



The Greensboro Amateur Radio Association

Feed Line

Providing Amateur Radio news for the Triad



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What's New in 2012?

By Brian Wilson, NX4U

With a new year comes many changes and one of the questions on everyone's mind is, "What's New this year?"

With GARA each new year brings a new Board of Directors, and even though some of the names remain the same, each year there are new people on the Board. Some have served before and some are "newbies." This year is no different.

Besides the changes in the Board, GARA has also taken another step and made a change in their meeting location (see "New Meeting Place!!" on this page). While it remains to be seen if this is a temporary or permanent change, many in the club agree that something has to be done. With a membership of over 100, continuing to meet in a room that only comfortably holds 50-60 doesn't seem like a wise choice. Many hope that the new meeting place will be a nice fit for GARA. Captain Bill's Seafood and Steakhouse at 6108 West Market Street is the location of the January meeting, and we hope you will choose to come to the January meeting on this Monday, the 23rd.

Two other changes that effect

more than just GARA in 2012 are changes by the FCC and a new

"treat" for award chasers.

In 2012, there should be a change to the 60M band (see <http://www.arrrl.org/news/arrrl-requests-feedback-for-60-meter-band-plan-for-the-latest>). If the FCC follows through with the



NEXT MEETING

Monday, January 23

The next meeting of the Greensboro Amateur Radio Association will be Monday, January 23rd, at Captain Bill's Seafood & Steakhouse, 6108 West Market Street, Greensboro, NC 27409, between Guilford College Road and Swing Road. This month's meeting will be entitled "All you need to know about PSK-31," and will be presented by David Macchiarolo, AJ4TF.

publishing of the new rules in the Federal Register then 30 days later those rules will go into effect.

Also, ARRL has introduced a new Challenge for 2012. See page 3 for more information.

New Meeting Place!!

With the increasing membership of GARA, a decision was made to find a meeting location that would be a better fit for the club. Late in 2011, the Board began to try and find a place that would allow more members to meet comfortably in one location. The idea of meeting at Captain Bill's on West Market Street was presented and it was accepted.

The January 24th meeting of 2012 will be the first time GARA will meet at this location. Be sure to join us. As usual,

it is 6:30pm to eat and the meeting will start at 7:15pm.



Photo by Tom Forrest, N4GVK

GARA Meeting Minutes

Regular Meeting Minutes November 28, 2011

The Greensboro Amateur Radio Association held their monthly meeting on November 28, 2011, at the Golden Corral restaurant located near the intersection of Wendover Avenue and I-40.

Chris Thompson, K4HC, called the meeting to order at 7:15pm and asked that we start off with reports from the officers.

Al Allred, K4ZKQ, gave the financial report stating that expenses are slightly less than expected, and we have six more members than forecast.

Ernie Wall, NC4EW, gave the treasury report stating that we are doing real well with all bills paid except the phone bill and SERA bills for December, and we have money in the bank, and the check book is balanced.

Greg Spencer, KG4UQV, said that the meeting room at Captain Bills is reserved for the January meeting.

David Macchiarolo, AJ4TF, gave the engineering report stating that the solid state hard drive in the D-star machine died and that a new one has been installed and

the repeater is working well. David also said that we also have a current backup copy.

Bob Mays, KE4MOW, had no report. Betty Williams, KC2BFN, had no report.

Todd Smith, AK4TS, said that he is still working on prices for the GARA shirts and he is looking at more group purchase opportunities. Todd thanked the club for allowing him to serve this past year.

Chris spoke about the Anderson Power pole connectors which are becoming the standard connector for DC power in amateur radio. Chris also thanked the club for allowing him to serve and said it was a pleasure.

Chris also said that he has some name tags made by Bill Blackwell, KM5DW, and said that Bill makes these free to all GARA members.

Allen Bradley, KD4IUN, spoke about the soccer tournament that was held recently and said that this was his final tournament. GARA will continue support of the soccer tournaments.

David spoke about the special event station N4G. He said that he has the equipment lined up and everything is looking good. We are planning a practice run in January to ensure there are no conflicts with the park service equipment.

Bob, KE4MOW, asked what the start and end times were for the N4G special event station. David said we have a permit that allows us to be there from 8:00am Friday until 5:00pm Sunday but we have not decided what hours we will work at this time.

Roy said he will hold a Fox hunt on Sunday January 8th at 1:30pm.

Chris asked everyone to identify themselves.

Chris then announced the results from the nominating committee for 2012 GARA Officers:

At large

Gaither Frye, KD4CTY
Fred Lomax, KK4BAW

Financial

Al Allred, K4ZKQ

Engineering

David Macchiarolo, AJ4TF

Operations

Roy Smith, N4BYU

Treasury

Craig Bondy, N8STA

Secretary

Greg Spencer, KG4UQV

Vice President

Todd Smith, AK4TS

President

Was not filled at this time.

Bob Mays, KE4MOW, made a motion that with the exception of the office of President we close nominations and accept the nominations as presented by the nominating committee and appoint those officers by acclamation. Brian Wilson, NX4U, gave a second and the motion carried. Several people were nominated as President but no one would agree to serve. Roy made a motion for the board to appoint a president; Chan White, KJ4ADX, seconded, and the motion passed.

Roy made a motion to have the books audited and report back to the club, Gaither asked to alter the motion and have the report made to the board fist. Chris asked John Strandberg to do a review of the books provided the motion carried. John agreed. Allen Bradley, KD4IUN, seconded, the motion carried.

Jim Yester, KJ4WKD, made a motion to have the financial records reviewed yearly; Royce Garrett, WD4CRM, seconded, the motion carried with two opposed.

The meeting ended at 8:05pm.

*Respectfully submitted by Greg Spencer,
KG4UQV, GARA Secretary.*

The Greensboro Amateur Radio Association

President ** Vacancy **

Vice-President Todd Smith, AK4TS

Treasurer Craig Bondy, N8STA

Secretary Greg Spencer, KG4UQV

Financial Al Allred, K4ZKQ

Engineering Chair David Macchiarolo, AJ4TF

Operations Roy Smith, N4BYU

Member-at-Large Fred Lomax, KK4BAW

Member-at-Large Gaither Frye, KD4CTY

Appointed Positions:

Webmaster Tom Forrest, N4GVK

Newsletter Editor Brian Wilson, NX4U

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Board Meeting Minutes January 9, 2012

The GARA board of directors held their first meeting of 2012 on January 9th.

The meeting started at 7:15pm with Todd Smith, AK4TS, VP; Craig Bondy, N8STA, Treasurer; Roy Smith, N4BYU, Operations; Al Allred, K4ZKQ, Financial; David Macchiarolo, AJ4TF, Engineering; and Greg Spencer, KG4UQV, Secretary, present.

Todd welcomed the new board members and then briefed Craig on board practices.

We discussed the club finances. Roy suggested putting some of the money in a CD or something that would bring us some interest.

Reports from officers:

David said that there is a pending update on the D-Star repeater as soon as it's ready.

There have been some short term outages on D-Star that were possibly intermod or interference. We discussed the VHF repeater controller which is old and out of date. David said he has researched new controllers and thinks that having a backup on hand would get us back on the air if our current controller should fail. Todd said that he may have a controller like our old one. Roy made a motion to investigate Todd's controller and see if it is working and compatible. David seconded, the motion carried.

Todd said that we may need to call a second board meeting to decide what to do about a president. Roy said that he knew someone who may be interested.

Todd said that we need to come up with some good programs

for meetings. David said he will provide a program on PSK-31 this month. Todd purchased a folding hand truck to transport equipment to and from meetings. Todd also said that we may need to purchase a projector screen.

Todd said that he will send out an e-mail to members who have not renewed their membership.

Meeting ended at 8:00pm.

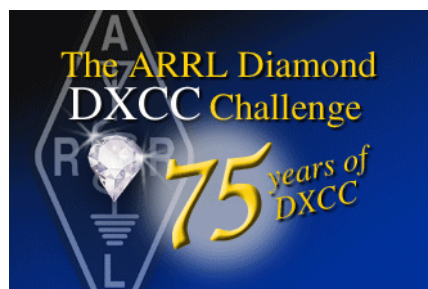
*Respectfully submitted by
Greg Spencer, KG4UQV,
GARA Secretary.*



ARRL Diamond DXCC Challenge

2012 is the 75th anniversary of the ARRL's DXCC Award. The world's preeminent DXing award continues to be DXCC, so reaching the "Diamond milestone" is an event that we all want to celebrate. Going back to the roots of the award, and specifically reading the 1937 DXCC List (January 1937 QST, pages 52-53) to learn what countries were counted at the onset led us to create the Diamond DXCC Challenge.

The country list we will use for the Diamond DXCC Challenge



is based upon the list of 231 places shown in 1937. We tried to find corresponding entities today that would represent the places listed in 1937, and we were mostly successful. There are a couple of places that were merged, like French

and British New Hebrides, and the Papua and New Guinea Territories. In those places, for 2012 if you work a YJ or a P29 (on the main island of New Guinea) you will get credit for working two entities! Many other oddities are sprinkled throughout the list, too. Returning to the air in 2012 will be the Canal Zone (any HP operating within 8 kilometers of the Panama Canal), the Cities of Gdansk, Poland, and Ifni, Morocco and Balochistan. The list is fascinating and leads us

see **DXCC**, page 11

From the (Vice)President's Shack Ask not what your club can do for you . . .

I'd like to welcome everyone to a brand new year. The Greensboro Amateur Radio Association is poised for great things in 2012, and there will be many exciting projects and programs this year. We are planning for many learning opportunities, teamwork activities, and service projects for you to choose from. As reported in the October, 2011 *Feed Line*, the Amateur Radio service continues to experience growth and a revival in interest, and GARA will certainly do its part to help support, bolster, and promote our hobby in the Triad.

The newly elected board held its first monthly meeting on January 9th, and we have a great board full of enthusiasm and great ideas. But one thing is missing: we are without a President. As most of you know, the nominating committee was unable to find a suitable candidate that was willing to make the commitment to take over as President. Rest assured that the vacancy of the President's position will not prevent our club from functioning -- the board of directors will lead the club and ensure that 2012 is a memorable and fulfilling year. But the fact that the nominating committee was not able to get a commitment from any of their nominees does provide the basis for the message I would like to deliver in this installment of "From the [Vice] President's Shack."

Personally, I was surprised

by the inability of the nominating committee to get a commitment from any of the Presidential candidates. The committee gave a report to the board, and it is clear that it was not for a lack of trying. The most common denominator among the candidates' declinations appears to be that the candidates felt that they did not have enough time to serve the club. On the one hand, I am grateful that the candidates were honest and up front about that (as opposed to accepting the office, only to be absent and lacking in participation). But on the other hand, it worries me that this seems to be a prevailing attitude.

Fifty-one years ago this month, newly elected U.S. President John F. Kennedy made his famous "Ask Not What Your Country Can Do For You" inaugural address. In his speech, Kennedy stated:

"And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country."

I think that same sentiment applies to our club. So, fellow GARA club members, I would like to say to you, ask not what your club can do for you, but what you can do for your club. After all, the Greensboro Amateur Radio Association, is us, its members.

Without the active participation of the members, the club will quickly go nowhere. Yes, it takes discipline and a slight degree of sacrifice to devote time to the club. But the rewards make that commitment well worth it. That has been the case for me this past year, and I guarantee it will be the case for anyone that serves the club.

And we need commitment not just from a few members to serve in various leadership roles, but from everyone. There are GARA members that I have never personally met, because they have not attended any monthly membership meetings or GARA events in the past year or more. That is a shame, especially when you consider everything that can be learned from other members, and the lasting, rewarding friendships that can be formed.

So, get involved in the club. Ask a board member or club officer what you can do for the club. Do

you have an idea or request for a program or activity? Bring it to the board's attention -- we may just ask you to lead or implement the project! Try to attend as many meetings and activities as you can. If you haven't come to a monthly membership

meeting in a while, make an honest effort to come -- you may be pleasantly surprised by what you find there. The club is by and for its members -- we need your active participation to make it the best club possible.

Photo by Tom Forrest, N4GVK



Todd Smith, AK4TS
GARA Vice President, 2012



Engineering Update for January, 2012

From David Macchiarolo, AJ4TF

We have had no troubles from our equipment in the last month, other than the phenomenon that I describe below, since I told you in November about the failed hard drive that was replaced in the D-STAR gateway machine. The keepers of the D-STAR US trust server have come out with some improvements in the gateway software package, and Arch is currently testing those changes to verify they work correctly with his D-Controller software; although the change descriptions sound like there will be no problems, it's always good to make sure! I have made a current backup of the system prior to incorporating the gateway software updates.

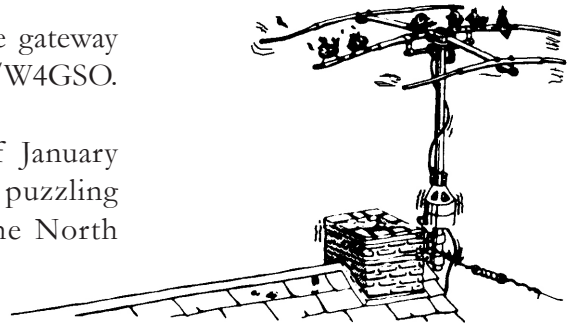
I have also updated the gateway to include a valid security certificate (the previous one had expired) along with a valid DNS entry in the US Trust Server domain.

You can now access the gateway using the URL: <https://W4GSO.dstargateway.org>

On the evening of January 3rd, we experienced a puzzling phenomenon during the North Carolina D-Star Net... all of the stations

checking in via RF to the W4GSO D-Star repeater were experiencing an apparent decrease in receiver sensitivity, even stations that are located close to the repeater. But, after about an hour, the problem went away as suddenly as it started. We're still looking into it, but several of the users offered up theories, as you might expect from amateur radio operators!

The VHF repeater seems to be running well, I have not heard any issues with it. One project that I will be looking at in 2012 is to look at repeater controllers that are out on the market that could be easily swapped into our machine in



the unlikely event that the current controller, which is not being made any more, happens to fail. I have identified a couple of candidates and will be talking about this more in the coming months. I'm not proposing we actually replace what we have, this is only a study (for now).

As always, if you have any questions or concerns about your club repeaters, either VHF or D-Star, please contact me at aj4tf@arrrl.net

73,
David AJ4TF

N4G Special Event Station Update

We were planning to run an Operating Test of the N4G special event station on Saturday, January 21st, but due to inclement weather, we have postponed the test until Saturday, January 28th. We plan to set up at least one antenna and radio at the N4G operating site at the Colonial Heritage Center Museum in Tannenbaum Park in northwest Greensboro and make

sure there are no hiccups, weather permitting. We'll plan to be out there around 9am to get started putting up antennas, so if you want to come out to watch, feel free, but note there is not a huge amount of parking there.

Thanks to the generosity of several GARA members, it looks like we now have all of the equipment needed to run the

Special Event Station. Rather than list them all out here, at the risk of inadvertently leaving someone out, I will personally thank those who already know who they are for their kindness for loaning their personal equipment to this endeavor.

73,
David AJ4TF

More Arduino

By Sasha Varlamov, AK4KL

This article is about the Arduino Microcontroller and interfacing it with Microsoft Flight Simulator X. This is a more generalized version of the article that I did for SimPilotNet.com. To see it and the code for this project go to simpilotnet.com and search for Arduino it will be the first result.

If you haven't read the article that David Macchiarolo, AJ4TF, wrote about the Arduino I'd really encourage you to read it, because it really gives a good explanation of what the Arduino is and what it is used for.

Microsoft Flight Simulator X, as you can guess, is a flight simulator that is available for under \$25 depending where you buy it. It also has a wide range of add-ons and extras that are available both as freeware and payware.

For my project that I have been coding and soldering for about two and a half months, I decided to write several programs to send and receive flight data (speed, altitude, heading, etc.) and in the end to have the Arduino display the flight data on a LCD (Liquid Crystal Display).

I started off my project with a lot of research about communicating with FSX. The verdict was that it was possible to do. The program that made

it possible was Sim Connect a program included with FSX that makes it possible, without any hacks, to receive data from FSX. Once I was a bit more knowledgeable about C++ (the language I was forced to use due to the SDK and API), I started coding the program that would get the data. That was fairly easy to do with the help of the examples in the SDK, soon I was getting data and processing it successfully, but I wasn't done yet.

The next problem I had to solve was how to get the data to the Arduino for display on a LCD. That was solved with serial communication. This however,



I had trouble with. It had a lack of documentation and lack of options on how to do it. However, with some more research, I found a few libraries to use to send my data over serial. I ended up using a library called "tserial" that was a free download off of the internet. It was very helpful; however, I had to modify my code a little bit to suit the serial library.

The final part of the project was getting the Arduino to display the newly received data. This was easily accomplished with a 16 by 2 character display attached to the Arduino. First, I programmed the Arduino to read the serial port when something comes to it. Then using the modified 4bit LCD library that I got off of the Internet, (there is a LCD library included with the IDE, but due to the way I wired my LCD I had to use a modified one) I wrote the values to the LCD. For any questions or suggestions email me at the.ham.ak4kl@gmail.com.



Congratulations! You Passed!

Every month on the second Saturday, except in March when it is the third Saturday, W4VEC holds a testing session for those who live in the area. This provides an opportunity for individuals to be able to test for their amateur radio license or upgrade. Thanks to Glenda

Nicholson, AG4NC, and a group of volunteers, each month there are new or upgraded hams in our area.

In December and in January, we had 3 individuals each month who passed their test(s) and earn either their Technician, General or Extra class license.

Next month's testing session will be on February 11th at #3 Centerview Dr, Hickory Building, Greensboro, NC 27407 at 9:00am. While walk-ins are welcome contacting the lead VE is preferred. Please contact Glenda Nicholson at (336) 674-3810 or by email at ag4nc@bellsouth.net

All Photos Courtesy of Todd Smith, AK4TS



***Charles W Piper - KK4FRO
New Technician***



***John J Lawson III - KK4FQT
New Technician***



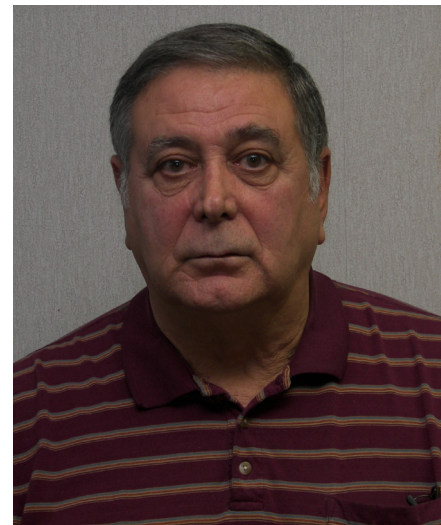
***Richard E Bernier - KK4FQS
New Technician***



***Rory Dale Swiggett - KK4GBZ
New Technician***



***Charles J Thornton - KK4GCA
New Technician***



***John P Pizzulo - KK4GBY
New Technician***

How to Buy an HF Radio

By Chris Thompson, K4HC

Many hams new to the hobby, or recently upgraded, are looking to buy their first HF radio. The question often is asked of their friends and acquaintances; “What radio do I buy?” Unfortunately, there isn’t a cookie-cutter answer to this one. This article will hopefully offer some

suggestions and recommendations that allow you to get the biggest bang for your buck, and enjoy your first excursions into the world of HF operation.

Before beginning to scour the online ads, or prowl the flea-market tables at the next hamfest, you need to step back a moment and consider the bigger picture. The first thing that needs to be considered is your budget. This budget should include not only the radio itself, but the other necessary things required to get a station on the air. These include your antenna, support, feedline, power supply, computer, sound-card interface, antenna tuner, coax jumpers and other connecting cables needed, and wattmeter/SWR meter. Some of these items might be unneeded for the most basic station, but most are used by almost everyone I know that is active on HF. Your particular situation may dictate certain aspects of this equation, such as antenna possibilities. Count on somewhere between 25 and 50 percent of your total budget to go to items other than the radio itself.

As you can see, this is quickly becoming a fairly complex adventure.

Do yourself a favor, and don’t try to keep this all in your head. By carefully considering the entire aspect of setting up an effective station, you can avoid surprises and disappointments along the way.

Create a spreadsheet, scribble notes, organize your

thoughts before spending your first dollar. Refine your notes as you go along – one decision may (or most likely will) change your other options along the line. For the rest of this article, I’ll minimize talking about the other accessories needed (after all, this is supposed to be about buying a radio), but don’t forget about them in the process.

Now that you have a budget in mind, and have planned for the additional items, it’s time to start narrowing your choices. New or used?

Extremely basic, or advanced features? What modes do you plan to operate? It’s

time for some opinions before I go further...

STRONG OPINIONS BEGIN

The major manufacturers (which I recommend you keep your selection limited to for your first radio) all make fine, serviceable, quality radios. I have my opinion on what radios I like, and they’re different than the next guy. The

current NEW offerings range in price from \$520 to \$12,500 from your favorite radio dealer. Most NEW radios in the “entry” class average in price around \$1000, and any of them would serve you well, both beginning and well into the future. The advantages offered by the highest cost radios are generally only “needed” by elite-class operators (say, the top 2%). In general, I also advise staying away from the very least expensive radios. There’s a reason they’re so cheap. If your budget can allow it, a new purchase from a dealer can offer several advantages – a warranty (usually 1 year) on equipment; support from the dealer if there are problems; and that “new radio smell”.

In the USED market, things can get very murky. Many used radios can cost more than a good new radio can be bought for. In general, I suggest looking for either a radio in current production, or just recently discontinued. For

a first rig, I strongly recommend avoiding anything that uses tubes, anything

more than 20 years old, QRP or low-power radios, anything assembled as a kit, and finally, anything made by someone no longer in business. Don’t worry, this still leaves LOTS of choices. Exceptions can certainly be made to these rules, but please do so only after careful consideration.

END OF STRONG OPINIONS

see **How to Buy**, page 12



Guilford ARES holds Fox Hunt

By Todd Smith, AK4TS

The Guilford County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) group held a Fox Hunt exercise on January 8th. The exercise was organized and run by Roy Smith (N4BYU). For those readers not familiar with a Fox Hunt, it is also known as a Transmitter Hunt, or Radio Direction Finding (RDF). A transmitter, or “fox”, (in this case, Roy N4BYU) transmits from an unknown location, and the hunters use radio direction finding techniques to locate the “fox”. The January 8th exercise utilized the 2 meter band, with Roy transmitting on 146.58 megahertz.

Fox Hunts provide an opportunity for amateur radio operators to hone their direction finding skills, which can be very useful in emergency situations. But besides that, it is a great deal of fun! Everyone that participated in the January 8th Fox Hunt had a great time. Local ham participants included: Roy Smith (N4BYU), Terrell Brown (K4TLB), Scott Suter (AJ4ZV), Gaither Frye (KD4CTY), Seth Strayer (N8UOH), Art Neller (W4DBU), John Ferrell (W8CCW), Todd Smith (AK4TS), Patrick Moore (KB2RAC), and Charles Young (KJ4TAO).

One of the hams that participated, Seth Strayer

(N8UOH), is a Captain with the Greensboro Fire Department, and happens to be



Todd, AK4TS, & Gaither, KD4CTY, begin their search.

in charge of GFD's Emergency Communications truck. Seth brought the truck out for the fox hunt, which provided an opportunity for the fire department to practice their radio direction finding skills. Seth brought two other firemen along with him, and we hope to have them join us in the future as licensed hams!

Many of the participants decided to team up. Gaither (KD4CTY) and Todd (AK4TS), working as a team, were the first to find Roy (the “fox”). It took Gaither and Todd 31 minutes to locate Roy, who was transmitting from the area near the lake in Greensboro's Country Park. The Greensboro Fire Department team

was close behind, and located Roy at nearly the same time as Gaither and Todd.

The exercise was such a success that Roy has already announced another Fox Hunt to take place on Sunday February 19th. We hope to have even more hams turn out for the next one!

For more information on ARES, and to keep track of announcements for future Fox Hunts, please visit the Guilford ARES website at www.guilfordares.org. There is also a website with great information on radio direction finding at www.homingin.com. Several of the participants (including the winning team) used a directional beam antenna that was designed by local ham Joe Leggio (WB2HOL). The antenna can be built for well under twenty dollars, and works very well. Instructions can be found on Joe's website at theleggios.net/wb2hol/projects/rdf/tape_bm.htm



Todd, AK4TS, Roy, N4BYU, and Seth, N8UOH, discuss the results of the Guilford ARES Fox Hunt.

Jump Kits, part 2

By Gaither Frye, KDACTY

Emergency: *An event where immediate action is required to intervene between life and death.*

Disaster: *A very large emergency. (gf) Be prepared so you are not afraid. (gf)*

Attitude:

Let us check in to see where your attitude is. Is your head in the Sand with "It will not happen to me."? Or do you have a fatalistic approach "Well it is Gods will." or "It must be my time to go."? Or do you have the "It is not my fault." So "the government will take care of me/mine/us/my family." Or "Someone will rescue us. It's their job."

The reality is that I do not need to know your attitude. I will survive and you and your family will not! I am prepared. I am prepared with my jump kit and my attitude.

That may sound harsh. It is harsh if you do not want to hear it. I can not help or change your attitude, I can only provide information.

Action Plan:

After the first few moments of a disaster, "What is going on?!?!?" You should settle into a mode of what will I do? What do I need to be doing? Also, who can I team with to make the best of this bad situation?

Try this 4 step plan: **S.T.O.P.**

1. STOP, Look and Listen,
2. Think and plan and team,
3. Objects in the way and Observe again,
4. Proceed.

Stopping is the hardest thing to do when all is collapsing around you. You must observe what is going on to get out in one piece. Stop your brain for a quick moment to look, listen, and feel. What are the facts? Ignore the masses and crowd hysteria. Observe 360 by 360. Look up and down and all around. Never, never, never stop observing!

2- Think! What is it going to take for me (and my family) to survive this disaster? How you answer that question will lead to your plan. Who will help me survive? And will he or she team up with me? Will they be assets or not? Ask them to join you.

3- Who or what will hurt me. What objects are in the way? Observe again.

4- Execute your plan. Never stop observing. Review your team. Keep all your options open in your plan. It is sometimes explained with this term: "Be RIGIDLY FLEXIBLE!"

Skill Sets:

Now that my Jump Bag is packed. How do I use it to survive? Is your Jump Kit close to the exit. Is it easy to grab in a hurry? Is it easy to carry long distances away from harm or to a shelter? Does each member of your family have a kit with water, food, rain gear, & clothes?

What do you know? What does your family know? What do

your co-workers know?

Start asking questions. Do not forget to know the quiet ones. What kind of hobbies do your co-workers have? The current rankings of the basketball teams will not help you. Someone who is an avid fisherman should be able to put food on the table. And they have spent some time in nature that they may have more skills than is on the surface.

Does this person live near you? Will you travel thru their neighborhood on the way home? How far out-of-the-way will it be to go to their house?

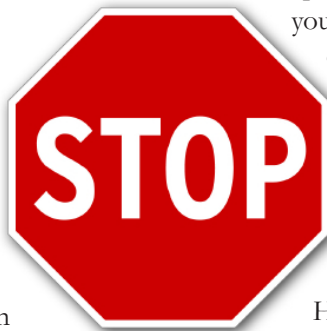
Are your neighbors going to be assets or are they going to turn on you for being prepared? How can you help them survive without compromising your survival?

Practice and Rehearse:

Practice your skill sets before you need them. An easy example is to start your cook out charcoal with wood instead of liquid lighter fluid.

Practice getting kindling and tender together. How do you build your fire nest of tender so that the kindling will light to start your charcoal? Limit yourself to 2 matches. If you are not successful with the first 2 matches, then you have to start building your fire nest from scratch and 2 new matches.

Practice Fire Drills at work, home and church. Ask your passengers to make simulated 911 phone calls in the car. Do they know where you are so help can find



DXCC

continued from page 3

to learn more about world history and how geopolitics has changed leading up to today.

As you “check off” these entities during the course of 2012 working DX (which is an achievement even today) using spotting networks, pan-adapters, 200 watt rigs and stacked tribanders, imagine how DXing was different in the early years of radio and DXCC! Working Tibet or Aldabra with 50 watts and crystal-controlled transmitters to simple wire antennas had to be a thrill like no other in that time for ham radio operators.

We anticipate that this award

will be very popular thanks to the unique nature of the entities that we will try to put-into the log in 2012. Not only are there traditional DXCC entities, but there are cities, Islands on the Air (IOTA by RSGB) island groups, and various sub-political entities inside DXCC entities, such as the Indian State of Goa, and many States in Malaysia and islands in Indonesia. There are even three individual “countries” that make up today’s Yemen (7O --Yemen, Socotra Islands and the City of Aden)! Yes, we would like to have even one of them on the air. An interesting factoid about this 1937 list came via the late Jim Maxwell, W6CF. Jim said the only entity from the 1937 list to

be removed without a single QSO being made was Wrangel Island.

For some entities that today consist of multiple countries, you may work any of today’s entities to qualify for that single 1937 country. For example, French Equatorial Africa will be considered worked if you log a station in TL, TN, TR or TT in 2012. The Diamond DXCC country tables show the current entity names and prefixes that qualify for the 1937 countries.

The Diamond DXCC Challenge is an “Honor Award” and will not require acquisition or inspection of QSLs or proof of confirmation, although it still will be fun and useful to seek out

see Diamond, page 12

Kits

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you? Teach the kids on highways, route numbers, mile markers, as well as direction of travel. ie: North or South bound on I-85, Business 85 or Interstate 85?

Start looking for Hazardous Materials labels or UN numbers on trucks. Start paying attention to the weather, winds, clouds and forecasts. Take a Skywarn class. Take the FEMA Independent Study Program (ISP) on-line classes especially the one on Household Hazardous Materials. Go to the local fire department and ask for fire extinguisher training. Become a Community Emergency (CERT) Team Member. GET CPR and First Aid trained!

Is a member of your family in a Special Population

group? The Elderly, Very Young, Handicapped, Sick, Someone under constant life saving medication/s such as oxygen or insulin will be hit the hardest. Think very hard how these family members will survive.

I personally expect that civil order may deteriorate during such an event. Neighbor hood, church, citizen teams should be prepared to mutually support each other. Build your team in advance.

Assembly Area:

The first and easiest assembly point is your home. The second assembly point, in case your home is on fire, is somewhere close so that all members of the family can be counted and accounted for. Do not use the garage or car port

for this one. A third assembly point may be your church or community building or a close and trusted friend. A forth location may be Grand Ma’s across town or in another state.

Additional Jump Kit Items:

- Baking soda,
- Eye Glasses repair kit,
- Ham Radios,
- HRS Radios,
- Maps,
- Phone Cards,
- Triangular Bandages,
- Weather Radio.

Please continue to offer me more suggestions. In Part 3 we will go over what we all can do to minimize the impact of a disaster and what will happen after a disaster.

How to Buy

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This next section talks about looking for a used radio. Just like buying a used car, you can get a lemon, a cream puff, or something in between. You can also buy from a dealer (usually for a bit more, but usually with some sort of guarantee), or an individual (most are honest, but there are some unscrupulous characters out there). This is a significant purchase, so the principles of Caveat Emptor (Buyer Beware) apply here.

Hopefully, you're starting to consider some possible specific radios. You can research these on the internet pretty easily. Some websites to use in making your choices are:

www.rigpix.com – pictures and manufacturing dates for radios;

www.arrl.org – objective product reviews;

www.eham.net – subjective opinions in their product reviews.

Ask the hams at the club meeting or on the repeater what radio they use – and what they like or don't like about it. If someone has a particular radio you're considering, see if you can arrange a visit to their shack to twirl the knobs, and see how YOU like it.

It's also a good idea to see how much particular radios are selling for -

swap.qth.com, www.eham.net, and www.qrz.com all offer classified ads you can search through. The major radio dealers

also list used equipment on their websites.

It's time to start making a list of radios that would meet your needs and wants, and start listing expected prices. This list will become your best friend and a reality check as you search through the tables at a hamfest. You may also discover radios you DON'T want, at any price. List those, too. Print this list out, and carry it with you when shopping.

This next part assumes you're shopping at a hamfest, though many of the same things apply to an online purchase. If purchasing online, you're generally



safer in my opinion to stick to the ham radio oriented websites (qth.com, eham.net, qrz.com as prime examples). I would avoid Ebay.com for purchase of a used HF radio. Your mileage may vary.

Assuming the radio you're looking at meets your basic criteria (price, features), it's time to look a little deeper. Does the radio appear well cared for? Did the seller even dust it off? Is

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DXCC

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cards or LoTW confirmations. We will provide forms online to use at your operating position to track what you have worked and forms for applying for awards and endorsements. As the year goes on, we will also provide hints and tips about what is happening with the Diamond DXCC Award and, for instance, who might be on the air from Goa or Gdansk!

The Diamond DXCC certificate will be available for working 100 of the 226 entities, and will be endorsable at 5 levels: 125, 150, 175, 200, and 225. If anyone works all 226, there will be a special award for that remarkable

achievement! There will also be awards for the top finishers. We hope to publish award recipients' call signs online during the year, and identify high numbers.

There will be a Diamond DXCC Challenge Honor Roll. The Honor Roll level will be determined by the leader in worked entities submitted to HQ, and the bottom of the Honor Roll will be 9 entities less than that of the leader. Example: If W1AW has worked 165 entities, the bottom of the Honor Roll will be 156 entities. In February 2013, HQ will issue a final Honor Roll tally with overall leaders.

For more information, including complete rules and updates, see <http://www.arrl.org/diamond-dxcc>

HF Radio

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the manual included? Do all the controls move freely? Are there any problems with the radio? What optional accessories such as microphone, filters, matching speaker or power supply are included? Why is the person selling the radio? Can you test the radio? (many hamfests offer a “Testing Center” with a power supply, wattmeter and dummy load to check basic operation of a radio). How much are similar radios selling for? Does the seller offer any sort of guarantee? After answering these questions, step back for a moment and evaluate what you know. Is the price fair for this radio in this condition? Do you have any reservations about the radio or the seller? It’s usually best to walk away from a deal where you’re uncomfortable.

Assuming the radio and the deal pass your initial muster, now it’s time to make an offer. Dealers normally expect to get their asking price for a used radio. Dealers will sometimes take checks, credit/debit cards or cash for a purchase.

Individuals almost universally expect “cash on the barrel head”. Individual sellers often are willing to haggle, at least

a little, and sometimes quite a lot. This is where the “art” of the haggle comes into play. Observe other buyers at this and other tables. Did this seller just sell something to someone else significantly below their initial asking price? Sometimes the prices are quite fluid,

sometimes quite firm. Sometimes, at the end of the day, prices become more fluid – but someone else may decide they want “your” radio at a higher price. Maybe this seller has that power supply you need with this radio, and is willing to make a package price lower than the individual prices. Regardless, make a decision as the most YOU are willing to pay for this radio, and make your offer based on that.

Another comment about purchasing. It is generally best to avoid becoming emotionally attached to “this” radio.

If this deal is not meant to be, another radio will come along – maybe not today, but eventually. But there

are two types of buyer’s remorse – Buying a radio you either didn’t want, or paid too much for,

because you “had” to have it; or walking away from a good deal, to find the radio sold when you come back later to buy it. However, only you can make that decision. Arming yourself with information BEFORE shopping is the best defense

against both types.

After you make your offer, the seller may do one of three things – Accept your offer, Make a counter-offer, or decline your offer. You can then either complete the deal, make another counter-offer, or walk away.

Enlisting the aid of someone you trust, and with some experience under their belt can also be a great help in shopping. A second set of eyes never hurts – but remember the final decision is yours to make. Try to arrange help before the hamfest – often, if asked, someone will attend with you to help, even if they otherwise weren’t planning on going. You might offer to buy them lunch, or drive, to offset their investment in time to help you out.

After you make your purchase, you have one more thing to do. Take the thing home, hook it up, and get on the air and make contacts! And don’t forget to have fun!



Area Happenings

FOURTH MONDAY – at 6:30pm, the Greensboro Amateur Radio Association have their regular monthly meeting at the Golden Corral, 4404 Landview Dr, Greensboro, NC 27407, off Wendover Ave, near Sam's Club. Please plan to gather at 6:30pm for dinner. The meeting is scheduled to start at 7:15pm

CLUB NETS:

SUNDAYS – at 7:30pm, the **Technical Forum** on the 145.150;

- at 9pm, the **GARA News and Information Net**. This net features *NewsLine* and is on the 145.150, W4GSO repeater. Roy Smith, N4BYU is always looking for net controls. Contact him if you would like to help.

TUESDAYS – at 8:30pm **The Triad SkyWarn Net** meets on the 147.225, K4ITL repeater, no tone required.

TUESDAYS – at 9pm, the **D-STAR Net** meets on 442.8625 (W4GSO B and Reflector 17C)

WEDNESDAYS – at 8:30pm, **The Guilford Amateur Society Rag Chew Net** holds their weekly net on the 145.250, W4GG repeater with an 88.5 Hz. tone. Jim Hightower, W4JLH is the net control.

THURSDAYS – at 9pm, **The Guilford County ARES Net** meets on the 145.150 repeater (100 Hz. tone).

OTHER ACTIVITIES :

FIRST MONDAY – **The Guilford County A.R.E.S.** monthly meeting is held at 1002 Meadowood St. off W. Wendover Ave, in the EMS building, beginning at 7pm.

THIRD MONDAY – at 6:15pm **The Guilford Amateur Society** holds their monthly meeting at Tex & Shirley's Restaurant in Friendly Shopping Center. Eat at 6:15pm and the business meeting begins at 7pm.

THURSDAY – at 11:15am, Greensboro Hams get together for lunch. Thursday lunch group is meeting at the K&W Cafeteria, 300 Forum VI Mall at Friendly Shopping Center. Talk-in is on the 145.150, W4GSO repeater with a 100 Hz. tone.

EVERY FRIDAY – at 8pm (approximately) Greensboro Hams get together for coffee at Starbucks at Edney Ridge Rd.

The W4VEC Testing Schedule

Feb to July 2012

February 11, 2012

March 17, 2012

April 14, 2012

May 12, 2012

June 9, 2012

July 14, 2012

Location: #3 Centerview Dr,
Hickory Building,
Greensboro, NC 27407

Time: 9:00am

Contact: Glenda Nicholson

Phone: (336) 674-3810

E-mail: ag4nc@bellsouth.net

GARA REPEATERS

145.150 MHz - offset, 100 Hz. tone

442.8625 MHz. + offset, Digital D-Star



Greensboro Amateur Radio Association

P.O. Box 7054

Greensboro, NC 27417

www.w4gso.org

FIRST CLASS MAIL

The Official Publication of GARA