



THE FRANKFORD RADIO CLUB NEWSLETTER

PROFICIENCY THROUGH COMPETITION

CALENDAR

March 2011:

- 5-6 ARRL DX Contest, SB**
8 Main Meeting, 7 PM
17 T.I.T.S. Meeting, Noon
19-20 BARTG HF RTTY Contest
19-20 Russian DX Contest
22 Rexy Meeting B, 8 PM
26-27 CQ WW WPX Contest, SSB

April 2011:

- 2-3 SP DX Contest
12 Main Meeting, 7 PM
16-17 YU DX Contest
21 T.I.T.S. Meeting, Noon
23-24 Helvetia Contest
26 Rexy Meeting B, 8 PM
30-5/1 Florida QSO Party

CHANGES

New Members

K4IKM

Steve Walters
478 Patten Circle
Albrightsville, PA 18210
k4ikm@ptd.net

AF3I

Andrew Forsyth
5 Northern Dancer Drive,
Dillsburg, PA 17019-9300
ajforyth@verizon.net

W3HP

Richard J. Harris
1109 Gunstock Lane
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050
w3hp@rjharris.com

Deadline for April issue:

Sunday, March 27, 2011

President's Column

Straight from the Radio Shack.... K9 Radio Shack

Wow, big winds and big scores for ARRL CW! Ten meters was still mostly missing but conditions are definitely improving and the contest was very interesting. We have lots of **FRC** stations at the top or towards the top of the listings and many great efforts sprinkled throughout.

The other interesting thing about ARRL CW was the wind and at the **K9RS** station I kept watching the antennas through the weekend. Most of the stuff didn't get bothered even though the winds were very high for a very long time but I have a hex beam on a small military 'launcher' tower that took on many shapes during the weekend. It survived just fine but each of the ops enjoyed seeing it go through contortions with each gust of wind and it sure looked like it would be down in a tangled mess at any moment.

Another thing many of us noted is that the reverse beacon network has for sure changed the way you operate in the CW multiop and assisted categories. If you are not using it try it out in the next CW contest. It makes a big difference over just using the normal cluster spots.

Thanks to Larry, **K2GN**, keep an eye out for gofrc.org email addresses which we will be announcing for a nominal fee. A great email address and a way to support **FRC** and all of our activities!

WRTC 2014 : Check out the wrtc2014.org web site and consider supporting. We have one close by and it's coming up!

73 & GO FRC....K9RS

Have an Article Idea?

Articles on pretty much anything contesting related (or maybe even non-contesting) are always encouraged. If you have an idea, or even an idea of an idea, feel free to contact me and I'll try and talk you through it. Or just send me the article, in whatever format, and I'll make it work.

I know many of you have something to contribute. This is a good place to do it.

73, Joe KQ3F

MEETINGS

Main meeting—March 8 at 7 PM, Inn at Towamencin, Lansdale.

T.I.T.S. meeting—The Trexlertown International Transmitting Society meets on Thursday, March 17, at 12:00 noon. Location is the Hometown Diner on Route 222 in Trexlertown..

Rexy Meeting B—The Rexy Meeting B will meet at 8 PM on Tuesday, March 23..



Contest Season is Here!!!

Work Wanted:

Experienced tower climber immediately available to perform antenna and tower maintenance.

Install/repair/remove antennas, replace feedlines and cabling, rotator servicing, guy wire renewal, new tower installations (guyed and self-supporting), and tower removal.

Reasonable hourly rates and scheduling that meets your needs.

Contact: John Crovelli W2GD

w2gd@hotmail.com

Phone: 908 391 5611 (Mobile)

Contesting from Honduras

By Dale Long, N3BNA

Just back from Honduras at 4AM this morning. This was the single most difficult and complicated trip that I have ever taken. Just about everything went wrong. I was expecting it to be a pleasant and easy trip before my tougher trip to Haiti. But this trip was like a bad movie or a Greek tragedy

My plan was to visit an old friend in Honduras (who lived with me 28 years ago) maybe put up a few wires and get in the RTTY contest the weekend before ARRL, and then to operate in the ARRL contest from the new mountain site of HR2J where I operated as HQ5A.

I drug along a 600 watt solid state amp, but couldn't get my digital program FLdigi to increment correctly in the RTTY contest. I had packed the contest instructions, but could not find them, and could not understand the manual, although I tried various things.. N1MM didn't work because I tried to save the ham.mdb file on a thumb drive. Then after a few RTTY contacts, I fried the amp in the RTTY contest. So all the effort to take the amp along was wasted.

That was before I got the virus and the heart attack and after the broken clutch and blown head gasket at night trying to go up and down steep mountains keeping the revs down because we were losing water and overheating.. And then it rained and we still had no water, but the dirt roads turned very slick and thankfully while fishtailing we missed oncoming traffic several times. Otherwise it's been a pretty boring trip. Oh, did I mention the battery is dead so you gotta push it to start it, whether you are having a heart attack or not.

And I am now trading one friend with an old rattletrap that needs a lot of repairs for another one. Life sure ain't boring !!!

Follow up was that my friend tried to make the long trip (with wife and kids) to see me at the hospital and the truck broke down again. Head gasket problems again. In trying to drive it that night without enough water the engine became warped. Now more repair. He was going to borrow his brother's car to come say goodbye to me but that broke also. Every time in the city we are using a taxi, which turned out to be the reason I had my heart episode, **and also missed my flight on the way back.**

Working on antennas and got a late start on the contest, but made a big effort. Had no 160m, but found later that I could have if my host would adjust his antenna. He really wasn't an antenna guy, but a very interesting character. He did not want to change the setting of the antenna, so it is resonant on 7.7 14.5, 29.5 etc. ..but it also has 160.. I never heard of a Five-Oh antenna, but I'm not a vertical guy.

No internet at the site. Still building the station, and the low yagi is broken. Of course I built a half square antenna for 40 and slogged around the undergrowth to put it up. Got all kinds of insect bites (something like chiggers/chigoes).

After spending Feb 14 on a 4 hours bumpy ambulance ride to the hospital in San Pedro Sula, and most of the next two days in the hospital, on Thursday afternoon I had a stress test, and then left for the remote mountain QTH of Javier HR2J

Spent most of the day on Friday putting up wire antennas in the bush, and used the first hour of the contest to get N1MM to key the radio. When I got it working, I was in DXpedition mode, so no multipliers. Need a database guy to fix the log but I got a lot of mults on every band , 10 through 80.

<http://www.lz1jz.com>



FRC MEMBER SUBMISSION

Most of my friends know that my hearing is not very good. Actually it is really poor. But at the first clinic where I was treated for my heart they gave me a wrong medicine (because I cannot have a sodium-based IV they gave another one, but it was wrong)...This caused a bad vertigo attack which always causes me to lose hearing. So right before the contest I was literally deaf !!!

With many prayers for my health and my hearing, and some medications I had fortuitously taken with me, I recovered some of my hearing but not much. My goal was 200 QSOs, because I was mostly deaf, and could not hear the guy standing beside me. I took some medicine for my hearing, and many people were praying for me. My health got better in the mountains and with the headphones, finally I finished with about 2679 QSOs but my log needs repairs.

This is a rough summary of my contacts. Boy I wish I could have had a yagi and something on 160m.

<u>Band</u>	<u>QSOs</u>
10m	465
15m	709
20m	667
40m	381
80m	450

If I would have had a yagi instead of wires, and a 160m antenna I could have done better. But it was tough work for my ears, even though it was fun. You may have heard that it is difficult for older folks (with hearing loss) to hear in crowded restaurants. As bad as my hearing is, it is difficult to work pileups, but I try. I will not be competing in the pileup contests at Dayton.

But I'm fortunate to be alive and thank God for that. My prayers are with Joe **K3NM**.

One thing I learned is you can work the ARRL with low antennas as long as you are close to the USA. Very different from S America and Africa where you need a lot of aluminum.

73, Dale E. Long - N3BNA



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Featuring new and used meters, elements, loads and more by BIRD® and Coaxial Dynamics.

Mixed Decision from the California Court of Appeals in Palmdale, California Antenna Case

On January 27, 2011, the California Court of Appeals, Second Appellate District, issued its Opinion in the antenna case of Alec Zubarau, WB6X. In several respects, it is a win for Amateur Radio in California. Working with his ARRL Volunteer Counsel, Len Shaffer, WA6QHD, Mr Zubarau is now considering their next course of action.

The Court found that the Palmdale antenna ordinance, as it pertained to the height limit for vertical antennas, was “unenforceable” because it allowed a radio amateur to have a vertical antenna up to 75 feet high when measured from the ground but limited the “active element of the antenna array” to 30 feet. The ordinance did not define “array” or “active element” and did not specify from where the 30 permitted feet for such “array” was to be measured. The Court found that if even one reasonable interpretation of the ordinance could be found, the ordinance could be upheld, but that in this case, no one could understand what the limitations were and how they could be applied. That portion of the City’s ordinance was therefore unconstitutional and unenforceable.

The Court also held that the ordinance was unenforceable to the extent that it attempted to regulate radio frequency interference. The City maintained that it could regulate RFI, but the Court, citing case law and argument in ARRL Amicus Curiae brief, held that only the FCC could regulate RFI. Any State or municipal law that attempts to regulate RFI is preempted.

Of some concern to Len Shaffer, however, is that the Court held that Palmdale properly ordered Zubarau to remove his permitted 55-foot crankup tower. The Court opined that the small, VHF/UHF vertical on the roof constituted “reasonable accommodation” under PRB-1 and California PRB-1 statute (California Government Code Section 65850.3). The Court said that leaving Zubarau with a VHF/UHF antenna constituted a reasonable accommodation because it allowed him to be active in some part of Amateur Radio. There was no analysis of the “minimum practicable regulation” test in PRB-1 and the California statute, so that part of the three-prong PRB-1 test was left unexamined. Because the Court reversed the trial court on this finding, Zubarau had no longer clearly “substantially prevailed” in this case and so the Court remanded the case to the trial judge to re-examine the issue of attorney’s fees claimed by Zubarau.

The Court’s application of the “reasonable accommodation” standard of PRB-1 in this case is, in the view of Len Shaffer and ARRL, both unique and very narrow. Said ARRL General Counsel Chris Imlay, W3KD:

“While this decision is positive for Amateur Radio in California in two significant respects, the record in this case shows that the small, roof-mounted VHF/UHF antenna at WB6X was insufficient to conduct any international communications. Alec’s tower is necessary in order to conduct international communications and to permit even a 50/50 chance of contacting Alec’s native Belarus on any given day. The Court ignored this evidence and it did not apply the “reasonable accommodation” test articulated by FCC and in prior case law, and it did not apply PRB-1’s “least practicable restriction” test at all. In essence, the Court applied a balancing test which FCC and several Federal courts have said is improper in conducting the PRB-1 analysis. It is not true that any accommodation for a radio amateur is reasonable accommodation, and it is not sufficient to simply permit a radio amateur “some participation” in our avocation. Instead, PRB-1 permits effective, reliable Amateur communications. It is hoped that the Court will revisit this portion of its otherwise favorable decision and get it right the second time.”

The court made three decisions that affect amateurs in California. First the court found that part of the Palmdale ordinance was unconstitutional because it was vague and could not be understood by a reasonable person. That part of the ordinance allowed an Amateur to have a vertical antenna up to 75 feet high when measured from the ground but limited the “active element of the antenna array” to 30 feet in height. The court found that the ordinance did not define “array” or “active element” and did not say where the height of such array was measured from. After a number of questions were submitted regarding this ordinance, the court determined that no one could really understand what it meant and declared it unconstitutional. This part of the decision, said ARRL Volunteer Counsel Shaffer, will affect only hams living in Palmdale.

(Continued)

The next issue decided by the court had to do with radio frequency interference. They said that only the Federal government could regulate RFI and any state or municipal law that tried to address it was preempted. That means it is not enforceable. That part of the decision affects hams throughout the state, according to Shaffer. He asks any California amateur whose municipality or county has an ordinance that limits Amateur Radio antennas or operations based on whether there is interference to consumer or other devices to contact Southwestern Division Vice Director Marty Woll, N6VI, at n6vi@arrrl.org.

The final part of the decision had to do with whether Palmdale followed the law when they made Alec Zubarau take down his permitted tower but allowed him to keep a VHF/UHF vertical on his roof. The court said they thought this was a reasonable accommodation because it allowed him to be active in some part of Amateur Radio. "This decision is troubling," said Shaffer, "and we are considering what options we may have regarding any further review of the issue. We will be conferring with various legal sources before any final determination is made."

Reprinted from the ARRL Contest Update

CQ WPX Director, Randy K5ZD, continues innovating like that giant sunspot firing off solar flares. "I am pleased to announce a new tool to help everyone format their logs correctly for the WPX Contest. The Cabrillo Log Check page will check the format of your Cabrillo log file for any mode of the CQ WPX Contest. Use this to check your log before submitting it to the robot." The new page by Tzetzto LZ2FQ supports CQ WPX RTTY, SSB, and CW in Cabrillo 2 or 3 formats.

More innovation in contest administration comes from the Russian DX Contest Committee as they tighten up the requirements for winning logs with new rules. Competitive logs will now be required to specify frequencies with a 1-kHz resolution and to be submitted within 36 hours. The intent is to crack down on post-contest log editing and during-the-contest spotting information poaching. (Thanks, Harry RA3AUU)

Glenn KDØQ is a big fan of the Safety LifeLine for climbing his AN Wireless free-standing tower. "The sleeve that attaches to the cable also attaches directly to the front of my harness - I use no lanyard. The sleeve slides right along the cable with me as I climb. It really reduces the time it takes to climb the tower compared to hooking and unhooking two lanyards. I feel much safer as the hooking and unhooking is eliminated and there is little slack to take up if something happens."

If you want a reliable, rugged footswitch, follow the lead of the tattoo artist whose customers would not care at all for incomplete body art. Ron WW8RR - who is not a tattoo artist - recommends the Linemaster Gem switches. "These are round, heavy duty, weighted, non-skid, virtually indestructible foot switches. Since they are round it doesn't matter which angle your foot hits the switch, it activates. The internal design does not use any micro switch, but instead has three compression springs, heavy brass rings, and steel plate. It is as robust as it gets. There is really nothing in the design to wear out or fatigue."

When using steel conduit for running coax cables, Roger K8RI points out, "Carefully de-burr the ends of the conduit as a tiny burr can peel the jacket right off a piece of coax. Leave no rough edges that can contact the coax." Ends of conduit need to be fully seated into couplers and fittings, too. "If not fully seated [the edge] will form a squared-off edge of 1/4 to nearly 3/8" on which cables can catch. If need be, bevel the inside of the male end to a 60-degree angle so there is no lip." Roger also recommends the use of two 45-degree "sweeps" to make a 90-degree turn as they put a lot less stress on the cable when pulling it through. And use lots of inexpensive wire soap, too!



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P. O. Box 431 Albury, PA 18011-0431



Affiliated Club

The Frankford Radio Club

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Repeater - 2 meters, 147.27/147.87 Input and Output PL tone, 114.8

Home Page - www.gofrc.org

Meetings

The main meeting is held at the Inn at Towamencin in Lansdale between 7-9 pm on the second Tuesday of each month from September through May. Summer meetings are held at member homes (one Saturday/Sunday per month).

Packet Cluster Contest/DX System

144.950 K3ZV
 145.050 W3TUA
 145.530 AA1K
 145.530 K3WW
 145.570 WT3Q
 145.670 W3PP

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