



April 2007

The HARC Spark

The Official Newsletter of the
Holmesburg Amateur Radio Club
P.O. Box 6253 Philadelphia, PA 19136
WM3PEN 146.685 Mhz Repeater PL 146.2
{K3FI} CLUB CALLS {WM3PEN}



Celebrating Over 30 years of Serving the Philadelphia Area
Web Site <http://www.harcnet.org> WM3PEN@ARRL.NET

Next Meeting
Thursday, April 26 8 PM
8th District Police Station
Red Lion & Academy Rds
Communications & the Navy in the Civil War

HARC - UPARC

Since the early 1980s HARC has been a guest of the University of Pennsylvania Amateur Radio Club (UPARC). The two clubs began working together to install the HARC repeater on top of one of the high rise buildings on campus. In 1982, both Clubs joined forces to operate W3WP, or "Whiskey Three William Penn" as the station was proudly announced over the air. The special event station obtained use of the callsign by enlisting the callsign's owner as a temporary control operator. The William Penn station served to commemorate the Tricentennial of the City of Philadelphia as part of the City's "Century IV" celebration. Both clubs participated in Field Day in the mid-1980s at Penn's Valley Forge Research Center.

UPARC became inactive for a number of years, but now thanks to the work of Penn Alumni and current students and staff, the Club is now back to life. HARC and UPARC are rekindling their close working relationship. Mike, KB3NDC has joined the HARC Board to strengthen the ties between the Clubs.

Repeater System Update

The HARC Repeater System upgrades are continuing. As we went to press a new transmitter is being installed at the Northeast Philadelphia site. Once that is done a work crew will go to the main site to adjust the audio levels.

Much Much More

- Possible Island Expedition
- Flag Day Parade - Help needed
- Women's Triathlon - Help needed
- HF/VHF Awards Manager
- Field Day and more

A Trip to Pea Patch Island & A Possibility to put the Island on the Air

Fort Delaware, located on Pea Patch Island, just east of Delaware City, DE is a Union fortress that dates back to 1859, and once served as a prison for Confederate prisoners of war. It was originally built to protect the ports of Wilmington and Philadelphia.

Dan Cashin, N3LMY, portrays a Confederate POW and is on the Ft. Delaware Board of Directors. He will help bring a period of history to life.



(Photo courtesy of visitthepark.com)

The Park Superintendent's father is a ham radio operator and is interested in bringing ham radio to the Island. Dan will discuss the possibility of activating the Island. Many hams routinely attempt to work U.S. Islands similarly to Working All States and Counties. If the Island is put on the air it would qualify for the US Islands Awards Program. USI covers saltwater and inland fresh water river or lake islands of the fifty (50) states of the United States. USI was formed to further enhance "island chasing" that has become so popular on the amateur radio bands. The USI goal is to promote a simple but effective system of state-island collecting. <http://www.usislands.org>.

For more information check out the Fort Delaware Society <http://www.del.net/org/fort/> and Fort Delaware State Park <http://www.destateparks.com/fdsp/index.asp> or <http://www.visitthefort.com/>.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Jim - KK3K	Richard - W3FIL
Ray - N3DQW	Jim - WA3ERQ
Vincent - N3VMC	David - W3CQU
John - N3ZNA	

HARC Board of Directors

President - Mike Wurgley, N3LXN
Treasurer - Bob Josuweit, WA3PZO
Membership - Charley Johnson, K3CJ
Technical - Ron Cardullo, K3RJC
Member-at-Large - Sol Volen, N3UBY
Webmaster - Rich Shivers, AB3EO
Newsletter Editor - Bob Josuweit, WA3PZO
WM3PEN @ AOL.COM

We have a few openings on the Board of Directors. If you would be interested in serving on the Board contact Mike, N3LXN.

The First Thirty Days

Since February 23, 2007, the date that the Amateur Radio rules changed, Volunteer Exam Coordinators (VEC) around the country have been processing applications for new Amateur Radio licenses and upgrades. Incidentally, while ARRL may handle the lion's share of license applications, we are only one of twelve VECs that make up the National Conference of Volunteer Coordinators -- NCVEC.

<http://www.ncvec.org/>

Volunteer Exam sessions around the country, many of them club sponsored events, are churning out many new and enthusiastic hams. This is evident on the airwaves. The influx of good operators looking to learn the ropes of DXing, contesting, traffic handling and just plain old rag chewing is remarkable.

Log Book of The World usage has exploded.

ARRL is upgrading the LoTW hardware and software to handle the additional traffic. The switchboard at HQ has been flooded with calls from new hams asking all sorts of questions about operating practices. These zealous new operators want to make sure that they are getting it right.

In almost every conversation that I have had with a new ham they tell me of a memorable QSO or proudly boast of the number of DX countries that they have worked so far. ARRL has issued a whole lot of First Contact Awards < <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/ead/award/certificate/1contact.html> > to new operators who will always remember that exciting time when they first got on the air and introduced themselves to the Amateur community. The first one hundred requests came in the first week of the changes and everyday more continue to roll in.

It is reassuring to see that nobody paid any attention to the curmudgeons that tried to tell us that ham radio was going to become the new Citizen's Band or that ham radio licenses were some how being degraded because we no longer are required to test for Morse code proficiency. It is unfortunate that some people continue to wallow in their own complacency while the rest of us adapt, accept and move forward. Ham radio in the 21st century is as exciting as ever. (The ARRL CLUB NEWS and The American Radio Relay League.)

PHILA ARES INFORMATION

All amateurs interested in participating should check into the Phila ARES Net, Sunday's at 9:00 PM, hosted on the Phil-Mont Repeater System; 147.030 MHz (+offset 91.5 PL) ;444.80 MHz (+offset 186.2 PL) When control operators are available, Echolink node 29742, WU3I-L, is on the repeater. Backup link is KB3IV-L.

All interested amateurs are welcomed and encouraged to check in for more information. There is always a different topic of interest to the amateur community discussed with an informal round table of comments and suggestions.

Look forward to having all check in on Sunday nights @ 9:00 pm. See web site for more information.

- Visit the Philadelphia ARES web site

<http://www.harcnet.org/aresindex.html>



VE SESSIONS

PhilMont Mobile Radio Club has moved it's testing from Northeast High School to Ambler, PA on the 4th Thursday of every month.

Exams are given at Ambler Ambulance Association, 1414 E. Butler Pike in Ambler, PA. Registration begins at 7pm.

Warminster - last Wednesday of each month. Contact Tom Michaud (WA3TQJ) at (215) 343-3494 (7-9PM)

Bryn Mawr - quarterly on a Saturday. Contact Bob Lees, W3ZQN, rjlees@aol.com

Bellmawr, NJ - 3rd Thursday of the month. Contact Dianne Nafis at 856-227-6281

2 X 3 WM Calls Not Available

A recent reading of the FCC rules raised some concern and surprise about HARC's WM3PEN call sign. According to the FCC rules "Any 2-by-3 format call sign having the letters WC, WK, WM, WR, or WT as the prefix (Group X call signs)" are not available for assignment. Well how did WM3PEN get assigned? According to the FCC there was a glitch in the programming for vanity call signs that allowed the WM call signs to be assigned. The WM calls were originally held for Military Recreation licenses. There are only 5 WM - 2 x 3 call signs currently assigned in the United States. The others are WM1SAR, WM1SPN, WM4JOY, WM6GUN

Have a Story to Share?

Did something interesting happen when you made a contact? Are you interested in sharing a technical tip or a short cut in the shack? This is your newsletter. Send story ideas to WM3PEN@AOL.COM.

PUBLIC SERVICE EVENTS

National Flag Day Festival - June 16th Ben Franklin Parkway. Over 3500 marchers will commemorate the adoption of the U.S. Flag. Festival organizers are still putting this event together, but they say between 30 -50 hams will be needed. Contact Bob, WA3PZO.



Field Day

June 23-24, 2007

At Alverthorpe Park

Come one - Come all

Talk-in on the repeater output
146.685 -600 131.8 .

Call us through the repeater, or
simplex on the output.

Women's Triathlon - July 8. 10 ops needed to cover the cycling part of the event along the River Drives on both sides of the Schuylkill River.

Northeast Philadelphia 5 Mile Run

Sunday, October 14th, 2007 (Date pending)

We will be providing communications support for the Forth Annual Northeast Philly 5 Mile Run

This run is in support of The Northeast Philadelphia Youth Alliance

It is being held at the Northeast Philadelphia Airport

We are meeting at start/finish area by the parking lot to the right of the main entrance .

Talk-in on the repeater output frequency - simplex 146.685
Working frequency will be provided at check-in.

Mayfair/Holmesburg Thanksgiving Parade

Sunday, November 18th, 2007

We will be providing communications support for the 32th annual Mayfair/Holmesburg Thanksgiving Parade. We are meeting at Wachovia Bank parking lot SE corner of Rhawn St. and Frankford Ave. The parade starts at 1:00 PM

HF/VHF Awards Manager Sought

Two of the more popular ARRL operating awards are the Worked All States (WAS) award and the VHF-UHF Century Club (VUCC) awards. To earn the WAS award you have to make contacts and get QSLs for working all 50 states. Various endorsements are available for OSCAR Satellite, SSTV, 144 MHz, 432 MHz, 222 MHz, 50 MHz, 160 meters and 5 Band WAS. The Digital award, issued for working any digital mode (PSK31, AMTOR, PacTOR, RTTY, G-TOR, etc), is also available.

The VHF/UHF Century Club (VUCC) is awarded for contact with a minimum number of Maidenhead 2 degrees by 1 degree grid locators per band. Grid locators are designated by a combination of two letters and two numbers. As an ARRL Special Service Club, HARC may nominate a person to be an HF or VHF Award Manager. Appointments are made by the ARRL Membership Services Department (MSD). You must be an ARRL member to be considered for the appointment.

CA HAM MEETS PRESIDENT IT'S NO APRIL FOOL

By Randy Hatfield, AG6RH

Strange things happen in a person's life. A week ago meeting President Bush was the farthest thing from my mind. Keep in mind that April Fools Day was just a few days away. Also, Robert and I had played a few tricks on each other in the past.

Thursday, March 29, 2007, Robert Barton, a ham radio club member and Victorville's Office of Emergency Services coordinator contacted me. I had been a volunteer for Victorville's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and the Emergency Communications Service (ECS) for a year. He told me that he had been contacted by the White House. He asked me for my social security number, date of birth and driver's license number. He said I was nominated for a special award from President Bush. Robert also told me that a member of the White House staff would be calling me to do an interview over the phone. I went along and said to myself and later my wife, Lori, "Oh, sure!"

Friday mid-morning, I received a call on my cell phone from a lady (Jill, for the purpose of this article) who claimed she was from the White House, Freedom Corps. I'd never heard of Freedom Corps. (See www.freedomcorps.gov) Jill said I was being considered for an award from President Bush. The award is for voluntary service to the community to further the purposes of Freedom Corps. She asked me a number of questions regarding my background and involvement in CERT and ECS. At the end of the conversation Jill said she'd contact the person who nominated me regarding their decision.



Sunday, April Fools Day, at 5:45 PM (8:45 EDT) Jill called again to my cell phone and said I was selected to be the High Desert representative to receive the Freedom Corps award. I almost laughed but I kept my composure. She congratulated me and asked a few more questions. At the end of the conversation she said a man named (Jack, for the purpose of this article) would call me on Monday. He would have further instructions regarding the airport meeting of President Bush. Jill told me not to call the press or make my instructions public. I was at first excited but thought Robert had done a really creative job of pulling off an April Fool. I called him at home to try to figure out this thing. Robert congratulated me and said he hadn't heard from Jill regarding the decision.

Monday mid-morning, I realized that my cell phone battery was dead. I put it on the car charger as I drove to the old George Air Force Base. I planned to look for the address Jill had given me the night before. I looked at my phone, found I had a voice mail and listened to it. It was from Jack. He gave me his area code (202, Washington, DC) phone

number and asked me to call. Before I could get my little pickup pulled over I received a call from Jill. Jill said she'd heard from Jack and that I should call him... I began to think maybe this wasn't a hoax!

Jill asked me a few more questions to clarify my background details. I told her that up until her call I thought this was an elaborate April Fools joke perpetrated by Robert Barton. I was assured by Jill that I would shake hands with President Bush on Wednesday about noon. She gave me her area code (202) phone number to call if I had any further questions. She suggested I call Jack right away.

I called Jack. He sounded very official. Jack gave me the instructions I needed for meeting the President on Wednesday. Suddenly, reality set in... This was not a joke.

Wednesday, April 4th, 10:00 AM Lori and I went to old George Air Base and waited with other local, county and state officials. There was a holding area where we were screened and went onto the tarmac of the base. Lori was taken to the press platform to take pictures. 11:30 AM, when Air Force One stopped on the ground I was taken to a special place next to the plane. The White House photographer positioned me. The President came down the stair waving. He paused and looked directly at me and waved.

President Bush greeted the local officials and then came over to me. He shook my hand and asked how I was doing. I was presented the Presidential Volunteer Award pin. I gave him something as well. It was a postcard dated December 8, 1941.

My dad was at Pearl Harbor when it was bombed. He was allowed to send a postcard to his parents to let them know he was okay. It read, "I am well. Will write at first opportunity". I gave that postcard to President Bush and explained its meaning. He said it would be displayed at his presidential library.

President Bush headed off to his helicopter and I was escorted to the press area for questions from the press and pictures.

VA Tech Shooting - Ham Connection

While details are still sketchy about the victims of the VA Tech massacre, here are a few notes on a ham radio connection. The Virginia Tech Amateur Radio Association, K4KDJ, is very active on campus. VTARA sponsors a 2 meter repeater and is active in contests and public service events.

HARC friends Kay, WT3P, and Carter, N3AO, recently moved to Blacksburg, VA, about 4 miles from campus. Their family is ok. There are about 160 hams in town. However the shootings did touch one NJ ham. On the DXCHAT reflector, Steve, KF2TI, reports that his son's best friend, a resident assistant, was killed after he came to the aid of a girl who had been shot.

I TALKED TO A SPACE TOURIST

By Ron Hashiro, AH6RH

I talked with Astronaut Suni Williams and Space Tourist Charles Simonyi Tuesday evening. I was the first person in the world to talk with him on ham radio.

I decided to take a few moments from doing taxes and try to talk with the International Space Station for a few minutes. I drove the car to a clear, open area away from tall buildings and decided to park at Grace's Drive-In to get some dinner after the attempt. It's pretty much a gamble to see if the astronauts are operating the radio at any given pass. They're awake between about 5:30 pm Hawaii Time, into the night, and go to sleep about 11:00 am in the morning our time. The space station comes by about four times a day, at certain times and locations in the sky which can be calculated with a PC program.

I kept calling, not sure if anyone would be there. "NA1SS, AH6RH" over and over hoping for a response. A female voice came back, announcing "November Alpha one Sierra Sierra", the callsign of the International Space Station.

I was stunned! I really wasn't expecting anyone to answer, much less a female voice. I knew it was Suni Williams, whose amateur radio callsign is KD5PLB. She's the only female onboard. After a few moments, I returned the call "NA1SS, AH6RH. Hello Suni. Name is Ron, Romeo Oscar November. I'm located in Honolulu, on the island of Oahu." She replied, and asked me to confirm my callsign and name..

I mentioned to her that I had listened to her earlier contact with the school in India, and it was a thrill to speak with her directly. She said that Hawaii was her favorite place and had some relatives in Hawaii. She mentioned that there was someone interested in talking with me. I replied "That must be Charles." Charles Simonyi is the latest "space tourist", having arrived aboard the space station on Monday,

He came on a few moments later, identifying as "NA1SS". I welcome Charles to ham radio, and he gave his personal callsign KE7KDP. I still was in a mild shock, not really expecting to have made contact with Charles. I asked him if he was the author of the "Hungarian notation" of Windows programming, which he acknowledged. I said I was involved in Windows programming over 20 years ago, and am glad to meet the creator of it. I turned the contact back to him, and asked him to call for other ham contacts.

Charles called out "Q R Zed (ham speak for "Is someone calling me?"), from NA1SS". Ray, NH6RZ responded to his call, and talked him him a few moments. I rejoined the contact, and welcomed Charles to look for us in Hawaii whenever he overflies us, and that I'd do my best to be up and around. I mentioned that it happens roughly once every 12 hours or so.

From start to finish, it was done in about six minutes. So, it was a fabulous and eventful evening. After a quick plate of beef stew, it was off and back to doing taxes.

Recent Licensing Statistics

As I'm sure you're aware there has been a recent surge in licensing in response to the elimination of Morse code requirements. ARRL's Volunteer Examiner Coordinator Department has been blitzed lately by new Technician license applications and General and Extra upgrade applications. Some licensees prepare through self-study, but many prepare by enrolling in classes. You may be interested in the statistics reported for all VECs through 3/25/2007: (ARRL)

	2006 Jan 1 - Mar 25	2007 Jan 1 - Mar 25
New Technicians	4685	6565
New/Upgrade Generals	945	7395
New/Upgrade Extras	775	1910



The FCC is one of the tenants of this Gettysburg office building. (WA3PZO photo)



HAMFESTS

In the area

22 Apr 2007 York, PA

<http://www.yorkhamfest.org>

Talk-In: 147.33 (PL 123.0)

York County 4-H Center

29 Apr 2007 Mountaintop, PA

Talk-In: 146.805 (PL 82.5); simplex 146.520

Wright Township Firehall

6 May 2007 Warminster ARC

<http://www.k3dn.org/hamfest.htm>

Talk-In: 147.69/09 (PL 131.8) & 146.52

Middletown Grange Fairgrounds

Wrightstown, PA

1 Jul 2007 Wilkes Barre Hamfest & Computerfest

Murgas ARC Luzerne County Fairgrounds

<http://www.qsl.net/k3ytl>

Talk-In: 146.61 (PL 82.5)

Lake Lehman, PA

4 Jul 2007 Fire Cracker HamFest

Harrisburg Radio Amateur Club Bressler, PA

<http://hrac.tripod.com/>

Talk-In: 146.76 (PL 100)

15 Jul 2007 Valley Forge Hamfest & Computer Fair

Mid Atlantic ARC Kimberton, PA

<http://www.marc-radio.org/hamfest.html>

Talk-In: 145.130/- and 147.060/+ ctcss 131.8

30 Sep 2007 Hamarama

Mt. Airy VHF Club Wrightstown, PA

<http://members.ij.net/packrats/Hamarama/hamarama.html>

Talk-In: 146.52 simplex

21 Oct 2007 Annual Hamfest

RF Hill Amateur Radio Club, Inc. Sellersville, PA

www.rfhill.ampr.org

Talk-In: 145.31 (-), pl 131.8

LOOKING AHEAD!

The May 24th HARC Meeting will feature antenna guru Mark Rothstein, KC3JV. Mark has written for *AntenneX*, an amateur radio online magazine on antennas. With Field Day coming up it should be an interesting program.



HOLMESBURG AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
P.O. Box 6253 Philadelphia, PA 19136
"Serving the Community Through Ham Radio"

Next Meeting: Thursday April 26th, 2007.
8PM @ 8th District - Red Lion & Academy Rds.



HOLMESBURG AMATEUR RADIO CLUB MEMBERSHIP FORM

HARC, PO BOX 6253, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19136
<http://www.harcnet.org>
WM3PEN/K3FI



All members in good standing are eligible to vote and hold a board office. Dues are \$20.00/year.
Make checks payable to H.A.R.C. and mail to PO BOX 6253, Philadelphia, PA 19136.

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ADDRESS _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone # _____ Would you be willing to receive the newsletter via email? ____
E-mail _____

Are you an ARRL member? YES NO Membership Expires (mm/yy) _____