



October 2001

The HARC Spark

The Official Newsletter of the
Holmesburg Amateur Radio Club

P.O. Box 6253 Philadelphia, PA 19136

WA3AOP/R 146.685 Mhz Repeater
K3FI CLUB CALLS WM3PEN

Web Site <http://www.harcnet.org>



Editor: WA3PZO

PREZ SAYS..REMEMBER 9-1-1

September has been anything but normal. We were all shocked by the events of Sept. 11. I paused to think that amateur radio operators might be at their finest hour. ARES and RACES members reported for duty, leaving their families, to serve in the public interest. With at least 14 wireless cell sites destroyed at the World Trade Center, over 2.5 times the normal volume of calls, and police and fire communication equipment destroyed, amateur radio came through. Amateurs responded on foot and by public transportation. They couldn't drive to some locations. I felt like I was repeating a story I wrote on the Indian Earthquake where hams traveled by foot and bus to get to the disaster area. No I wasn't talking about India. I was talking about the largest city in the United States.

Could something happen here? I certainly hope not, but to say it couldn't would not be realistic. As I write this we are involved with military action overseas. Are we as prepared as the hams in New York? Consider getting involved with public service.

We remember the victims which include at least 6 hams. We'll remember all who responded as heroes.

You certainly have noticed the smaller newsletter. We have lost our ability to get the newsletter copied for free. If we were to go to Office Max or other copy centers we would be paying \$7.00 per page per 100 copies. 8 sides = \$56 plus tax. HARC can't afford that bill every month. So we'll be talking about the direction of the newsletter. If you have a source for cheap printing or are interested in offsetting the cost of printing contact WA3PZO. So read on for Club news.

MAYFAIR-HOLMESBURG THANKSGIVING PARADE - NOVEMBER 19

HARC will again provide communications for this annual event. The parade will have a patriotic theme and our work will be as important as ever to make sure the marchers move smoothly down Frankford Ave. We need to be in operation by 12 Noon and the parade will go until approximately 4:30. Come out and have some fun.

HARC was recently awarded a special service award by the March of Dimes for its assistance with its walk near Northeast Airport.

MEETING LOCATION CHANGED

HARC has been informed that the Aviation Supply Office is closed to the public through at least October. For at least October and November we will be meeting at the 8th District Police Station at Red Lion and Academy Roads near the Northeast Philadelphia Airport. See the map on page 2. Joining us will be QST's Old Time Radio Editor John Dilkes, K2TQN. Set aside October 25th. Time is 8 pm.

OCTOBER 25TH MEETING OLD TIME RADIO QST'S JOHN DILKES, K2TQN

On November 29th ARRL Vice President Kay Craigie, WT3P, will be talking about ARRL's Education Project.

NBC10's Techfest at the Pennsylvania Convention Center has been rescheduled for Dec. 1 and 2 as a result of the Sept. 11 events. ARRL will be promoting ham radio at the fest.

HAM CLASSES - OCT. 17

Interested in a hobby where you could talk to your neighbor or someone in another country? Or maybe you're would like the opportunity to talk to an astronaut on the International Space Station. These and many other opportunities are available to local amateur radio operators.

The Holmesburg Amateur Radio Club will be teaching an Introduction to Ham Radio Class starting Wednesday, October 17 at 7:00 PM at the Oxford Circle Jewish Community Center, Algon and Unruh Aves, Philadelphia. The cost of the class is \$25 which includes instructional materials. For further information on the classes you can contact Frank Flangan, at 215-744-2963 or N3ZZN@aol.com or check out the Club webpage at www.harcnet.org.

!WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!
Edmond Losco N3DLV
Joseph Bonadonna KB3GXX

H.A.R.C. Board Of Directors 2001
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All members online can be emailed via theircallsign
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newsletter should be in standard ASCII or MS Word,
.jpg or .gif formats and E-mailed to the Editor no later
than the 2nd Saturday of month to be included in the
next edition!
WA3PZO@Harcnet.org.

H.A.R.C. Nets meet on 146.685 weekly
The Chaverim Net: Tuesday @ 9:00 PM
CW Practice: Wednesday @ 7:30 PM
Members net: Wednesday @ 8:00 PM you can listen to
the Amateur Newsline & ARRL audio reports.
SSB Net on 28.450 +- mhz Sundays @ 9:00 AM

H.A.R.C. Monthly Meetings - The Board of Directors
meets on the 2nd Tues. @ 8:00 PM. General meetings
are held the last Thurs. @8:00 PM.

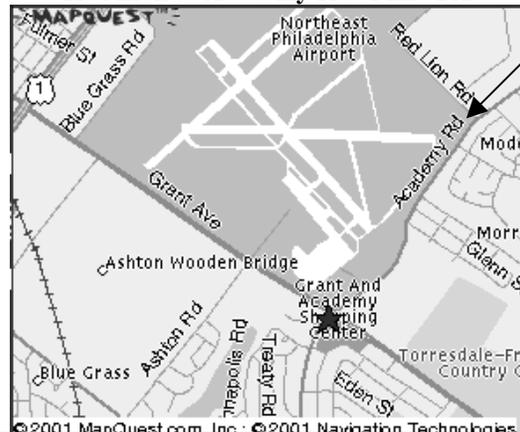
HOW ABOUT A HARC JR?

Last month I suggested a HARC JR. Frank, N3ZZN, has expressed interest in seeing what we could do. If you're interested in helping contact Frank.

FOX HUNTS GOING GREAT

The club now has it's own official FOX BOX that transmits about 4 watts and ID's every 4 minutes, VVV DE K3FI/3 HARC FOX HUNT HI. It plugs into a cigarette lighter and we can let anyone wishing to be the fox take a ride and see if the can beat us, we are looking for volunteers to be the FOX. The last FOX HUNT was on 9/23/01. Our search area more than doubled in size from our first Picnic Hunt. The last FOX Hunt included, Street Road South to Bridge Street bounded on the east by the river and west by Bustleton Ave. We have been using PennyPack Park as the launch site but it may change since we are considering opening the hunt area even more. The Hunt has been run now every 2 weeks with success and the next scheduled is for OCT 7th. The winner on 9/23/01 was Mike N3LXN and Dick W3BMA in about 1 hour, using nothing more than an HT! Yup - Hand Held no extra gear hmmm...The FOX was hiding in a Duncan Donuts parking lot just off RTE 1 and Old Lincoln Highway. So it doesn't take fancy Doppler's or Directional antennas if you're astute. The previous FOX Hunt was won

8th District Police Station, Red Lion & Academy Rd. Phila PA



H.A.R.C maintains the 146.685 repeater located @
Univ. of PA., Phila PA with inputs in Abington, N.E.
Phila, and Cherry Hill, NJ; More Club Information &
Member Applications can be had by contacting any of
the Directors via E-mail. [Info@harcnet.org](mailto:info@harcnet.org), the web
page <http://www.harcnet.org> or writing to HARC PO
Box 6253, Philadelphia, PA 19136.



HARC is an
ARRL Special Service Club.

by Bob KB3SM and Jay WA3IFY in about 70 minutes. The FOX was hiding along the Delaware River At the Old Field Day site that HARC had a few years back at the Fire Dept. training center off State Rd. in the N.E. As long as there is interest we will continue with Hunts every 2 weeks. It is a lot of fun and we will try to include a prize for the winning teams. There are no rules. Basically the Fox hunt is open to anyone that comes out for it. You must take off from the designated launch site with everyone else and you can not be a prize winner twice in a row. We may have to handy cap some of the hunters if they prove to be winning to often by delayed starting times some of those guys have super duper Doppler's ect... and have a slight advantage. The purpose is to get out and sharpen your skills and meet some friends and have FUN. It is not to be out to win every prize out there and there may not always be prizes but at least you will get a certificate of honor for winning first place!! So if you like, come on out and ride along even if you have no gear it can be done... or just see what's happening have a good time... Questions can be sent to kb3sm@harcnet.org

FCC Registration Number Becomes Mandatory in
December Starting December 3, 2001, everyone doing
business with the FCC--licensed or not--must obtain and use
a 10-digit FCC Registration Number--or FRN. Avoid
problems register now

Sightless ham tells story about ham radio in the Philadelphia area!

(This is the third of a series of articles by W3DD, who lives in suburban Philadelphia. The articles are from the Handi-Hams email newsletter.)

Becoming a Ham - Part 3 By T. A. Benham, W3DD
The FCC pays me a visit There were two incidents involving the FCC that occurred about this time. One afternoon there came a knock at the front door. It was a man from the FCC. "I've come to inspect your log." "Ok," I said, "come out to my radio room." We were required to keep a record of every transmission. I opened the file drawer and pointed to the cards. He said, "Pick one at random." I did and handed it to him. "I can't read this! It's in Braille, or something." "I keep the log that way." "But, I can't read it." "The law doesn't say how the log should be kept." "You're right," he replied. "Read this card for me." I did so and he was satisfied. He stayed a while and chatted about how I got along. The other incident happened a couple of years later. I received in the mail a "pink ticket," a warning that I was interfering with a commercial station on a certain frequency. When I thought about it a while, I realized the frequency mentioned was exactly twice my operating frequency. After studying the problem, I discovered that the tuning of the antenna was seriously affected by rain. The interference was eliminated by carefully tuning the system so that rain did not cause the second harmonic of my transmitter output. Some Special Friends A Ham friend from this period deserves some attention. He was Bob Maloney of Perth Amboy, NJ, W2PBY. He appeared in my log on March 9, 1932, and was in it many, many times until 1938. He and I chatted in CW almost every day. A good deal of my skill in operating, sending and receiving the code is due to our contacts. He came to visit a couple of times, staying for a few days each time. I went off to college in 1934 so we did not have as many contacts after that except for a visit with him to the huge commercial ship to shore station at Tuckerton NJ, WSC. I used to listen to it handling messages many times so I knew its procedures, jargon, and format. It was a Saturday afternoon, so the place was not busy. In fact, only the operator was there. After we chatted a while and the operator had shown me everything he could, I sat down at the operator's position and located the bug and dials. A bug is a key that send dots automatically in order to increase sending speed. It has the official name of Vibroplex, probably the name of the original one, but there have been several other manufacturers since the first. The operator showed me the switch which disabled the transmitter, turned it off, and said, "Go ahead, practice sending and get used to the feel of the thing." I played around a few minutes sending nonsense sentences and tuned the receiver a bit. Suddenly I found a ship calling WSC, so without saying anything, I flipped the switch to "on" and began to answer the ship. The operator jumped up and shouted, "What are you doing, you can't do that." Pause. "Oh hell, go ahead, you seem to be making out alright." I always carried a Braille slate with a file card in it in my pocket along with my stylus, so I grabbed them with the other hand and put them on the desk. By this time, the ship had gotten my signal and was ready to

reply. He said he had a message. I sent, "g a (go ahead)." He sent a message at about 25 wpm. I copied it without trouble, acknowledged and signed off. The operator of WSC was flabbergasted, jumping up and down with excitement and congratulations. I said, "Do you want me to read the message to you so you can get it in your log?" He said, "I have it. I wrote it at the same time, but read it to see if we agree." We agreed and all was well. You can imagine my excitement at all that and the pleasure it has afforded me over the years since. I had a similar experience except not so exciting one other time at about the same age. I had learned the old Morse code, as I mentioned earlier, but didn't have a chance to use it. However, one afternoon I was with a couple of friends when we went to the operating room of W I P, the station that operates on 610 KHz and is now known as the "Sports" station. At that time, about 1932, it played music and such, but it was also in communication with other stations by wire. They used old Morse to communicate between stations in the network of that time. As we were standing in the communications room talking, I heard the "sounder" send W I P W I P. No one paid any attention to it. After about four or five W I P's I said, "Hey, isn't that your call?" The operator on duty jumped and said, "Oh my god, yes", and ran to the desk. Of course, I was the hero of the day. One evening in September of 1938, I came home from a job I had at the time. I was greeted by Mother who said, "I have some bad news for you. Bob died the other day. He was only 25. He just dropped over while shaving. Here is a note from his mother." Of course, that was a sad moment in my life as we had had so many hours of pleasure together and now I would never hear W2BPY again. After thinking about it for a few days, I decided I would like to have something of his as a memento. I wrote to his mother and asked her if I could have his bug, the telegraph key that he had used all those years. She sent it to me. I have it on my desk even today beside the one I used then and still use. Mine is set to be used at 30 words per minute, considered to be quite fast, and his is set at 22 wpm. I left mine at the speed we always used after I got good enough, but I set his for 22 wpm because it is necessary to send at a slower rate some times. Also, some days I don't seem to be sufficiently alert to keep up the faster rate. Another interesting friend I came to know quite well was Howard Humpton, W3BY. My log shows I first contacted him in November, 1931, just after I got started. He lived close by, so he invited me to his house. I learned he was a ship's radio operator home on leave. He was not married and lived with his parents when he was home. He was an excellent CW operator and helped me get my speed up and my sending as perfect as possible. I finally got good enough at 30 wpm for him to remark, "Gee, I can't tell whether you are sending or a machine is doing it." It has always been my ambition to send so that people would ask if I was using a machine. W3BY was one of my favorite call signs. I loved to hear it on the air. Howard sometimes called me on the phone. When I picked up the handset and said hello, and he was sure it was me. I would hear dot dash dash dot dot dot dash dash dash dot dot dash dot dot which is W3DD. He would carry on the entire conversation with his key sending code. Sometimes I would get my bug and a

buzzer and answer in code, too. Of course, we could have done it over the air just as well. We did many things together. One evening he took me to Philadelphia to hear and meet Ted Weems and his orchestra. Naturally, Ted Weems became one of my favorite band leaders. The piece he did that I liked the most was "Heart Aches" which had a marvelous whistler featured in it. One evening, in Spring of 1932, he took me down to the Philadelphia dock area and took me aboard a ship that was anchored there. I forget the name of the boat and its radio operator, but he introduced me to both. The station call sign was W N W. I was allowed to operate it with the hand key, not his bug, and I contacted two or three ships at sea. I saw Howard, W3BY, off and on for many years. We would contact each other by Ham radio while he was at sea. He had his Ham station on board, and he called by phone when he was home on leave. All Hams were off the air during World War 2, when I began teaching Physics, Electronics, and Engineering at Haverford College, but were back in action immediately after. I was very active for a couple of years after the War, but then I got away from it for a while. I remember running into W3BY two or three times during those relatively inactive years. In July, 1962, the phone rang and when I answered it, there was the voice of W3BY. He asked me if I could get on the air to have a chat. He was staying somewhere near by. He said he had a station in his car and would call me on a certain frequency at 5:00 PM that day. I didn't tell him I had no transmitter. My receiver was in good working condition as I had been using

it to contact satellites. So, between his phone call and 5:00 PM, I hurried to put together some sort of a transmitter. By schedule time I had a one tube thing with a few watts output. I called W3BY several times, signed my call, W3DD, and set about to listen on the agreed frequency. Much to my surprise, a station replied and signed W5DD. I about fell off of the chair. The long and short of it was that Howard had lost his original call, W3BY, and requested the F.C.C. to give him W5DD. Being an old-timer, he was granted the favor and got as close to my call as he could. His residence was in a state that came under the fifth district, which is how he got the W5 designation. This event gave me the incentive to get myself on the air properly, so a Haverford student helped me build a transmitter kit and put up a proper antenna. When Howard left Ardmore to go back to his ship, we kept in touch all the way down to New Orleans, where he was living when ashore. I heard and contacted him now and then for the next few years. In about 1973, I was talking to a Ham on a ship just off the north coast of Brazil. He said he was from New Orleans. Since I hadn't heard from Howard for two or three years, I asked him if he happened to know W5DD. He replied "Yes, and he was a good friend of mine." "Was?" I asked. He told me that W5DD had died at sea two years ago. Howard had always been a rather "sickly" person, always having something bothering him, so it wasn't a big surprise, but I certainly was sad to think I would never hear that familiar "fist" again. To be continued.



HOLMESBURG AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

P.O. Box 6253 Philadelphia, PA 19136

"Serving the Community Through Ham Radio"

**SEE YOU AT THE NEXT CLUB MEETING OCTOBER 25TH
OLD TIME RADIO - QST'S K2TQN
MEETING: 8TH DISTRICT POLICE STATION**