



CAARA Newsletter



CAPE ANN AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

JANUARY 2017

President's Desk

by Rick- WZ1B

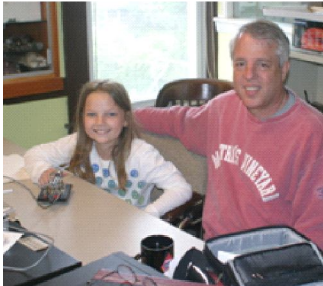
**CQ CQ CQ CAARA
Members and
Future Master CW Operators:**

You Are Invited...

You are invited to join our 24th year CW class. CW is art in other clubs.

You are invited to become part of the elite (*joke*) of the ham radio service. CW operators are a unique breed in ham radio (*true*). Requiring a commitment to learn and build your skills as no other aspect of ham radio demands, new operators come to hear the musical cadence of this seductive mode. My daughter when learning CW at 9 years old characterized it as *"like learning a new secret language that only some could understand."*

EVERYONE who is willing to do the study work masters the language of CW and become skilled at operating. The CAARA CW class has accomplished in training hundreds of CW operators who became skilled at sending and receiving. Once you get over the comprehension hump, CW communicating becomes VERY fun. There is a special camaraderie among CW operators and since the advent of phone, there has been a



friendly rivalry between CW operators and other mode operators.

The unknowledgeable think that CW has gone the way of Latin in the modern world. That couldn't be farther from the truth.

CW Is Still Relevant!

CW is still employed by emergency services around the globe, including the United States. The US Military, as well as most around the globe, still employ CW. During my last deployment in 2009, I met the senior officer in the Pentagon who was responsible for oversight of CW training for all services. The uses of CW are still broad, including: backup to the high tech communication devices, primary communications for special operations, operational deployments where satellite and line of sight communications are impossible, and a variety of clandestine operations by the intelligence services. I actually helped a deployment team prepare for operations in which they would be using 1980s ICOM HF equipment designed for ham radio.

Just recently, because of the threat of weapons of mass destruction, Homeland Security was asked to plan the use of radio equipment and specifically the CW mode that would not be effected by nuclear-type of weapons.

Ralph Karcher (W1RK) School Dedication

The CW training program is dedicated to the memory of Ralph Karcher, W1RK, Ralph was THE Master CW operator of CAARA. Ralph was also my elmer and closet beloved friend for over 30 years.

(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.

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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 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. The former W1RK 443.700 repeater is now on the cell tower in the Blackburn Industrial Complex with greatly enhanced performance.

The Association is one of the few amateur radio clubs that has its own clubhouse. Located at 6 Stanwood Street in Gloucester, it includes a permanent HF station with rotating beam and vertical antenna along with a 2 meter packet station and 2 meter voice and 220 MHz transceivers.

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.

New! The club is open every Tuesday from 4-8PM for CAARA members to stop by and socialize, as well as use the extensive collection of ham radio gear.

The 2017 Schedule:

Classes begin on Saturday January 21st and will be held about every Saturday through the end of April from 9:00 AM through Noon. EVERY class will include on air practice. If you can't make the first class, join us when you can.

*Attendance is not mandatory, enjoy the practice and camaraderie when you can. **Please email me if you are interested in attending: RMAYBURY@PPG-I.COM.***

New CW Operators

From January 21th through February 25th will be focused on the level of new CW operators learning for the first time. Those just wanting the practice at beginner speeds are very welcome to join the group as well!

Expanded Group

From February 25th through April 29th, the CW class will begin a steady development toward the higher level of proficiency and speeds. AT ALL TIMES, all levels are welcome. Each class will go through a training process that accommodates all levels of skill.

Testing and Award Presentations

As soon as the first individuals are ready, proficiency testing will be done during every class. **Testing is completely optional**, those passing tests will be able to earn awards outlined below. VE testing may be available during every test session as well. We have done that in the past and may do so again if we have VEs participating in the class or willing to come down for the testing.

About the Classes:

You all are invited to participate in the exciting world of CW, the elite of the Ham Radio Service 😊. This is a low key, easy-going, and fun way to learn with tried and proven teaching and learning techniques. Operators at ALL levels learn together, coaching each other with no pressure but to enjoy ourselves.

For many years, new and experienced CW operators have progressed from zero to twenty-plus words per minute at their own pace, some over years and others much quicker. Experienced operators have increased their speeds and comprehensions while supporting the learning of others. At one time we were focused on earning licenses, now just for the love of the art and the camaraderie.

The goal is to get everyone to the level of proficiency *of their own choosing*.

We normally have 8 to 20 participants, *attending when they can*. We will begin at the most basic level and progressively increase speed and comprehension as is comfortable for each person. We will do a bit of operating at the end of each class.

The following rules will apply for every class:



- **HAVE FUN!** The class will use a variety of learning techniques to help individuals with different styles. In past classes we have laughed a lot, enjoyed each others' company while taking the process serious enough to get good at operating.
- **Be patient with yourself.** Code for some, (me included!....just ask WV1A, K1MB or W1RK), is not easy at first. The pace that people memorize the letters, begin to hear the characters and get to the point to process whole words is different for each person. Everyone has the ability, time and practice are the ONLY keys to becoming a successful CW operator.
- **BE CONFIDENT.** You **WILL** be successful. If you attend class regularly and practice during the week, you will become part of the elite CW operators club 😊. Good attitude is 80% of the effort.
- **Help each other.** The learning model will include lots of working with each other, practice and getting on the air. Be patient and supportive of your friends during the class. That makes a big difference!



Awards:

There will be four levels of achievement with “official certifications” and awards:

- **Certified Novice CW Operator – 5 words per minute:** *Cape Ann Amateur Radio Operator's University, Certified Novice CW Operator.* A certificate is awarded that is of a professional quality to be framed.
- **Certified CW Operator – 12 words per minute:** *Cape Ann Amateur Radio Operator's University Certified Advanced Operator.* A certificate is awarded that is of a professional quality to be framed. An attractive t-shirt custom designed with imprinting on both front and back with the accomplishment prominently displayed
- **Certified Advanced CW Operator – 20 words per minute:** *Cape Ann Amateur Radio Operator's University Certified Advanced Operator.* A certificate is awarded that is of a professional quality to be framed. A high quality hooded sweatshirt custom designed with imprinting on both front and back with the accomplishment prominently displayed.
- **Certified Master CW Operator – 20 words solid copy:** The ultimate prize is the coveted blue sandwich cap, with a specially designed embroidered CW patch that says **Cape Ann Amateur Radio Operator's University** along the outer circle and a picture of the traditional straight key on the inside. In bold letters on the front and back of the cap is: **CERTIFIED MASTER CW OPERATOR**. A certificate is awarded that is of a professional quality to be framed.
- **Special Elmer Award.** For those enthusiasts who are especially helpful helping others, as voted by the class members, will receive a t-shirt with: **Cape Ann Amateur Radio Operator's University** on the top and underneath “**CW Elmer**”.



Equipment and Technical Training:

I have available 20 practice straight keys, 10 Iambic keys, four “bugs” for those interested in true old form sending, a variety of electronic keyers and additional



equipment specifically designed for training that generates QSOs and that which reads your sending. All are available as loaners to class operators.

I also have a variety of QRP and 100 watt output transmitter loaners. A Kenwood TS-820 will be available for those with a desire to learn how to tune older tube-type rigs.

Feel free to bring your own equipment to the class, it is a great way to develop your skills, fist and touch.

Operations Practice:

Coordinated weekend outdoor operations, weather permitting, are often great opportunities to practice as are emergency preparedness operational events held at the club. Contests are the very best way to develop skill, speed, comprehension and overall operations capability. You will be amazed how quickly your comprehension and speed increase from participating in a contest. We will try to participate in one contest per month as an adjunct to the class.

We have colleagues that have been with the group for a number of years and are willing to serve as Elmers. They offer wonderful experience and patience, as well as technical acumen.

Training Aids:

We have collected a variety of website resources, films, articles, books and apps for both phones and the computer to support operator development.

Come Check It All Out:

Come join us and try it all out and experience the excitement of learning a new language and being inducted into the elite 😊 CW Operators Society.

Classes will be held at 9 Stanwood Street. Coffee and muffins will be served. On occasion authentically smoked BBQ ribs and pulled pork, and smoked sausages will be served. During contests pizza and Chinese food will be served.

Call or email me if you have any questions. Email me if you would like to join us.

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73,
WZ1B

Best,
Rick Maybury



Information Desk

by Dean-KB1PGH



First off here's a reminder that the clubs January Board of Directors meeting will be held on Wednesday January 4th at 7:30 PM at the clubhouse and all members are welcome to attend. The monthly members meeting will be held the following Wednesday January 11th at 7:30 as well at the clubhouse on 6 Stanwood Street. I think for this month I will try to give some helpful information to the newly licensed ham out there who is deciding what to buy for their first HF rig. Now before we start talking about specific rigs let's talk about a few other important aspects before you spend your money. First off is where you live have any RFI or EMI? I say this because I live in an area that is close to a lot of industry which creates so much electrical interference that I am not able to even operate at night. I was forced to operate HF portable so I bought a smaller rig. So please take a survey of your EMI before you buy a rig. Then please really survey your life before you buy a rig. How much time do you have to get on the air? I myself have full time work, a wife, a house to take care of and a 3 year old so my time is limited so there's no need for me to buy a \$3000 to \$5000 rig that will sit there idle for most of the year. The next piece of advice I would say is if you are new to the hobby take the chance on buying a "Starter" or "Entry level" rig. What I mean by that is the old saying that you don't need an atomic bomb to sink a ship. Please buy a rig that is relatively easy to use so you can take your time and learn the basics of radio operation with all the filters and DSP. You can now take a look at your

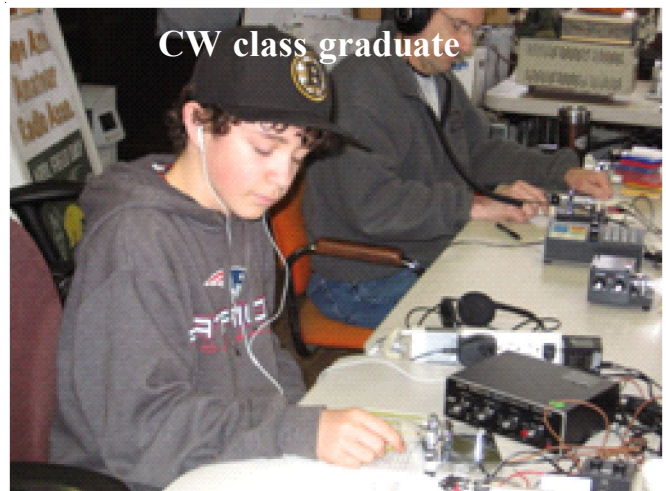
budget. How much are you willing to spend or how much do you have right now to spend? Do you really need to buy a radio now or do you have

the patience to save some money to buy what you want? If you have the patience and you want to buy a newer rig please shop around for a lower price and there is always some sort of sale going on. Now don't forget that you don't HAVE to buy a new rig. There are plenty of used rigs out on E bay or around your local ham community. Most used rigs that are 10 years old or



less are more than capable on the HF bands for the newbie. So what type of rig should I buy you ask? Before I get to that please take some time and look on the internet. If you see a radio that interests you go on to Youtube and see it in action and there are reviews as well. Just type in what radio you want and write "Reviews" on Google and dozens of reviews will pop up. You can also go on to www.eham.net and there are reviews as well. Plus Yahoo has user groups for every type of radio out there. Plus you can

ask the members of CAARA for advice on what radio you are interested in. Good luck to buying a new rig, I have purchased and sold 4 different types of rigs in 10 years. I started with an Icom 718 which was a great starter rig. Then I went portable with a Yaesu FT 897. Then I sold that to buy an Icom 7000 which was a great rig. This past year I sold that to buy a Yaesu FT 991 which is also a nice portable rig. All of these radios cost below \$1300 since my time on HF is limited. There's no need for me to own a \$3000 rig that will just sit there. So you will have to ask yourself these questions plus how much time do you expect to be on HF? Who knows, maybe you'll be hooked on HF for life or maybe your interest in ham radio might fall off. You never know. Just take your time and do some homework before you buy your first toy. I mean HF radio. For this month's prepper tip, now's the time to go through your "Bug Out" bag and check all of your supplies. Check to see if any food or first aid medicine has gone out of date. Make sure your flashlights work and replace the batteries if you have not done so in the past year and make sure you have some fresh water as well. Yes, water can go stale in a year. 73 and see you next month!



WHAT'S GOING ON AT CAARA ?

CHRISTMAS PARTY AT THE CLUB WAS A GREAT TIME!

The club party was a huge success with almost 40 people attending the event which also honored Bob Quinn-WV1A for his years of service to the club. Ross-W1RAB not only presented the award, he made it on his 3D printing machine. The BOD decided to hold the party at the recently renovated CAARA headquarters instead of renting a hall at the local church. The party chairman was Chris- K1TAT with Jon- K1TP assisting. The photo on the right shows the first floor of the club setup for the party before the crowd arrived.

Jon and Chris repainted the first floor bathroom for the event and finally get rid of the horrible brown and yellow paint.

Stefan-K1SCD donated a fresh turkey which was cooked at the club and Rick-WZ1B donated a spiral ham. We had a great selection of side dishes and an abundance of desserts. The food was just plain delicious. I can't remember when the club ever smelled so good!











Pictures of the award ceremony and the Appreciation Award that was handmade especially for Bob-WV1A by Ross-W1RAB.

We plan on some more fun events at the club involving meals as things turned out so well! Stay tuned for future events.

Dave- KA1LKX on the right was front and center helping in the kitchen.



The Call to Action *by Curtis- AA3JE*

One of the great traditions that is being lost is the “Cut off your hand if it picks up the phone to a repairman” cult. I was indoctrinated into this sect when I was a boy, living in a country town of 50 people, 7 miles from the nearest civilization. In that setting you could call for help, but it would be an hour getting there (you had to pass a bar on the only road, and no self-respecting serviceman would do that), and the minimum bill was \$50, sometimes \$75, depending on how thirsty he was, (cash only, no checks). Also, the quality of the work was sometimes questionable.

call

So, if something breaks, the LAST thing you did was call anyone, except a relative or friend, (if it was a job you never had done before). Relatives and friends were eager to help, as it gave them a chance to unload all the unsolicited advice they had been storing up.



“What’s the problem?”

“Car won’t start.”

“Well, I knew you would have a problem like this sooner or later. Ford quality assurance has taken a real down turn in the last 20 years.”

“It’s a Toyota, Dad.”

“Oh, yeah, sure, new glasses.....tiny darn emblems.”

“Can you fix it?”

Always a tough question. Computerized cars and I do not see eye-to-eye.

56 Chevy? 55 Ford pickup? 1927 Overland Coupe? No problem. 2012 Toyota with more computing power than the original moon rockets? Might be a problem.

But the complete lack of action when I pressed the starter button (no key’s anymore), told the tale.

“It is either that the computer is totally fried and lobotomized, you burnt the main fusible plug, or you have a dead battery. How old is the battery?”

“Er, how do you tell? Look up the exhaust?”

And, as expected, the guy who installed the battery, had failed to punch the date. But it was an original battery, so it was probably 4 years old. About time to fail.

“I’ll go get the charger, and see what’s what.”

Now I had bought a new battery charger when the smoke started to leak out of my old one, (not unexpected after 40 years), and the new charger had, you guessed it, a computer. I hooked it up, and all it would do was flash “ERROR 43” at me. Since the book was long gone, I had to guess at what “ERROR 43” meant.

My guess was that it meant, “I don’t know what you hooked me up to, but I ain’t charging it! Read the damn manual! What kind of a fool are you! IDIOT!”

The only thing it would not do was charge anything.

I hate it when electronic devices get sarcastic!

So I got out the (non-computerized) jumper cables, and the car started right up!

“Dead battery”.

“I’ll call the dealer, we have a warranty.....”

“CALL THE DEALER? What kind of an answer is that?”

“DAD.....”

“NO DEALER!”

So I got the make and model of the Toyota, and called NAPA in Gloucester.

“What is the group size?”

“I have no idea.”

“There were three batteries used in that vehicle. I need the group size.”

So, using the principle developed by Alexander the Great with the Gordian knot, I yanked out the stupid battery and hauled it to Gloucester.

“It’s this size!” I said, plunking it on the counter.

We all inspected it. There were, of course, the usual group of guys hanging around the counter, hoping to get a discount on whatever. Or just avoiding work. The six of us looked at it, and finally found, in letters 1/8 inch high, buried in the part number, the group size. 24F.

“\$148 dollars”

Now for that price, I expected gold plated terminals, gel mat, a red battery case, and “TURBO RACING” on the side, but it was a plain old battery. It must be the EPA or something. In my mind ordinary car batteries cost about \$48. It must be overhead, or the cost of keeping the guys in free coffee and candy. Later, when I checked at Sam’s, the cheapest brand was \$79.

But I paid, and dropped it in.

Well, I meant to install the battery, but I dropped the cap of the windshield washer reservoir and there was a small delay as I took off the belly pan to get the darn thing out.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

But! Low and behold! The car started, charged properly, and smiled at me.

I just love it when cars smile.

Now I just got to find the charger book and figure out what error #43 means.

Heck, HRO has 20 amp adjustable metered power supplies, guaranteed not to contain a computer, for small money. I don't like using the one I bought at HORSE TRADERS for \$20 anymore. It's 40 years old and smells funny. And emits brown smoke.

Self reliance is a wonderful thing.

Note to self- Be careful about accidentally shorting charged batteries. Also, buy more burn ointment.

Advertisement- **Anyone need a high end battery charger? Computerized! Really sophisticated! No manual.**

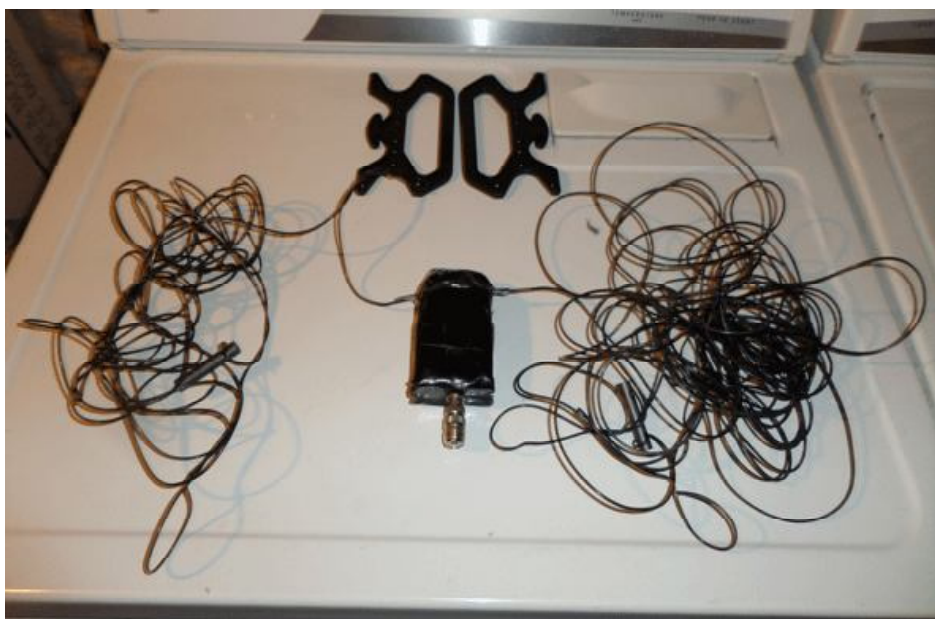


Happy Holiday from the shack of Rich- KC1FSR



Hints and Kinks from KB1PGH

Since I operate HF portable I recently purchased a Hy Power 4 band Off Center Fed Dipole which is 66 FT long. Well after a couple portable HF op sessions I quickly figured out what a time consuming pain it was to unravel it to use it even though I was so careful winding it back up for storage the last time as you can see in the photo. So I went to www.buddipole.com and got 2 wire winders for just \$5.00 a piece and wound the antenna up in those and problem solved! Now I won't have to fight to unravel it and storage will go much quicker. So hope this helps if your going nuts trying to unravel your portable wire antennas out in the field!



“Ask not what C.A.A.R.A. can do for you, Ask what you can do for C.A.A.R.A.”

by David Linsky KA1-LKX

Throughout C.A.A.R.A.’s history and even up to the current day, countless club members have stepped up to the plate time and time again to help C.A.A.R.A. in countless ways to become the successful Amateur Radio Organization that it has become. Years ago they were called ‘C.A.A.R.A. Angels’. And that title is still very appropriate even today!

The following narrative is meant to demonstrate of how easy it is to help C.A.A.R.A. in a way and manner that works for you. All C.A.A.R.A. members are encouraged to think of ways in which they can volunteer a small amount of their time to help C.A.A.R.A. continue to grow and flourish into the future.

This writer was recently made aware of a very worthwhile activity that was carried out by a member of C.A.A.R.A. on Sat. morning December 3, 2016 between 9:04 - 9:42 a.m.

This writer has been granted permission to communicate a brief description of this good deed to all of the other members of C.A.A.R.A. on the promise that his (or her) identity is never to be revealed. (This writer reluctantly agreed to these strict conditions).

The action that was relayed to this writer was that an anonymous member of C.A.A.R.A. visited C.A.A.R.A. headquarters on the above mentioned very windy Sat. morning.

This (I mean that) anonymous C.A.A.R.A. member carefully walked the entire outside area completely around the C.A.A.R.A. building and parking lot with his (or her) innovative de-littering devices and proceeded to check for any litter that may have blown in off of the street.

Except for an errant dark green trash bag with white paint on it, there was **no litter** to be found anywhere! **No litter** was found around the entire C.A.A.R.A. headquarters building and **no litter** was to be found anywhere throughout the entire C.A.A.R.A. parking lot area as well! (**Radio Amateurs have always been by their very nature non-litterers**)!

This (I mean that) anonymous C.A.A.R.A. member then decided to check out Stanwood Street for any stray litter. He (or she) managed to completely de-litter both sides of Stanwood Street (including the sidewalks) from Washington Street all of the way to the other end of Stanwood Street up to its intersection with Gee Ave.

He (or she) managed to retrieve a substantial amount of litter, as well as 251 cigarette butts (**none of which were found on C.A.A.R.A. property**)! This anonymous C.A.A.R.A. members’ efforts on this Sat. morning resulted in some additional notable unintended benefits as well. All the while that he (or she) was travelling along on his (or her) delittering journey, countless vehicles traveled by and several neighbors took notice as well.

The unintended benefit (as well as having a clean Stanwood Street) was that several of the vehicle operators as well as some of C.A.A.R.A.’s neighbors recognized the de-litterer as being a member of C.A.A.R.A. and thus how good and caring a neighbor that C.A.A.R.A. is.

PLEASE THINK OF SOMETHING THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO DO TO ASSIST C.A.A.R.A.

FOR SALE ITEMS

Item 1 KENWOOD TS-570D HF transceiver with under 90 contacts. I used it for a backup rig. It comes with the power cord, hand mike, YK-88SN-1, 1.8KHz SSB filter, instruction manual, and block and schematic diagrams. There is a 2 inch scratch on the cover. Asking \$575.

Item 2 ASTRON RS-35A power supply. 13.8 volt 25 amp peak rated supply with cables to connect to the KENWOOD TS-570D. \$150.

Item 3 MOSLEY TA-34-XL 4 ELEMENT HF ANTENNA. All 4 elements are active on 10,15,and 20 meters. It has a 2 inch OD X .104 inch X 21 ft boom and the maximum element length is 28 feet with a turning radius of 17 ft. 9 in. This antenna is recommended for harsh environments. I can bring this antenna to the CAARA clubhouse.

Email: wk9879@verizon.net Phone: 781-729-7683 Bill Kirk, nj1x



Memorial Member's Meeting at the Cape Ann Amateur Radio Association

Please join the Cape Ann Amateur Radio Association at 6 Stanwood Street, Gloucester, MA on February 8th, 7:00 PM for a memorial member's meeting in honor of our past Association President, Mr. Norman "David" Curley, WA1YTS. Mr. Curley was a crewman aboard the ill-fated Pilot Boat CAN DO which was lost with all hands on the night of February 6-7, 1978 during the famed "Blizzard of '78".

Joining us will be Mr. Pete Torosian, W1CBY who will give a presentation on the events of that evening. Mr. Torosian was a Coast Guardsman serving aboard the 210-Foot Medium Endurance Coast Guard Cutter USCGC DECISIVE, which assisted in the search for CAN DO at the height of the storm. Mr. Torosian has audio recorded by Warren Andrews at Salem Control that night

Submitted by Gardi- KB1BTK



Instructions by Curtis- AA3JE

I am often accused by “SHE WHO MUST BE OBEYED” of failing to read and follow instructions.

This is a cruel and untrue slander.

The problem is that the instructions are written in five languages, with the English instructions on the back of a folded map-like transparent paper, in small print, and by the time I have read the mandatory warnings (do not stick your fingers in the moving parts, avoid electrocution, we aren't responsible for anything else), I am so upset that I am not thinking clearly.

Now those of you who follow the easy, step-by-step instructions on how NOT to “do it yourself” that I write, are aware that in the last adventure (drilling 1 inch steel plate), I burnt the edges off 25 drill bits.

When I went to Ace to check on replacements, the projected cost was \$65.

So I decided to solve that problem by buying “The Drill Medic” for 39\$, which premised that in one easy step I could sharpen my drills to like new. Better than new, actually, and there was a cute video of a sweet girl sharpening a drill in less than 15 seconds.

As I am a sucker for videos of sweet girls in bathing suits, regardless of topic, I didn't pay a LOT of attention to the actual part about sharpening the drill.

So I sent off the money, and in a few days a small box with an impressive logo arrived.

Showing manly restraint, I opened the box, grabbed the manual, and closed the box.

I was not going to use the darn thing till I read the manual!

So, I read the manual. It was really pretty simple.

1. Put drill in chuck.
2. Align drill in clamp jaws,
3. Turn on gizmo.
4. Sharpen drill.

So, armed with my new knowledge, I found a dull drill, (no shortage) put it in the chuck, aligned it, turned the thing on, and started sharpening.

The result was horrible. There was no cutting edge. It was ground flat!

Not dismayed, I re-read the manual.

And tried again. And again, and again.

I only stopped when the drill was 2 inches long with all the flutes ground off.

Drill #2- same story. This time I tried various artistic stances, gentle touches, all kinds of things.



Rotten results, every time.

So I opened the box, and there was a DVD. That was OK as the same girl was doing the demonstration. I can watch girls in their underwear all day.

Personally, I would not recommend working in my shop in a bikini, but I'm not a girl. I want a bit of cloth between me and the red hot metal shavings.

Girls evidently are made of tougher stuff. God knows "SHE WHO MUST BE OBEYED" is apparently made of boot leather and cast iron.

So I watched the video, and I was doing it absolutely right!

So I tried again. The result would not drill butter.

I will not bore you with and account of the ensuing hour. It was not pretty.

I finally called the manufacturer. I got a robot, a secretary, the sales rep, and finally the technical guy.

"Honestly! You cannot screw this up! A monkey could use our product!"

"I can't."

"Look, put the drill in the chuck, loosely."

"Check"

"Put the chucked drill in the alignment port. "

"Check"

"Turn the chuck so that you feel it slip into the notch in the port"

"That's not in the instructions. I lined up the white line with the mark on the port."

"The "WHITE LINE!!?"

"The Alignment mark"

"The Alignment nub has no mark. It's a plastic nub that pops right into the jig."

"ER, BLACK PLASTIC THING at 90 degrees to the white mark?"

"The white mark is for point splitting! Use that and the sharpener will grind the point flat and the drill won't cut butter! Line it up with a gentler pressure and you will feel it snap in. You cannot mess this up, sir!"



So, I rotated the jig 90 degrees, and it indeed, popped right in.

“ER, I think I found the problem.....”

“OK, now let the alignment arms rotate the drill bit to the minimum diameter.”

“Check”

“Tighten the chuck and sharpen”

I did so. Perfect, clean, sharp drill, in ten seconds. It was just as well. I felt like an ass standing there in my underwear. It was the only thing I could think of that I had not tried. It has worked for Bunny in the video. Of course she had a better figure.

“No problem! Thanks.”

“No one has ever tried lining up on the splitting mark before. It must have made a mess of that drill.”

“You don’t want to know.”

So I sharpened all the bits, and went upstairs.

“HOW DID IT WORK?” asked “SHE WHO MUST BE OBEYED”.

“No problem. You were perfectly right. Reading the instructions made it all very easy.”

Yeah. I lied. You would too. The time in purgatory is less painful than telling the truth.

Ham Radio software company alleged to have blacklisted users for leaving negative reviews

The Register reports on the story of **Jim Giercyk**, an amateur radio enthusiast who, it is alleged, had his copy of the popular **Ham Radio Deluxe** (HRD) software revoked after posting a negative review.

Other radio hams have followed up with us regarding claims that this was not an isolated incident and others may have had their license keys blacklisted for being publicly critical of the company. And just to be clear: by blackballing keys, installed copies of the software stop working.

Giercyk, a professional musician in South Carolina, U.S., says that after his dealings with HRD Software (which has since reinstated his software key) and the statement made by the developer’s co-owner Dr Michael Carper, he takes issue with claims made by the company. Giercyk, aka N2SUB, told us on Tuesday: “The issue is not the refusal of service, the issue is that HRD disabled my software, and then offered to enable it in exchange for the removal of an online review of their product. It’s extortion, not refusal of service.”

Giercyk also said that since he went public about his blacklisting last week, he has received messages from other users who have stories of their software keys being revoked by HRD without their knowledge for speaking up about having a bad support experience. A number of other readers pointed out a collection of bad reviews posted on hobbyist site eHam by customers who had their license keys blacklisted. HRD told us some of those users could have written their assessments after requesting a refund and deactivating their software, thus their

licenses will appear revoked.

Meanwhile, Reddit threads and follow-up discussions to Giercyk's catalyst forum post reveal similar stories of keys being revoked after critical comments about Ham Radio Deluxe have appeared online. Other sources allege some amateur radio forums have in the past deleted posts critical of HRD.

How to work distant stations on Ham Radio

Radio Hams around the world have the great privilege to use part of the Very High Frequency radio spectrum to enhance their communication hobby, but how do you work long distance stations on V.H.F.? This part of the radio spectrum is by nature a line of sight band under normal weather conditions, line of sight plus about a third of the distance is the normal range, however there are conditions that do exist sporadically that offer the keen operator the fun of working many hundreds of miles.

Keep an eye on the weather forecast, sporadic E and Tropospheric ducts occur from time to time and offer good long propagation conditions. Areas of high pressure over land often contribute to this condition. Meteor shower trails left behind meteor showers help propagate what is normally a line of sight frequency over several hundred miles.

Temperature inversion over the North Sea has given me the opportunity to contact stations in Scandinavian, this type of propagation occurs during differences in temperature between the sea and the surrounding atmosphere. Coastal ducts often happen for those who are lucky enough to live by the sea, this phenomenon sometimes happen during times when the coast is bathed in thick fog.

There is a tremendous amount of loss of signal strength on V.H.F. between the transmitter and the receiver, to counteract this physical fact many operators use a directional aerial comprising a boom where a number of elements have been attached to amplify the power from not only the transmitter, a directional beam amplifies the incoming signal too. The Yagi aerial is an example of this design. Commercial radio masts erected for utility operators can easily overcome this problem by having multiple hilltop repeaters that receive the transmissions; they are then sent to other hilltops via microwave radio links or connected together via fibre cable and the internet.

Working longer distance on V.H.F. is possible if you engage in this activity during certain organised events. Contests and other planned events including field days offer the chance for radio Hams to cover larger distances with their equipment. Many people set up their stations well away from urban areas where masts can be erected and larger beam aerials can be utilised. Linear amplifiers are used to boost the outgoing signal. Head for higher ground during these events, you will be amazed how many contacts can be made from a hilltop location.

I live in an area that is only 120 feet above ground level, not the best location for V.H.F.; however the Pennines, a mountain chain running through the middle of the United Kingdom is within easy driving distance from my home. Operating from the Pennines offer the V.H.F. Ham radio operator the benefit of height, I have operated in a particular spot on the Pennines that is over 1300 feet above sea level. Using a transportable transceiver and a homemade Yagi aerial, I have communicated with other stations well over 200 miles away under flat radio conditions. Proving that height above sea level gives the operator a great advantage.

Emergency communications rule does NOT allow use of any radio frequency for NON-Amateur Radio Operators or Commercial licensees.

The emergency rule ONLY applies to licensed amateur radio operators. This allows any *licensed amateur radio operator* to use any *amateur* frequency, regardless of license class in an emergency. You will notice that rule is in Part 97, which **only** applies to licensed amateur radio operators! Part 97 does NOT apply to any other radio service!

There has been a lot of discussion on this. Most of it is total fiction.

NO private citizen can use any radio frequency in an Emergency! ONLY licensed hams can do this to operate outside of the frequency limits imposed by license class restrictions WITHIN Amateur radio bands.

§ 97.403 Safety of life and protection of property. No provision of these rules prevents the use by an *amateur station* of any means of radiocommunication at its disposal to provide essential communication needs in connection with the immediate safety of human life and immediate protection of property when normal communication systems are not available.

It also looks like Part 90 Commercial *LICENSEES* also have this rule within part 90 services:

§ 90.417 Interstation communication. (a) Any station licensed under this part may communicate with any other station without restriction as to type, service, or licensee when the communications involved relate directly to the imminent safety-of-life or property. (b) Any station licensed under this part may communicate with any other station licensed under this part, with U.S. Government stations, and with foreign stations, in connection with mutual activities, provided that where the communication involves foreign stations prior approval of the Commission must be obtained, and such communication must be permitted by the government that authorizes the foreign station. Communications by Public Safety Pool eligibles with foreign stations will be approved only to be conducted in accordance with Article 5 of the Inter-American Radio Agreement, Washington, DC, 1949, the provisions of which are set forth in § 90.20(b).

As you see, these are the ONLY provisions for emergency communications. NO private citizen may operate unless they are licensed under the above rules.

Here is definitive evidence, in another rule part:

§2.405 Operation during emergency.

The licensee of any station (except amateur, standard broadcast, FM broadcast, noncommercial educational FM broadcast, or television broadcast) may, during a period of emergency in which normal communication facilities are disrupted as a result of hurricane, flood, earthquake, or similar disaster, utilize such station for emergency communication service in communicating in a manner other than that specified in the instrument of authorization: Provided:

(a) That as soon as possible after the beginning of such emergency use, notice be sent to the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau of the Commission at Washington, D.C., stating the nature of the emergency and the use to which the station is being put, and

(b) That the emergency use of the station shall be discontinued as soon as substantially normal communication

facilities are again available, and

(c) That the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau of the Commission at Washington, D.C., shall be notified immediately when such special use of the station is terminated: Provided further,

***** **Read this:**

(d) That in no event shall any station engage in emergency transmission on frequencies other than, or with power in excess of, that specified in the instrument of authorization or as otherwise expressly provided by the Commission, or by law: And provided further,

(e) That any such emergency communication undertaken under this section shall terminate upon order of the Commission.

Note: Part 73 of this chapter contains provisions governing emergency operation of standard, FM, noncommercial educational FM, and television broadcast stations. Part 97 of this chapter contains such provisions for amateur stations.

[28 FR 13785, Dec. 18, 1963, as amended at 80 FR 53749, Sept. 8, 2015]

FCC Denies Expert Linears' Request for Waiver of 15 dB Rule, Petition Pending

The FCC has denied a request by Expert Linears America LLC to waive Part 97.317(a)(2) of the Amateur Service rules limiting amplifier gain. Expert, of Magnolia, Texas, distributes linears manufactured by SPE in Italy. **Its waiver request, filed in June, would have allowed Expert to import an amplifier capable of exceeding the current 15 dB gain limitation as it awaits FCC action on its April petition (RM-11767)** to revise the same Amateur Service rules. That petition remains pending. Expert has asserted that there should be no gain limitation on amplifiers sold or used in the Amateur Service. Most commenters supported Expert's waiver request, but a couple of commenters - including FlexRadio - demurred.

"In light of the conflicting comments regarding the desirability of eliminating the 15 dB limitation, we conclude that waiving the limitation at this stage of the rulemaking proceeding would prejudice the rulemaking proceeding and prematurely dispose of commenters' concerns," the FCC said in denying the waiver. "Moreover, we agree with FlexRadio that granting Expert's waiver request while the rulemaking petition remains pending would provide an unfair market advantage for one equipment model over other manufacturers' RF power amplifiers that would still be limited by [the existing rules]." he FCC said it would rather give full consideration to "the pending issues" and apply the result of the rulemaking proceeding to all Amateur Radio Service equipment.

The FCC said a minority of those commenting on the waiver request expressed concern that eliminating the 15 dB limitation would lead

to an overall increase in power levels, "including transmissions that intentionally or unintentionally exceed the maximum power limit."

In its April rulemaking petition, Expert maintained that the 15 dB gain limitation is an unneeded holdover from the days when amplifiers were less efficient and the FCC was attempting to rein in the use of Amateur Service amplifiers by Citizens Band operators.

Although the FCC had proposed in 2004 to delete the requirement that amplifiers be designed to use a minimum of 50 W of drive power - and subsequently did so - it did not further discuss the 15 dB limit in the subsequent Report and Order in that proceeding. Expert has pointed to its Model 1.3K FA amplifier as an example of a linear "inherently capable of considerably more than 15 dB of amplification," which would make it a suitable match for low-power transceivers now on the market.