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**TWO POWER
UTILITIES CITED
FOR INTERFERENCE**
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Ham Radio Aids In Saving Life

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Feed Line



September, 2007

E-mail: info@w4gso.org

Soccer Tournament Report . . .



GARA Photo | N4GVK)

Our tournaments have changed over

Engineering Report

by Engineering Chairman Carlton, O'Rork, N4DFA



During this year that I have been the Engineering Chairman, I believe more things have gone bad, become defective or just plain quit than I can ever remember from the past. I have spent far more time than anyone realizes researching for the duplexers, dealing with Telewave engineer and salesman, confirming specs and completing the purchase, on just this one item.

I have communicated with the City of Greensboro engineers and management, repeatedly indicating times that we intended to visit the site for repairs or maintenance and how we were making every effort to keep the site secure as per their wishes. There are a lot of Politics and behind the scenes activities that must be followed that most members are not aware of!

I have communicated very frequently with Arch, the Engineering Committee and the Board to keep everyone in the loop as to what was going on and what our proposals were to bring our repeaters up to maximum efficiency, which could only have been done with the work and expertise of Arch,KT4AT. I made many, many trips to Arch's home and to the

repeater site to accomplish our goals.

During my time on the Engineering Committee as a member for close to six years in addition to this last year as chairman, I have provided misc items from my own supplies such as printer paper, ink cartridges, nails, screws, etc. I have bought many inexpensive items such as a volt/ohm meter, calculator, automotive ties, brackets and many others things I can not even remember. Of course a great deal of mileage and gas was used to accomplish the many trips to Arch's home and the site, hardware store, etc.

None of the above was charged to the Club as much of it was too difficult to break out and account for, not to mention the time and effort involved. Of course Arch has done much of the same as I have listed above.

I point this out only to make the members aware that a great deal goes into maintaining our equipment, keeping all parties informed and making a serious effort to insure the City that we very much

appreciate the use of this location and go out of our way to comply with their wishes regarding security and other matters.

Having said that, I wish to state at this time that I do not intend to run for the position of Engineering Chairman for this next year of 2008. Our VHF and UHF machines as well as the new duplexer are performing very well and there are only two or three things remaining to be done.

One important matter regarding the Controller/DVR Software and it's use is currently being dealt with by the Board. Allen is working with Arch as regards the actual uploading methods and using the software. A new Inventory List of all our equipment will have to be done for insurance purposes as well as for our own records.

I will leave that to the next Chairman and will assist this person as they take over this position in any way that I can. I do not intend to be a member of the Engineering Committee as after over six years there are other matters that I wish to spend more time on.

FCC Lowers Vanity Call Sign Fees Effective Sept. 17

The FCC announced it will reduce the regulatory fee to obtain or renew an Amateur Radio vanity call sign by more than 40 percent starting September 17th.

In a Report & Order released August 6th, the Commission says that it will cut the fee from its current \$20.80 to \$11.70. This marks the lowest fee in the history of the current vanity call sign program.

According to the ARRL Letter, the FCC is authorized by the Communications Act of 1934 to collect vanity call sign fees to recover

the costs associated with that program. This fee has fluctuated over the past 11 years from a low of \$12 to a high of \$50.

But in the Report and Order on the Assessment and Collection of Regulatory Fees for Fiscal Year 2007, the FCC says it anticipates some 14,700 Amateur Radio vanity call sign applications during the next fiscal year. This means that it expects to collect \$171,990 in fees from the program. (ARRL)

The Greensboro Amateur Radio Association

President: John Doggett, K14BMS
Vice-President: Chris Thompson, K4HC
Treasurer: Ernie Wall, NC4EW
Secretary: Greg Spencer, KG4UQV
Financial: Al Allred, K4ZKQ
Engineering Chairman: Carlton O'Rork, N4DFA
Operations: Roy Smith, N4BYU
Members at Large: Clark Doggett, KG4HOM
Tom Forrest, N4GVK
Appointed Positions:
News letter editor and Webmaster:
Tom Forrest, N4GVK

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NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Greensboro Amateur Radio Assoc. will be September 24, at the Golden Corral Steak House, 4404 Landview Dr, Greensboro, NC 27407, off Wendover Ave, near Sam's Club.

GARA Meeting Minutes



Regular Meeting Minutes August 27, 2007

The regular meeting of the Greensboro Amateur Radio Association was held Monday evening August 27, 2007, at 7:15 PM at the Golden Corral Steak House off Wendover Avenue.

President John Doggett, KI4BMS, called the meeting to order. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as printed in the "Feed Line." John had all those present introduce themselves. There were 21 members present along with five visitors.

Treasurer Ernie Wall, NC4EW, gave the treasurer's report, saying there were no large expenses except for the usual bills. He also read a letter from a person want to dispose of an Atwater-Kent radio.

"Al" Allred, K4ZKQ, reported that Income and Expenditures are well in line with the forecast for the year. All was looking good.

Vice President Chris Thompson, K4HC reminded everyone to keep all equipment ready in case it was needed – it's hurricane season.

Tom Forrest, N4GVK, Feed Line Editor and Webmaster, reported all was fine and the web site had been receiving numerous requests and interesting questions. He also said there was a new feature on the GARA web site, the HazeCam in Forsyth County, with a view of Pilot Mountain. The site is designed to give air quality reports. It's also on the ARES site and the N4GVK.NET weather site. He thanked those for the nice articles recently and said he still needs more for the newsletter.

John Doggett, KI4BMS, reminded everyone of the cook out on September 22 – to start about 5:30 – 6:00 p.m.

Roy Smith, N4BYU, reminded the

group that volunteers are needed for the nominating committee for the upcoming 2008 officer elections.

Allen Bradley, KD4IUN, commented on the Labor Day Soccer Shootout stating he need one additional operator. This will be one of the largest tournaments held.

Mike Sussman, N8NQP, demonstrated a collapsible kite pole that could be used as a small antenna support. It was from JacKite.com of Virginia Beach.

The program for the evening was given by Lisa Touvel, K4LAT, on Traffic Handling. Lisa with the help of Roy Smith, N4BYU gave a PowerPoint presentation and handed out examples of how to send and receive formal ARRL traffic. Members had some questions and a good discussion followed the presentation. The meeting adjourned 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Forest, N4GVK, Acting Secretary



Instructors Needed

Stephen Marks, CEM Guilford County Emergency Services Emergency Management Division is looking for qualified instructors and volunteers for the upcoming Amateur Radio classes to be held this coming October.

The class will focus on the requirements to obtain your "Technician" class license with the FCC and allow you to operate an Amateur Radio.

The class will meet on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. beginning on Tuesday, October 2. The class will conclude with a test session on Thursday, October 25. The class will be held at Guilford County Emergency Services on 1002 Meadowood

Street, near the intersection with West Wendover Avenue in Greensboro.

If you can assist Steve, please contact him at steve.marks@guilford-es.com

There is no cost for the class, but registration is required so that we may get an accurate count of the number of students.

A PDF file can also be downloaded from the GARA web site, so you can print it out to pass around.
www.w4gso.org



Steve Marks, KE4FCW, CEM, GC, explains to ARES members the course outline for upcoming Amateur Radio class.

(GARA Photo | N4GVK)

Get Well ...

Allen Minter, AI4NG, recently had surgery on his nose to remove a skin cancer and is doing better now. In addition to this, Allen's wife fell and hurt her back and arm. Last report, all were recovering.

Weldon Fields, W4AJT, recently had surgery at Wesley Long on Greensboro, and was reported doing well according to family members.

Larry King, W4VEN, recently received an electronic marvel - a heart pacemaker. According to Don Harris, W4BUZ, who talked with Larry, there have been some problems and Larry had to return to the hospital. They got his medication on the right track. There are still some issues to be addressed, but the pacemaker is working as planned.

Rusty Hughes, WA4SAD, is still undergoing treatments at Baptist Hospital.

Please keep all these fellow amateurs and families in your prayers.

Interoperability In NYC: Not Prepared For Another Disaster

The communications infrastructure of New York City is not prepared to face another 911 attack or any other truly catastrophic event. This is the conclusion one reaches early on when reading the article Emergency Comms in New York City by John Kasupski, KC2HMZ. It's in the September issue of Popular Communications magazine.

In his article John Kasupski asks a rhetorical question. Would the vital police, fire and E-M-S personnel responding to such an incident be any better off in their communications capabilities today than they were six years ago? He answers the question by stating that as of this past June the evidence suggests that they would not be any better off than they were on September 11, 2001.

The article cites the results of an investigation by WABC television reporter N.J. Burkett. Among the things Burkett

discovered was that a battery back-up system for the New York fire department radio system was supposed to last 24 hours. It didn't. And the emergency 911 call system bogged down after a 2006 power failure. Priority callers had to wait up to 20 minutes to get a response.

Interoperability with adjoining communities also remains a problem. A quoted report from WCBS news said that even though New York City has an 800 MHz radio system, the current approach for providing communications between the city and its neighboring counties remains the telephone.

And that's unreliable for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that no one particular agency seems to have current phone number to reach its counterpart in an adjacent community.

Kasupski's article is a graphic lesson

on how local politicians have completely failed to bring the city's emergency response radio system into line with the times we live in. It should also serve as a reminder to radio amateurs in the metro New York metro area as why they need to be ready to respond at a moments notice.

If all that John Kasupski, KC2HMZ, states in his article is correct, then the City of New York is still totally reliant on hams in time of crisis even though that fact won't be realized until the time comes for them to respond.

History does seem to have a way of repeating itself.

You can read John Kasupski's story on the emergency communications problems facing the New York City beginning on page 15 of the September issue of Popular Communications magazine. (ARNewsline)

Two Power Utilities Cited For Interference To Texas Ham

The Federal Communication Commission's Dallas Field Office has issued Citations to two utilities in a longstanding power line noise case in Lubbock, Texas.

Bryan Edwards, W5KFT, of Lubbock, first reported the interference claiming interference from two utilities in early 1994. The alleged sources were electric providers Lubbock Power & Light and Xcel Energy. Since then it has been an up-hill battle for Edwards, but a pair of citations issued to the energy providers by the FCC this past July 25th may now bring the entire matter to a head.

According to an ARRL bulletin, the citations issues say that an investigation conducted by the Dallas FCC office was conducted this past May 22nd to the 25th. That it found both utilities had caused harmful interference to the reception of amateur communications to W5KFT. The FCC then directed both utilities to provide documents and information within 10 days of their respective citations.

In its undated response Lubbock Power

& Light stated that it does not admit to and specifically denies any violation of the Communications Act or any rule pertaining thereto.

Xcel's response was far more positive. It pointed out that the citation acknowledges that the source of harmful interference is from more than one power company. Xcel also claims that it has been working with a Edwards for a number of years in an effort to identify the source of, and a possible resolution for, the interference he is experiencing. Xcel Energy says that it has a good working relationship with Edwards and has coordinated with him on numerous occasions in attempting to resolve his interference problems.

Xcel then stated its intention to retain an outside technical consultant to provide an unbiased assessment of whether the harmful interference to W5KFT is attributable to Xcel Energy's power system and if so, what corrective measures would be required. And even before the link was dry on its response, it acted.

On August 30th Edwards reported that

he received a phone call from Paul Leonard, head of Xcel Energy in West Texas. Edwards said he was told that Xcel has contracted with Mike Martin, K3RFI, of RFI Services to come to Lubbock in October to work on locating the source of the line noise.

Xcel Energy's Leonard added that his company tried to get Lubbock Power & Light to participate with them, but they refused. At airtime, what measures Lubbock Power & Light may take to solve the interference its lines are causing to Edwards operations is unknown.

According to the ARRL, Mike Martin's firm RFI Services is dedicated exclusively to RFI locating and training. Martin has been locating interference sources for more than 25 years, solving an average of 500 complaints a year. K3RFI has also given power line interference workshops at ARRL Headquarters (ARRL via ARNewsLine)

Amateur Radio Proves Valuable In Woman's Rescue

Amateur Radio was crucial in summoning help for an elderly New Mexico woman after repeated attempts to contact 911 services by landline and cellular telephone failed.

On August 12th, a thunderstorm knocked out parts of Cibola county's telephone service. About 5:50 in the afternoon, Jonathan Pickens', KD5PHG, received a phone call for his wife, Pam. She told him that a resident of the El Morro Ranches had discovered an elderly neighbor lying semi-conscious on the floor of her home.

The couple rushed to the home of the woman. It turns out that the woman was eighty-six years-old. She had been on the floor for at least two days and was suffering from an apparent stroke and broken hip. She had been unable to yell for help or

move to reach a phone. Pam, having medical training as a first responder, began providing assistance while neighbors tried to summon help.

Another El Morro resident was finally able to reach the Cibola County Sheriff and notify them of the situation. But the Sheriff's office was unable to contact area ambulance services because their local phone service had also failed.

KD5PHG realized the situation required an ambulance or possible life flight. With local landline and cell phones useless, Jonathan used his mobile radio to contact the Cibola County Amateur Radio Emergency Service on the Zuni 2 meter repeater.

Dana and Kathy Farmer, WA5SOX and KB5QGH, responded to the call for help

from Vanderwagen, New Mexico. They were able to contact the Gallup Metro dispatch who sent the Vanderwagon Fire Department and the Pine Hill Clinic ambulance. The elderly woman was eventually taken to the Gallup medical center for further evaluation. Shes likely alive thanks to the quick response of her ham radio neighbors and their ability to communicate with all phone service knocked out. (K5CEC)



JOTA 2007 Set For Oct. 20-21

The 50th anniversary of scoutings Jamboree on the Air or JOTA is coming up in October. The dates this year are October 20th and 21st.

JOTA is the largest official scouting event in the world with an expected 500,000 participants. It is also open to both Boy and Girl Scouts, making it one of the few joint events between the two scout organizations, and one of the few internationally sponsored events.

Ham Radio has always been an important aspect of JOTA. To find your nearest local council, go to www.scouting.org or www.girlscouts.org/councilfinder to locate your nearest boy or girl scout council. If they have no ham radio station planned, you might want to think about volunteering your time and gear to bring one on the air.

More about the Jamboree on the Air is on-line at www.scout.org/jota. (RSGB, ARNewsline)

PA Firm Told To Get Truckers Off 10 Meters

A Smithfield, Pennsylvania based company, Smith Trucking, Inc, has been cited by the FCC. This, for operating radio equipment on the frequency 28.535MHz without a license and causing interference to licensed stations in the 10 Meter Amateur Band.

According to the FCC, drivers in Smith Trucking vehicles were seen operating radio gear in April and May 2007 at several locations in West Virginia. The FCC directed Smith Trucking to advise it drivers that operation of radio transmitting equipment without a license is a violation of the Communications Act and could subject them to a fine or imprisonment, as well as in seizure of any non certified radio transmitting equipment. (Via FCC)

New Fireproof Lithium-ion Batteries

New lithium-ion batteries being developed for hybrid electric automobiles may hold promise as a dependable high power source of emergency communications power. This, as A123 Systems of Watertown, Massachusetts announces a new type of high power lithium ion cell not prone to the fire hazards associated with current batteries.

Although the lithium-ion cells you see in laptops and mobile phones pack twice as much energy per pound as any other current battery, they have not been adapted for hybrid cars and other power demanding uses because they are worryingly prone to fires. But A123 believes it has solved the fire potential problem with a new lithium-ion design that utilizes a special formulation for the battery's cathode.

Lithium Ion battery fires seem to begin when a small manufacturing defect, perhaps compounded by overcharging, causes oxygen to separate from the cathode. As the cell overheats, it can prime oxidation in neighboring cells, a process known as thermal runaway. A123 overcomes the problem by making its cathodes out of iron phosphate, which bonds to the oxygen far more overfully than does the cobalt dioxide found in conventional lithium-ion batteries. So its cells are theoretically far less subject to oxidation, and thus less prone to thermal runaway.

A123's batteries are already in use in other applications demanding a combination of power and safety.

More on these new lithium ion batteries is on-line at www.a123systems.com/ (IEEE Spectrum via Science OnLine.)

Area Activities

FOURTH MONDAY – at 6:30 PM, 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 6:30 PM for dinner. The meeting is scheduled to start at 7:15 PM

CLUB NETS:

SUNDAYS – weekly at 9 PM, 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.

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

TUESDAYS – at 8 PM, the **2 Meter SSB Net** meets on 144.225 Mhz. USB. Chris Thompson, K4HC is the net control station.

WEDNESDAYS – The **Guilford Amateur Society** holds their weekly net on the 145.250, W4GG repeater with an 88.5 Hz. tone. Jim Hightower, W4JLH is the net control.

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 7 PM.

THIRD MONDAY – at 6:30 PM The **Guilford Amateur Society** holds their monthly meeting at the Greensboro Police Western Sub Station at 300 Swing Rd in the community room. Refreshments at 6:30 PM and the business meeting begins at 7 PM.

SATURDAYS – at the K&W Cafeteria on Big Tree Way, hams get together for **Saturday Breakfast** at 7:30 AM. Talk-in is on the 145.150, W4GSO repeater, with 100 Hz. tone.

THURSDAY & FRIDAY – at 11 AM, Greensboro Hams get together for lunch. Thursday lunch group is meeting at the K&W Cafeteria off Big Tree Way and a Friday lunch bunch is at the K&W Cafeteria off South Holden Road. Talk-in is on the 145. 150, W4GSO repeater with a 100 Hz. tone.

EVERY FRIDAY – at 8 PM (approximately) Greensboro Hams get together for coffee at Guilford College (summer location till Daylight Savings time changes)

Greensboro Amateur Radio Association

P.O. Box 7054

Greensboro, NC 27417



Web:
www.w4gso.org

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