



CAARA Newsletter



ARRL
The national association for
AMATEUR RADIO

AN ARRL AFFILIATED CLUB

JULY ISSUE- 2011



President's Corner

by Stan-W4HIX

One of our members became a silent key this month—Briggs Longbothum, AB2NJ. Briggs was a central member of the club, and I like to think of him as CIO—Chief Instigative Officer. He was always getting something new going, bring life and excitement to CAARA. He was also an ambassador for CAARA. He will be greatly missed.

Field Day this year proved to be a real opportunity for CAARA to show off its capabilities. Let me say that I was extremely impressed with the members that helped out. Moving the Field Day operation to the Fuller School meant several unknowns—a new layout, possible RF issues and a reworked food service plan—all of which worked out to be improvements from the Babson site.

I was a little disappointed with the turnout from city officials, but Fiesta is hard to compete with. The one official that really counted—Miles Schlichte, Gloucester's new Emergency Management Director—did attend. I had a long discussion with him regarding how CAARA would fulfill the role of the Gloucester EOC Communications team. We will continue to work to get officials onsite (our Eastern Massachusetts Section Manager Phil Temples did visit us) and next year we're not in competition with Fiesta.

A few days before Field Day, CAARA was awarded ARRL Special Service Club status. That puts us in the upper level of clubs in the ARRL, and comments from local ARRL officials put us near the top in Eastern Mass.

Though the summer is generally a quite time for the club, we have the 13 Colonies special event coming up, and I'm hoping a cookout in August.

Thanks to everyone for their efforts and support of CAARA.

DEAN'S CORNER by DEAN-KB1PGH

The Cape Ann Amateur Radio Association and its members would like to dedicate our 2011 Field Day operations to Briggs Longbothum AB2NJ. Briggs became a silent key just days before the start of field day and the sudden loss of his passing was a shock and saddened us all. Briggs had been a member of CAARA for many years and he was also on the Board of Directors and he served a term as the clubs Vice President as well. He loved to do kit building and portable HF operations with his Buddipole Antenna. He was involved in every aspect of the clubs with his sidekick chocolate lab Merley K9DOG and he was a ARRL Volunteer Examiner as well. He went out on the clubs first Thatcher Island Expedition and he was recently getting CAARA involved in the upcoming 13 Colonies Radio event. He also gave of his time in amateur radio public service as he provided communications for local road races. He was also instrumental at getting the CAARA NET back and up and running on Sunday nights a few years back. Other than all of this the most important thing about Briggs is that he was a kind man and always had a smile on his face and enjoyed life. Briggs will be missed beyond words by the members of CAARA and we should consider ourselves fortunate enough to know such a kind and gentle soul.



Briggs- AB2NJ

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-Editor
K1TP

Board of Directors- 2010-11

President: Stan W4HIX
Vice Pres: Dick WB1W
Treasurer: Hank McCarl W4RIG
Clerk: Dean Burgess KB1PGH

Directors:

Dick Copithorne, KR1G
Jon Cunningham, K1TP
Charles Downey, N1OCT
Ruth Hodsdon, WW1N
Briggs Longbothum, AB2NJ
Jim Mondello, W1DDX
Dick Ober, K1VRA
Bill Poulin, WZ1L
Don Swenson, N1UVV

Welcome to CAARA:

CAARA, an ARRL affiliated club, operates the 2 meter W1GLO repeater on 145.130 MHz with antennas located on the Cingular 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 with antennas located in Magnolia is now located at the CAARA clubhouse and has a very 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 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.

DAYTON HAMFEST 2011



Here are a few pictures taken at this years hamfest at Dayton, the hamfest that draws hams from all around the United States and world to see manufacturer's new products. My friend who owns DavisRF, a coax and wire company, sent me the pictures.

Family Holidays by Curtis-AA3JE

Most families get together for the holidays. It is meant as a time of renewal, affirmation, celebration and joyous togetherness. Well, that's what it always looks like on the Hallmark TV shows. In actual fact, our family get-togethers sometimes seem to slip a little short of the mark. This is not because we are not a close, loving family. It's not because we do not like each other and share tender moments of inter-generational intimacy. It's not because (as in the old days) Uncle Elmer gets stinking drunk and throws up in the Christmas cactus.

It's because of the curse.

The origins of the curse are well known in the family. One Christmas, many years ago, some imprudent relative gave me a geologist's hammer (you know, the forged steel thing with the pick on one end, hammer face on the other) for Christmas. Christmas morning, after all the presents were opened and the mess cleaned up, there was a space of a few hours before lunch where we are all turned loose to play with our new toys. I wandered out into the back yard with my new hammer, looking for a suitable geological specimen. What I found was the large quartz boulder that marked the last resting place of "Indian Hannah" last of the Lenni-Lenape Indians. Fortunately my family found and stopped me before I had chipped off more than a few fragments, but Indian Hannah evidently did not take the desecration of her last burial place gracefully, for that was the last family Christmas without a family disaster. They were never fatal, but they often made you wish you were dead before they were over.

The next year everything was going well up until my father decided that it was time to dump all the torn wrapping paper into the fireplace and burn it. This would have been fine, if he had not forgotten that the flue was firmly closed. Once the flames got going it was impossible to get close to the thing, and the smoke rolled, billowing and choking, leaving the family to flee for the exits, carrying grand-dad in his chair with us as we stumbled toward the exits. The local fire department was very reassuring, but I have fond memories of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding eaten with our coats on around the picnic table on the

porch. The snow was beautiful, but since most of us had slippers on, a bit damp.

The year after we forbade father from this particular form of incendiary activity, and were just settling down to open our presents, when a shriek from the hall alerted us that things were not going as well as they seemed. It seemed that the septic system draining the front guest bedrooms had given up the ghost under the strain of four adolescent girls and water was spilling from the toilet and down the hall. Each male member of the family sprang into action, and with mops, buckets, plungers, augurs and finally a visit from "Roto-Rooter" (extra charge for holiday calls), the problem was resolved.

I think you get the drift. It could, of course, all be explained by the sudden load on the house when the occupant load tripled, but it was very suspicious, nevertheless. Every year we wondered what disaster would enliven the holidays, and most of us packed extra first-aid supplies along with our bunny slippers and flannel robes. One year it was a jammed seat-belt latch that trapped Aunt Mynah in the car for about two hours till we lost patience and finally cut it free with the poultry shears. One year it was my sister Angeline mistaking the "100 decibel panic button" on the alarm system for the light switch. Each of us in turn became the star of the holiday, and as we grew older our children contributed, resulting in grand-daughter Alex's disastrous and infamous "face plant" during the banister sliding competition, our son's mistaking a can of "mace" for air freshener, and the various cooking accidents. Most memorable was the year that my wife bought a lovely set of new kitchen canisters which she could not bear to deface with a label. This led to my future daughter in law stirring turkey gravy to which confectioners sugar had been added, waiting for it to thicken. (And waiting, and waiting, and waiting). At least she had fair warning as to the family she was marrying into.

But the best, the absolute best, was the year of the airplane. My brother, for reasons known only to himself, was seized with a passion to build an airplane from a kit. In the garage. The garage attached to the house. All went well until the early hours of Christmas morning when he awoke at 3 AM, his usual time, and went down to potter about installing a new fuel gage.

He had bought the fuel gage after a small accident involving running out of fuel in mid-air after an arithmetic mistake involving fuel consumption calculations. He had repaired the damage after the crash, which was slight, and thought that adding a fuel gage to the plane was a good idea. He did not have the correct tubing, but had bought some stuff at the hardware store that would do until the proper aviation grade came in the mail. He connected the new gage, filled the tank, and it worked perfectly. He then went into the living room and sat reading a new biography of Charles Lindberg. It was a riveting book, and as he read of the struggles to fill the plane that fateful morning of take-off, he could see it in his mind. In fact, he could almost smell the fumes as they filled the tanks.

As the rest of the 10 gallons of gasoline spilled quietly onto the garage floor through the dissolved plastic tubing (gasoline soluble), the family, including our 98 year old mother, spent Christmas morning in the snow on the lawn, watching as the local HAZMAT crew cut power to the house, set up the ventilation fans, and as the dawn rose we all agreed that my assignment was to humbly apologize to Indian Hanna. I did so before the new year.

Things have been quiet since then. but it has not been nearly as much fun.

Eight year-old Extra Class Ham

A TV news video features 8 year-old **Mikaila Williams KK4BFB** who has been issued with the highest US Amateur Radio license - Extra class.

The YouTube description says:

This is one amazing young lady that is only 8 years old, she is set out to make herself available should there be a disaster requiring individuals with specially trained skills in the area of Emergency Radio Communications & Weather spotting for the National Weather Service.

In order to make yourself available to the government and your community a really good place to start is by obtaining at least one of Federal Communications Commission's Amateur Radio Licenses to be legally able to operate these high powered two-way radio devices (No, nothing like the Citizen's Band Radios used back in the 70's where you just send in a payment and the FCC sends you back a piece of paper (license)

saying you can talk on the radio).

The license that this 8 year Deltona girl obtained required her to pass all three license class exams, where she had to answer a total of 120 randomly selected questions from a total of 1,618 questions between all three exams, (not seeming to be much of a task, but many fail each of the exams, multiple times). The Orlando Sentinel News Paper was so impressed with Mikaila's feat that they not only wrote a news story in their paper they also posted in the story in their video archives and thanked her for her service to the community.

8 years old and already in a position that she is receiving thanks from a major news publisher for her services, WOW what a task. What a young lady! It is good know that we have youth growing up in our community that is willing to stand up for their neighbors.



Briggs- AB2NJ Silent Key

Field Day was dedicated to Briggs this year and we all exchanged stories of how he touched us. He had quite an impact on the club and activities especially considering he wasn't a member for that many years.

He was a fixture at the clubhouse during the week playing radio and "melting solder" as he would say. Briggs always reached out to new members especially ones that just got licensed and made them feel special when they attended meetings or got on the repeater.

June 20, 1840: A Simple Matter of Dots and Dashes

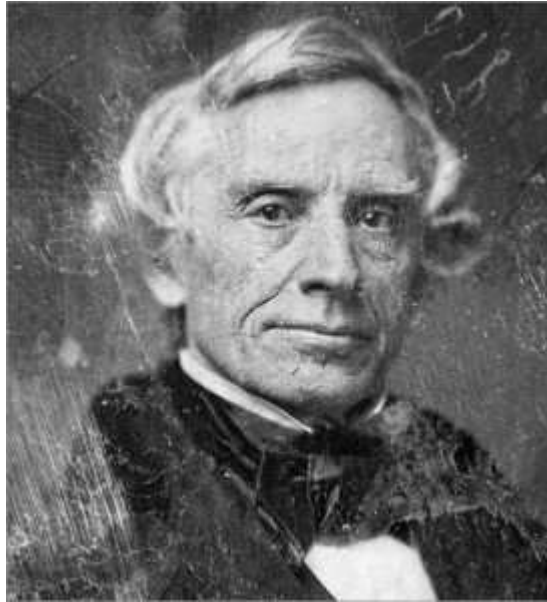
1840: Samuel F.B. Morse receives a U.S. patent for his dot-dash telegraphy signals, known to the world as Morse code.

The code Morse devised in partnership with Alfred Vail uses a system of dots and dashes to represent letters and numbers. It went into practical use in 1844, after he and Vail produced a working electromagnetic telegraph transmitter. Vail worked on various refinements to the transmitter before leaving the business altogether in 1848, feeling that he was being lowballed on his salary. Some scholars argue that it was Vail, not Morse, who actually came up with the dot-dash system. He did hold a small piece of Morse's patent but didn't get rich from it.

Regardless of who devised it, the original code was a little different than the one in use today. What we recognize as Morse code is actually an international variation of the original, or "American," code. The American code contained not only dots and dashes, but also spaces in five letters: C, O, R, Y and Z. (C, for example, was rendered like this: ••••) The numerals 0 through 9 were also different.

The international version, known as Modern International Morse Code, was introduced at a conference in Berlin in 1851. The American code remained in widespread use until the 1920s, when everyone finally lined up behind the international version.

1840 was a busy year for Morse. An accomplished, respected painter trained in photography, he opened a portrait studio in New York. Morse had met Louis Daguerre in Paris the previous year, and in New York he taught the daguerreotype process to several photographers — including Mathew Brady, who put it to pretty good use during the American Civil War. Following a failed run for mayor of New York, Morse turned his attention in earnest to telegraphy. With Vail, he finished up work on the first telegraph transmitter. He spent several years trying to drum up interest in his



telegraph, which was met with initial skepticism, both official and unofficial.

When he finally received a patent for the telegraph itself, it came first from the Ottoman Sultan

Abdulmecid in Constantinople (now Istanbul), who

personally tested it and gave it his blessing. Others, notably Englishmen Charles Wheatstone and William Cooke, had patents on similar (and some say, superior) hardware, but Morse eventually triumphed in the legal battle. His adept promotion, one-wire transmission system and simple software — the Morse code — won the day.

Morse code has now been in use for more than 160 years. It still has practical applications in the modern world because almost anything can be used to tap out or flash a message — from telegraph key to flashlight to pencil to

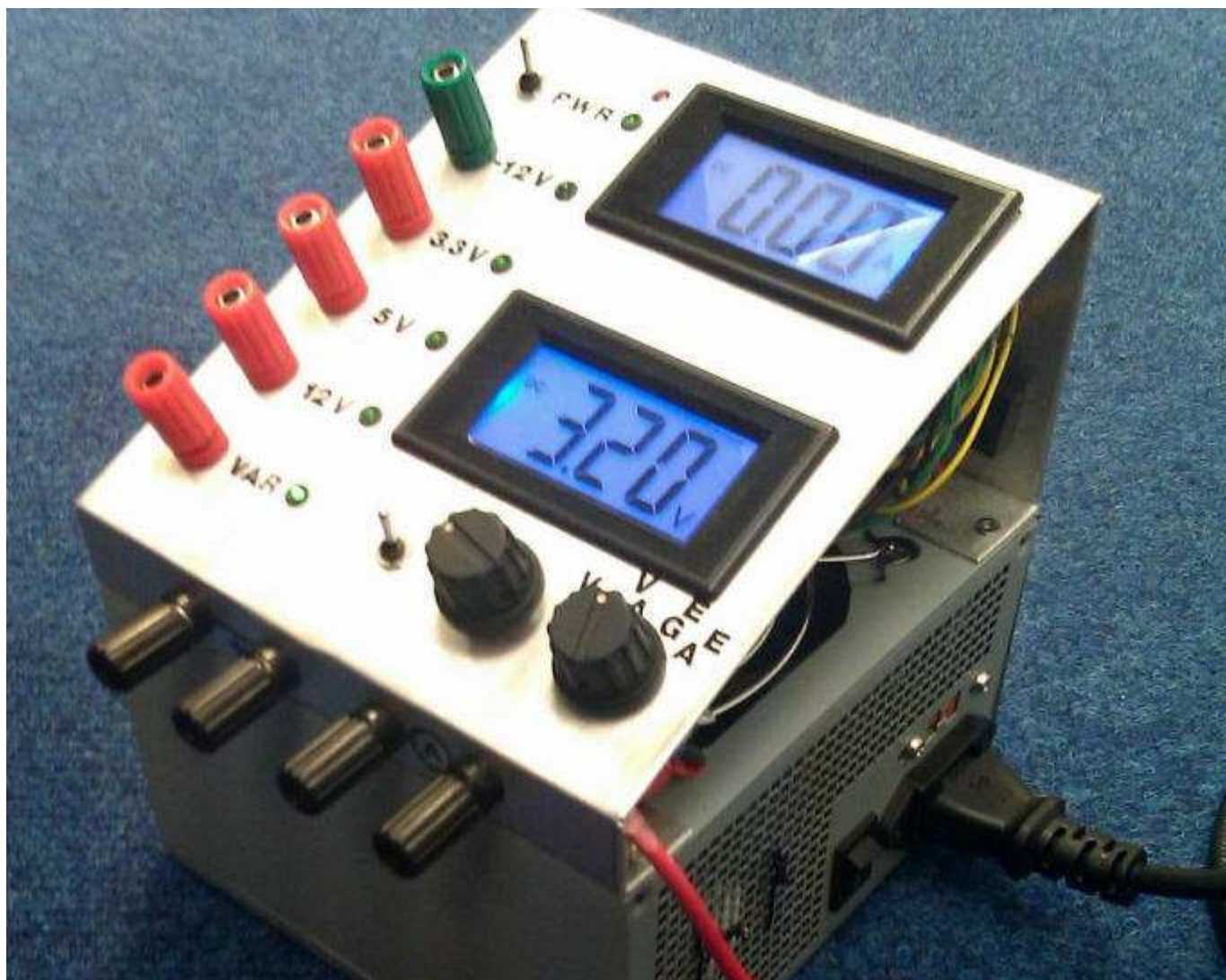
fingertip. Severely disabled people even use Morse to communicate, sending out the code by eye movement or puffing and blowing.

ISS Survives Near Miss of Space Junk

Just after 8 AM (EDT) on Tuesday, June 29, the six residents of the International Space Station ([ISS](#)) climbed into two Soyuz space capsules as an unidentified object hurtled past them at a speed of 29,000 miles per hour, missing the space station by only 1100 feet. This was only the second time in the 10 year history of people living on the space station that the crew needed to take such precautions. If the station had been hit, the crew could have quickly undocked from the ISS and returned to Earth via the space capsules.

"We believe the probability that it would hit the station was about 1 in 360," said Lark Howorth, who leads the team at NASA that tracks the ISS' trajectory. NASA rules call for precautions when the risk of impact is greater than 1 in 10,000. According to NASA protocol, personnel onboard the ISS are warned several days in advance of the possibility that something might come too close to the station, allowing the crew time to move the station by firing its thrusters. That has happened 12 times.

MAKE A POWER SUPPLY FROM AN OLD COMPUTER SWITCHING SUPPLY.....CHEAP!



The power supply is based on an old pc ATX power supply. This is great because they are cheap, efficient and provide a huge amount of current on demand. I didn't have any spare power supplies lying around so i asked a few friends and managed to get a nice 550w supply for free. This has a huge 12cm fan on top which will be useful for cooling my electronics as well as the supply itself.

The supply has a bundle of wires coming from it. All wires of the same colour provide the same function and so can be bundled together.

the voltages provided are:

-12v: blue wire

3.3v: orange wire

5v: red wire

12v yellow wire

as usual the black wires are ground

There are a number of other wires coming from the supply and these have special functions that i'll explain later.

in addition to these outputs I'm adding a variable output by using a variable low drop out, linear voltage regulator on the 12v line. This should give me from 1.4v to 11.6v with a couple of amps.

ATX power supplies have had a number of revisions and some older ones include a -5v output on a white wire. Unfortunately this one doesn't but I don't think I'll miss it much.

PROJECT CAN BE FOUND AT:

<http://tgbuilds.wordpress.com/projects/diy-bench-supply/>



A magnificent NEW, full color, 8 1/2"x11", certificate, printed on heavy card stock, with the state flags of all the 1776 colony states, adorning this award. You can work one state or, all 13 and, be eligible for the certificate. The theme for 2011 is the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration adorns the 2011 certificate-very cool. see above. Also a special "Contact" logo will be affixed if you worked one or all 13 stations. A "Clean Sweep" indicator will also be affixed, for those lucky enough to "Q" all 13. Each year a completely new design with a new Independence Era Patriotic theme..NICE!

<http://www.13colonies.info/>

Special Event Call: **K2H**

Westford, MA

CLUB CALL: **WB1GOF**

Police Amateur Radio Team of Westford

Fall River , MA

CLUB CALL: **K1ZZN**

Raymond J. Levesque Memorial ARC

Dartmouth, MA

CLUB CALL: **W1AEC**

Southeastern Massachusetts Amateur Radio Association

Gloucester, MA

CLUB CALL: **W1GLO**

Cape Ann Amateur Radio Association

CAARA FIELD DAY 2011 WAS A SUCCESS!



6 METERS WAS OPEN AND WILD....





SETUP STARTED FRIDAY AFTERNOON FOR THE TENTS AND IT WAS WELL ATTENDED.





THE FOOD TENT WAS ORGANIZED BY SUE-N1XQW AND HER DAUGHTERS/FAMILY. IT WAS OUTSTANDING AND THE MOST ORGANIZED FOOD OPERATION I HAVE EVER SEEN AT OUR FIELD DAY SITE...CONGRATULATIONS TO AL WHO HELPED!



**JAKE-K1LDL MANNED THE
CW TENT BAREFOOT!**



I HOPE WE CONNECTED THE COAX!



**THE 6 AND TWO METER BEAM ON TWO SECTIONS
OF ROHN TOWER PROVED TO BE A GREAT ADDI-
TION TO FIELD DAY.**



**DICK-WB1W AND STAN-W4HIX SPENT A LOT OF
TIME ORGANIZING THE EVENT AND NETWORKING
THE LOGGING PROGRAM.**





THE RED CROSS VAN HOUSED THE HF SSB STATION

Gloucester Emergency Management
Director Miles Schlichte talking to a
Red Cross volunteer



GOTO STATION ON TEN METERS SSB

Bill Poulin WZ1L, Larry Beaulieu KB1VMR and Charles Douglas N1EDN working the Gota station on 10 Meters SSB. They worked the whole event on 10 Meters and got the 100 contacts needed for the bonus points.



Hank McCarl W4RIG and Dick Macpherson WB1W working the Field Day Digital station. They used a Yaesu FT 897 on PSK 31 on the 20 meter calling frequency of 14.070 MHZ.





Jim Mondello W1DDX and Allen Edwards KB1TRB working 40 meter ssb phone out of the back of the Red Cross Emergency Response Vehicle. The antenna was a 40 meter cut dipole hung off of the top of the flagpole at the Fuller School site and the radio was run off of the ERV's batteries the entire 24 hrs as an operational test of the Red Cross ERV's deep cycle batteries and it's ability to recharge them. over 24 hrs of constant use.

ARRL Section Manager Phil Temples K9HI, ARRL Government Liason Hank McCarl W4RIG and CAARA Club President Stan Stone W4HIX with a Proclamation from Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick stating that the week of Field Day is AmateurRadio week in Massachusetts!



Commonwealth of Massachusetts



A Proclamation

His Excellency Governor Deval L. Patrick

Whereas Amateur radio has always played a significant role in developing world-wide radio communications; and

Whereas The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has more than 13,848 amateur radio operators, who continually demonstrate their value in public assistance; and

Whereas Amateur radio operators are constantly vigilant in case of tornado, flood, hurricane, or other local emergencies, in order that they may use their equipment and skills to assist local and state officials; and

Whereas Massachusetts amateur radio operators have generously donated their time, equipment, and knowledge to provide communications support and technical training to local service clubs, organizations, and interested citizens; and

Whereas Massachusetts amateur radio operators will hone their skills by participating in the 24 hour simulated emergency known as 'Field Day' on June 25th and 26th;

Now, Therefore, I, Deval L. Patrick, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do hereby proclaim June 25th - 26th, 2011, to be

AMATEUR RADIO WEEK

And urge all the citizens of the Commonwealth to take cognizance of this event and participate fittingly in its observance.

Given at the Executive Chamber in Boston, fifteenth day of June, in the year two thousand and eleven, and on the Independence of the United States of America, the two hundred and thirty-fourth

By His Excellency

DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH



WILLIAM FRANCIS GAVIN
SECRETARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH

God Save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Governor Proclaims "Amateur Radio Week" in Massachusetts!

Just in time for Field Day--Massachusetts Governor Deval L. Patrick has declared June 25-26, 2011 to be "Amateur Radio Week" in Massachusetts.

The Proclamation was signed at the Executive Chamber in Boston on June 15. The official document was awarded on June 21 to ARRL Eastern Massachusetts Section Manager Phil Temples, K9HI who met with Bianca Hoffman in the Governor's Office on Beacon Hill. Last year's proclamation was secured through the diligent efforts of the Hampden County Radio Association in Western Massachusetts. (See <<http://ema.arrl.org/node/1712>>.)

Several individuals worked to secure this year's proclamation, according to Temples. "I want to acknowledge the work of our State Government Liaison, K3HI, along with effort by several club presidents--and in particular, one of our Local Government Liaisons, **Hank McCarl, W4RIG** of Gloucester," remarked Temples. "Hank set up conversations with the office of the Senate Minority Leader--who is, coincidentally, a licensed amateur, and a member of the Cape Ann Amateur Radio Association." Temples added, "We hope also to secure a Senate Resolution honoring Amateur Radio before the start of Field Day."

K9HI plans to tour with the official Proclamation throughout Eastern Massachusetts during the Field Day weekend.

NEW ICOM RADIO



Icom ID-31E D-Star UHF digital transceiver shown at Friedrichshafen Ham Radio Show 2011

Icom have provided a really nice surprise for everyone at the Friedrichshafen Ham Radio Show 2011 by previewing a new UHF D-Star Digital transceiver.

Called the ID-31E, it is intended to show the continued importance that Icom place on D-Star.

This is the first public showing of this new model which will feature the following:

- Built in GPS Receiver
- D-Star DV/Analogue FM Mode
- DR Mode User-Friendliness Improved
- Directional Keypad Navigation
- Full Dot Matrix Display
- Slim Compact Design
- IPX7 Waterproof Construction
- Free Download Cloning Software
- Micro SD Slot

The unit shown at Friedrichshafen was only a mock-up of the ID-31E. At present we have no details of the launch date or pricing. Stay tuned to this website for more updates.

Icom-UK website
<http://www.icomuk.co.uk/>

IMAGINARY RADIO PART IV:The Empire Strikes Back

Recapitulation (for those just joining the story).

Several years ago I had a bit of money burning a hole in my pocket and decided to buy a FLEXRADIO. This was a bit daring (my son calls it “insane”), because I am not really all that computer literate, but the idea of owning a radio that exists only in software (“virtual” or “imaginary”) tickled my fancy. (Other parts were tickled due to poor RF grounding but we will get to that later.) Parts I-III describe my adventures setting up, downloading software, and exploring the rig, and now we turn to today’s adventure.....

We all have wives, or life partners, or room-mates, or children, or someone who has claims on our time and personal space. I had asked my wife if I might use some of hers to set up my FLEXRADIO when I first got it and she said “yes, but only for a while”. Well the bill came due and she was cleaning up her office (the only clean space on that floor of the house), and she delivered an ultimatum.

“Please dear, could you remove your FLEXRADIO to a more convenient location?” she said. Well, actually, that’s not strictly accurate. What she actually said was

“Get that snarly mess of wires and cables off my desk!”.

What could I say? It was HER desk. (Mine was full of the big Yaesu and a huge stack of stuff I needed to file). So I bundled it all up, and didn’t get to it for a while. Finally FIELD DAY came, and it seemed a good time to set up my forgotten imaginary radio. I had one problem, though. The computer in my office was about 8 years old, and since Microsoft kept upgrading WINDOWS, it had finally slowed to the point that the operating system was several times as large as the available memory. NO PROBLEM! I would just move the new computer i bought for the FLEXRADIO into the shack.

Well I cleaned things up, ran a new antenna cable, filed enough of the mail to produce a clear spot on my desk, and plugged in the new computer where the old computer had been. I turned it on. Nice startup graphics, nice clean sound, and a greeting from the computer.

“Please enter your password”

“Password? What password? Did I have a password?”

Then I remembered that the computer had had a FIT when I tried to load the Rumanian software for a strange digital mode the last time I used it and sulked in some weird grey “protected mode” till I gave it a password. I had no idea what. I asked for a hint. The hint was absolutely unintelligible.

“What a magnificent tale”

“What tale? The Iliad? The Raven? Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales? “Iron Man Graphic Novel? I had no idea. I called my son.

“Let me get this straight, Dad. Despite the warning that there was no way of recovering a lost password, you lost your password.”

“Well, sort of like that, I guess.”

“ Did you make a password disc like it suggested?”

“Yes, but I forgot to label it. It’s in the bin with the other 300 unlabelled discs that I can’t read because the computer is locked up.”

“Reload the OS and start over.”

Well I tried. But the recovery discs seemed to have gone missing. I called GATEWAY.

“Why yes, sir, we would be pleased to send you some replacement system discs. There is no charge if you need them in 6-8 weeks, or we can FEDEX them to you for \$29.95. (Credit card charge GATEWAY \$29.95).

Well the discs came the next working day and I started feeding them into the computer. All went well, till I re-booted like I was told to.

“SYSTEM INCOMPATIBILTY ALERT” the screen flashed at me. “This computer was upgraded to Windows 7 PRO. You have loaded Windows 7 Home Office. Do you want the capabilities of Windows 7 PRO?”

Well, since I was not sure what the capabilities of Windows System 7 PRO were, I sure didn’t know. I had done it before, so I said yes (Credit card charge MICROSOFT \$89.95).

So I downloaded the software package and it said “I need to update some files, please wait, 87 files to update.”

10 minutes later it said, “86 files to update, 10 minutes later “85 files to update”. This took 4 hours, but the computer did re-boot, sort-of. There was a blood red sign over the whole screen;

“YOUR NORTON ANTI-VIRUS IS OUT OF DATE. DO YOU WISH TO RENEW YOUR PROTECTION, OR DO YOU WISH TO BE ARRESTED BY THE FBI WHEN EVIL HACKERS TURN YOUR COMPUTER INTO A ZOMBIE, STEAL ALL YOUR MONEY AND LOAD YOUR COMPUTER WITH GIGABYTES OF KIDDIE PORN?”

Well, that sounded awful, so I clicked on “update” (Credit charge NORTON, \$49.95).

Norton had about a zillion updates, each requiring a manual restart, but after two days and \$170, I had a working computer again. Of course, it was stripped of all the software to make the radio work. So I went to the FLEXRADIO website.

“FLEXRADIO NOW RECOMMENDS ALL USERS SWITCH TO VERSION 2.0 OF POWER SDR, CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD.”

Well, I was sure getting used to that. I did so. The download was easy, the virtual radio interface booted up, the screen showed signals, and not a sound came from the headphones.

Dead. Stone Dead, Deader than dead. I could see the signals, I could change modes, I could tune, I could transmit, but no sound. Not a peep. I had had enough. I sent a blistering email to FLEXRADIO accusing them of everything I could imagine. FRAUD, INCOMPETENCE, DECEIT, FALSE ADVERTISING, SELLING A DEFECTIVE PRODUCT. Then I went to bed, it was 2 AM.

The next morning I found a polite, concerned note in my inbox.

“Sorry you have had trouble. Please plug your headphones into the REAR jack and things will work fine. If you want to use the FRONT jack, just turn it on in the MIXER menu. We do not set it up that way because you need to use STEREO headphones and many hams are using MONO headphones which might damage the ICs if used (see owner’s manual). Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience. FLEXRADIO CUSTOMER SUPPORT”

I did as suggested, replaced my WWII MONO headphones with a more modern pair and the radio works great.

Best customer service I have ever had and they did not charge me a dime.

I do have one bit of advice.

“WRITE THE STUPID PASSWORD DOWN SOMEPLACE YOU CAN FIND IT.”

REMEMBERING KA1GTA by J. Pallazola, WB1CHJ

It has been a sad time for me, Tom has been a great friend for many years. CAARA members who knew him, know how much he did for the club even though he would like to fly under the radar. Tom has been supportive in good times and in difficult times in my life. Also, I would run something by him to get his input. Many times he has pointed me in right direction.

I remember the camping trip we went on. There were five or six other guys on our weekend venture into the great outdoors. I never had so many mosquito bites in life. As some of you may know, Tom was a boy scout leader for many years. Tom slept in a tent. I ran for shelter in the back of one of the guy's van. I thought, I was camping with Daniel Boone. When we returned to civilization Tom asked, "Did you enjoy your first camping trip?" I answered, "I enjoyed being with you and all the guys. But, the next time I go camping it will be at the Ramada Inn." There were other wonderful days like the Boxborough Ham Convention. Tom, Nan and I had a great time at the Topsfield Fair. I could always depend on Tom and Nan to get me to medical and dental appointments. They have logged some hours waiting for me.

His last years were a struggle. As he did in the Korean War, Tom fought a good fight.

A beautiful afternoon on the water with Tom and Nan



Photo by Nan Andrew, KA1SFD