrons in the materials in the panels themselves out into the metal silicon conductive metal grid that you see in the panels.



Did you know that there are two layers in each panel. A positive electron side and a negative electron side. They are divided by P/N layer which will only let positive

electrons through. The photons hit the positive side, knocking the positively charged electrons through to the negative side and then they go down the metal silicon grid into whatever you are trying to power and making the circuit.

That's pretty cool. Just if your curious solar panels are only able to take in about 15 to 20 percent efficient at taking in of the suns photons with todays technology.

One last thing. As always it takes just a little bit of effort to try to get the maximum solar power out of the panels. Just make sure that they are in complete sun with no shade and point them to the south. Of course you could always lay this panel system flat if the sun is directly overhead.

See you next month, Dean



BY MARK PERSONS,* WØMH

There is a little-known fact that coaxial cables, such as RG-8, RG-213, RG-214, and RG-58, have more RF loss in one direction than the other. This is due to the twist direction of the inner conductor and the braid twist on the outer conductor of the cable. The inner conductor controls forward power and the braid is the return path for receive signals.

This phenomenon was discovered and documented by Professor Loof Lirpa, SM9LL, in Sweden, now SK. He came across this while doing basic research at the University of Stockholm in April, 1956. This science does not apply to hardline, in which the inner and outer conductors are solid, not braided.

Manufacturers of quality braided cable today print an arrow on the outer jacket of their cables, indicating which way the transmitted RF should go (Photo A). You may not have noticed it because the arrows are tiny.

* E-mail: <mark@mwpersons.com>



Photo A. RG-8 coaxial cable with arrow printed on outer insulation.

If the coaxial cable in your shack does not have an arrow, you can experimentally determine it. Connect your transmitter to one end of a cable and a wattmeter, with dummy load, to the other end. Check the power and then reverse the cable to see which way it works best. Then mark the cable with an arrow so you will always know the "sending end" of the cable for minimum loss to your antenna. Install it accordingly.

This can be a significant advantage for the ham radio operator trying to make long-distance contacts, especially in a pileup.

SPRING SNOW

by Curt- AA3JE



New Hampshire, (Northern New Hampshire) is treacherous in March. It gives you a week or two of 35-40 degree weather then it dumps snow on you. In balmy Massachusetts, this means rain, the cable TV goes out, and a bit of water overflows the sewage treatment plant.

In New Hampshire snow tries to kill you. Ten miles from here, in Tuckerman Ravine, the wet snow falls, creating a pristine sea of snow. Snow that is so heavy that it slides on the lower layers, and will drown you in an avalanche.

In my driveway, the night before, the asphalt is dry and easy, the dog nibbles at the snow at the edges, and the next morning there is three inches of wet, wet snow. Too wet to snow blow. I start the tractor, attach the snow blade, and start pushing. You have to do it three times per pass, the first pass, then two additional passes to get the stuff that spills out the edges.

And where to put it? The edges of the driveway are piled six feet high, so it has to go to the yard. Thankfully there is a gate, and you push it over the hill. In the course of the winter, this creates a glacier that is fifteen feet high, and extends thirty feet down the hill. The top is level, but the slope of the land makes it scary steep at the downhill end.

So I had a half hour of snow pushing, and I scraped it all into piles, and started to push it out to the edge. Having done this for five years now, I am attuned to the machine, and when the downhill wheel started to spin, I felt the tractor wheels begin to dig in.

This is an existential problem, literally. If you are wise, you stop, RIGHT THEN, and go get the tow rope. But no one ever does. You stomp the differential lock and try again. 20 seconds later the tractor wheels are dug in up to the hubs. Being a crafty operator with a front-end loader on the tractor, you lower the bucket to grab the snow and push back a foot of two.

The bucket sinks in up to the top of the ram. You get out. The base of the snow pile, frozen like solid iron all winter, is now nothing but soft, crumbly, slush. You (I), try again. Now the tractor crabs toward the edge. Heart thumping, you shut down, get off, and watch as the tractor begins to slide, ever so slowly, toward a \$15,000 roll-over.

Run to the garage, find the tow rope that you used last year, and pull the truck around. Two bowlines later, you pull. Nothing. The wheels, even in 4-wheel drive, just skitter and slide on the wet, icy surface.

Sighing, you go get the shovel, and dig ramps in the slush behind each wheel. Then you pull again. Nothing. So, taking a deep breath, you pull forward, then back up firmly.

The tractor pops out, and all is well.

You go inside. Your wife greets you.

“I thought I heard the truck. Where did you go?”

“Pulling the tractor out, I got stuck.”

“Oh, OK.”

Half an hour later my pulse dropped below 150.

Spring snow, New Hampshire, it's treacherous.



Amateur Radio Newline Report

FIRE DESTROYS VITAL REPEATER IN SOUTHERN OKLAHOMA

NEIL/ANCHOR: A vital repeater in southern Oklahoma has literally gone up in smoke, leaving a region without an important emergency communications resource. Ralph Squillace KK6ITB has that story.

RALPH: Fire has destroyed the W5BLW repeater in southern Oklahoma, taking down a critically important resource for SKYWARN, the Red Cross and local emergency operations in five counties of the region. According to Vance Smith, KE5BAL, of the Ardmore Amateur Radio Club, it will be a slow road back for the repeater, which stood for more than 16 years.

Vance told Newline that the repeater was consumed by a controlled burn that went the wrong way on the private ranch property where the repeater stood. By the time the damage was noticed on the mountaintop, it was too late.

Now the scrambling - and the hard work - begins so that emergency communications can resume when needed.

Vance said he has an old repeater that can be put up temporarily on another site but it will be a while before a full power repeater will be back in action at the site on top of Arbuckle Mountain. He told Newline [quote] "We have a lot of work to do up at the site. We are going to need a tower climber to do work up top and along the side of the tower." [endquote]

The Ardmore Amateur Radio Club repeater bears the name and callsign of Ardmore club member Charles M. Dibrell who became a Silent Key in 1998. He had been a licensed ham since 1929.

Vance told Newline: [quote] "This is a very important piece of radio equipment for southern Oklahoma." [endquote]

This is Ralph Squillace KK6ITB.

(VANCE SMITH, KE5BAL; QRZ: LLOYD COLSTON, KC5FM)

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FCC SEEKS GUIDELINES FOR CELLPHONE SATELLITE OPTION

NEIL/ANCHOR: A recent move by the FCC means that increasing numbers of smartphone users may discover what hams already know: that when there's no terrestrial service, additional coverage is readily available from satellites. Dave Parks WB8ODF has the details.

DAVE: Smartphones may soon have a direct connection to satellites when necessary, following a move by the US Federal Communications Commission to set out guidelines for such service. While space-based connections are already a reality on a limited basis with Apple phones and are in the works for T-Mobile, SpaceX, Qualcomm and Iridium, guidelines are still needed to sort out the rules for broader implementation. A recent draft document by the FCC seeks to explore this kind of supplemental service and how it would work.

The FCC said in a news release that this would require agency authorization for terrestrial-based providers so they could provide licensed operation on a part of the spectrum reserved for them. Phones would switch to the satellite signal when no other signal is available.

This is Dave Parks WB8ODF.

(TECH CRUNCH)

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SILENT KEY: HAMVENTION'S RON CRAMER, KD8ENJ

NEIL/ANCHOR: A leader in the Dayton, Ohio amateur radio community and a force in the annual Dayton Hamvention has become a Silent Key. We hear more from Patrick Clark K8TAC.

PATRICK: Amateurs in Dayton, Ohio and beyond often looked to Ron Cramer, KD8ENJ, for leadership. He was the vice president of the Dayton Amateur Radio Association, which he had one time serve as president, and he was general chairman of Dayton Hamvention. Ron became a Silent Key on Saturday, March 11th, after a brief illness.

His skills at organizing and leading especially came to the forefront as part of the group that worked to provide Hamvention with a smooth transition to the Greene County Fairgrounds after more than five decades at Hara Arena.

In a message on the ARRL website, DARA president Jack Gerbs, WB8SCT, described Ron as [quote] "a hardworking, dedicated, wonderful person who had a positive impact on everyone he encountered. His only fault was, he would never say no." [endquote]

Ron Cramer was 75.

This is Patrick Clark K8TAC.

(DAYTON DAILY NEWS, ARRL)

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PEI AMATEUR HONORED FOR LIGHTHOUSE ACTIVITY

NEIL/ANCHOR: Congratulations to George Dewar, VY2GF, of Prince Edward Island, Canada, on being chosen Activator of the Year for 2022 by the Amateur Radio Lighthouse Society. George is being celebrated for his numerous activations at the region's lighthouses and for promoting the activity in the media. Society president John Huggins, KX4O and Tim Hijazi, KB3K, said that George was selected for having [quote] "set a high bar not just with quantity of lighthouse activations and logged QSOs but equally with quality." [endquote]. All the best, George!

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A SPACE JOURNEY OF EXPLORATION

NEIL/ANCHOR: Amateur radio communication is just one part of the outer-space experience one ISS astronaut is sharing through a new website. Here's John Williams VK2JJW with that report.

JOHN: The website is known as ELF in Space, and it has been created by the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre in Dubai and the Emirates Literature Foundation as a communications tool about technology and the space programme. It features Sultan Al Neyadi, KI5VTV, the second astronaut from the United Arab Emirates. The communications engineer is on board the ISS for the longest Arab space mission to date. The website's debut was

announced on March 10th. Al Neyadi is giving its visitors a window into his six-month experience on board the International Space station. His is not the only voice to be heard. There will be input from some very terrestrial voices, such as authors and space experts. Other UAE astronauts such as Hazzaa Al Mansoori and Nora Al Matrooshi will join him.

The website has a strong tie-in to the classroom experience and each week new topics will be released discussing the challenges and discoveries of space travel. There are also classroom-based activities for educators to download for their students.

As part of a 20-week learning programme, students around the world will watch each episode as it is released with subtitles

A link to the first episode is in the text version of this week's newscast at arnewsline.org

This is John Williams VK4JJW.

[DO NOT READ: <https://elfinspace.ae/exercise-in-space/>]

(GULF NEWS, WIA, MOHAMMED BIN RASHID SPACE CENTRE)

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AUTISM AWARENESS SPECIAL EVENT BEGINS

NEIL/ANCHOR: Just a reminder that the worldwide special event for Autism Awareness is on the air March 25th through April 2nd, sponsored by the Ten Mile River Scout Camp Amateur Radio Club. Listen for call signs from an international team of operators including W2A, GB2AA, GB2AAW, GB0AAW, 8A0RARI, 4X0AAW, HI0AUT, S76A and VC2AA.

(QRZ.COM)

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GETTING TO THE HEART OF THE SUN

NEIL/ANCHOR: Scientists have found the source of a mysterious radio signal from the sun that sounds curiously like a heartbeat. Kent Peterson KC0DGY takes the pulse of this remarkable research.

KENT: When a recent C-class solar flare more than 5,000 kilometers above the sun sent out a radio signal in a heartbeat-like pattern, scientists began work to unlock the reason behind it. The international team went in search of the origin of this pattern, known as a quasi-periodic pulsation, or QPP.

Studying observations captured in 2017 by a radio telescope in California that detects microwave frequencies, the researchers began studying a heartbeat-like pattern that repeated every 10 to 20 seconds. Then they unearthed something unexpected: a secondary signal, which was weaker and could be discerned every 30 to 60 seconds.

According to their recently published study, they have been able to determine that the so-called heartbeats are triggered by disruptions known as "magnetic islands" which form in sheets of rapidly moving plasma from the sun.

At the heart of the matter is what this research may ultimately reveal: Writing in the journal Nature Communications, one researcher said the answer was key to a fuller understanding of the scope of the damage that solar storms can do when their energy is released.

This is Kent Peterson KCØDGY.

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A VIRTUAL VISIT TO BOUVET ISLAND

NEIL/ANCHOR: The Northern Illinois DX Association hosted the first presentation by a Three Y Zero Jay team member on what it was like to live on and activate Bouvet Island. DXpeditioner Adrian KO8SCA provided a one-hour talk, complete with dramatic photographs, on the Zoom platform earlier this month. He described the team's 10-day effort to maintain a delicate balance of food and fuel supplies as they scheduled precious time to operate on the air - at first using CW and SSB and later FT8. They also kept an eye on storm systems. As Adrian told his viewers [quote] "Mother Nature is never doing things in your favor." [endquote] The DXpedition left the island on February 14th after making more than 19,000 QSOs.

Whether you worked Bouvet Island or not, you can still view Adrian's talk which is now available to

everyone on YouTube on the Northern Illinois DX Association channel. You can also find a link to it through the Northern Illinois DX Association website at nidxa.org (nidxa.org).

(YOUTUBE, AMATEUR RADIO WEEKLY)

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FOR YOUNG ACTIVATOR IN AUSTRALIA, A PEAK AT GLORY

NEIL/ANCHOR: A very young amateur in Australia has completed a summit activation that he's likely never to forget. Graham Kemp VK4BB shares his victory with us.

GRAHAM: First-time summit activator Emile, VK5WWW, has now earned one point in the SOTA awards scheme for each year of his life: The 10-year-old Australian amateur successfully activated Mount Wellington in Tasmania with an HT and a lot of hope on Tuesday, March 21st shortly before 9:30 am local time.

The summit is 1,270-metres, or 4,167 feet, high.

Operating at VK5WWW/7 he logged six contacts in the Hobart area on 2m. One-half hour later, it was a done deal. Emile's first solo act was a success.

His proud father, John VK5HAA, who is also an activator, reported his son's SOTA success on the Australian SOTA activators' groups.io email list.

Congratulations on reaching new heights, Emile. Good on ya!

This is Graham Kemp VK4BB.

(GROUPS.IO)

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WORLD OF DX

In the World of DX, the Sable Island DXpedition CYØS is under way in Nova Scotia, Canada until the 30th of March and will include 2M EME operation. Operators will also use the HF bands plus 6 metres. Modes will include CW, SSB and FT8 in fox-hound mode. Contacts also count for Parks on the Air, for Park VE-0210, the ARLHS Lighthouse Award, for

Lighthouse SAB-002, and IOTA for Island Number NA-063. QSL via WA4DAN.

Listen for Miguel, CT1EBM, who is using the callsign CN2EBM from the 26th of March to the 9th of April during a 5,000-kilometre tour through Morocco. He is using SSB and FT8 on the HF bands. He will be operating via the QO-100 satellite on SSB. For details, see QRZ.com.

Philippe FK4QX, Yves FK4RD and Michel FK8IK are using the callsign TX5L from Lifou Island, IOTA Number OC-033, in New Caledonia from the 27th through to the 31st of March. They are operating CW and SSB on 40-10 metres, QSL via F4FTV.

Pista, HA5AO, will be on the air as 5X2I on the shores of Lake Victoria in Uganda from the 24th of April to the 10th of May. He will operate CW, SSB and FT8 in fox/hound mode on 40-10 metres. QSL request to OQRS or send your card direct or via the bureau to HA5AO. The complete log will be uploaded to LoTW six months after the expedition.

Be listening for Janusz, SP9FIH, who is operating as E51WEG and for Leszek, SP6CIK, operating as E51CIK from Rarotonga, IOTA number OC-013, in the South Cook Islands. They will be there from the 13th to the 28th of April, operating CW, SSB, RTTY and FT8 on 40-10 metres. QSL via Club Log's OQRS.

(425 DX BULLETIN)

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KICKER: HE HAS MASTERED THE CODE OF LONGEVITY

NEIL/ANCHOR: For our final story we ask: Can you imagine being 101 years old and still on the air, sending and copying CW? We visit with one man in Iowa who doesn't have to imagine it because he is living it! Jim Damron N8TMW tells us about him.

JIM: Just like the Morse Code he loves to send, the 101 years of Lowell Dibble, WØTER, have been a continuous wave.

The Iowa man turned 101 years old on St. Patrick's Day and according to several press reports and a video on YouTube his longevity and enthusiasm - like his ability to send CW - transmit a powerful message on a daily basis.

Lowell has a long history on the air. He served as a radio officer with the Merchant Marine during World War II. An Amateur Extra Class operator, he has regular QSOs with his friends using CW and keeps active at the retirement community where he lives. His mental workouts with Code are complemented by his daily routine of physical workouts that start his day.

His son Mark told TV station KCRG in an interview just days before his father's birthday that what keeps him going is [quote]: "the excitement of just wanting to do things, get up in the morning...It's not 'what am I going to do?'" It's 'What of all of these things am I going to do today?'" [endquote]

Dibble told the TV station that although he credits good genes, having a positive outlook is also a definite plus -- and he plans to keep riding the excitement of that continuous wave.

This is Jim Damron N8TMW.

(KCRG TV)

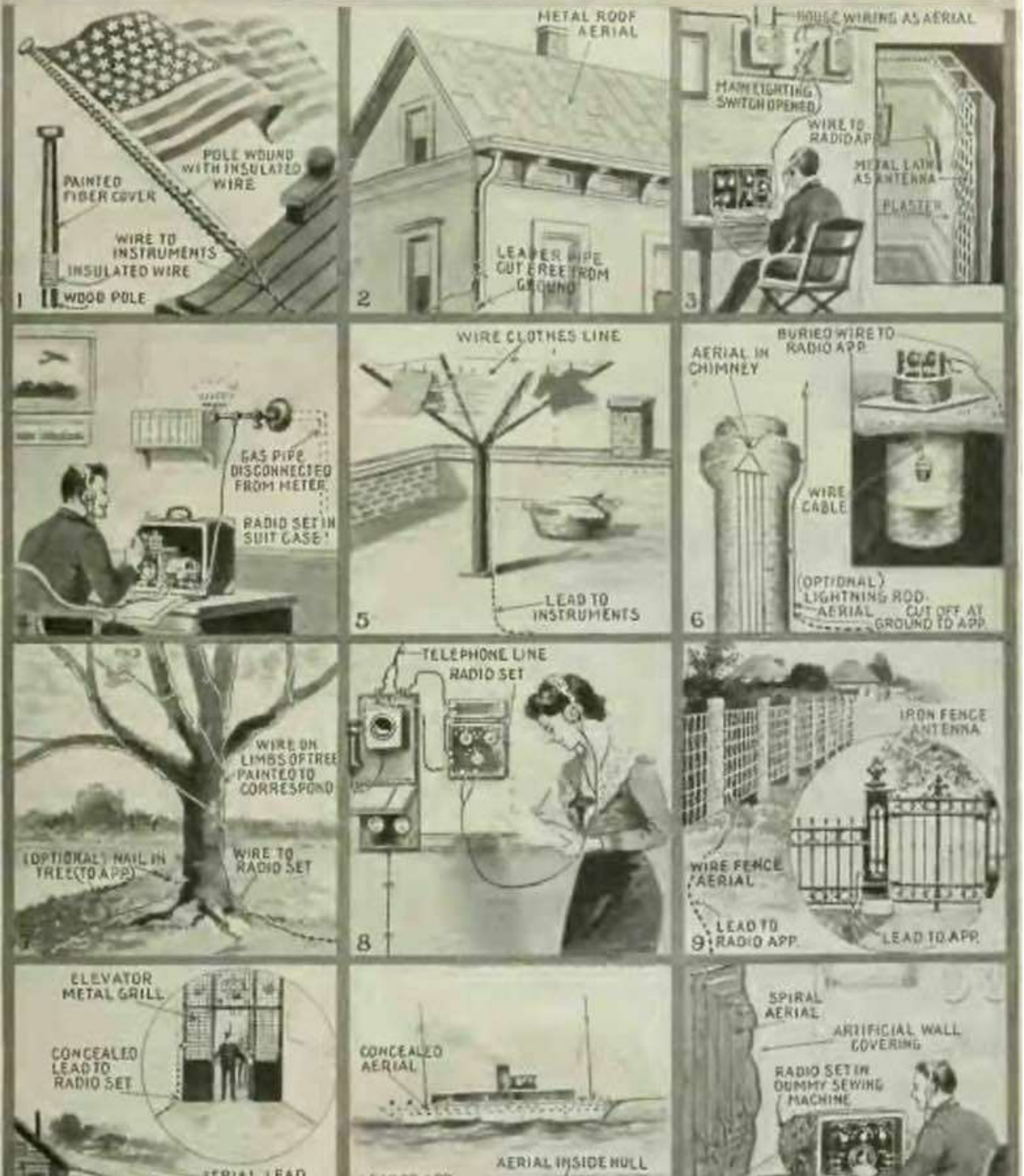
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NOMINATE OUR NEXT 'YOUNG HAM OF THE YEAR'

NEIL/ANCHOR: We remind our listeners that young hams who live in the continental United States have an opportunity to make news, if they aren't already doing so, by being a recipient of this year's Amateur Radio Newline Bill Pasternak Memorial Young Ham of the Year Award. Consider nominating an amateur radio operator 18 years of age or younger -- someone who has talent, promise and a commitment to the spirit of ham radio. Find application forms on our website arnewsline.org under the "YHOTY" tab. Nominations are now open and close on May 31st.

Check your club email for the next CAARA Saturday morning pancake breakfast coming up in April plus a coffee and donut event soon after!

SECRET RADIO AERIALS



Panics

by Curt- AA3JE



I have noticed a recent trend. It has to do with my wife. She has a large number of social contacts, all of whom forward emails and texts that they think might interest her. Even when their issue occurs in California, Bangladesh, or lower Slobovia.

So, back when there were shortages of toilet paper in New York, she cautioned me to buy toilet paper when I went to the store. I went a few days later, and to my shock and horror, the only toilet paper on the shelves (12 rolls), was “MANLY MAN”, a brand that is made from recycled corncocks.

The rest of the store had nothing but empty shelves and angry staff.

Three weeks later, the truck arrived, and I got toilet paper. I bought a little extra and stuffed the excess on top of the freezer.

But my wife had received a text that sugar was going to be in short supply. So I went to the store, and guess what, no sugar.

A month later I bought 20 pounds and stuffed it on top of the freezer again.

You guessed it.

The next month it was flour, then paper towels, then pork, then chicken, it went on and on.

I kept stacking the stuff up till the freezer was full, the garage was full, and the pile on the freezer collapsed and nearly killed me.



The problem with the Internet is telling real information from purely local news. Personally, I think this is a new marketing ploy.

Anyway, anyone need flour?

NEXT CLUB MEETING ON SATURDAY, APRIL 8 AT NOON
BOARD MEETING AT 11AM, ALL ARE WELCOME

Trail Day Adventure

This Trail Day adventure started by boarding the Manitou & Pike's Peak Cog Railway at Manitou Springs, Colorado. The 'Cog' is a train that can go up a very steep incline because it drives itself up on a third rail which has big cog teeth on it.

You can see the Cog train route pictures at <http://www.cograilway.com/alongroute.htm>

There are exciting times on the rails too, one uphill train engineer threw an old oil rag out on the tracks to warn the downhill train engineer of a broken rail. Not too bad going up but you better take it slow going downhill, He said. Of course, they have 2 big springs at the bottom of the tracks to stop runaway cars, Colorado Springs and Manitou Springs.

Hiking down Pikes Peak from the top or from Barr Camp sounds easy but it can find the weakest part of your body and blow it out. Knees, ankles and Hiking shoes can become instruments of torture and blistering is guaranteed. More hiking information is at: <https://www.pikes-peak.com/hiking-pikes-peak-mountain/>

To start this downhill hike (Which I called Trail Day because it coincided with Field Day) I rode the COG train up to the 'Mountain View' siding. It was only \$10 for a one-way ticket (expect to pay more now). When you jump off the train in the middle of an extremely remote place like this, with your backpack on, you will see a lot of envious tourists on the train who wish they could be going along with you. I hiked across the face of Pike's Peak over to Barr Camp, I made several contacts on the trail before Field Day started.

Barr Camp is a wilderness cabin midway on the Barr Trail which goes from Manitou Springs to the top of Pike's Peak. Barr Camp cooks up Breakfast and Dinners, sells candy and supplies, and has a bunk house for hikers



It is like a mountain oasis, there are picnic tables and a bench swing that is set by the stream to comfort the tired hikers

You can see Barr Camp on-line by going to <http://www.barrcamp.com/>

When I arrived at Barr Camp everyone came out to inspect my Pedestrian Radio operation. I let them talk on the radio to several other hams.

The weather held and I was able to hike down the mountain without my rain gear. The 7-mile descent was pretty hard on my feet. My 40 pounds backpack got really heavy carrying an extra battery. The PRC319 radio alone was 25 pounds.

The 12-hour hike was all done using one 6AH LiIon battery. I worked a dozen Field Day stations. It was a great field trip. Lots of nice wildflowers, Fields of Columbines, but no animals. When I got back home there was a doe and her 2 fawn in my back yard.



NEAR-Fest
New England Amateur Radio Festival

NEAR-Fest XXXIII
April 28 & 29, 2023
Deerfield, NH

New England Amateur radio operators like Bob McArthur of New Ipswich make connections

Bob McArthur turns on his radio and puts out a “CQ” call – calling anyone, anywhere for a chat.

Answering the call, somewhat tinny until McArthur makes a few adjustments to make the signal clearer and clearer, is Ian, of central England.

The two exchange some details – their exact locations, the kinds of radios they have and how clear their signal is, before signing off.

It’s a pretty typical conversation between ham radio operators. The fact that they’re across an ocean from each other is no object.

McArthur, whose radio set up is in an upstairs office in his New Ipswich home, with an antenna set up in his backyard, has been a ham radio enthusiast for the past 25 years.

McArthur’s call sign is K1QT, a sign he picked himself. Though he occasionally gets ribbed about whether he’s a “cutie,” he said he chose it for more practical reasons – it’s short, understandable over a weak connection and has a good rhythm when being transmitted by Morse code.

The range of radio communications on rigs like McArthur’s depend upon atmospheric conditions. When there are a lot of solar flares, the ionosphere surrounding the Earth hardens, and signals can bounce off and reach greater distances.

Current conditions for the hobby are excellent, McArthur said.

“It’s at its peak right now. We’ve been waiting five or six years for this to happen,” McArthur said.

One of his favorite things about the hobby is seeking out hams in far-reaching places. Often, even those in foreign countries speak at least a little English because of the popularity of the hobby in English-speaking countries. The United States has by far the most amateur radio operators, at 779,545 licensed operators.

“I just love coming up here and turning the radio on,” he said. “You don’t know who you’re going to connect with. It might be someone in Mason, or it might be someone in Japan.”

McArthur said it’s a more-popular hobby than many people believe; in New Ipswich alone, 86 people hold an operator’s license.

While McArthur has a 133-foot antenna wire strung across his backyard, with a complete setup in his home, he said those interested in getting a start don’t need anything so elaborate.

One of his favorite summer activities is taking a much smaller, portable radio to the top of Pack Monadnock in Peterborough, along with a five-foot antenna, and using the height of the mountain and lack of natural barriers to reach other operators.

McArthur, in his long career as a ham operator, has collected the countries he has contacted in several ways. He has a log book, where he collects contacts made from countries for the first time, and exactly how far away the operators were from his location. His current record-holder is an operator from Saipan, 12,481 miles from New Ipswich. His log book has recorded contact between 228 countries over the many years he has been doing the hobby.

McArthur also collects QSL cards – QSL being shorthand for acknowledging receipt of a message. The cards are often mailed between hams after they’ve made contact on the air. Each country has a code specific to it; the United States’ code is K.

McArthur said once, on vacation, he spotted a radio antenna, and having packed a selection of his own QSL cards for the occasion, swam over to the home to strike up a conversation with the fellow ham and exchange cards.

Community is a big part of the hobby, McArthur said. There are annual “field days” where radio operators operate for the full 24 hours and try to make as many unique connections to other operators as possible. This year’s field day is June 24 into June 25.

McArthur recently helped another New Ipswich resident, John Murphy, get back into the hobby. Murphy originally got his operator’s license 40 years ago, but fell off for a few years. Now, a few days shy of his 70th birthday, he decided he wanted to reinvigorate the hobby.



“It really is something that is for all ages,” Murphy said.

Murphy first signed up for a class on a whim, but even though he has not had much time for the hobby, kept up his license, always figuring he’d get back into it eventually.

When Murphy put out a call on social media asking for any other hams in the area who could help him get back in the game, McArthur answered the call, helping him install an antenna.

While some ham operators use microphones to have conversations, others, like Murphy, prefer to use Morse Code.

His is rusty, Murphy said, but in the few weeks since purchasing a new radio and re-entering the world of ham radio, he has started to make connections with other operators who transmit at about his speed.

“You can talk to people from foreign countries if you want. We talk about the weather, the kind of antenna they’re using, things like that,” Murphy said. “I think if people knew more about it, they’d enjoy it.”



Next Club Meeting is on

Saturday, April 8

Lunch Fundraiser at Noon

\$5.00 donation



MARCH BOARD MEETING



MARCH LUNCH

MFJ 998 AUTO TUNER REVIEW



I have a few 100 watt LDG auto tuners that I use on my hf radios in the house and portable without amplifiers with great success and ease of use. It is great having auto tune matching units because the antennas I use require a tuner with a greater range than the built in tuners in the radios. My antennas consist of dipoles fed with ladder line as well as an end fed and OCF dipole. That being said, I got tired of tuning with my manual tuners when band hopping.

My main station consists of an Acom amplifier using a 2KW TenTec 238 manual tuner that works just great but again it is no fun when going from band to band.

I decided I would try a high power auto tuner which can handle 1.5 kW of power. The LDG company has one for about \$579 with no metering, just LED's. MFJ (who I never buy from) has one for \$750 that has a cross needle meter for power/swr and a led displaying the frequency, matching info, etc. A pretty nice looking unit, I was just worried about the MFJ reliability factor but decided to go with it and cross my fingers.

After receiving the unit, reading only enough of the manual to turn it on I was off and running. I have to say it works great and memorizes the frequency settings so retuning up is quick. It also disables the amplifier while tuning up and saving a lot of smoke from billowing out of the radios! As soon as a match is found, the amplifier is ready for use again.

While the unit is more than I wanted to spend, I am glad I purchased it....so far, so good.

Jon- K1TP

SECOND FLOOR STATIONS



440 WiresX repeater setup



Echolink setup



Yaesu FT-897



Icom 7300



Yaesu FT 1000



RangeCast Scanners online



Second Floor stations all connected to antenna panel for use.



Icom 7000

Thanks to our loyal members

I want to thank all the members who have paid their dues to CAARA this year. We retained all members except for two and gained many new members so we are in a positive membership upswing. Without your continuing support we could not provide the clubhouse, repeaters, and services we now offer.

We will continue to offer lunches at meetings, breakfasts, a TBA movie night on a Tuesday night, VE testing, Tech in a Day classes, Field Day, etc. Look forward to more activities in the newly remodeled first floor!

The two meter repeater is located in a busy industrial site and we have been experiencing noise issues. Please bear with us while we resolve the matter and remember that our 440 repeater on 443.700 FM and digital is available as a backup for nets and races and has great coverage.

The club entry code has been changed, as it is every year, and if you need the code please talk to a board member or better yet, come to a club meeting.

NEARFEST is coming up and always an enjoyable hamfest with lots of new and used gear for sale, parts galore, and a good food selection. If you have not been, put it on your bucket list of things to do.

Please check-in to one of the nets on our two meter repeater. The "Friendliest Net on Earth" is on Monday-Wednesday- Friday at 6PM and the CAARA Sunday Night Net is on at 9pm.

If you wish to volunteer around the club doing anything, please let me know. We would love to have you, contact me at jpcrockport@gmail.com

If you have any gear to sell, contact me and we will advertise it for free in the newsletter.

If there is any interest we are considering opening the club on Tuesday evenings, contact a board member and let them know.

Special thanks to Bill- W1WMM for taking on the lunch and breakfast program. It has been very successful and has started making money for the club funds.