

the Milliwatt



The award-winning monthly publication of
The Baltimore Radio Amateur Television Society
P.O.Box 5915 Baltimore, MD 21282-5915

March, 2006

Joel Harrison, W5ZN, Elected ARRL's 14th President

ARRL First Vice President Joel Harrison, W5ZN, of Judsonia, Arkansas, will be the League's president for the next two years. He'll succeed Jim Haynie, W5JBP, who chose not to run for a fourth term in the uncompensated, volunteer post. Gathering in Windsor, Connecticut, for its annual meeting, the Board voted 10 to 5 to choose Harrison over ARRL Central Division Director Dick Isely, W9GIG, the only other nominee. Harrison, 47, said he believes Amateur Radio is looking at a different society -- and pool of potential licensees -- in the 21st century than in the past.

Authorities warn of Randy McCloy, KC8VKZ, e-mail hoax

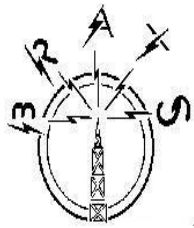
According to "The Checkout" column of The Washington Post, federal and state authorities are warning consumers about a bogus e-mail seeking donations to aid Sago Mine disaster survivor Randy McCloy, KC8VKZ, of Simpson, West Virginia. "The Checkout" reports that e-mails claiming to be from Dr Lawrence Roberts, McCloy's primary physician, describe the 26-year-old miner's condition and seek monetary donations for his treatment. "The Checkout" editor Caroline Mayer advises those who have received such e-mails to consider contacting the Internet Crime Complaint Center. McCloy reportedly is eligible for immediate medical and wage-replacement benefits as well as for workers compensation benefits based on the extent of his injuries. Over the weekend, McCloy's condition was upgraded from critical to serious, but he remains in intensive care in West Virginia University's Ruby Memorial Hospital in Morgantown. Although still sedated, McCloy's heart and liver functions reportedly have improved, his muscle deterioration has abated, his neurological condition is stable and he's been breathing on his own. He remains in intensive care with other serious medical issues, however, including impaired kidney function.

Injured miner Randy McCloy, KC8VKZ, moved to rehab facility

Randy McCloy, KC8VKZ, the sole survivor of the January 2 Upshur County, West Virginia, coal mine tragedy, has been transferred from the hospital to a rehabilitation center. McCloy, 26, was moved to HealthSouth Mountainview Regional Rehabilitation Hospital in Morgantown on January 26. McCloy's condition remains fair. He is no longer in a coma, although he remains unable to speak, according to his physician, Dr Larry Roberts. McCloy's fever has dropped and he has not needed kidney dialysis in the past few days. The explosion at the Sago Mine killed 12 other miners and left the mine filled with deadly carbon monoxide. McCloy has been hospitalized for the past three weeks at West Virginia University's Ruby Memorial Hospital. Well-wishers have been sending cards and QSLs to McCloy at PO Box 223, Philippi, WV 26435.

"SuitSat-1" Keeps on Ticking; Low Power Output Eyed as Cause for Weak Signal

"SuitSat-1" remains operational more than a week after being deployed from the International Space Station, but its 145.990 MHz FM signal continues to be extremely weak copy on Earth. Speculation now is focusing on extremely low transmitter output power as one explanation for the faint signal. SuitSat-1's sponsor -- the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) program -- continues to seek voice telemetry reports as part of an effort to pin down what might have gone awry.



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The award-winning monthly publication of The BRATS.
Items herein may be reprinted with credit.

Mayer D. Zimmerman, W3GXX, Editor

Some Thoughts

It's not too early to write about hamfests in general, and our Hamfest in particular. Last year, we had one of the few hamfests in the area which was a financial success. We want to do it again this year But we need your help again. We need people to distribute our hamfest flyers at every hamfest between now and July 23, 2006. We need people to work at the hamfest itself. Participate with us and make us have another financial success.

73, Mayer, W3GXX

The Baltimore Radio Amateur TV Society, Inc. P.O. Box 5915 Baltimore, MD 21282-5915

a non-profit organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and a non-profit corporation in the State of Maryland. We belong to and support the Foundation for Amateur Radio (FAR) and the American Radio Relay League (ARRL).

home page: <http://www.bratsatv.org>

e-mail: mail@bratsatv.org

InfoLine: 410- 461-0086

Meetings: 2nd Tuesday, 7:30 PM, Pikesville Library, 1301 Reisterstown Rd., Pikesville, MD.

President: Ed Rosen, N3GXH

Vice Pres: Edward Koritzer, N3DGY

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Vice Chairman, Operations: Ian Millet, N3CVA

BRATS Repeaters

BRATS Linked Repeater System:

WB3DZO: 147.03+, 224.96-, 448.325-

BRATS Stand-alone repeaters:

443.350+

BRATS Packet Network Nodes

W3GXT-5 145.05

W3GXT-10 224.52

BRATS ATV Repeater System:

W3WCQ: inputs: 426.25, 1253.25

outputs: 439.25, 911.25

BRATS Weekly Nets

Mon 9 pm Traffic and Info Net, W3GXX

Tues 9 pm BRATS Horsetraders Net, Grant, KA3CEA

Wed 9 pm BRATS ATV Net

Thurs 9 pm BRATS ATV Net

Fri 11:45 Informal ATV Net, W3WVV (Note change from Monday to Friday)

Sat 1 pm Weekly News Bulletin, W3WGXX

Sat 1:20 The BRATS Answer Men:
W3WVV and N3GXH

As needed Weather/Emergency Net, Skywarn

BRATS Board of Directors

Through 12/06:

N3WJH, N3YI, KB3KYM, KB3LJM, KC3FI, K2GZL*

Through 12/07:

KA3IDB, W3ZQI, K3RGG, KD7QOT, KB3FIF, K2ORX*

*Appointed by the President

REGULAR BRATS MEETINGS

Second Tuesday of each month,
7:30 pm, at the Pikesville Library
1301 Reisterstown Rd, Pikesville

Next BRATS Meeting

Tuesday, March 14
7:30 PM, Pikesville Library

DUES :

Regular Membership: \$15

Retired/Disabled/Student: \$10

Entire Family of hams: \$20

FCC Requires Payment of Vanity Call Sign Fee at Renewal Too

As the window approaches to renew the very first Amateur Radio licenses issued a decade ago through the vanity call sign program, the question on many lips is, "Do I have to pay a vanity call sign fee again when I renew my license?" The answer is, "Definitely yes, if you want to keep your vanity call sign for another 10 years." The FCC has steadfastly maintained from the very start of the vanity call sign program that payment of the vanity call sign regulatory fee would be required for renewal applications as well as for new applications.

League Calls on FCC to Deny Part 15 Rule Waiver Request for 902-928 MHz

Expressing concerns about interference potential and increased noise levels, the ARRL this week asked the FCC to deny an industry request to waive three sections of its Part 15 rules. Octatron Inc and Chang Industry Inc sought the waivers last November to accommodate unlicensed analog video and audio surveillance products they're developing that would operate in the 902-928 MHz band--an Amateur Radio allocation. The FCC opened the proceeding, ET Docket 05-356, for comments in late December.

FCC Noncommittal on "Morse Code" Proceeding Action

Just when the FCC will act on the "Morse code" proceeding, WT Docket 05-235, remains hazy. The Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rule Making and Order (NPRM&O) last July proposing to eliminate the Element 1 (5 WPM) Morse code requirement for all license classes. The Amateur Radio community has filed more than 3800 comments on the proceeding, and additional comments continue to show up, even though the formal comment deadline was last October 31 (with reply comments by November 14). The next--and most-anticipated--step for the Commission is to formally adopt any revisions to its rules and conclude the proceeding with a Report and Order (R&O) that spells out the changes and specifies their effective date.

"There really is no news," an FCC Wireless Telecommunications Bureau staffer told ARRL on background. "We certainly hope to release WT Docket 05-235 sometime this year, but we're not making any predictions at this time. We certainly are not saving up any big announcements for Dayton Hamvention."

Another Transatlantic QSO -- on 2200 metres, 22 January 2006

The Atlantic has been spanned by amateur long waves again as Jim Moritz M0BMU and Joe Craig VO1NA transmitted on 136.317 and 137.777 kHz respectively. Jim was running a 1.2 kW Decca amp into a 40m wire while Joe was running 70 watts to a 100 metre wire. The contact used slow speed CW and lasted for almost 5 hours with solid reception at both ends. Jim used was a home brew sound card receiver described in the latest RSGB Handbook. The details of Joe's home brew LF station were published last July in QST. Strong signals were also received from Dave Pick G3YXM, but the QSO was cut short by fading. Several other stations on both sides of the Atlantic were also active. RAC were successful in adding a 2200m amateur allocation to the agenda of next year's World Radio Conference. For more information on the long wave experiments in Newfoundland, please visit the Marconi Radio Club of Newfoundland web page by searching for VO1MRC on the internet. [RAC]

Canadian Amateurs to Lose 220 - 222 MHz

Effective 25 January, 2006, despite the protests and the efforts of Radio Amateurs of Canada, the Canadian Amateur Service lost the 220 - 222 MHz portion of the 220 - 225 MHz band. Details are contained in Canada Gazette Notice DGTP-004-05, "Proposals and Changes to the Spectrum in Certain Bands Below 1.7 GHz" available on the Industry Canada web site at: <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/insmt-gst.nsf/en/sf08494e.html>

Major milestone for 737

Final assembly on the 5,000th Boeing 737, the best-selling commercial jet in history, has begun at the company's Renton, Wash., manufacturing plant. An announcement on Boeing's website indicates the 737-700 is destined for Southwest Airlines and will be delivered next month. A fact sheet on the site shows just how ubiquitous the 737 is in the world's skies. According to Boeing, "about 1,250 737s are in the air at all times" and more than 12 billion passengers have traveled on one since the jet entered commercial service in 1968.

Eating fish makes you smarter (about fish)

I always heard growing up that fish was "brain food," but if you've ever beheld a catfish you understand why a young Midwesterner might find that odd. But Japanese diners enjoying a tasty dish of aji (horse mackerel) may soon be able to wise up about their entree's post-aquatic life thanks to RFID chips and bar codes that'll follow their fish through the culinary process. According to the always-enlightening RFID In Japan blog, in one test diners received the bar code for their fish at the same time the plate reached the table, allowing them to "view the encoded information using their mobile phones before, during, or after enjoying the dishes." Interesting, but wouldn't it have been even better to bring the bar codes before people ordered? Sure beats asking the waiter what he thinks of the fish's quality that evening. Besides, enquiring once you've eaten the thing... maybe the emergency-room doctor can get some good out of that in very special circumstances, but on the whole I think that would qualify as too much information too late.

Lexus LS 460:

Do motorists really need the world's first eight-speed automatic transmission? "Yes," says Jim Press, president of Toyota's U.S. operation. "It allows you to get really good mileage without sacrificing performance," he says. Plus, he promises that drivers will actually be able to use them all. Gears galore isn't the only over-the-top feature of Lexus' new flagship sedan, available this spring for a price yet to be disclosed. The new LS also offers a 380-horsepower, V-8 engine, a stereo system with 19 speakers and an ice chest under the rear seat. The car will also have a feature to automatically parallel park itself. The climate control will measure both the temperature of the car and of your body. "I've been afraid to ask where that sensor goes, but I'm sure it does a good job," Press said.

Paris public toilets will soon be free

The land of "liberte, egalite, fraternite" is hoping to boast another civil liberty starting next week: the right to urinate for free. On Feb. 1, Paris plans to begin converting its more than 200 self-sanitizing public toilets to work for free, mayoral aide Pierre Serne said Thursday. They currently cost 40 euro cents (about 50 cents). Long sought by homeless advocates, the initiative is expected to relieve the chronic problem of finding toilets in the French capital. The measure "is to help everyone," said Serne, adding that the comfort of tourists was not the main concern. "Tourists don't have a problem paying ... For the homeless, this is their only chance to use a toilet during the day." The measure enjoys widespread support but still needs official approval at a city council meeting Monday, Serne said. In a plan worked out with Decaux, the company that manages the self-sanitizing toilets, the city government will pay 17 euro cents (20 cents) in operating costs for every visitor above the 2.4 million tallied in 2005. Paris expects to recuperate most of the money spent on the toilets, called "sanisettes," by saving on street cleaning, Serne said. France topped worldwide tourist destinations in 2005, with 75 million visitors, the tourism minister announced Wednesday.

Software Defined Transponder to fly on Phase 3-Express satellite

The Board of Directors of AMSAT-DL (Germany) plans to fly a Software Defined Transponder (SDX) on its Phase 3-Express (P3E) spacecraft. "This is outstanding news," said AMSAT-NA President Rick Hambly, W2GPS. "The opportunity to fly SDX on P3-Express will provide an early opportunity to demonstrate the potential of SDX in orbit and gives AMSAT-NA the benefit of in-orbit testing before placement on the Eagle-class satellites." Putting the SDX on P3E also will provide a test platform to evaluate the its weak-signal processing capabilities that could prove valuable for the Phase 5-A deep space mission that AMSAT-DL is evaluating. Along with improved receiver performance, SDX offers the ability to program configuration changes while in orbit and the integration of uplink and downlink bands via digital connections.. "This announcement and the follow on work reinforce the close cooperation between AMSAT-NA, AMSAT-DL and AMSAT-UK as we develop the next generation of high-Earth-orbit amateur radio satellites," Hambly commented. P3E will be placed into a highly elliptical Earth orbit and may launch as early as his year.--AMSAT-NA/AMSAT-DL

AMSAT Space Symposium set for October

The 2006 AMSAT Space Symposium will take place October 5-11 in the San Francisco Bay area (Crowne Plaza San Francisco Mid-Peninsula Hotel in Foster City). Registration will open and a first call for papers and presentations will be issued approximately April 1. This year's Symposium will include meetings of the AMSAT-NA Board of Directors, the AMSAT general membership, the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) international delegates, the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) Satellite Advisors Committee and the AMSAT international delegates. Additional information is available on the AMSAT Web site.

Nominations Invited for 2005 ARRL Technical Awards

The League is accepting nominations from ARRL members and affiliated clubs for its three technical awards for the year 2005. The deadline is March 31 to submit nominations for the ARRL Technical Service Award, the ARRL Technical Innovation Award and the ARRL Microwave Development Award.

ARRL Field Day 2006 Packages, Rules Now Available:

The 2006 ARRL Field Day package <http://www.arrl.org/contests/forms/06-fd-packet.pdf> and rules HTML version: <http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2006/rules-fd-2006.html> ; PDF version <http://www.arrl.org/contests/forms/06-fd-rules.pdf> are available on the ARRL Web site. "The only rule change in 2006 involves the GOTA ('Get On The Air') station bonus-point structure," says ARRL Contest Branch Manager Dan Henderson, N1ND. "An individual operator may earn a 50-point bonus for completing 50 QSOs at the GOTA station. They may earn an additional 50 bonus points when they reach 100 QSOs." Henderson notes there's a 100-QSO cap for bonus points per individual GOTA operator, but additional GOTA operators may earn the bonuses for the club, up to a maximum of 500 GOTA bonus points. ARRL Field Day 2006 will be Saturday and Sunday, June 24-25.

ARRL Headquarters Looking for a Few Good People

The ARRL is looking for a few good people. Specifically, the League has openings at its headquarters in Newington, Connecticut, for a Business Services Manager, a Membership Manager and an Assistant Editor. All three positions are fulltime with benefits. Full Story (ARRL Web Page)

FCC Orders Amateur Rule Changes to Conform with WRC-03

The FCC has ordered several rule revisions to implement changes agreed to at the international level during World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03). Acting Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Chief Catherine W. Seidel signed the Order, released today. The changes affect §97.111, Authorized transmissions; §97.113, Prohibited transmissions; §97.115, Third party communications, and §97.117, International communications. "These amendments will ensure that the Commission's Amateur Radio Service rules conform to Article 25 of the international Radio Regulations adopted at the 2003 World Radiocommunication Conference, and will further the Commission's ongoing efforts to streamline its Amateur Service Rules," the FCC said in its order. "The overall effect of this action is to update the Part 97 Amateur Radio Service rules in the Code of Federal Regulations to conform to now-effective international agreements." The rule changes will become effective upon publication in The Federal Register. **The FCC Order revises: §97.111(a)(1)** to permit "transmissions necessary to exchange messages with other stations in the Amateur Service, except those in any country whose administration has notified the ITU that it objects to such communications. The FCC will issue public notices of current arrangements for international communications." The old language permitted communication among amateur stations in different countries "except those in any country whose administration has given notice that it objects to such communications." The FCC said the change does not prejudice its consideration of comments to rule changes it's proposed to §97.111(a)(2) in WT Docket 04-140--the so-called "Omnibus" proceeding that covers a wide range of rule changes and proposals. The Commission has proposed amending that rule section to clarify that amateur stations may at all times and on all authorized channels transmit communications necessary to meet essential needs and to facilitate relief actions.

§97.115(a)(2) to facilitate the transmission of international communications on behalf of third parties in emergency or disaster-relief situations, whether or not a third-party agreement is in place between the US and the countries involved. The revision now permits communication with any non-US station "when transmitting emergency or disaster relief communications" as well as with any non-US station "whose administration has made arrangements with the United States to allow amateur stations to be used for transmitting international communications on behalf of third parties." The revised rule further provides that no station may transmit third-party traffic other than emergency or disaster relief communications to a station whose government has not made a third-party arrangement. Still excepted from the prohibition is any third party eligible to be the control operator of an amateur station.

§97.113(a)(4) to prohibit amateur stations exchanging messages with amateur stations in other countries from making transmissions that are encoded for the purpose of obscuring their meaning, except for control signals exchanged between Earth command stations and space stations in the Amateur-Satellite service, something Part 97 already provides for. The old rule referred to the use of "codes and ciphers." The same rule also already prohibits transmitting music, communications intended to facilitate a criminal act, obscene or indecent words or language and false or deceptive messages, signals or identification.

§97.117 to state that amateur stations may transmit communications incidental to the purposes of the Amateur Service and to remarks of a personal character. The FCC also revised §97.3 and 97.309 to update the definition of International Morse code and of various digital codes in the amateur rules to reflect changes in the Radio Regulations.

RTTY pioneer, DXer Jules L. Freundlich, W2JGR, SK

Jules L. Freundlich, W2JGR, of Minneapolis, Minnesota, died January 10 following a short illness. He was 88. Licensed in 1935, Freundlich evolved in the early 1980s into a serious RTTY DXer, ultimately confirming 327/333 (current/deleted) DXCC entities. RTTY enthusiasts also may remember him as the longtime editor of VK2SG RTTY DX Notes, a post he left in 2003. In addition to being an ARRL member, he was a past president and member of the Long Island DX Association and the Twin Cities DX Association.

Group petitions FCC to eliminate segregation of emission modes

A group calling itself the Communications Think Tank has filed a Petition for Rule Making asking the FCC "to discontinue mandatory segregation of emission modes and the activities using these modes in the Amateur Service." Instead, the petitioners would substitute "a voluntary system of coordination" on the bands. The FCC has designated the petition as RM-11305. Comments are due by February 6. The petitioners assert "there is a chronic need to allow greater leeway in selecting a place to operate" on the ham bands. "We propose ending mode-based subbands in the Amateur Radio Service, and we seek affirmation of established operator responsibility against interference as part of this request for greater latitude in frequency selection," the petitioners state. A survey, "An Analysis of Band Occupancy by Mode" accompanies the group's petition.

New Technician class question pool released to the public

The National Conference of Volunteer Examination Coordinators (NCVEC) Question Pool Committee (QPC) has released the new Technician (Element 2) Amateur Radio examination question pool. The new Element 2 question pool is available for viewing or download in these formats: Adobe PDF, MS Word .doc file, RTF and ASCII text. Other versions may be available on request. The new question pool will become effective for all examinations administered on or after July 1, 2006, and it will remain valid until June 30, 2010. The current Element 2 question pool that became effective July 1, 2003, will expire June 30, 2006. The new Technician pool contains 396 questions, from which 35 are selected for an Element 2 examination.

New guide on lightning protection available for downloading

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) has released a new lightning protection guide: How To Protect Your House and Its Contents From Lightning: IEEE Guide for Surge Protection of Equipment Connected to AC Power and Communication Circuits By: Richard L. Cohen, Doug Dorr, James Funke, Chuck Jensen, and S. Frank Waterer. This is a 52 page illustrated guide written by the IEEE Surge Protection Device Committee. It covers lightning hazards, integration of the various components of a lightning protection system, AC and signal surge protectors, multi-port protectors for equipment connected to signal and power lines, and grounding methods. It is written in plain technical language, and is an excellent guide for all amateurs concerned about protecting their antennas, shack and homes from the effects of lightning. The guide is available at no cost as a 1.1 mb pdf file (61 pages) from the following URL: (Thanks to Ed Frazer, VE7EF) http://omegaps.com/Lightning%20Guide_FINALpublishedversion_May051.pdf

ISS commander continues to set on-the-air records

International Space Station Expedition 12 Commander Bill McArthur, KC5ACR, has topped 100 entities in his effort to complete DXCC from space. "Bill was able to work a few more stations prior to and just after the space walk that deployed SuitSat-1 and now has exceeded the 100 mark," says Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) Ham Radio Project Engineer Kenneth Ransom, N5VHO. Among the latest DXCC entities he worked from NA1SS were Brunei (V8), Chagos Island (VQ9), Falkland Islands (VP8), East Malaysia (9M6), Reunion (FR), Tajikistan (EY) and Trinidad & Tobago (9Y-9Z). Since DXCC rules make no provisions for contacts from space, McArthur will have to settle for an honorary DXCC certificate. One of the most active ISS crew members, McArthur also now holds the record for the most ARISS school group contacts at 24, and Expedition 12 still has approximately seven more weeks to go. McArthur has been on both VHF and UHF, and earlier completed Worked All Continents (WAC), including Antarctica, on both 2 meters and 70 cm. The worldwide VHF FM voice downlink frequency is 145.800 MHz. Voice uplink frequencies are 144.49 MHz for Regions 2 and 3 (the Americas, and the Pacific), and 145.20 MHz for Region 1 (Europe, Central Asia and Africa).

A Brief History of the ATV Repeater

The BRATS ATV Repeater was not the first one in the world, it was the second. The exact date it went into service seems lost in time but it was somewhere in the early 1970's. In those days you needed an STA to set up a TV repeater. If my memory serves me the call was W3HAM or something close to that. The STA was needed for only the first year, after which Bob W3WCQ placed his call on the repeater and was Trustee. The first home for the repeater was at City Hospital where we had space in the penthouse. An interesting sidelight to having it there is that one day Bob got a phone call to turn on his receiver. He did and there was a channel 2 coming out of the repeater. A mad dash down there found some workmen eating lunch and watching TV. This was before we had cabinets for this stuff and the men had seen the TV and thought they could watch TV while they ate.

The first repeater had a down converter at the receive antenna and a long run of co-ax to a Sony 7 inch TV. The TV had been modified to bring out the AGC and video. The transmitter was one of the car phones modified with a video modulator with a separate transmitter and antenna for sound. After a while we managed to borrow a single channel, crystal controlled channel 4 receiver to replace the Sony. On-carrier audio made it easier for the transmitter to access the repeater. All you needed was a car phone transmitter crystallized up on the right frequency, with a video modulator, a microphone and a camera and you were ready to go. I thought that there would be interaction between the two signals but it worked just fine.

Around 1980 the City sold the hospital to the Feds and we had to move out. Since we already had equipment (a receive site for the 030 machine) at Good Sam Hospital we were able to move the ATV repeater there when we lost the use of City Hospital. Co-incident with the move were some upgrades. For the receiver a Scientific Atlanta "Frequency Agile" tuner was purchased (the kind used by cable companies) and the tube type power amp was replaced with a transistor amp. Along the line many other changes have been made: Mike Dees made a controller, I made a 1200 input, a sound detector with very sharp skirts (to minimize nearby interference) and several other improvements including an 800 output.

As for the sound, we decided that the 030 machine would be used on most nets so that we might interest more people in ATV. Also a consideration was the need for squelch for the sound on receiving TVs.

If you disagree with anything I have said or want to add to what I have said I invite you to write your own article. I am sure that Mayer would love to have more articles from the club members.

Heru W3WVV

Western Union Stops Sending Telegrams

After 145 years, Western Union has quietly stopped sending telegrams. On the company's Web site, if you click on "Telegrams" in the left-side navigation bar, you're taken to a page that ends a technological era with about as little fanfare as possible: "Effective January 27, 2006, Western Union will discontinue all Telegram and Commercial Messaging services. We regret any inconvenience this may cause you, and we thank you for your loyal patronage. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact a customer service representative." The decline of telegram use goes back at least to the 1980s, when long-distance telephone service became cheap enough to offer a viable alternative in many, if not most cases. Faxes didn't help. E-mail could be counted as the final nail in the coffin. Western Union has not failed. It long ago refocused its main business to make money transfers for consumers and businesses. Revenues are now \$3 billion annually. It's now called Western Union Financial Services, Inc. and is a subsidiary of First Data Corp. The world's first telegram was sent on May 24, 1844 by inventor Samuel Morse. The message, "What hath God wrought," was transmitted from Washington to Baltimore. In a crude way, the telegraph was a precursor of the Internet in that it allowed rapid communication, for the first time, across great distances.

Digital sound inferior to FM

Music connoisseurs have slammed the quality of digital radio broadcasts in the UK. They claim that the BBC and commercial broadcasters are packing too many stations into their digital transmissions and as a result the sound quality is suffering. Digital radio is touted as offering better sound quality than analogue radio. It suffers none of the hissing and crackle that blights analogue broadcasts. Digital radios are also easier to tune than analogue sets. However, owners of high end hi-fi systems claim the sound quality from digital radio is worse than the traditional FM broadcasts that digital radio is intended to replace. As one music buff said: "On a small portable it is not an issue, but if you have very good FM reception on a hi-fi system, digital radio is nasty." The problem is that broadcasters can only transmit a set amount of information within their allocated digital frequencies and this has to be shared between their stations. As a result, BBC Radio 1, 2, 4 and 6 are broadcast at 128 kilo-bits per second and Radio 5 Live is transmitted at 80 kilo-bits per second. This compares with the 256,000 kilo-bits per second of sound quality offered by a typical Compact Disc. Responding to criticisms of the quality of BBC digital broadcasts, a BBC spokesman said: "We believe that we are providing good sound quality on all our digital networks and recent research bears this out. Around 95% of digital radio listeners rate its sound quality as excellent, good or satisfactory." GB2RS

WA7BNM Contest Calendar

- Feb 18-19
ARRL DX Contest, CW
- Feb 24-25
Russian PSK WW Contest
- Feb 25-26
REF Contest, SSB
UBA DX Contest, CW
Mississippi QSO Party
CZEBRIS Contest
NA QSO Party, RTTY
High Speed CW Club Contest
- Feb 26-27
North Carolina QSO Party
- March 4-5
ARRL Intl DX Contest, SSB
Wake Up QRP Sprint
Open Ukraine RTTY Champ.
DARC 10 Meter Digital C.
- March 7
AGCW YL QSO Party
- March 11-12
Idaho QSO Party
RSGB Commonwealth Contest
- March 12
AGCW QRP Contest
NA Sprint, RTTY
UBA Spring Contest, CW
NSARA Contest
- March 13-14
Wisconsin QSO Party
- March 17-18
SARL VHF/UHF Contest
10-10 Intl Mobile Contest
- March 18-19
CLARA Family HF Contest
- March 18-20
Virginia QSO Party
- March 19
9K 15 Meter Contest
- March 25-26
CQWW WPX Contest, SSB

Special Events Throughout 2006

4 special event call signs, operating in 2006:

GB1PCB. From Portland Bill Lighthouse To celebrate 100 years of operation of the lighthouse.

9A650C. Radio club of Koprivnica (9A8K) 650th anniversary of the Croatian city of Koprivnica becoming a free town. Info: www.9a7k.com

LZ13ARDF. Celebrates the 13th ARDF World Championships 12-17 Sept., in Bulgaria.

GB30STD. Celebrating 30th anniversary of St. Dunstan's Amateur Radio Society.

ARRL DX Bulletin**NEPAL, 9N.**

Pop, YU7EF is QRV as 9N7JO and has been active on 80meters using CW around 1700z. He has also been active on 40 meters around 1440 to 1600z. QSL to home call.

OMAN, A4.

Chris, A45XR has been active on 160 meters around 0230z. QSL to home call.

ANGOLA, D2.

Janna is QRV as D2DX. She has been active on 20 meters around 1800 to 2000z and 30 meters as well. QSL via OH2BAD.

NEW CALEDONIA, FK.

Tibo, FK8HW has been QRV on 20 meters using SSB around 0700 to 1200z. QSL via VK4FW.

SAUDI ARABIA, HZ.

Manfred is QRV as HZ1IK and has been active on 40 meters using SSB around 0055z. QSL via DK7YY.

ANTARCTICA.

Station LU1ZB will soon be QRV from Melchior Base in the Melchior Islands, IOTA AN-012. QSL via LU4DXU.

SOUTH SHETLAND ISLANDS.

Look for LU1ZC to be QRV from Deception Base on 20 meters. QSL via LU4DXU.

SUDAN, ST.

Barney, K3LA will be QRV as ST2LA from Khartoum. He will be active from various locations as time permits. QSL to home call.

WESTERN KIRIBATI, T30.

Udo, DL9HCU is QRV as T30HC and has been active on 20 meters SSB around 0450z. He also operates CW QRP on 20 meters around 0530z. QSL to home call.

EGYPT, SU.

Hans, SM0CFO is QRV as SU9HP while spending his winter here. He is usually active on 160 meters between 1945 and 2300z. QSL to home call.

MALI, TZ.

Paul, ON7ASL is QRV as TZ6PVI from Bamako. He is active mostly on 40 meters during the evening. QSL to home call.

AZERBAIJAN, 4J.

Serge, 4J5A is usually QRV on 160 meters CW between 0200 and 0300z.

MAURITANIA, 5T.

Jean, 5T0JL is normally QRV using CW on 80 meters after 0400z. QSL via ON8RA.

MALAWI, 7Q.

Cato, 7Q7PF is normally QRV using SSB on 20, 15 and 10meters, and various digital modes on 40 to 6 meters. QSL direct.

Hamfests

Sunday, Feb. 26 - Annandale, VA Vienna Winterfest, NoVa Community College, Rte. 236, Annandale. (146.91/R) . Jim, AG4MA, 703-971-4812

Fri./Sat. March 3-4 - Kulpville, PA Winter SWL Fest, Best Western . <http://www.swlfest.com>

March 25-26 - Timonium, MD Greater Baltimore Hamboree and Computerfest, Timonium Fairgrounds. 410-HAM-FEST . (146.67/R)

Sunday, April 23, York, PA. York Spring Hamfest, York County 4H Grounds, Stoverstown Rd. Jim, W3MYK 717-812-37 (147.955/R)

Sunday, May 7 - Hagerstown, MD The Great Hagerstown Hamfest, at the Washington Co. Agr. Center, Route 65. <http://www.w3cwc.org> 301-432-2358. 147.09/R

Sunday, May 28 - West Friendship, MD MD FM Assoc. Hamfest, Howard County Fairgrounds. <http://www.marylandfm.org> 301-641-5313 (146.76/R)

Fri-Sun, June 2-4: Rochester New York Rochester Hamfest , Atlantic Division Convention; Monroe Co. Fairgrounds <http://www.rochesterhamfest.org> 585-424-7184

Sunday, June 18 - Frederick, MD. FathersDay Hamfest, Frederick County Fairgrounds, E.Patrick St just off I-70. 147.06/R [NOTE: Date not confirmed]

Sunday, July 23 - West Friendship, MD The Famous BRATS Maryland Hamfest And Computer Fest. Howard County Fairgrounds. 410-461-0086 (24 hours); 147.03/R <http://www.bratsatv.org>

BARC VE EXAMS for 2006

BARC Clubhouse, 12360 Owings Mills Blvd, Owings Mills. Info: Rusty, N3WKE, 410-247-0578 Exams at 2 PM, walk-ins allowed.

Saturdays: March 4, May 6, June 3, August 5, September 2, November 4, December 2

Sundays: April 2, July 2, October 1

AERO VE EXAMS

\$14 Fee, (ARRL VEC)

March 18: Northpoint Library, 1716 Merritt Blvd, Dundalk

May 20, Sept 30, Nov 18: White Marsh Library, 8133

Sandpiper Circle, White Marsh.

Register at 1 PM, exams begin at 1:30 PM

Frank, AC3P, Pat, AC3F, 410-687-7209

Other Club Exams

2nd Saturday, 1 PM, Davidsonville, by AARC. Register 12 noon. Bob, AA3RR, 410-437-8193

3rd Saturday, 9 AM, Laurel, by LARC, 384 Main St. John Creel, WB3GXW, 301-572-5124.

4th Tuesday, 6 PM, Linthicum. At Historical Electronics Museum. Harold, WB4OGP, 410-757-0493(h); 410-712-6829(w)

SA Maritime Net

The South African Maritime Net operates 7 days a week, and provides weather reports from around the coast, and maintains contact with boats off the coast of South Africa and up into the Mozambique channel. There are two regular schedule times as follows:

06:30 UTC: Starts on 14316 kHz for 5-10 minutes, and then moves to 7045 kHz.

11:30 UTC: Starts on 14316 kHz for approx. 30 mins and then moves down to 7045 kHz.

Direct FAX Number Now Available for DXCC

The ARRL DXCC Desk now has a direct FAX number to improve and expedite the receipt and handling of DXCC-related communications. The number is 860-594-0346. There has been no change in policy, and DXCC does not accept DXCC submissions via FAX.

March, 2006

the Milliwatt

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milliwatt swap shop*ads are free and get results!*

Send ad to: BRATS, P.O. Box 5915
Baltimore, MD 21282-5915, or email
to mayerzimmerman@verizon.net

FOR SALE: Heathkit Security Sentinel GD-3810, \$20.
Kenwood MC520DM hand mike, back lite, numbers, \$20.
New 3-ton Olympia chain hoist, \$75. WWII hi-power
antenna tuner, VAC variables, roller inductor, \$120. Azden
DM headphones, new in box, \$15. Telex C1320, \$15. Bush
Clevite, \$15. Panasonic adapter BC1031C, \$45. W2IHY
8-band Audio equalizer, noise gate, \$175. Call Ted,
W3OWN, 410-668-5580. Please leave message if you get
answering machine.

ATTENTION: The famous W3GXX low band station and
accessories are sold. Thanks to the anonymous purchaser.
MILLIWATT want ads do get results. Send your ad to:
w3gxx@verizon.net

WANTED: AC Gilbert erector sets; old, new, large, small,
need not be complete. CASH paid. Lewis, 410-296-4874

FOR SALE: Yaesu FT50R dualband 2-mtr/440. Scans
from 76 MHz to 999 MHz (less cell). Extra battery, CA-15
charger, ear/throat mike, over shoulder harness, regularly
\$330. Sell for \$275. Contact Russ for either or both rigs:
n3yi@yahoo.com

FOR SALE: Alinco 110 2-meter transceiver can be base or
mobile, \$100; ACI AC-20 Linear for 2 meters \$20; Heathkit
HM-102 RF Power Meter with attached antenna selector
\$40; All in good working order. Call Jerry, KB3AP,
410-484-2460, kb3ap@netzero.net.

WANTED: Your ad for this space. Send copy to
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ATTENTION: if you do NOT want your ad to run again,
please send me an email to that effect.
Thanks! mayerzimmerman@verizon.net

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One source up to 2 hours, \$30. Standards, conversions.
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Bob Shapiro, K2MYS
<http://www.videotapingservice.com>

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1009 Ingleside Ave, Baltimore, MD 21228. Phone
419-719-1246; Fax 410-719-9494. Your answer to
custom built PC, office and home networking. Reseller
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design and hosting POS and networking. We do CPR to
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Antique Radio Repair, Restoration

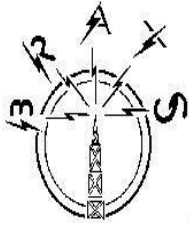
Eric, WA3TAD, Audio-Visual Service / Retro Radio,
3401 Chestnut Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21211.
410-467-3620; wa3tad@comcast.net

Radio Consignment Shop at Overlea Hobbies

8411 Harford Road, Parkville, 410-665-3622. Home of
fine trains, model kits, x-acto, cars, planes, ships, many
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Mayer, W3GXX, 410-786-6839 or email
w3gxx@verizon.net



the Milliwatt



The award-winning monthly publication of
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P.O.Box 5915 Baltimore, MD 21282-5915

March 2006

BRATS Public Service

To sign up to participate and help at the next BRATS Public Service activity, please call Ian, N3CVA at 410-303-1412 or email via N3CVA@hotmail.com

**To join The BRATS or to renew,
please use the form below! Thanks!**

UTAH ATV

Lots of projects and links:
http://www.ussc.com/~uarc/utah_atv/utah_atv.html
(Thanks, Scott, KB3JQQ)

ATV NETS

Brats Nets:

Wednesday and Thursday, 9 PM:
Rotating Net Control
Friday at 11:45 AM, W3WVV

Homepages

BRATS

<http://www.bratsatv.org>

HATS (Houston ATV Society)

<http://www.hats.stevens.com>

Black Mountain AQTV Repeater

<http://www.w6yx.stanford.edu>

Kent Amateur Radio Society, K3ARS:

<http://www.k3ars.org>

Next BRATS Meeting

Tuesday, March 14
7:30 PM, Pikesville Library

Other Radio Club Meetings

QCWA

Monday at Noon, Cactus Willie 7315 Ritchie Hwy, Glen Burnie
3rd Thursday, 1 PM: Old Country Buffet, Joppa Road at Satyr Hill
Last Wednesday, 1 PM: Denny's Bel Air Rd at Putty Hill

AARC

1st and 3rd Thursdays, 7:30 PM
Davidsonville Family Rec. Center, Queen Anne Bridge Rd, Wayson Rd (147.105R)

AMRAD

2nd Thursday, 7:30 PM,
Dolley Madison Library; 1244 Oak Ridge Ave. McLean, VA (147.21/R)

BARC

1st and 3rd Wednesday, 7:30 PM
12360 Owings Mills Blvd (near warehouse)
Owings Mills, MD (146.67R)

CARA

4th Tuesday,
Gateway Center, Rm 401, 6751 Gateway Dr.
Columbia South off Rt 175 (147.135/R)

BRATS Membership Renewal: Regular=\$15; Retired/Disabled/Student \$10; Family \$20		
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