



FEEDBACK

AUGUST 2008



COMMENTARY

The following article is part of the Editor's Log written by Nancy Kott, WZ8C, appearing in the August 2008 issue of World Radio.

Did you have a good Field Day? In Michigan, we had our traditional rainstorm on Saturday Evening. Participation seemed down this year and there wasn't the contagious "Field Day Fever" that brings out the amateurs you don't see all year. Most of the focus was on emergency communication promotion, which is good for the public to see, but the camaraderie and contesting fun is getting lost along the way.

From my point of view, this all falls back on tradition. It appears that we are bending backwards to be politically correct and assimilate ourselves with the newcomers. It used to be the other way around. The new amateurs were excited to be one of us: the licensed, the proud, the Hams, to paraphrase a military slogan, and that included learning our traditions.

I just had my 20th anniversary of getting my first Amateur Radio license and remember when I first started learning about the slang terms that were used by Amateur Radio. For instance, the term Fine Business or FB. "How dumb is that?" I thought. "No one is going to say that on the air." But when I made my first CW contact and the operator came back to me with "599 FB copy Nancy," I was thrilled! It was like I had been accepted into the fraternity, using a special language. And every contact after that used Fine Business in the conversation. It didn't seem dumb anymore, It was Ham-speak!

Same thing with the term Lid (which thankfully, no one used about me, at least not to my face). And the term Elmer. And Old Man. They may seem silly to outsiders or newcomers, but that are part of our language and culture. They have been around almost from the beginning of Amateur Radio. I read on the internet that the term Elmer was coined in the 1970s, but I find this hard to believe. Speaking with Old Timers, including my father W8ROG, they remember hearing it when they were licensed in the late 1930s and 1940s. I did find a reference to it on the web dated 1947. Old Timers, do you remember hearing the term "Elmer" before 1970?

Our culture makes us who we are, and gives us a sense of continuity and belonging. I would hate to see it disappear because we are trying so hard to be part of our community, let them learn the language. We have already made the written tests easier, eliminated the code requirement, simplified the exam system; let's not give up our verbal language, too.

NEWBIES

The class organized and led by Lou, WB8WXS, successfully graduated 4 students. Gary Hurt, our head VE, organized a testing session resulting in three students earning their Technician license and one upgrading to General.

As usual, each Technician was given membership in SMARS as well as a gift from Walt, K8AEM, a complete G5RV antenna. Lou, sent notes to each student praising them for their achievements.

LOU AND CLOCKS

The July meeting had a very interesting display of clocks and mechanisms by Lou. He discussed the various methods of time keeping over the ages as well as the various clever ways in which clock movements were designed. Some of the tools that he needed to repair and make parts for clocks were also on display.

DID YOU KNOW

Before settling on the name Mark Twain, Samuel Clemens published work under the names Thomas Jefferson Snodgrass, Sergeant Fathom, and W. Apaminondas Adrastus Blab.

NOTICE

To save bandwidth and the resulting returned issues of Feedback, members will be reminded that the current and past issues may be found on the W8DF website:

www.w8df.com



A LETTER FOUND ON THE WEB

None of this has anything to do with CW proficiency, or knowing your Hartley from your Colpitts. This is simply, "No Ham Left Behind."

Diminished Licensing, Technical Standards

I read with interest the recent opinions about the role of relaxed test standards on the technical competence of the amateur community. As someone who has been away from the hobby for about a decade, and recently became active again on VHF and UHF, I have to observe decline in our effectiveness I've noticed which has little to do with exams. Simply put, we appear to be licensing lots of new hams, but failing them after they get their tickets. I notice this in two major areas.

First, some newcomers appear unable to master the daunting feature sets of even low-end FM transceivers. I've heard ARES volunteers unable to field-program a new frequency, CTCSS tone, or other unexpected setting, not just when using unfamiliar rigs at emergency operations centers, but even when using their own handhelds.

Second, we appear to have many hams operating FM who have extremely low audio levels, don't realize it, and/or don't know what to do about it. It occurs to me that we old-timers who learned AM modes such as SSB on HF probably developed better awareness of ensuring adequate audio levels. Perhaps newer hams accustomed to consumer electronics and "automatic record level" everywhere have never learned the basics of mike technique and setting proper audio levels.

In the spirit of "bring me solutions, not problems," let me suggest that clubs and ARES groups, where possible, bring back the annual "rig clinics" which were once popular, at which members were invited to bring their rigs, service manuals and little screwdrivers, and a local two-way shop or well-equipped ham brought the equipment necessary to check for frequency accuracy and deviation. When we hold routine training nets, let's be honest with signal reports, and offer them even when they're not requested. If someone checks in with voice audio that's neck-and-neck with his own CTCSS tone, don't tell him he's "loud and

clear!"

Consider recording receive audio during a training net, and posting the entire recording in MP3 format on a club or ARES Web site for download. Some of us never get to hear our own received signal, at least not in comparison to other signals during a net on an FM repeater.

During at least some training nets, let's also practice a short-notice, mass migration to another repeater or simplex frequency, odd split, or a change in CTCSS tone, acknowledge everyone who gets there successfully, and follow up with instruction for those who don't.

Finally, if you hold a course to prepare newcomers for the Technician exam, consider adding a session two weeks after the test, and have everyone bring his new handheld. The owner's manuals are obviously not an adequate resource.

In one community along the Oregon coast, 18 new Technicians had gotten licenses and equipment specifically to be ready for an emergency. Just weeks later, their county was virtually cut off for two days by a storm-related break in a fiber-optic cable, and not one of them could figure out how to get a piece of traffic to the outside world. This is not only a sad waste of human resources and expensive gear, but has to be demoralizing to anyone who tried his best to be prepared.

None of this has anything to do with CW proficiency, or knowing your Hartley from your Colpitts. This is simply, "No Ham Left Behind."

Paul W. Plack, AE4KR, Murray, Utah

IDIOTS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD:

I live in a semi rural area. We recently had a new neighbor call the local township administrative office to request the removal of the Deer Crossing sign on our road. The reason: too many deer were being hit by cars and he didn't want them to cross there anymore.

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OLYMPIC SPECIAL EVENT STATION

Special Event stations for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games began operating on May 18 and are scheduled to continue through September 17. Five special calls, representing the five official mascots of the 2008 Beijing Olympic games, are on the air: BT1OB, BT1OJ, BT1OH, BT1OY and BT1ON. The last letter of the call sign corresponds to the first letter of the name of each mascot -- Beibei (fish), Jingjing (panda), Huanhuan (flame), Yingying (Tibetan antelope) and Nini (swallow).

A QSL card, reserved for special use incorporating all five symbols, has also been designed. Zheng Feng, BA4EG, will be the QSL manager for all stations. QSLs can be sent either direct or via the bureau and will begin to be answered in October. A Web site supporting the Special Event stations include an online log search and QSL card received and sent status, as well as other information.

An award for contacting each of the five stations on 10-160 meters a minimum of five times (using CW, SSB or RTTY, as well as SWL) is also available. The Games of the XXIX Olympiad begin Friday, August 8 and run through Sunday, August 24. --Thanks to Chris Parker, VE6PKR

OLDER AND WISER

An older, white haired man walked into a jewelry store one Friday evening with a beautiful young gal at his side.

He told the jeweler he was looking for a special ring for his girlfriend. The jeweler looked through his stock and brought out a \$5,000 ring. The old man said, 'No, I'd like to see something more special.'

At that statement, the jeweler went to his special stock and brought another ring over. 'Here's a stunning ring at only \$40,000' the jeweler said.

The young lady's eyes sparkled and her whole body trembled with excitement.

The old man seeing this said, 'We'll take it.'

The jeweler asked how payment would be made and the old man stated, 'by check. I know you need to make sure my check is good, so I'll write it now and you can call the bank Monday to verify the funds and I'll pick the ring up Monday afternoon,' he said.

Monday morning, the jeweler phoned the old man. 'There's no money in that account.'

'I know,' said the old man, 'But let me tell you about my weekend!'

All Seniors Aren't Senile

ECHOLINKS

Seems to have been a rather slow month on W8DF Echolink as there were only 198 connections made. Of course many of these were for testing. Thanks to Echolink, the W8DF 220 net was run by WA8MFL from Oshkosh on July 28.

I picked up an interesting call on the repeater from KB3RMT. He is employed by the Japan Ministry of Education teaching English to grade school students in Battle Creeks sister city of Takasaki. He has been there six years and got his callsign three days earlier. He said he "stumbled" onto echolink while surfing the internet. I asked how did he get a license while in Japan? He wrote the test in a VE session conducted by VE's. in Japan. More surprising, the VE team was Japanese nationals with US licenses!

A new feature on the W8DF 220 mhz repeater. Use you Tone Pad and transmit the * (star symbol). It will return instructions to connect to an Echolink node.

On July 14, the 220 repeater was replaced with a Motorola Micor modified for use in the 220 MHz band. After two weeks of operation, it appears to be working well. Repeater audio quality is much improved and transmitter output has doubled.

Don, W8RVT

(Ed Note: In addition to all ten call areas of the U.S.A., call signs of five other nations appeared as using our 220 repeater; Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Italy, Canada and Slovenia).

NEED A POWER SUPPLY?

I have always thought I would like to have a switching power supply to replace the linear supply I use for bench work as well as a DC power source for radios. Last month, I scoured EBAY for such a supply and found new supplies direct from a manufacturer in Hong Kong. The supply was advertised as 110/220 VAC input and produces 25.3 amps at 13.8 VDC output +/-10% adjustable.. I ordered it and it arrived about ten days later. Sure enough, the supply is as advertised. Weighs about two pounds and is about the size of a cd reader/writer you would install in a computer. I have had the thing plugged in and operating for two weeks now and it works great. The cost to get it to me was \$58.00. A pretty good deal in my opinion.

I intend to bring this supply to the August club meeting for show and tell. I also went back to ebay and the manufacturers web site and found I can get these in lots of ten which reduces the cost to about \$50. I have found five people that want one. At the club meeting, I will look for at least four more and doing that, I will place an order that night for a quantity of ten such supplies.

Don-W8RVT

THE CHICKEN AND THE ROAD

How did the chicken cross the road
NT Chicken: Will cross the road in June. No, August. September for sure.

OS/2 Chicken: It crossed the road in style years ago, but it was so quiet that nobody noticed.

Win 95 Chicken: You see different colored feathers while it crosses, but cook it and it still tastes like ... chicken.

Microsoft Chicken (TM): It's already on both sides of the road. And it just bought the road.

OOP Chicken: It doesn't need to cross the road, it just sends a message.

Assembler Chicken: First it builds the road ...

C Chicken: It crosses the road without looking both ways.

C++ Chicken: The chicken wouldn't have to cross the road, you'd simply refer to him on the other side.

VB Chicken: USHighways!TheRoad.cross (aChicken)

Delphi Chicken: The chicken is dragged across the road and dropped on the other side.

Java Chicken: If your road needs to be crossed by a chicken, the server will download one to the other side. (Of course, those are chicklets)

Web Chicken: Jumps out onto the road, turns right, and just keeps on running

Gopher Chicken: Tried to run, but got flattened by the Web chicken.

Newton Chicken: Can't cluck, can't fly, and can't lay eggs, but you can carry it across the road in your pocket !

Cray Chicken: Crosses faster than any other chicken, but if you don't dip it in liquid nitrogen first, it arrives on the other side fully cooked.

Quantum Logic Chicken: The chicken is distributed probabilistically on all sides of the road until you observe it on the side of your course.

Lotus Chicken: Don't you *dare* try to cross the road the same way we do!

Mac Chicken: No reasonable chicken owner would want a chicken to cross the road, so there's no way to tell it to.

Al Gore Chicken: Waiting for completion of NCI (National Chicken-crossing Infrastructure) and will cross as soon as it's finished, assuming he's re-elected and the Republicans don't gut the program.

COBOL Chicken: 0001-CHICKEN-CROSSING. IF NO-MORE-VEHICLES

THEN

PERFORM 0010-CROSS-THE-ROAD

VARYING STEPS

FROM 1 BY 1

UNTIL ON-THE-OTHER-SIDE

ELSE

GO TO 0001-

CHICKEN-CROSSING

THE AMATEUR'S ROLE IN EMERGENCIES

(The following article was in the ARRL newsletter ARES E-letter, that is edited by Rick Palm, K1CE. While it is concerned primarily with Hurricanes, the problems and solutions are universal.)

Amateur Radio Session Held at National Hurricane Conference

[Ron Mettler, WB4GHU, represented the ARRL Northern Florida Section at the National Hurricane Conference, April 1, in Orlando, Florida. Here is his report of the Amateur Radio Session there. -- ed.]

The Amateur Radio portion of the conference was divided into three presentations and was moderated by Dennis Dura, K2DCD, Manager of Emergency Preparedness & Response, ARRL and Chair of the National Hurricane Conference Amateur Radio Committee. The first session was given by the National Hurricane Center's Amateur Radio station WX4NHC organization, John McHugh, K4AG and Julio Ripoll, WD4R. In this segment, the many roles of Amateur Radio were illustrated by charts, audio clips, and video clips. Amateur Radio was praised for its historical role of assistance through the years in tracking hurricanes. The paths of access to the NHC were given: <wx4nhc@wx4nhc.org>;, the Hurricane Watch Net (14.325 MHz), the VoIP Hurricane Net, and the Citizen Weather Observer Program (CWOP). Both the NHC and the Coast Guard are considering implementing WinLink as well.

Another source of access to the NHC is through APRS. They appreciate this mode because gathering the data is automatic. In the past, NOAA initiated a program to provide weather stations to various amateur stations throughout the Caribbean, but the funding for that program was lost before the project was completed. For those amateurs interested in using APRS, the system that was used in this program is the Peet Brothers Model U2100.

In addition to the Hurricane Watch Net on 14.325 MHz, the NHC also gleans information from the Maritime Service Net on 14.300 MHz, and the Waterway Net on 7268 kHz.

One final way to get a report to the NHC is via an online reporting form on <<http://www.wx4nhc.org/>>.

The second segment of the program was devoted to VoIP and EchoLink activity and presented by Rob Macedo, KD1CY. Using these methods provides an interoperability among government and non-government agencies to provide weather data to the NHC. There is a VoIP node on 7203 kHz, with an IRLP of 9219. A weekly net meets at 0000Z on Sunday (2000 Saturday night Eastern time) during hurricane season, and a monthly net at the same time on the first Sunday of the month during the hurricane off-season. The NHC is excited about using this mode to gather data, and amateurs are strongly encour-

aged to support it by checking into the VoIP Net.

The third portion of the program was dedicated to the roles that amateurs play during hurricanes. This session was presented by Dennis Dura, K2DCD and Rob Macedo, KD1CY. We are being looked to for weather reporting, damage assessment, monitoring of critical resources and infrastructures, communication augmentation, and communication infrastructure replacements. In addition, intelligence gathering through the SKYWARN program training is another expectation. The NHC shares such information with other agencies, once it is verified.

ARES and RACES intelligence gathering includes shelter communications and mass care communications, and this information is also shared across multiple levels of agencies. MARS members who are also SKYWARN trained can share information with DOD and other federal entities. Even FEMA uses such information to determine appropriate responses.

The role of the amateur is changing. The new motto is "Before it fails, Amateur Radio gives situational assessment." We are no longer just communicators. We are being looked to for intelligence gathering, providing real-time assessment of conditions where we are.

In summary, if hams are actively performing all of these functions, we will have the situational awareness to know that something will fail, so we can be there when it does fail.

The future of Amateur Radio in disasters is changing dramatically, and our role is expanding in a new direction. It becomes an issue of personal responsibility for each of us to stay abreast of our training and technology in order to perform our role to its maximum.

HAMFEST CALENDAR

17 Aug Lapeer, MI
Lapeer Ham and Computer Swap 8 AM to 1 PM at Lapeer County Center Building, 425 County Dr. Admission \$5 at the door: talk-in on 146.62 (100 Hz) repeater. All sales inside. www.w8lap.com

6 Sep Lowell, MI
Grand Rapids Hamfest 8 AM - 1 PM at Kent County Fairgrounds, 225 S Hudson St Admission \$6; talk-in on 147.26 (94.8 Hz) Repeater. Grahamfest08@w8dc.org

Paul WD8JOM

IDIOTS IN FOOD SERVICE:

My daughter went to a local Taco Bell and ordered a taco. She asked the person behind the counter for "minimal lettuce." He said he was sorry, but they only had iceberg.

ARES / RACES Report for JULY in Calhoun County
RACES / Skywarn Nets and Training

4 Skywarn Training Nets	1hr each @ 66 People = 66hrs
Total NETS and Training Seminars,	85 People =66 hrs
Public Service Events	0 People 0hrs
Total Public Service Events,	
Emergency Operations	Total 3hrs @ 27 People = 84 hrs
2 Thunder Storm Warning Net,	
Administration Hours, Total for JULY	Total = 20hrs
Travel Hours for JULY	10hrs
Expenses- Out of Pocket	Total = \$120.00
Travel Miles for JULY	125 Miles
Members	34

Dave Smith
KC8COT
E-12
City of Battle Creek and Calhoun County
RACES, Emergency Coordinator

BATTERY TIPS

Q: How should I dispose of Lithium Ion batteries?

A: Lithium ion batteries, like all rechargeable batteries are recyclable and should be recycled. They should never be incinerated since they might explode. Most places that sell rechargeable batteries will also accept them back for recycling.

Q: Quick charging NiMH batteries will reduce their life?

A: For practical purposes with batteries that are designed to be quick charged, for example, Sanyo, GP, , that is not true. It is important to use a battery charger that has been specifically designed to rapid charge NiMH cells. Actually there is a much greater likely hood of reducing the life of a NiMH battery by using an "overnight" charger than by using a smart fast charger. Overnight chargers rely on the fact that you will unplug them after a number of hours. If you forget to unplug them they can continue to charge the batteries longer than they should. Overcharging WILL reduce the life of batteries. From a strictly technical sense, a battery that is always slow charged will likely last a little longer than one that is always rapid charged. However, the difference is so small that it is not likely to be noticeable for most users.

Q: Can you discharge NiMH/NiCad cells to <1.0 volts and get away with it? Say down to .3V-.4V..

A: A single cell can be discharged to zero volts without damaging it. However in a pack there is always the danger of reverse charging one of the weaker cells when the pack voltage gets too low. This causes damage to the cell, which makes it liable to be reverse charged even deeper the next cycle, etc.

Q: For transformers the current carrying capability of wire is often listed in "circular mils" What is a circular mil, and how do I relate it to the real world?

A: The unit "circular mils" is a strange unit. It is a measure of area--the area of a circle 0.001 inches in diameter, which turns out to be 7.85×10^{-7} square inches, or 0.000507 square mm. So if the criterion is 500 circular mils per amp and you need 7 amperes you would multiply $500 * 7 = 3500$ circular mils, multiply by 0.000507 to get 1.771 square mm, or a wire with diameter 1.5 mm, or about 14 AWG.

all-battery.com (the largest professional battery and charger web

SMARS BOARD MEETING

August 7, 2008

Called To Order: 7:03pm

Officers Present: Bill KD8CDS Ned WB4BKO John KC8WMM

Others Present: Marion WA8MFL Stephanie W8AEZ Bob KC8PRL

Topics:

Abe sent Ned an e-mail asking for someone to mow the 440 repeater site. John and Marion will look at site.

No program yet for the August meeting.

Feedback copies available on the w8df.com site. Marion will send reminders of this, instead of e-mailing the actual newsletter.

Field Day report submitted by Bob on July 19. Nothing has appeared yet on the ARRL website, due to the paper filing.

Missing club equipment was questioned. Nobody present had any information on what it was or who had it. Tabled for further information.

Loan of club equipment to Don W8RVT's granddaughter was approved.

Marshall Fly-In was discussed. Stephanie has been in contact and wanted to know if the club would be interested in setting up a trailer. She will get the date (probably Labor Day weekend) and report at the August club meeting.

Marion presented receipts for repeater repair. The expense of \$10.86 was approved. Don is still waiting for the replacement UPS approved previously. Don requests the purchase of a new power supply for the repeater. He has a chance of a bulk buy if he can get enough interest. The purchase of 1 was approved with the Technical Engineers consent.

A local source of monitors to replace the ones in the trailers has been found. The monitors are free and just need to be picked up. There may be also some replacement computers from the same source.

Marion brought up the possibility of a General License Class for this fall. He is willing to run the class if there is enough interest, trying to follow the manual as closely as possible.

Stephanie, as part of her new job, is considering a student radio class. She is trying to gather information and materials.

Adjourned: 8:00pm

Respectfully Submitted,
John Davidson KC8WMM
SMARS Secretary

SMARS CLUB MEETING

July 17, 2008

Called To Order: 7:01pm

Officers Present: Bill KD8CDS Rene KC8SLI John KC8WMM Lou WB8WXS

Secretary's Report: as published in Feedback, approved
Treasurer's Report: oral report, read and approved

Committee Reports:

Field Day: Bob reports 4942 total points including bonus points for publicity and junior contacts. Several QSL cards have been received. Thanks to Lou and Mike for food. Don W8RVT reports a problem with the 440 transceiver, which he fixed. Jerry W8FOK has some tubing for antenna supports that he is donating. The 6M FD antenna had problems due to not being tuned and assembled incorrectly.

Hamfest: no report

ARES/RACES: no report

Feedback: starting to send electronically. Copies also available on the website.

VE Testing: special test set for July 18. Jim KG8GZ has set aside a portion of the VE examination fee to help pay for the use of the church.

Old Business:

Donation from the Eagles last month and being stored by Don W8RVT, will be lent to Don's granddaughter and will be returned to the club when she has her own equipment.

New Business:

Discussion about the 2nd Field Day site run at 15 Mile Rd and why some people felt the need to not participate in the club Field Day at the airport. No real consensus reached, but most felt regret about the situation and hoped some way could be found to heal the rift.

Presentation:

Lou WB8WXS displayed many of his antique clocks, demonstrating the mechanisms and some of the tools he has made.

Adjourned: 8:30pm

Respectfully Submitted,
John Davidson KC8WMM
SMARS Secretary

JULY FINANCE REPORT

Beginning Balance	\$2,599.93
July Expenses	
Maple United Methodist Church	200.00
Flash Sanitation	83.00
Marsh Insurance	320.00
Ending Balance	\$1,196.93

Rene, KC8SLI

SOUTHERN MICHIGAN AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY

FEEDBACK



AUGUST 2008

SMARS
P.O. BOX 934
BATTLE CREEK MI 49016

FIRST CLASS MAIL



SMARS NETS

Before Lunch Bunch
Monday-Friday 11:30 A.M.
146.66

Sunday Evening 8:00 P.M.
146.66

Monday 7:30 P.M.
224.24

Wednesday 7:00 P.M.
443.95

Wednesday 8:00 P.M.
28.365

Saturday 8:00 P.M.
443.95

ARES/RACES/SKYWARN.NET
Monday 7:00 P.M. 147.12

ACTIVITY CALENDAR

HAMFEST LAPEER AUG 17
THIS MONTH SMARS CLUB MEETING AUG 21
SMARS BOARD SEP 4
HAMFEST LOWELL SEP 6
SMARS BREAKFAST SEP 6
B4LUNCH BUNCH LUNCH SEP 11
NEXT MONTH SMARS CLUB MEETING SEP 18