



CAARA Newsletter



AN ARRL AFFILIATED CLUB

DECEMBER ISSUE- 2013



President's Desk

by Stan-W4HIX

November 2013

I hope everyone had a pleasant Thanksgiving. One thing that I'm thankful for is the great friends and fellowship that I have at CAARA.

CAARA was the winning (and only) bidder for the sale of the 6 Stanwood St property this month. With some work convincing our neighbors that they don't need to drive across our parking area and a purchase and sales agreement, we should be able to close in a month or so. While this marks a milestone in CAARA's history, it doesn't make major changes in the way we operate. What it does is provide stability in ownership—no more negotiations regarding our lease. I hope that CAARA members feel more ownership in the building and are willing to make the investments in the facility beyond the maintenance level. This will soon be CAARA's building.

Work is now starting on first floor spruce up. Jon K1TP and Jake K1LDL have started working through our pile of donations and much of it has been listed on ebay.com. Roger KB1YTJ was successful in selling the paper folder and ice cream maker and getting them crated for shipment and out of the building. The walls and trim are being prepped for paint. Bob WA1UCG has been working through the file cabinets upstairs for eventual scanning and posting online of club records, much as every newsletter is currently online. Bob has also volunteered to hang all of the plaques club certificates and proclamations above the bulletin board. The pile of ebay shipping materials has been stored neatly out of sight. Things are definitely looking up.

Don't forget the Christmas party on Friday Dec. 13th. Please let Dean KB1PGH know if you will be coming—this is very important for planning. The CAARA Christmas party is a lot of fun—don't miss it!

Don't forget, the club is open on Tuesdays—afternoon and evenings—for operating. Drop by and see what Gardi's (KA1BTK) is up to.

73 de Stan, W4HIX
stan@w4hix.com

Information Desk

by Dean-KB1PGH



I keep reading the reports from the ARRL that as of 2013 there are a over 700,000 "Active" amateur radio licenses which is an all time high. Well that may be true in numbers we must look at the facts that ham licenses are good for 10 years so lets factor in the issue of silent keys who have died 9 years ago and their licenses are still active, plus the fact that how many licenses are sitting "Idle" due to non use. While it is good PR for the ARRL to toot the horn of record numbers lets take a moment and think about something else. Now I'm not going down the negativity of the "No Coders" and "Appliance Operators" route but who really cares about record numbers and what we really should be focusing on sometimes is how educated the Technician class operators should be before getting on the air. Now this isn't a slam to the new Technician Class Operators but all I ask of them is to please educate themselves further before getting on the air. Whenever the ask I always say, "Please get the ARRL Operators manual". I want them to read it through its entirety before getting on the air. At least it covers the basics. I would even say for them to get the ARRL's Handbook which really goes into depth of all the different aspects of radio, propagation and antenna theory. I was talking to another club member the other day and we sort of agreed that there should be some sort of class time

(cont. p 3)

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 k1tp@arrl.net. If possible, material should be in Word format. Material may also be submitted as hard copy to Jon-K1TP or any Club Officer.

All material published in the CAARA Newsletter may be reproduced for noncommercial use provided such use credits both the CAARA and the author of the article. Copyrighted material will not be accepted without accompanying written permission to publish.

The opinions expressed in the CAARA Newsletter are solely those of the editor or other contributors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of either the Board of Directors or membership of CAARA.

Jon Cunningham- K1TP Editor
Dean Burgess- KB1PGH Cub Reporter

Board of Directors- 2013-14

President: Stan Stone W4HIX
Vice Pres: Jake Hurd K1LDL
Treasurer: Hank McCarl W4RIG
Clerk: Roger Smith- KB1YTJ and Asst. Jon-K1TP

Directors:

Ross Burton- W1RAB
Paul Anderson KA1GIJ
Pete Chadbourne -K1LJO
Bill Poulin WZ1L
Larry Beaulieu AJ1Z
Dick Ober, K1VRA
John Graves WA1JG

Welcome to CAARA:

CAARA, an ARRL affiliated club, operates the 2 meter W1GLO repeater on 145.130 MHz (PL 107.2) with antennas located on the ATT 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 (no PL) located at the CAARA Clubhouse with a very limited range. The former W1RK 443.700 (no PL) repeater with antenna at the CAARA Clubhouse in Gloucester, Massachusetts has a limited range.

The Association is one of the few amateur radio clubs that has its own clubhouse. Located at 6 Stanwood Street in Gloucester, it features multiple HF station's with rotatable 10-20 meter beam, G5RV wire antenna, and 2 HF vertical antenna's along with a 2 meter packet station and multiple 2/220/440 MHz transceivers. CAARA also has an impressive collection of older tube radios.

Amateur radio exams are held on the second Sunday of each month at 10:00AM at the CAARA clubhouse. Anyone who is considering a new license or an upgrade, is welcome to test with us. There is no pre-registration necessary. Contact the head of our VE team Bob Quinn if you have any questions about monthly testing.

Monthly member meetings are held on the first wednesday of each month at 7:30 PM except for July and August.

Each Sunday evening at 9:00pm, the club operates a 2 meter 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.

required for those who want to get the Tech License where they are at least taught about how to make a simple repeater contact and SSB contact. Anyway-I just think that a properly educated Technician class operator is the best way to go. It's not just "Getting" the license, it's about at least educating yourself in the basics of ham radio and the hobby we all love.

I also remember years ago when many said that computers were the death knell of ham radio-OOPS! Well I guess that prediction was way off. The computer and the internet are such an excellent resource for a new Technician class ham radio operator. I always recommend new hams to look on Youtube for product reviews and general ham radio topics. There are even "HamNation" shows on TWIT TV online that are great. EHAM.net is a great way to read reviews on ham products before you buy something-plus EBAY is a great way to get into ham radio for those people on a budget. The internet is such a powerful tool for ham radio newbies. Even our club's website, www.caara.net, has many ham radio links-plus years of monthly newsletters like this one, that are filled with many topics covering ham radio. At this point how can a new Techie NOT educate themselves on the many aspects of their new hobby?

I would also recommend to any new Technician class operator to please join an amateur radio club and to get an "Elmer" that will teach them how to properly get on the air. The question I always get from new Techies is "What radio should I buy?". Now I don't really mention what brand but my advice to them is to always buy an entry level radio first. For example-I have a Yaesu VX 8 GR which is an advanced HT with many features-it even took me-an extra class operator, who programmed scanners all his life, a few times to go through the manual and get the programming right. Now at the clubhouse I had a new Techie come up to me with the same radio and ask me to help him program it because it was too confusing. An entry level radio such as the Yaesu FT 270R is a much simpler radio to program and figure out and get started on.

Educating yourself in ham radio is the key. Always read the manual-then read it again! Especially for those like myself who have multi-menu driven radios like the Icom IC 7000 and don't get a chance to use them a lot. How many times did I have to go back to the Nifty Manual to operate the radio when I was HF portable on Stan's Tech in a day session? Quite a few. Here's this month's piece of advice-when

operating with an HT during an emergency communication exercise turn on the "Lock" feature on your HT which will deactivate all your buttons so when you accidentally bump them you won't go off frequency or mode when it's in your pocket. Also be aware of your mike position when you are operating VOX so you don't bump the mike switch and leave an "Open Mike" on the repeater. See you in 2014!

AROUND THE CLUB

by Jon- K1TP

Your club has been hopping during the week with various members stepping up to the plate and doing the little things that make our club the best in Eastern Massachusetts.

Jake and I have been going over to the club weekdays and hooking up stations for your use on the second floor. If you don't have a HF station at your house, use one of the club station's.

Station one consists of a Yaesu 897 with a tuner. I made a contact with an old friend in GA and received a 20 over report on twenty meters the other day. The beam has low SWR in the SSB end and you can work the world with it!

Station two is a Yaesu 920 equipped with manual tuner and works perfectly on CW or SSB.

Station three has a vintage Kenwood 820 with a Kenwood tuner that is setup with a straight key and Kenwood microphone. This is a hybrid radio, the RX is solid state and the TX is tubes. If you have never tuned up a tube radio, this is a good one to learn how to load and dip correctly without burning out the finals! See someone who knows what they are doing before using this radio!

Station four is digital stuff that Stan is setting up-packet, APRS, Flex radio, etc.

All the stations have access to the beam, G5RV dipole, and R5 vertical. It is a good way to hear the difference between antennas on different radios. Experiment, it's all part of ham radio.

I have a suggestion to you Sunday morning coffee drinkers, get off your butts and get upstairs and turn a radio on....It's a RADIO CLUB....

Ross-W1RAB was splitting a rock in the driveway one afternoon and installed a stake in the ground to mark our recently surveyed property.

Gardi has been opening up the radio club on Tuesday afternoon to early evening for members to stop by chat and play radio and do a little club maintenance. Feel

free to help and volunteer with cleaning up the club area.

Roger- KB1YTJ had been busy Ebaying articles for fundraising and recently sold the Ice Cream machine and Paper Folder for over 400 dollars. We have many more items we will be listing on Ebay this fall and winter for use in improving the club facilities and equipment.

Bob Spanks- WA1UCG has been busy weekends putting all the monthly club meeting agenda/notes from 1970's to present in order to ensure our club history is intact. This is a big job, thanks Bob!

Stan-W4HIX is at the clubhouse on an almost daily basis working on digital stuff, etc.....



DON'T FORGET THE
CAARA CHRISTMAS PARTY
FRIDAY NIGHT, DECEMBER 13

FCC UPHOLDS \$14000 FINE FOR SELLING NON CERTIFIED GEAR

A California company has been dinged \$14,000 by the FCC for making and selling unauthorized radio gear. Amateur Radio Newline's Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, has the details: — The FCC has issued a monetary forfeiture in the amount of fourteen thousand dollars to Custom Interface Technologies, a Division of Thornstar Corporation, in Joshua Tree, California.

This for willfully and repeatedly violating rules against manufacturing and marketing of unauthorized radio frequency devices in the United States. Back on November 17, 2011, the Enforcement Bureau's Los Angeles Office issued a Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture for fourteen thousand dollars to Custom Interface Technologies for manufacturing and marketing uncertified video assist transmitters. In response to the proposed fine Custom Interface Technologies, did not deny the violations, but requested cancellation of the forfeiture based on its inability to pay. However in affirming the forfeiture amount the FCC says while Custom Interface Technologies did provide the Commission with three years of tax returns and a bank statement to support its claim of an inability to pay, after reviewing of these financial documents that the FCC says that it declines to reduce the forfeiture amount and that the \$14,000 fine is warranted.

The Cape Ann Amateur Radio Association mission is to:

- Provide health and safety communication services for emergencies and disasters on Cape Ann and in other areas when requested
 - Provide health, safety and coordination services for community events
 - Maintain disaster and emergency readiness by conducting regular simulation drills and participating in national disaster simulations
 - Educate and train new amateur radio operators and to maintain a well-tuned disaster team
 - Conduct FCC testing for new licenses and those wishing to upgrade
 - Provide educational services and demonstrations to local area schools and community organizations such as the Boy Scouts
 - Conduct public demonstrations and educational events
 - Assist public utilities, such as the Mass Electric Company, in finding radio frequency interferences that could potentially harm or hinder emergency communication activities
 - Create a positive, supportive environment for our members that promotes camaraderie and fellowship.
- Cape Ann Amateur Radio Association members will serve the public unselfishly, will not take any form of remuneration for their services, and will only undertake activities that are 100% for the general good.

Roof Work

by Dr. Curtis Wright- AA3JE

Those of you who are fellow charter members of the “Micky Rig” club, will understand that it was very unusual behavior when I responded to SHE WHO MUST BE OBEYED’s statement the way I did. Usually, the scent of a possible home repair had the same effect on me as the smell of gunpowder to an old war horse. It sets my blood racing, it sends me off to ACE hardware at high speed, it is a GOOD thing.

Except sometimes not.

“THAT SKYLIGHT IS LEAKING AGAIN.”

The rational first defense is denial.

“Do you really think so? I think it’s a shadow. You know, how the light hits it.”

“IT’S LEAKING. IT’S WET. I CAN TELL.”

“I think it’s more like condensation, you know, dripping on the inside.”

“IT’S A LEAK!”

Denial does not work very well with wives. The next defense is procrastination.

“Yep, I agree. We need to plan for replacement of those windows sometime.”

“PLINK.....PLINK.....PLINK”

“YOU! GET IT FIXED! NOW!”

Well, that was pretty clear.

After a trip to the kitchen to get a saucepan, I realized I was cornered. I was going to have to do roof work.



I knew what the problem was. I had fixed it before. The frames on skylights have nice, solid, rubber washers that keep the water out, at least for the first decade. After about ten years or so, they crack, and the water runs in, and drips on the couch.

There are three ways to repair such a leak.

1. Replace the washers with OEM replacements.
2. Replace the skylight/window.
3. Smear sealant all over it.

Strategy one is best, but the maker of these windows has fled to South America years ago.

Strategy 2 is excellent, but

expensive.

Strategy 3 requires going up on the roof.

Now I have a disadvantage. I am a physician, a former Emergency Room physician. I have seen one story, two story, three story, four story and five story falls off a roof. Anything over one story is bad, anything over two stories is Intensive Care Unit.

Now if I was a Graduate of Gloucester High, it would not be a problem. I would call my old buddy who owns a roof company.

“Hey ED, I got a five minute calk job up on my roof. Trade you a half gallon of Vodka for having one of your guys do it.”

Unfortunately, I went to a wimpy high school. My fellow classmates all became research scientists, actuaries, senior financial managers, and lawyers. Not a one of them knows how to calk a roof or do anything useful.

So I had to do it myself. Which is a problem, since I am sort of scared of dying. (Well, not really the dying, more like the hurting before dying part). I calked the ones on the rear, NO PROBLEM, since if I slipped, I would just fall to the porch, a mere one story fall. I fall, I break a leg, get a cast, six months later, all better.

The problem is that this window is on the front, which is a full three story fall onto hard asphalt. I go over the edge on that puppy, I end up with a 50% fatality rate and if I do live, it is after six months in the ICU.

“YOU ARE NOT GONG TO FIX IT YOURSELF? ARE YOU?”

“It’s real easy dear, I’ll just dab a bit of calk on it, job done.”

“IF YOU SAY SO.”

Now I do have to go get the sealant. This was easy. I’m sixty five. I figure that I might be up there at seventy five, but clearly won’t be at eighty five. So I need 20 year calk.

Then it’s back to the basement. After a half hour search, I realize that I got rid of the alpine climbing gear I had a few years back, since I decided I was not likely to take up technical rock climbing after age 60.

I could not even find my lineman’s safety harness.

After a few minutes reflection, I realized I could lay a ladder section over the peak, tie it to the porch foundation, and have a solid framework to hold onto. Holding on is good, when forty feet up in the air.

“YOU ARE NOT GOING UP THERE ALONE? THAT’S CRAZY.”

Now she is right, but all my friends will talk me out of getting up on the roof. That’s because they are all sane. Well, mostly sane. Well, really, sane a lot of the time.

“It’s no problem, dear, I’ll be right back. If you hear a scream and a big thud, please call 911.”

I won’t bore you with the sordid details. I got the ladder laid on the roof, tied it down, and it was not a problem. My neighbors did walk by, and offered hope and encouragement.

“WHAT THE (EXPLETIVE DELETED) ARE YOU DOING.”

“Oh, just calking a leaky window frame.”

“YOU FALL FROM THAT FAR UP, YOU GONNA GET REALLY HURT.”

“Oh, it looks worse than it is.”

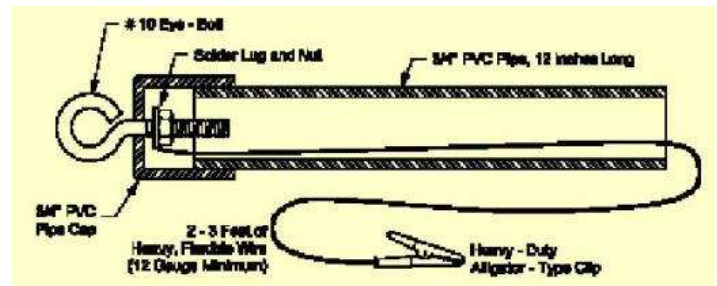
“BETTER YOU THAN ME, BOYO. I PAY SOMEOEN ELSE TO DO THAT KIND OF CRAZY (EXPLITIVE DELETED).

They are such good neighbors, SO thoughtful and caring.

Ten terror filled minutes later, the calk was on, the leak fixed, and I was on the ground again.

I’m looking forward to the next twenty years. Well, actually, looking forward to the end of the next twenty, when I can plead age and infirmity. Till then, I’ll stick to denial and procrastination. And go up there as few times as possible.

WHAT IS IT??????



The Answer...a "chicken stick" to discharge HV from caps, was in an old QST magazine.

**CAARA XMAS PARTY
DECEMBER 13, 2013
FRIDAY NIGHT**

(Below) Ross Povenmire KC1APW, John Webster K1FWE, and Daniel Herbert KB1ZLX take their FCC amateur radio license upgrade exams in the peace and quiet and roominess of the second floor of the CAARA clubhouse during the November ARRL VE session which was held on Sunday, November 10, 2013. All passed their exams with Ross earning his Extra class license, John passed his General exam and Daniel earning his Extra class license as well, Congrats guys!

(Left) CAARA member John Mellen KB1WGK on the left receives his Extra Class ticket form CAARA/ARRL VE Ron Beckly N1RJB during the November VE session at the clubhouse. If you are looking to take an amateur radio license test just remember that CAARA holds a test session every second Sunday of every month from 10 AM to noon at the clubhouse. Just remember to bring \$15.00 for the FCC testing fee and two forms of ID which must include your social security number for the FCC as well. You may let Bob Quinn WV1A know in advance that you are coming and we also welcome walk ins as well!



CAARA and NSRA help Santa Claus !!!

Several members of the Cape Ann Amateur Radio Association and the North Shore Radio Association braved the rainfall and provided communications for Santa Claus and his parade through the city streets of Gloucester on Sunday, December 1st. Amateur radio operators once again volunteered their efforts and time to help provide logistic and safety communications for the public during the parade as it started at Parker Street and ran through Main Street and wound up at Kent Circle near the Boulevard for the Christmas Tree Lighting. The following hams help out during the net: Jim Palmer KB1KQW as net control, Chuck N1OCT as lead vehicle, Curtis AA3JE, Sue N1XQW, and Gardy KA1BTK on the parade route.



(Left) Jim Palmer KB1KQW of NSRA works net control for the Gloucester Santa Claus Parade which took place on Sunday, December 1st

(Above) Santa Claus thanks the amateur radio operators for guiding him safely through the streets of Gloucester!

December is Ham Radio YOTA month!

After the success of the **Youngsters On The Air** events in the summer, we decided that it's time to do some more action!

During the whole month of December several countries will become active with YOTA as suffix in the callsign.

The idea for this is to break the ice for some youngsters and take the microphone in the hand. As seen over the years the YOTA-group is growing fast and every week more youngsters are asking to participate.

You want to hear us on the air? Listen for Youngsters On The Air callsigns in the whole month of December!

At least 17 stations from 14 countries with young HAM's will be active. We would be happy if you try to work one or more of the following callsigns:

EA7URA/YOTA
EI0YOTA
ES5YOTA
ES9YOTA
LY5YOTA
OH2YOTA
OK2YOTA
OM9YOTA
OM13YOTA
ON4YOTA
PA6YOTA
S513YOTA
SN0YOTA
SH9YOTA
YO0YOTA
YL13YOTA
YL2013YOTA

A special Youngsters On The Air Award is available
<http://www.ham-yota.eu/?p=381>

Amsterdam Island DXpedition update

Col, MM0NDX, reports: "Our sea container loaded with our pallets of equipment has arrived in New Zealand. The container had been unloaded and its contents placed in a bonded customs warehouse. It is ready for transportation by truck to the port of Tauranga.

"The Braveheart will return from a mission to Raoul Island on December 6th, and be prepared to load our cargo shortly thereafter.

Between December 9th and 14th the ship will be provisioned, undergo routine maintenance, and a main engine oil change. The Braveheart staff will fill our shopping list and put all dry provisions aboard the vessel.

"The ship's crew will have been at sea or working for a long time, so they will take a vacation during the week of the 15th to the 21st.

On December 23rd the Braveheart will take on fuel. On the 24th fresh produce (eggs, milk, fruits, vegetables) will be put aboard. The crew will spend Christmas day with their families.

"On December 26th, at 1400 the Braveheart will depart Tauranga via New Zealand's North Cape, cross the Tasman Sea south of Tasmania, cross the Great Australian Bight past Albany, and then sail north up the western coast of Australia to Fremantle. This is a 3440 nautical mile voyage that will take 17 days.

"The Braveheart is scheduled to enter the port of Fremantle on Monday, January 13th. The vessel will take on fuel and provisions on January 14th. She will clear customs and depart for Amsterdam Island on January 15th with our 14 team members and lots of radio equipment aboard."

VHF Communications magazine closes

VHF Communications magazine is closing after 45 years of continuous publication

A message on the magazine website says:

VHF Communications was the foremost construction oriented publication for Radio Amateurs and Professional RF Communications Engineers. The magazine especially covered VHF, UHF and Microwave communication was published from 1969 to 2013. The last magazine published was issue 4/2013

By the end of 2013 the number of subscribers was not sufficient to support the magazine. Also the supply of articles had become difficult because a lot of good articles are published direct to the Internet.

Thank you to all subscribers and authors who have supported the magazine

A DVD containing the complete collection of magazines is available

VHF Communications
<http://www.vhfcomm.co.uk/>

Live video streaming from the ISS

The N2YO satellite tracking website provides live video streaming from the International Space Station (ISS)

The Ustream video from the station is available only when the complex is in contact with the ground through its high-speed communications antenna and NASA's Tracking and Data Relay Satellite System.

During "loss of signal" periods, you will see a blue screen. Since the station orbits the Earth once every 90 minutes, it sees a sunrise or a sunset every 45 minutes. When the station is in darkness, external camera video may appear black, but also may provide spectacular views of city lights below.

Live streaming from the ISS
<http://www.n2yo.com/space-station/>

CONTESTING AT THE CLUB: Although we only have a few real "contesters" in the club ranks, our newly renovated upstairs is ready for your use.

We have three hf stations capable of 10-40 meters CW, Phone, or Digital modes. If you would like to bring your own radio, that is another option. We now have a nucleus of hams willing to open up and man the club nights and weekends to support any endeavor you might have in mind.

If you would like to just participate in just part of any contest that is fine as well, we all do not have the time or enjoy playing radio 24 hours straight.

Ross-W1RAB is spearheading the cleanup and painting of the first floor so it has a professional appearance as you enter the building on the first floor.

Exciting things are happening at the club, why not participate?

I do not want to hear the CAARA club is not setup to participate in radio contest's at the club or we do not offer CW classes or Exam upgrade courses or Elmering for new hams...We offer it all! No If's, And's, and But's need apply. Don't squawk, get RADIO ACTIVE!

The Christmas Party is Friday, December 13th, a great time to reconnect with the club and meet the many new members. Stan-W4HIX would like to get a head count for food and drink purposes...give him a call or a shout on the repeater.

The new Kenwood Repeater is working great, the Sunday Night 2 Meter Net is a great way to try it.

The Ham You Never Knew...Michael Cozzi (KD8TUT)

My father, Abraham, died in January 2009. None of you knew him. But you should have, you would have liked him. You would have admired his abilities, his tenacity, and his sense of humor.

He was born in Chicago, IL in 1932 to an immigrant family who left Italy in 1911 for a better life. His parents had a total of 12 children, 6 of whom survived to adulthood. The others died either at birth or within a few weeks. It was a hard life on the streets of Little Italy in Chicago. It was a world where the good, the bad, and the discriminated against were all tossed into the same places around Chicago. They had to be tough- and fend for themselves.

During my dad's youth he attended school like all other children, with decent grades. He was well liked and fell into a small group of local kids who, like him, were the children of immigrants. All were Italian except for one, who was the son of the local tailor and therefore Jewish.

These four kids, Abe, Dominic, Gene, and Irving ran together their entire life.

These gentlemen were old school in every respect and would never turn their backs on each other. They were glued together. My father benefited greatly from their lifelong friendship. And the connections forged in the old neighborhood never seemed to go away. It wasn't the "mob", my dad was not by nature a criminal, it was a familial connection shared by a common struggle to survive.

A great story about my dad:

I had been attending the University of Illinois in Chicago around 1985, and ate lunch at this little Italian restaurant in (what is left of) Little Italy almost every day. It was a one man operation, with hand made pasta you could see behind a glass counter- like a sushi bar. It wasn't "high end" so to speak, but it was Italian food, for Italians. Tourists did come in and eat there- but not during the day. During the day all the women had "big hair" and the men were your typical Chicago-Italian stock. People spoke Italian in this restaurant, and you drew stares if you did not. People would laugh at me while I fumbled through ordering in Italian. It really was a great place. As time went by I became friendly with the owner of the restaurant. His name was "Sal". An old school man about my father's age.

One day, I had some papers laid out with my name printed boldly on them, and he must have noticed them. All of a sudden, the interaction changed drastically:

"Hey, you Abe C's kid?" Sal blurted.

"Yes, my dad grew up at Taylor and May St." I responded.

Sal's whole expression changed before he said: "No kid of Abe's pays to eat here!". And he promptly took the check and tore it up violently.

He then went on to explain that he and dad had been good friends, and the two of them had been involved in working together as teens "putting in air conditioners during the war".

The following Christmas I asked my father about Sal. His face turned red as a beet. And he said: "We weren't putting them in"...

Needless to say, I ate for free for the next two years at Sal's restaurant and didn't ask any more questions. Hard times make hard people. But Sal, always treated me like family. He even tried to get me to date his daughter. But I was still hung up on my ex-girlfriend from high school.

My father married my mother at the age of 18 and answered his country's call in 1950 and entered the army. Back then you had to serve (or else). He gladly did it. And since my father even at that age was a true Mensch, even his superiors liked him. This was the Korean War era... and because he was liked- his superiors kept him in different training schools until they could station him outside of a war zone- in Europe.

Eventually, after going through artillery, cook, and radio schools he was stationed in Germany running a radio unit which engaged in maneuvers from time to time.

One story I was told about those days was this:

My father had been ordered to deploy his radio station. In some way, he was able to deploy, and was "unofficially" allowed to go on leave. So he and a friend decided they would go skiing, for the first time ever, while the operation was underway.

They went down the wrong ski slope, and apparently were skiing through the maneuver they had just set up. He had a lot of stories like that. They would get hundreds of retellings over the years when his friends would get together.

Dad returned from the army in 1952 and settled into married life with my mother, Rosemary. She was an Irish orphan, raised by Italians, and married to an Italian American.

They made their home in the family home on May St. in Chicago with my grandparents. And my father attended Coyne Institute for electronics training and graduated. Television, radio, and anything that had electrons flowing in it were objects of passion to my father. He could tear apart anything and fix it. Build anything. He used to tell me he could close his eyes and see the flow through a circuit.

Skipping ahead through 13 years of quiet family life...

I was born in November 1965, and would be the only child. Just this same month, my parents had moved from Little Italy in Chicago to the north suburbs after the City of Chicago used eminent domain to gut Little Italy, and put the University of Illinois in its place. Very little remained except for Taylor St. itself. It was the destruction of a culture, and it was intentional.

Our new neighborhood was different. It was full of doctors, lawyers, politicians, and well educated people. The majority was Jewish. More importantly, my dad's friend, my uncle Irving, lived in the same neighborhood. My father had purchased the cheapest house in the neighborhood, and planned to fix it up.

Over the years he had changed professions from TV/Radio/Electronics repair to a union electrician. He was a very skilled tradesman as well.... and he rebuilt the house into a (Italian) version of a palace: Two kitchens, three bedrooms, finished basement, a gas barbeque, and two car garage.

We had a Heathkit store 6 blocks from us, and yes... he started taking me there at the age of four. And at the age of four, with my father's help, I built a crystal radio- and was listening to it.

My dad was always obsessed with electronics. We used to drive around on garbage day, picking up televisions that were thrown out by our apparently rich neighbors. We'd bring the TVs home, and we would either fix them or strip them for parts. This was an ongoing activity, on a weekly basis, from as early as I can remember until I was a teenager.

Every few months there was a new TV in the house. Someone's garbage, had been fixed and sat in our living room.

One time, we picked up a Zenith Space Command TV and fixed it. My dad couldn't figure out how to get a replacement for the remote control, so we returned to the house we picked up the TV from, and made a deal for the remote control.

Imagine getting a top of the line TV for \$5? That was dad. I still remember him explaining to me how the mechanical ultrasonic elements in the remote made the TV change channels. Then he made the TV change channels by jingling his keys in front of it. Brilliant!

Then there were flea markets, and ham fests. I think my first ham fest was when I was 7 in Dupage IL at the Dupage County Fairgrounds.

In 1972, my father brought home a Hallicrafters CB-3a, a tube driven CB, and a quarter wave omnidirectional antenna. We applied for and were granted a FCC license KKZ-9634, and radio... took over my life.

From there on out it was building kits, talking on the radio (before the stupid movies ruined it), and short wave listening. For both of us. Dad would work third party on a friend's amateur station... he taught me how to call CQ. He used to drill me with a ham related platitude: "Hams Call!!"

We were having a good time. And I knew little about Amateur Radio at the time. But dad was forging us forward. One of my great-uncles was the technical lead at DeVry Institute in Chicago, and began giving me their instructional materials for free. He used to drill me all the time:

"So what are the four things in electronics?" Uncle John would ask.

I'd gulp: "Inductance... um... errr... resistance... uh... reactance... erm... hmmmm... capacitance...???"

Sometimes I'd get it right. When I did... dad would look proud. I was only 12 after all.

Sometime in my 13th year my dad decided we were going for our ham tickets. We attended the novice classes at Gompers Park in Chicago. We studied. But we never sat for the exam.

I did not figure out until college why we never sat for the exam. I could have passed. He certainly could have

passed. Right? Wrong. He would have failed.

My father... could not read.

He could look at a schematic and understand it. But he could not read. He hid this his whole life.

This realization hit me like a brick. It finally made sense... he used to have me read everything to him. He could not read it himself. He used to try and read... it would take him a month to get through a book. He couldn't read the exam questions. He probably could not do code.

He was functionally illiterate, most likely from dyslexia. Here was a man with a genius IQ, who could not show anyone how smart he was. He used compensatory skills. He befriended his instructors and learned verbally in social situations. He tape recorded lectures. He did everything hands on. I witnessed him doing this- and never put it together.

His teachers, hams he knew, and my uncle who wrote for Devry- considered him a genius. They treated him as an equal.

And no one knew he could not read. How did he graduate Coyne? My guess is that he was so good hands on, they graduated him with bad test scores, the fact that he could lecture you on theory and he knew it cold. But he could not write it down. He wasn't lazy and he wasn't stupid- he was disabled.

He could not face an FCC examiner. It just wouldn't have worked.

Pop died in January 2009 surrounded by his 2nd wife, myself, and my step sister. His last words were to me: "You're a pretty good guy".

Coming from my dad, that's the highest praise possible.

So every year, I try to do something to honor him. Last year it was getting my ticket. Which was a real blessing because I found out I really still loved radio. This year it's this article, and perhaps taking some of his ashes to W1AW.

He was a great man.

And I want you to know him. He was, in my mind, our brother. But could never formally be acknowledged. He had done most of what radio amateurs do, but could never earn the call sign.

He's the ham, you never knew. My father.

Abraham.

ATTENTION ALL CW OPERATORS WHO WANT TO SHARPEN YOUR SKILLS...OR THOSE THAT WOULD LIKE TO LEARN THE MORSE CODE. WE ARE LOOKING TO SEE IF THERE IS ANY INTEREST IN FORMING A GROUP OF HAMS WHO WOULD LIKE TO PRACTICE CODE AT THE CLUB. WE HAVE SEVERAL HAMS WILLING TO TEACH THE CODE ON TUESDAY EVENINGS AND PERHAPS EVEN OVER THE CLUB REPEATER LIKE JOE P. USED TO DO YEARS AGO.....CONTACT JAKE OR ROSS FOR DETAILS.....THIS WILL BE A LOW KEY EVENT.

***GOOD OPERATING AND DX PROCEDURES
FOR***

HAM RADIO OPERATORS NEW TO HF!

Good reading for us old timers in Ham Radio too!

by N4UJW, Hamuniverse.com

Getting on the HF bands for the first time is one of the most exciting times for anyone that holds an Amateur Radio Operator license, especially for the ham operators who are brand new to HF or will soon be getting on HF with the new “HF” privileges using voice on 10 meters and CW privileges on 80, 40, 15, and 10 meters.

This article is especially written and tailored for the new operators using their newly earned privileges authorized by the FCC on February 23, 2007 on 10 meter voice and newly upgrading General class hams.

Exciting Times Ahead and What to Expect!

For me, earning the privilege of HF operating was.....well beyond words to describe!
But here are two or three that will help you!

Normal and DX Operating on HF is very different from the 2 meter, 6 meter, 440 and bands higher. You won't be using repeaters on HF like on 2 meters and the other bands you are accustomed to if you are a Technician class ham. **General class hams have this privilege on the upper end of 10 meters!** You will strictly be in direct contact with the station on the other end, much like simplex on 2 meters. Your contact may be on the other side of the town you live in or on the other side of the world or in between using HF frequencies.

Depending on the time of day, propagation, the band you have selected, the mode you're using, and many other variables, your contacts may be “loud and clear” or almost down in the noise. You will have to accept major interference from Mother Nature's lightning crashes, solar storms, power line and other man made device noise and sometimes just too many stations on or near your frequency.

The HF ham bands can be very CROWDED especially during contests and DX'ing!
Let's face it, worldwide, there are several million Amateur Radio Operators using the same bands and modes and most probably, the same frequencies although they may not hear all of the other stations on the frequency. This is just the nature of propagation, antennas, differences in power levels and other variables.

HF ham radio operating can be a challenging adventure at times when all of those variables are working against you so don't expect crystal clear FM quality as if your operating on a repeater on the 2 meter ham band all of the time. It's kind of like going fishing, sometimes you have a great catch with strong signals, and other times, not a nibble!

Don't give up, you will make contacts!

Helpful Suggestions and widely used procedures for the “Newbie” on HF

If you're new to Ham radio, you need to know that ham bands have “Official Observers” listening on all bands!

They are ham radio operators just like you and I.

You could be communicating with one and never know it.

Their responsibility is to observe infractions of the Part 97 rules and regulations and to inform you of these infractions and if you continue, report them to the proper authority, the FCC.

Don't give them a chance to complete their responsibilities!

They really don't want to.....but they will and do all the time!

**Probably the most important thing you need to remember when transmitting is:
ID!**

Transmit your call sign CLEARLY!

FCC Rules and Regulations Part 97

Sec. 97.119 Station identification.

(a) Each amateur station, except a space station or telecommand station, must transmit its assigned call sign on its transmitting channel at the end of each communication, and at least every 10 minutes during a communication, for the purpose of clearly making the source of the transmissions from the station known to those receiving the transmissions. No station may transmit unidentified communications or signals, or transmit as the station call sign, any call sign not authorized to the station. (SOURCE PART 97)

DON'T GIVE YOUR CALL SIGN AND THEN SAY, "FOR ID"!!!!

YOUR CALL SIGN IS YOUR ID!

OTHER HAMS KNOW THIS AND YOU DO NOT NEED TO DEFINE WHAT YOUR CALL SIGN WAS FOR!

1. LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN!

Hey...wait a minute...I thought ham radio was about "talking"!

It is....but you will be surprised at how much you can learn about operating and ham radio by just listening around the ham bands! You always listen first to make certain the frequency is not busy before you transmit.

If you're bored with that video game, the internet or whatever,

get on any active ham band and tune around until you hear an interesting conversation. Listen to the conversation and try to pick out ham terms, topics or phrases you don't know the meaning of.....then, if your privileges, (and your station equipment), allow you to transmit on that band and frequency....wait for a pause between their transmissions and throw in your callsign.....most operators will acknowledge you and welcome you into the conversation....ask them to help you understand what they were talking about or point you in the right direction to learn more. Don't be bashful, tell them you are new to HF and would certainly appreciate their help!

Most will welcome you!

2. Be Patient

Making a contact to get any station to call you on HF usually requires that you use the term "CQ" repeated at least 3 times in a row along with your call sign on the end and waiting for a reply...if none...repeat it over again....then try the third time and hope for an answer to your call.

If still none, don't get discouraged!

If you have called CQ a multitude of times and still get no answer, try to figure out why....is it our old friend/ enemy propagation, your equipment, your antenna type or setup? Do you have power out to the antenna? How do you know? Do you show output on the power meter. How is the SWR?

Check your complete station setup including all controls, functions, cables, etc....is your antenna still up!

Contact a local ham on the phone or via email and set up a time and frequency to check out your station on the air.

If your trying to make a contact, any contact, on 10 meters or any other hf band for that matter and can't, then chances are that propagation is against you.

3. Using phonetics on HF

One of the major causes for voice communication errors is the misunderstanding of the spoken word on HF especially when operating under noisy conditions. Using the SSB mode under the assumption that it is a high fidelity mode like FM will surely disappoint you. There are many "accents" to the human voice and being in the sideband mode causes some words at times to be very unclear if the sending station is having technical problems with his microphone or audio circuits in his transceiver or you are operating under high noise levels.

If the other station's audio is extremely distorted, tell him so. He may have his mic gain cranked wide open, compressor full blast or a combination of both causing the background noise in his shack to be as loud as his voice!

Or his mic may be causing the problem and he may not know it.

Again, let him know that you think he has a problem with his audio.

Ask him to talk "across" his mic with it held **close** to his mouth rather than directly into it. You will be surprised at how much clearer his voice may sound, and yours, to others using this technique.

Most stock microphones that come with transceivers are designed for "close talking" and not held a foot away! Always try to use the "close talking" and "across" when using voice modes.

Even under the best of conditions, SSB communications can sometimes be hard to understand and if you have a hearing problem, even more so,

.....Enter Phonetics!

Definition: Phonetics - The study of speech sounds.

The Phonetic Alphabet is used to spell out letters in place of just saying the letter itself. By using a word for each letter there is less chance that the person listening will confuse letters. For instance, some letters that can easily be confused are "D" and "B". Using the phonetic alphabet, "Delta" and "Bravo" can be easily understood. The phonetic alphabet is used primarily in two-way radio communications. The effects of noise, weak signals, distorted audio, and radio operator accent are reduced through use of the phonetic alphabet. This system of pronouncing letters is used around the world by maritime units, aircraft, **amateur radio operators** and the military. This alphabet is recognized by the International Civil Aviation Organization, Federal Aviation Administration, International Telecommunication Union and NATO as the standard for aircraft communications and radio communications.

Many words with certain letters in them or the beginning of them sound much alike when spoken in the presence of noise, and there is plenty of it on HF.

Some examples:

thunder - sounds like under, lightning - sounds like heightening, many - sounds like any, rig - sounds like re, Yaesu - may sound like hayzou, seven like heaven or eleven, eight like hate or ate and on and on.

Using phonetics can help tremendously in the understanding of the more difficult sounding words, numbers, etc.

It would be hard not to understand my call sign, N4UJW, using phonetics like.....

November 4 Uniform Juliet Whiskey!