Numerous bills are before lawmakers in various states concerning the usage of cell phones/texting while driving. Passage of such bills has been on the list for legislators since an increase of accidents involving cell phones and texting while driving.

In Colorado recently, Amateur Radio operators won a legislative victory on February 3 before the Transportation and Energy Committee of the Colorado House of Representatives. The committee heard testimony Wednesday on HB 09-1094 Concerning Wireless Telephone Prohibitions for Drivers. The bill would entirely prohibit the use of wireless telephones by drivers under the age of 18 years and would require the use of hands-free devices for most other drivers while operating a moving motor vehicle in motion within the state of Colorado.

While the bill provided exemptions for public safety personnel within the scope of their duties, and all users in the event of an emergency to contact public safety authorities, there was concern that enforcement authorities would fail to differentiate between Amateur Radio transceivers and traditional cellular or PCS telephones.

Concerned about the possible ambiguity, ARRL Colorado Section Manager Jeff Ryan, K0RM, and Colorado Section Public Information Coordinator Robert Wareham, N0ESQ, reviewed the proposed bill together and devised a plan to address concerns. “Jeff had already contacted Rep Levy,” Wareham said, “but she expressed hesitance to add any amendments for what she considered ‘special interests.’ Upon introduction, the bill was referred to the House Committee on Transportation and Energy. My local representative, Frank McNulty (R-43), was a member of that committee, so I gave him a call.” According to Wareham, McNulty was unsupportive of the bill in general, but he agreed to introduce an amendment to clearly exempt Amateur Radio operators.

“I reminded Rep McNulty of a similar statute enacted in 2007 in the State of Washington. I thought he could use the Washington wording as a possible example to model his amendment. That statute expressly exempts Amateur Radio operators licensed by the FCC when operating mobile Amateur Radio stations.” After almost two hours of testimony, it was time for the Committee to vote on the proposed amendments. “Rep McNulty introduced his amendment, the one exempting Amateur Radio from the bill, and that was seconded by the Committee Chair,” Wareham said.

“The amendment added the following subsection to the proposed statute: "This section does not restrict operation of an Amateur Radio station by a person who holds a valid Amateur Radio operator license issued by the Federal Communications Commission.”

Back here in North Carolina, similar bills have been introduced before the North Carolina General Assembly, Senate Bill 12 and House Bill 68 (both of which can be viewed on the GARA web site: www.w4gso.org).

There is a feeling among North Carolina Amateur Radio operators and leaders that similar wording, such as adopted in Colorado, should be used in the NC Bills. NC ARRL Section Manager Tim Slay, N4IB, said in an e-mail received by the Feed Line editor asking about North Carolina’s clarification, “Yes we’re on it. Our State Government Liaison has already sent letters to some of the senators and heard back from one who voiced his support for our position.”

E-mails were sent to members of the NC House of Representatives recently to explain the usage of Amateur Radio.

“There has been a lack of defining certain
The Greensboro Amateur Radio Association
President Chris Thompson, K4HC
Vice-President Will Davet, W8JFQ
Secretary Ann Hartman, N5CQ
Treasurer Ernie Wall, NC4EW
Engineering Chairman Jesse Lindley, N4BFD
Assistant Engineers John Doggett, AJ4DV, Rick Mainhart, WB3EXR
Appointed Positions:
- News editor: Tom Forrest, N4GVK
- Webmaster: Tom Forrest, N4GVK

From the President's Shack
by Chris Thompson, K4HC GARA President

You don't have to know how to operate a radio, to Elmer a ham. By definition, Elmering is to "give back". It is also the ham who keeps his jump bag ready for a potential ARES activation, and helps his comrade consider what to put in HIS jump bag. We do a great job around here helping each other out. And it's something everyone can do, from the newest ham to the oldest ham.

By getting together and sharing ideas, we all tend to become better. This is one of the greatest benefits of our chosen hobby/service - by the very nature of communicating, the core essence of Amateur Radio, we all have the ability to improve ourselves. It's sometimes easy to lose sight of that in the day-to-day struggles we all face.

One of the long-time traditions within ham radio is that of the Elmer - a mentor, who helps especially the new ham become a contributing member of our community. I have tried to do my part with this, with helping proctor test sessions, helping to teach a class, running the Technical Forum with Rick, and many other small things to "give back".

Feed Line

Regular Meeting Minutes January 26, 2009
The first regular meeting of GARA was held on 1/26/2009 at the Golden Corral restaurant on Landview drive beside Sam's Club.

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 PM with Chris, K4HC, asking everyone to identify themselves.

There was a brief business discussion; Ernie Wall, NC4EW, reminded us that dues are due. Jesse Lindley, N4BFD, said that both of the Repeaters are in good shape again.

Will Ravenel, AI4VE, asked for program ideas. Contact him at ai4ve@bellsouth.net

Chris spoke about the condition of Charles Lyons, NT1J and Rick Mainhart, WB3EXR. Both are doing well. We also had some sad news that Mike Best, WD4DUG, has become a silent key and he will be missed.

Roy Smith, N4BYU presented a plaque to John Doggett, AJ4DV, for running the Sunday night net for four years. Alan Bradley KD41UN spoke about the soccer tournaments.

Bob DavetW8JFQ said that ecolink is working good and reminded users to let the repeater drop before resuming your qso.

Dan Yemiola AI8O said that the FCC has lost two people recently and that leaves no technically minded people that have any idea how a radio works making rules for us. He urged us all to write to the president and congress about this. Jesse gave a program on HF Digital modes.

The meeting ended at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by secretary Greg Spencer, KG4UQV

The Feed Line is ©2009 by the Greensboro Amateur Radio Association and published monthly. Our address is P.O. Box 7054, Greensboro, NC 27417. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide the club and prospective members information about the club and amateur radio in general. Material and information should reach the editor by the first Friday of the month for the next edition of the newsletter. Opinions expressed in “The Feed Line” do not necessarily represent the views of the officers, directors, editor or members of the Greensboro Amateur Radio Association. Material may be reproduced, provided proper credit is given to GARA.

From page 1..Cell Phone Usage Law

services that use mobile communications. One, being that of Amateur Radio (Ham Radio.) Amateur Radio is a two-way communication and is not considered a full-duplex conversations as with cell phones,” the e-mail stated.

“Ham radio operators are licensed by the FCC and a vital part of community service, especially in the time of disaster and non-disaster events. Our means of communications are primarily mobile communications for these situations. Amateur Radio operators feel a further clarification would be in order.” At this time, local ARRL and local liaisons are working with the NC General Assembly and state elected officials to resolve the wording of the NC proposed bills. It is important to have specific wording in the bill to clarify the status of Amateur Radio communications.
Crimp-on PL Connectors Offer Easier Installation

by Michael S. Higgins, K6AER
Via E-ham

Many hams have varying degrees of success when attempting to install the revered PL-259 solder on connector. Often these attempts end with melted coax and connector and a poor connection that will fail over time. I have installed thousands of these connectors and I must admit that when things go right I consider myself lucky.

Recently a crop of crimp on connectors and crimp tools have become available that have made the process much easier. These connectors greatly ease connector assembly and the tools are readily available to the average ham. Pricing on the connectors is about the same as a Teflon PL-259 and the connection and finished product is far superior. Some previous crimp on connectors crimped a solder on PL-259 and those connectors were poor at best. That is not the case with the RF Industries connectors. These connectors were designed from the ground up to be a crimp on connector.

Prep tools are available to prep the coax to the specified length so all that needs to be done is slip the new connector over the RG-8, RG-213 or LMR-400 coax and then crimp the end piece (Center Conductor) and the ferrule over the outer shield. The end result is a coax and connector that is superior to any solder on product. I know there are the old timers who scoff at a crimp on connector but in the cell phone industry we have found that crimp on connectors have a much lower failure rate than any field solder on connector. In addition the pull strength is much higher because the coax crimp is a much stronger mechanical connection than soldering through four tiny holes found on the typical PL-259 connector body.

The end product looks like what you would expect from a commercial product. This is depicted in the photo below:

In each case the crimp on product uses a ferrule that crimps to not only the outer conductor shield but also to the plastic jacket. - This method makes a connection with superior pull and flex strength.

In tests I have found the pull strength of the "N" and PL-259 crimp on connectors to handle over 120 lbs of pull. I could not test to failure because I ran out of weights to put in the horse bucket attached to the connector via a female connector.

The next test was to sweep the lines via my HP network analyzer. Just to keep things constant all the connectors were attached to LMR-400. At 900 MHz the Crimp on PL-259 had .1 dB more loss than the crimp on "N" connector. Not bad. The solder on connector had .23 dB of loss at 900 MHz when compared to the crimp on "N" connector. The cable lengths in each case were 24 inches. I know the conventional wisdom is don't use PL-259's above 2 meters but I saw nothing on the analyzer that said this was true below 1 GHz. Now that doesn't preclude a bad connector design or poor female connectors on the radio unit but I saw no reason not to use the PL-259 crimp on at UHF.

Continued on Next Page >
The benchmark PL-259 solder in my connector assembly was a Teflon Amphenol unit. This is a $3.00 connector and comparable in cost with a crimp on connector.

Crimp tool cost is often what makes ham shy away from crimp on connectors. Some special crimp tools can cost well over $400. This is not the case with all crimp tools. RF Industries makes a very economical unit that I have been using for over 8 years and it is holding up well. The crimp tool come in a plastic case that has cut outs for die sets to crimp a variety of connector types from miniature coax up to LMR-400.

A different prep tool is needed for the PL-259 connector due to the longer length needed for the center conductor. Although you can buy the tools from a number of distributors. Part numbers and pricing from Tessco distributors is shown below. The pricing shown is for small quantities.

You can buy the tools from a number of distributors. Part numbers and pricing from Tessco distributors is shown below. The pricing shown is for small quantities.

Note the crimp on PL-259 from Tessco is an RF Industries Part Number RFU-507-ST and is available also from Talley, Hutton and Electro-Comm distributors. These distributors also sell the crimp and prep tools.

Typical quantity cable prices for LMR-400 equivalent coax can range from $214 for a 500 foot reel from JEFA Technology to $360 for a 500 foot reel of Time Mirror LMR-400 from Tessco

US DTV Transition Will Be Delayed To June

The transition from analog to all-digital telecasting in the United States will most likely be delayed some four months. In a heated debate by legislators Wednesday, February 4th, the House of representatives voted to push the cut-off date for analog TV from February 17th to June 12th. As previously reported, ham radio operators were among groups targeted by the FCC to assist in making the public aware of the digital conversion and providing assistance to those who needed help. Hams nationwide have responded. Now they will have four more months to assist in the digital outreach campaign. (Published news reports)
Feed Line

Get Well ...

Get well wishes to GARA member Charles Lyons, NT1J, who recently suffered a stroke. Larry Pike, KI4PRT reports Charles is making good progress in speech and limb therapy and that doctors are optimistic about a full recovery. It will take time, however. He can speak with difficulty but sometimes it comes out nicely. He has his laptop computer and can do some things with it but is not on line at rehab. Next Saturday, the 14th, he will be brought home for a short trip. This will be a part of rehab in getting in and out of a vehicle. Our best to Charles for a speedy recovery.

Also, to Doug, Johnson, K4OJP, who recently suffer ulcer problems. Doug is home and doing well.

For Sale

Antenna, Pwr. Supply & Meter

Antenna, dual band, power meter and Astron RS-20M power supply for sale. It’s the one with two meters on the front. I can't find out how much they cost, so I don't know what to ask for it. Maybe you can help. It has been used very little.

Another item for sale is my Comet UHF/VHF SWR meter. I also won't be needing my dual-band antenna and the heavy-duty steel telescoping mast that it's attached which is for sale at $100

Call Fred Blackman, W4FB, at 336-841-4338.

ICOM IC-720A $150.00

HF cw/ssb transceiver: transmit 160m – 10m, 100 watts output; receive 0.1 MHz – 30 MHz. With matching ICOM IC-PS20 power supply and microphone, instruction manuals for transceiver and power supply. This rig was tested on the air (40m cw qso with W9OTE) on January 15, 2009.

Heath HW-101 $150.00

This is the classic, top-selling Heathkit transceiver. Complete with matching power supply, microphone, and speaker, along with the original instruction manual and extra tubes. (I last used this rig approximately 25 years ago. To make this classic transceiver operational, electrolytic capacitors should be replaced.) Contact Pete, W8LOG, at 336-852-8791 or at pkauber@triadrr.com

Aloico Swatt vhf/uhf with high capacity battery, remote mike/speaker/controller;

Oops! Satellites Collide

For the first time ever, two large satellites have collided in Earth orbit. It happened on Tuesday, Feb. 10th, when Kosmos 2251 crashed into Iridium 33, approximately 800 km over northern Siberia. Both satellites were completely destroyed.

U.S. Strategic Command is tracking hundreds of satellite fragments. In the 48+ hours since the collision, the debris swarm has spread around both orbits. Experts characterize the distribution as a pair of "clumpy rings"; one ring traces the orbit of Iridium 33, the other traces the orbit of Kosmos 2251.

This injection of debris substantially increases the population of space junk at altitudes near 800 km. Collisions are now more likely than ever. Fortunately, the International Space Station orbits Earth at a much lower altitude, 350 km, so it is in no immediate danger. The Hubble Space Telescope is not so safe at 610 km. In the days ahead, researchers will carefully study the make-up and dynamics of the debris cloud to estimate.

Sympathy

Our condolences to Joan Blosser, in the death of her father, John Kilpatrick of Sweetwater, TN. Joan is the wife of GARA member George Blosser, N4CPV. Mr. Kilpatrick was 83 days short of his 100th birthday when he passed away February 6th.

Jace Strandberg, W4JSJ, recently upgraded to a General license in December of 2008. Jace represents the third generation of active Hams in the Strandberg family. His father, John, and his grandfather, Charles, share the hobby.

With three active generations, the Strandbergs join a relatively exclusive group. Very few Ham families in Guilford County have the three-generation distinction.

Distress Beacons ...

Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs, used by individuals). The system includes space and ground segments that process the signals received from the beacon source and forwards the distress alert data to the appropriate Rescue Coordination Center (RCC) for action.

NOAA said that the 406 MHz emergency beacons have "superior performance capabilities” as compared to the 121.5 and 243 MHz beacons, as they "transmit a stronger signal and are more accurate, verifiable and traceable,” and that the 406 MHz distress signals can be “easily detected within a matter of minutes. Each 406 MHz beacon has a unique ID encoded within its signal. As long as the beacon has been registered (required by law), RCCs can quickly confirm that the distress is real, who they are looking for and where they should look.

February, 2009
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

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 6:15 PM The Guilford Amateur Society holds their monthly meeting at Tex & Shirley’s Restaurant in Friendly Shopping Center. Eat at 6:15 PM and the business meeting begins at 7 PM. Location changes from time-to-time. Watch for notices.

THURSDAY – at 11:15 AM, 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 8 PM (approximately) Greensboro Hams gather at Starbucks. Meet at Guilford College (winter) and Battleground Ave. (summer), location change concides with the Day light Saving time change.

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. (Not operational present time)

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.

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

Technical Forum Sundays at 7:30 - 145.15 repeater

Greensboro Amateur Radio Association
P.O. Box 7054
Greensboro, NC  27417

Web: www.w4gso.org

FIRST CLASS MAIL

The Official Publication of GARA
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION - RENEWAL / NEW - 2009

$24 per year
($2 per month)

Please fill out the following information and mail the address above or hand deliver to the GARA treasurer. Your membership is appreciated!

Call: __________________ Renewal? Yes ( ) No ( )

Name: __________________________ Spouse: __________________________

Address: _______________________________________________________

City: __________________________ State: _____ Zip: _____________

E-mail Address: __________________________
(*please provide an e-mail address to which the Feed Line will be e-mailed and we can contact you)

Phone number: __________________________
(please advise if this is unlisted and it will not be published on the club roster)

Note: Family memberships are available for persons living under the same roof or if a family member is a school student living away from home - no extra charge.

Is this a family membership? Yes ( ) No ( )

If Yes, family member name: ______________________________________

Call: __________________

* The Feed Line is also available each month from the GARA web site: www.w4gso.org
Ham Radio at Its Best
Join GARA for 2009
Ham Radio for the Triad

We are a diverse group of Amateur Radio operators providing public service for the Triad area.

GARA repeaters are active and “buzzin” with all kinds of information. You’re invited to join in. You got a question? - There’s probably someone on the repeater with an answer! These repeaters are open to everyone!

- Once again we are planning a great 2009 for Amateur Radio in the Triad area.
- GARA has the ONLY club supported digital D-Star repeater in North Carolina. Also, EchoLink is now operational on the 145.15 VHF repeater

- Get in on the fun! Come visit a meeting - Fourth Monday of each month. If you decide to join, membership is only $24 per year. Our yearly membership period begins January 1.

- Your membership supports two top-notch repeaters, a first-class information filled Triad area monthly news letter, and a top-notch weekly updated web site along with special member features.

- Radio broken? You have access to a loaner radio free of charge whenever your radio needs to go to the shop!

If you are a renewing member, we appreciate your continued support! If you are a new Ham and searching for an active Amateur Radio Club

Visit us on the web at: www.w4gso.org
If you have any questions, please e-mail us at:
info@w4gso.org

Greensboro Amateur Radio Assoc. • P.O. Box 7054 • Greensboro, NC 27417