



SIGMA



March 1999 Volume 8 Number 3

This Months Meeting

This months presentation is scheduled to be on Amateur TV

Next month's meeting speaker is tentatively Ranger Curt Rudge from the Massachusetts Bureau of Ranger Services. Curt manages Search and Rescue activities for the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management. He talk about what goes on in a SAR situation. He will try to bring the leader of the Central Mass Search and Rescue group who can explain how they training and operate.

Minutes of the February Meeting

Since Erik and Den were both unavailable, Stan KD1LE, chaired the meeting of 12 members.

Ralph, KD1SM, gave the treasurers report and mentioned that the club and its financial system are Y2K compliant, which was a great relief to members.

Stan advised of a FEMA seminar held recently in Belchertown, (Emergency Management Headquarters), in Western Mass.

The club has been fortunate in becoming the agents for the disposal of a collection of used Ham radio equipment, as listed in the last club newsletter. These items will be disposed of in a "Silent Auction" with the intent of getting a reasonable price for the equipment, with club members getting the first bids on the gear. Members are required to enter a bid via a 3 x 5 card, which should be delivered to Erik's residence prior to the next meeting on 3/18. Last minute bids will be entertained at the beginning of the 3/18 meeting (3 x 5 cards only).

An annual public service item coming up on April 25th is the Groton Road race. Members who wish

to volunteer for this event should advise Erik as soon as possible.

Stan mentioned that the "Fox Hunting" activity was being held on Sundays and had collected a loyal group of club members who were regularly challenged to locate the hidden transmitter (Fox). Members interested in participating in the "Fox Hunts" should call Stan or Ralph for details.

A Club construction project, related to Fox Hunting was discussed and will be in the form of a Fox "sniffer" designed by club members. This project has the potential to be written up as an article and submitted to QST, once the work is completed. Wolf, KA1VOU agreed to search for PC Board layout software to design and manufacture the PC Board for the Fox Hunting Kit.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned for Coffee and Doughnuts at 8.30 PM.

Ian Norrish,
NZ1B, Secretary,
NVARC

Groton Road Race Needs You

Contact Erik Piip if you would like to help out.

Equipment for Sale

Remember bids will be taken at the meeting for the equipment listed in last month's newsletter. Once Erik leaves the meeting bidding will be closed. Erik will notify the successful bidders.

Mt. Washington Automobile Hill Climb also Field Day Weekend?

Erik and others provide communications for the Mt. Washington Automobile Hillclimb. Here is last years story. -- Ed.

1998 Mt. Washington Automobile Hillclimb
The Gang

In Memory of Carl Merrill

This year we added some new members from our local ham club. We've been talking about this event long enough and they decided it sounded like fun, so we had Mark AB1X, Mary Beth N1FER, Dave W1TQ, Rob N1ICB, JimM WK1V, Bruce W1LUS, Mike K1LJN, Erik KA1RV and JimE N1HTS.

We started our trip Thursday with our usual stop at HRO by sending Erik there for when they open and he still gets us going late. He buys a new rig with hopes that Penni won't notice the VISA bill and shuffle him out of the store before he has a chance to buy anything else. For some reason we've been hitting traffic every year due to RT93 construction this time going down to one lane.

Back to two lanes, Mark was bored in traffic and wonders if the trailer next to him is heading to the mountain so he gets their attention and starts making conversation with Dan Rutan during stop and go, small world. JimE tells Bruce that he has a bad feeling about the weekend and something bad (or dumb) will happen. We arrive at our normal midpoint restaurant and ended up inside for the first time in all these years. Rob tries for a cardiac-friendly lunch but couldn't resist french fries.

The second half of the trip is normal (for us) and we arrive at the communications shack and begin setting up the ATV downlink antennas. As if on queue, Ian AF1R arrives just as we are about to leave, so we help him set up his antennas as well. We arrive at the campground to find that JimE screwed up the reservations - JimE (bad thing #1). After some discussions we arrive at a more than reasonable accommodations from the owners, so JimE, Mark and Erik proceed to the usual camp site in the trees. Erik tries unsuccessfully with the rock and string to get the antenna up high but succeeds with the slingshot. We get the dipole around 85' in the air this year. We'll take it. Dave and Diane Burden with kids and dog are up from Atlanta with a VW microbus. They are in the campsite across the road laughing at our annual

antenna raising party. They've seen us in action before and keep their distance until we back the motorhome into the site. Mike and Bruce set up a trailer while Mary Beth, Dave and Rob help the campground owners clean up a pop-up rental.

With three campsites set up we're hungry so we head into town to eat at the China Buffet. The buffet was ok but someone noticed there were no Orientals cooking the food there. Hmm. From there we headed to the store for the four main food groups: beer, salt, fat and cholesterol. By the time we get back to the sites we're too tired to bring out HF gear so sleep comes early after a couple of beers.

Friday's alarm goes off at o'dark thirty. We're all getting old so it's a slow start. We get to breakfast and Ian informs JimE that he's short of control ops for today and he'll be in control. Jim's glad he hit the sack early. Mary Beth ended up at 2, Mark at 3, Mike at 4, Rob at 5, Bruce at 14, Dave at 15, Erik at 18. JimM has to work Friday.

JimE headed up to 3 with Mark to set up the ATV transmitter and camera then comes down to control. The plastic folding chairs in control are hard after the first ten minutes. Jim misses Mack and his pillows. Since most of the accidents happen on the lower part, they decide to run that today.

Dave Patten in car #21 went OFF at 16. He was done for weekend, with plenty of debris in the radiator. Dave said the car was "smooshed". When we asked Denise separately she said that the car was "smooshed". Dave has done this before, but not during the first run. One of Dave's "friends" left him a "This car climbed Mt Washington" bumper sticker with "climbed" crossed out and "crashed at" inserted. There was a slight rollover elsewhere but the driver was ok. After we're all down and have our worker meeting, we head to the paddock to hassle the Havas brothers again. What? No dents? Look - a smooth roof on Andrew's car! He just gave us that look.

Back at the camp, Erik is drooling over his new IC746 and gets it on the air before he opens a beer. After reading the manual to get the antenna setting right, he finally makes contact with someone. JimM finally arrives at the campground after unwittingly taking the scenic route to the other side of Mt Washington, and goes to Wal-Mart to buy a rainsuit which really came in handy. It was so wet out that the umbrellas leaked. JimE decides to take a shower given it's hot, muggy and nothing

else to do and while shampooing, he realizes that the towel is in the camper (bad thing #2). At least he's clean before going to the Italian restaurant. Poor waitress.

First thing Saturday morning John Ricker got his car "smooshed" at breakfast when some truck decided John didn't need that front bumper anyways. Then we had massive rain, which caused everyone to stand around for an extra hour. Next time we will all head to the big top and let Ian come to us. Ian is voted this year's weather steward. Why not?

Jim, Mark and Erik ended up at 3 with Mark Ragsdale as the flagger. JimM and Mike at 7, Rob at 15, Dave and Mary Beth at 6 and Bruce at 2. Jim points the camera uphill since that is where the cars lose it on the first corner with dirt. Ray Blethen in car #50 drives right into the same ditch as two years ago but this time powers out of the ditch. Later in the paddock he said "there was no way I was staying in the ditch again".

Other cars, mainly Audi's get real close to that ditch. Tom Weaver drives Audi car #00 into the ditch, bounces up on the nose, spins on the nose and comes down across the road on the wheels. Control red flags 1-3 about as fast as Erik can call in the emergency. Mark runs with flags while Jim runs with the fire bottle. Mark checks Tom while Jim is checking out the car. Tom wants to get pushed out to continue but Mark informs him the left front tire is in the ditch and to kill the engine. Tom jumps out and runs over to open the passenger door. He had a camcorder which he rewound the tape from the start and the five of us are huddled close, under the umbrella so we can watch it on the little LCD screen. Of course all control can see is four workers huddling over a driver... The wrecker, flatbed and ambulance all arrive and we clean up the mess in the POURING rain. We name station 3 "Audi Corner" - aka the "Quattro Trap".

Chris Sanborn in car #13 (another Audi) hits the same ditch but deposits his muffler in the middle of the road so Erik had to run out and retrieve it. Chris pulled over further on up. On the way down he stopped to get his muffler and said "so how was the show?". Seems like something always happens to Chris. The rain is coming down so hard we can hardly hear anything. Mark looks up and yells "C'mon, is this the best you got?!". Nope, it kept raining harder Truck #7 lost another wheel this year. On the lighter side, Course Open-

ing at one point had 6 people in the Audi A4 they were driving. It was so chummy in there we heard they all exchanged phone numbers afterwards. :-) Jim is told later that the VCR he brought didn't record (bad thing #3) but the tv pictures were ok. He missed getting 00 on tape. The VCR *had* been playing ok, why check it on record? Duh!

At the campground it's naps for all before the cookout. At the cookout Paul Giblin was trying to give out 5 year pins for folks who have been coming for 9 years. Jim declines his pin to get next year's 10 year pin. The gang decided to generate a list for Ian for next year's pins. Gibby does his sponsor thank you's, driver thank you's, worker thank you's, and ends with a pile of worker giveaways. Funny how he got the best applause when he announced the extra large shirts and jackets. Hmmm. Rob and Dave were lusting over the diesel generator used to power everything under the tent. Back at the campground the HF gear comes out and FD points are given out until 11-ish. Tomorrow is a long day.

Sunday looks a whole lot better weather wise, but it's reported to be 13 degrees wind-chill on the top. This IS the end of June, right??? As we are all standing around basking in the daylight, Neil MacArthur introduces Stephanie Starbird as a paramedic since she is too short to be a paramedic. Neil gets the evil eye from Steph. It's too early for this stuff. Jim and Mark end up at 24 with the ATV, Rob at 3, Dave and Mary Beth at 25, Mike at 27, Bruce at 19, Erik at 23 and JimM at 33-finish. While we are setting up the ATV gear, a reporter comes by and asks Jim and Mark if they were ever Boy Scouts. Jim says yes and they start discussing how Boy Scouts prepared him for life and what he's doing here. Plenty of pictures taken and Mark says "That's all they need to see. You as a poster boy for Boys Life". Who knows what will come of it but it was fun.

Chris "Crash" Sanborn's car #13 ended up on it's side at 13. Dan Rutan's car #81 went off at 25 halfway between stations. Mary Beth calls it in while Dave runs 300 yards uphill with a fire bottle. Dave remarked later "I almost passed out", and he's in shape!!! Andy English came down from 26 to help. He spotted some smoke so he discharged Rutan's fire bottle to be sure. Naturally the wind shifted and he sucked in some dry chem. He was hurting walking uphill to 26. Dan remarked when he got to 25 that "the three bolts holding the steering wheel came lose while rounding cragway corner and instead of pulling over to

tighten them, I tried to tighten them while driving. Then the wheel came off". Something about lose nut behind wheel, but we aren't sure which nut. He was chasing Charlie Rutan's car #75 who broke a little further up hill with a rod through the crankcase. Later it was discovered that Dan's steering wheel bolts had stripped out of the aluminum hub! Not even Loctite will save you from that!

Howie and Gibby drove up passing out worker lunches. Thanks!!! There were a few broken cars and egos, but nobody got seriously hurt. We did have a whole lot of fun, even with the rain earlier in the weekend. JimM was amazed at how fast the cars flew past the finish line to become airborne for about 2-3 feet, just before the right turn to the top parking lot. Fortunately no one missed that turn, which would have been the express route to the bottom. He said "these guys are crazy". At the bottom we have all the antennas to take down. Sure comes down faster than going up. We head to the big top to hear the winners announced by Gibby. We have ice cream for supper and head out, except for Mike, who decided to stay the night at the campground instead of trying to back the trailer into the yard in the dark. As we are leaving, Jim tries to start the camper. He turns the key and nothing. He had left the lights on all day. Luckily Mark had a set of jumper cables. (bad thing #4). The battery got Jim home but it was toast the next day.

Between all the Audi sponsor's name being mentioned, and the discussions about the Audi's going off at this corner or that corner, or winning the event, we started saying "AUDI" like Minni Pearl used to say "HOWDEE" all the way home on the radios. Ice cream again at Thea's, and it's still light out. Not like last year. We arrive home around 10pm, and so far we'll all be back next year.

The results were in Pit Talk but we want to mention Frank Sprongl's new record of 6 minutes 41.99 seconds. Way to go Frank!!!

It's a sad note that long time PRO-Rally driver Carl Merrill died during a later rally. He will be missed.
Erik Piip

It's Almost Spring—Think Flea Markets

March

19-20 Lewiston ME AARC ME St Conv.

21 Southington CT SARA
27 Waterford CT RASON Auction
27 Pomfret CT ECARA
28 Henniker NH ComtoocookVRC

April

10I Twin Mt NH NARC + LARK
11I Bristol CT ICRC
11 Framingham MA
18 Flea at MIT
24 Nashua NE Antique RC

May

7,8 Rochester NH Hoss Traders

Public Service

The Boston Marathon coming up April 19th. The BAA has requested 180 hams for the 1999 Marathon. The contacts for the Marathon are listed below.

Apr 11 Boston MA Walk for Multiple Sclerosis
Bob WA1IDA 508-650-9440

Hopkinton-Start Steve K1ST 508-435-5178
stolf@ma.ultranet.com
Course Bob WA1IDA 508-650-9440
wa1ida@mediaone.net
Finish Line Paul W1SEX
ptopolski@net1plus.com

The Groton Road Race on April 25th needs 35 hams. For more information contact Erik Piip KA1RV at 978-448-5536.
piip@merl.com

25 Boston March of Dimes WalkAmerica Bruce KC1US

Jun 26-27 Boston MA Multiple Sclerosis Bike Tour John N1PYN

Adopy-a-Highway -- Another upcoming PS activity is the road cleanup for our adopted highway. We will start up again after the April meeting so I will be looking for volunteers...Stan

NVARC ARES/RACES

Saturday February 13th several local radio operators attended ICS-100 Incident Command System

training at MEMA headquarters in Belchertown. The course was taught by Jim Hall from MEMA and covered the basics of ICS with a communications focus. ICS is a management system that was developed based on experience gained while fighting large wildfires. It is designed to make managing large situations with multiple agencies and jurisdictions more efficient. Using ICS is required in all HAZMAT situations. ICS is used even in local fire departments. Besides the command structure, ICS standardizes names for various command levels (rank) based on experience not actual rank. It also standardizes terminology used to describe things like "helibase" or "command post".

Since the use of ICS may seem 'far off' I will mention that persons trained to manage Search and Rescue operations such as our speaker next month use ICS. So if you were ever involved in such an event it is likely you would be hearing terminology defined by the ICS program.

Attendees from our area were AA2T Gerry, KD1LE Stan, KD1SM Ralph, W1HFN Barry, and NZ1D Bill.

PS On the trip out and back Ralph and Stan got to test the range of the six meter machine from various locations. We raised it from a few high points along the way and had a chat with Bob W1XP from the scenic recreation area (Mt Quabbin?) overlooking the Quabbin reservoir near the dam. -- Ed.

From the ARRL Newsletter

AMATEUR RADIO SPECTRUM PROTECTION ACT OF 1999 INTRODUCED

It's round two in Congress for the Amateur Radio Spectrum Protection Act. At the request of the ARRL, Rep Michael Bilirakis introduced the 1999 version of the proposed legislation, HR 783, on February 23. The bill is aimed at ensuring the availability of spectrum to Amateur Radio operators. It would protect existing Amateur Radio spectrum against reallocations to or sharing with other services unless the FCC provides "equivalent replacement spectrum" elsewhere. Bilirakis, a Florida Republican, also sponsored last year's measure, which attracted upwards of 83 cosponsors on both sides of the aisle. Rep Frank Pallone Jr, a New Jersey Democrat, is the initial cosponsor of the 1999 bill.

ARRL Legislative and Public Affairs Manager Steve Mansfield, N1MZA, says the 1999 bill "is largely the same as last year's HR 3572." The major difference is that the 1999 version adds "Amateur Satellite Service" frequencies to "Amateur Radio Service" in detailing the frequencies that would be afforded protection under the act.

Specifically, HR 783 would amend the Communications Act to require the FCC to provide "equivalent replacement spectrum" to Amateur Radio and the Amateur Satellite Service in the event of a reallocation of primary amateur allocations, any reduction in secondary amateur allocations, or "additional allocations within such bands that would substantially reduce the utility thereof" to amateurs.

Mansfield said it's too soon to predict how HR 783 will fare in the new Congress, but said the fact that it has been introduced so early in the session "bodes well for our prospects." He said that a number of the cosponsors from last year already have indicated an interest in signing on again, "so I think we'll have a lot of support." Mansfield also hopes the bill can take advantage of a desire on the part of the House leadership to move a lot of legislation through this year. "I'm hoping our bill will get caught up in their enthusiasm," he said.

A copy of the measure is available via the Thomas Web site, <http://thomas.loc.gov/>

HAARP TO CONDUCT LISTENING, AMATEUR TESTS

The High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program (HAARP) facility in Alaska, will conduct a second HAARP Listening Test in late March. HAARP also will conduct an Amateur Radio experiment earlier in the month.

HAARP will transmit March 26 0800-0830 UTC and March 27 0700-0730 UTC, seeking reports from hams and SWLs in Alaska and in the "Lower 48." The HAARP facility rarely transmits, but its previous listening test in March 1997 was so successful that it has decided to conduct another one. The listening test transmissions will be on or about 3.4 MHz and 6.99 MHz. HAARP will send a CW message and request signal strength reports. HAARP's Ed Kennedy, K3NS, points out that the test times are early ones for those on the East Coast, but he says they represent the best chance for listeners in that part of the world to hear

HAARP. "They lost out last time due to poor propagation conditions," he said.

The 1999 listening test will begin on the hour on 6.99 MHz with an ID, followed by three four-minute periods of carrier only for signal-strength measurements, then a CW message. A somewhat shorter test will begin at 20 minutes past the hour on 3.39 MHz, with an ID, followed by one four-minute carrier and a CW message. QSLs will be available only for reports mailed to HAARP, PO Box 271, Gakona, AK 99586

HAARP also will conduct what Kennedy calls "a true Amateur Radio experiment" in conjunction with the March research effort. The ham experiment, March 20, 2200-2400 UTC, is being organized by Ed Cole, AL7EB, with cooperation from several participants in Alaska and Canada. As Kennedy explains it, "HAARP will attempt to generate field-aligned irregularities in the F-region over the HAARP facility, and the participants will attempt to establish communication links by scattering VHF signals off the FAI."

Each HAARP transmitter can produce 10 kW of RF output between 2.8 and 10 MHz. For the listening test, HAARP will use all 48 available antenna elements but run transmitters at half power, around 480 kW. During the Amateur Radio test on March 20, HAARP will run full power--960 kW.

HAARP's stated scientific purpose is to study "the properties and behavior of the ionosphere, with particular emphasis on being able to understand and use it to enhance communications and surveillance systems for both civilian and defense purposes." For more information, see "The High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program" (QST, Sep 1996, p 33) or visit the HAARP Web site, <http://w3.nrl.navy.mil/haarp.html>

VELCRO TO HOLD FIRST ISS HAM HARDWARE

Velcro will be used to hold initial Amateur Radio gear in place aboard the gravity-free environment of the International Space Station. Since the Russian-built Service Module lacks rack space for amateur equipment, the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station ham gear will be attached to the wall using Velcro. The use of Velcro to keep tools and equipment in place has become widespread over the years on the space shuttles as well as aboard the Russian Mir space station.

ISS Amateur Radio equipment development by ARISS volunteers continues in the wake of Janu-

ary meetings in Houston of most ARISS partners. During the gatherings at NASA's Johnson Space Center, ARISS Hardware Team leader Lou McFadin, W5DID, said initial development of Amateur Radio for the ISS supports the start-small-and-get-bigger approach to Amateur Radio deployment on the ISS recommended by ARISS-Russian's Sergej Sambourov, RV3DR.

Sambourov confirmed that four dual-use antenna feedthroughs have been installed on the Russian ISS Service Module. Plans call for these feedthroughs to support both Amateur Radio operations and ISS proximity video capability during Russian and US spacewalks. Cables have been installed internal to the Service Module to attach the four feedthroughs to the ARISS-coordinated Amateur Radio station.

ARISS Hardware Team members also have agreed on antenna design concepts, including a VHF/UHF antenna for 2 meters and 70 cm, and a flat, spiral antenna that will serve for an amateur radio L and S-band antenna. Yet to be defined is an antenna for HF. Sambourov says the antenna systems would be mounted on handrails near the back of the Service Module during spacewalks. Antennas would be secured using a clothespin-type clamp provided by Energia. The ARISS US and Italian teams will supply the antennas, diplexer, and mounting plate.

The ARISS team will provide training hardware for the equipment to be housed in the Service Module as well as antennas and antenna mockups for EVA training in Russia.

E44DX log search

The historic first DXpedition to E4 by W3UR, OH1RY, OH2TA and OH2BH, ended up putting nearly 34,000 contacts in the log during seven days of operation in February from Gaza City, Palestine. QSL E44DX via OH2BN. An online log search now is available at the official E44DX Web site, <http://www.n4gn.com/e44dx/>. The same log search database also may be searched via e-mail. Send a message to e44dx-log@n4gn.com with your call sign at the beginning of the Subject line. The body of the message should be blank.—thanks to Tim Totten, N4GN

PSK31 GETS RAVES

Getting tired of the "same ol' same ol'" on HF? From the father of AMTOR, Peter Martinez,

G3PLX, comes PSK31, a “live QSO” keyboard-to-keyboard mode that occupies a sliver of bandwidth and offers terrific performance even under weak-signal conditions.

PSK31 isn't new; it's been around for a few years, but no one really took much notice until Martinez developed free software that works with a PC sound card. Suddenly, PSK31 has become the latest HF fad. Unlike 'TOR modes, PSK31 does not use a synchronized linking—or handshaking—protocol to exchange error-checked data packets. Operationally, it's much like traditional 45-baud RTTY. PSK31 has shown itself to be a real trouper in weak-signal situations. Some hams experimenting with PSK31 claim that it outperforms all other amateur modes for weak-signal work—including CW. Indeed, PSK31 signals are easy to overlook on the bands. Most PSK31 activity is concentrated on 14.070.15 and at 3.580.15 MHz. You'll also find it on 40 meters at 7.035.15 MHz. On 15 meters, look for activity around 21.070 MHz.

To run PSK31, you need a PC that runs Windows that's equipped with a sound card. PSK31 software is available via the Web). Your HF SSB transceiver should be very stable and tune in 1-Hz increments. The connections between the radio and the sound card are very straightforward.

Several versions of PSK31 software are available as zipped files. The latest PSK31 software includes a couple of tuning aids that make finding and tuning signals much simpler. The “official” PSK31 Web site is <http://aintel.bi.ehu.es/psk31.html>, operated by Eduardo Jacob, EA2BAJ. The site also contains lots of information and links to other PSK31 and DSP-related sites, plus .wav files of PSK31 signals, so you'll know what to listen for.

W1AW Station Manager Joe Carcia, NJ1Q, has experimented with the new operating mode, PSK31, at the Maxim Memorial Station. While it took a bit of effort to get the equipment to function properly, he says initial results were quite good. Plans are in the works to add this mode to the complement of modes available for W1AW visiting operators.

Some have questioned whether the FCC permits hams to use PSK31. The answer is a definite “yes,” although some confusion is understandable given the wording of Section 97.309(a) of the rules. Responding to an ARRL inquiry, the FCC amended the section in 1995 (Order DA 95-2106) “to clarify that amateur stations may use any digi-

tal code that has its technical characteristics publicly documented.” PSK31 is publicly documented and widely available, but the ARRL in late January took the additional step of specifically documenting the technical characteristics of both PACTOR II and PSK31 in a letter to the FCC.

ZL9CI tops DXpedition QSO record:

The Kermadec DX Association's ZL9CI Campbell Island DXpedition topped the DXpedition QSO record set a couple of years ago by the Heard Island VK0IR DXpedition. During its operation from January 6-24, the ZL9CI crew put some 96,000 contacts in the log. The VK0IR team had held the record at 80,000-plus contacts. Both the VK0IR DXpedition and the ZL9CI DXpedition were recipients of Colvin Award grants via the ARRL. For more information, or to see if you're in the log, visit <http://www.qsl.net/zl9ci/>.

Check out the “new” QEX:

Can't get enough technical articles and challenging projects? Check out the new QEX! If you would like more technical articles and challenging projects, look for them in QEX. This bimonthly publication (64 pages) offers you more than four times the technical content of a single QST. Ham radio technical experimentation is alive in QEX. In the March/April issue you'll find: vertical antennas—modeling and building a quarter-wave on 160 meters; Remote base operation; homebrewing dream station; better filters for QRP rigs; killer front end; propagation from the edge; 6-meter power; power for MOSFETs, and much more. Visit <http://www.arrl.org/qex/> to see.

ADI sponsors ham radio testing site:

Premier Communications, which makes ADI and Pryme products, has debuted its HamTest.com Web site to help ham radio neophytes study for their Amateur Radio examinations. The site, <http://www.hamtest.com>, provides simulated tests, access to all question pools, and a link to the ARRL/VEC home page and the database of upcoming test sessions. Help is available by posting a request in the interactive user forum. Advice from experienced hams is available in the “Elmers Chat Room.” Use of advanced features requires a Java-enhanced browser. The site materials are available free to all. For more information, send e-mail to elmer@hamtest.com. The ADI/Pryme site is at <http://www.adi-radio.com>.--ADI news release

OHIO HAMS HELP SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL

Hams in Ohio's Miami Valley helped to search for a nine-year-old girl reported missing February 7. Erica Nicole Baker of Kettering failed to return home after walking the family dog near the Kettering Recreation Complex. The dog was found—still wearing its leash—about three hours later.

The youngster's parents are separated. Erica's father had dropped her off at her mother's home the afternoon of February 7. She was last seen in the park wearing a pink raincoat, a Winnie the Pooh sweatshirt, and blue jeans. An official search, which included search dogs and involved dragging, then draining, a pond near the park complex, turned up empty-handed.

The Dayton Amateur Radio Association van, the Warren County Mounted Search Team, and RACES were called in to aid with the search February 11. Hams from Warren, Greene, Montgomery, Clark, and Darke counties aided police, fire, and search teams by providing communication in the field and maintaining posts around the search perimeter.

The search was expanded to cover a 150-square-mile area around the rec complex. Miami Valley Urban Search and Rescue Team asked the DARA van to return February 12 to serve as command post support at the Germantown Dam Reserve. A decision also was made to use HF and packet instead of the well-monitored VHF and UHF repeaters, to minimize eavesdropping. Among those assisting was ARRL Great Lakes Director Dave Coons, WT8W.

As of February 25, Erica remained missing, according to Kettering Police. Her disappearance has been the subject of episodes on America's Most Wanted. Anyone having information on the missing girl is asked to call the Kettering Police, 937-296-2570.—Bev Priest, N8VZV

W4EHW OPERATORS COMMENDED

Operators at W4EHW ("Early Hurricane Warning") at the National Hurricane Center in Miami have been honored by the National Hurricane Center. The 30 operators received Certificates of Commendation in late January, presented by NHC Deputy Director Max Mayfield. He expressed his thanks for the operators' commitment and dedication in supporting the Center's staff.

NHC Director Jerry Jarrell says ham radio volunteers play an important role in storm forecasting and tracking. "Despite all the technological ad-

vances in satellite imagery and modern hurricane hunter airplanes, the hams many times are the only ones that can tell us what is actually happening on the ground, and, for this we are grateful," he said.

Volunteer amateurs have been donating their time and equipment to the National Hurricane Center for nearly 20 years now, helping to gather weather and storm data from hams along the US coast and throughout the Caribbean. During the busy 1998 season, W4EHW operators logged more than 180 hours for Hurricane Georges and nearly 90 for Hurricane Mitch—plus many hours for other storms. During Georges, W4EHW received nearly 500 reports by Amateur Radio, fax or the Internet. Hurricane forecasters use data received from amateurs via W4EHW as an aid in preparing their forecasts.

According to the NHC Coordinator for Amateur Radio John McHugh, KU4GY, Amateur Radio support to the Center began humbly during the 1980 hurricane season. "Julio Ripoll, WD4JNS (now W4EHW assistant coordinator), carried a borrowed HF radio in a cardboard box to and from the Center whenever a storm threatened," he recalled. "He set it up on a forecaster's desk, ran a wire antenna, and with a crew of five volunteers, operated for 12-hour shifts."

Today W4EHW sports a donated state-of-the-art station that includes HF, VHF, and UHF radios, six antennas and two computers that handle APRS and Internet communication. The 30 volunteers typically work three-hour shifts in conjunction with the Hurricane Watch Net on 14.325 MHz, usually starting when a hurricane is within 200 to 300 miles of land. This year, because of the threat that Georges might hit Miami and the NHC, one operator, Hank Collins, W8KIW, and his wife were "locked down" inside the center for 18 hours, McHugh recalled. Along with McHugh and Ripoll, Hurricane Watch Net Manager Jerry Herman, N3BDW, was among those receiving commendations.

For more information, visit the W4EHW Web site, <http://www.fiu.edu/orgs/w4ehw/>

BURUNDI (9U) CONTACTS DISALLOWED:

The ARRL DXCC Desk says it's determined that documentation for operations from Burundi (9U) since 1994 was forged. After inquiries to DXCC about Amateur Radio operations from Burundi, the

Director General of ONATEL, the communications authorities in Burundi, informed DXCC that the licenses were forgeries. The operators reportedly were expelled from the country, and the incident is under investigation by their employer. The DXCC Desk has since been rejecting cards for those operations. As soon as possible, all contacts from those operations will be purged from the DXCC database. This affects all operations since 1994 using a 9U prefix. DXCC notes that the submission of forged documentation is a clear violation of DXCC Section 1, Basic Rule 7, and also Rule 12(a).—DXCC Desk

Kenwood UHF Commercial two way will do 440
W/programming I'll supply
Amber Strobe 2 ranges

Swaps will be considered
dpeabody@net1plus.com

\$The February Treasurer's Report \$

Income for Feb/March was \$45 in dues and \$2 from one ARRL membership renewal. Expenses were \$13.20 for newsletter postage. Nothing was expended from the Community Fund. Current balances:

General Fund \$428.76
Community Fund \$440.92



Haven't seen many of those Y2K advance membership checks come in to the PO box yet. Don't wait too long, please.

Also, the newsletter address label always contains your next membership renewal date. If you're ever in doubt, check there or double-check with me at any club meeting.

73, -Ralph KD1SM



**Nashoba Valley
Amateur Radio Club**

PO Box # 900
Pepperell Mass 01463-0900

Pres.: Erik Piip KA1RV
V Pres.: Den Connors KD2S
Secretary: Ian Norrish NZ1B
Treasurer: Ralph Swick KD1SM
Editor: Stan Pozerski KD1LE
PIO: Jon Kinney N1JGA

Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of the month - 7:30 p.m. - Pepperell Community Ctr.

Talk-in 146.490 simplex
442.90 + 100Hz Repeater

This newsletter is published monthly. Submissions, corrections and inquiries should be directed to the newsletter editor. Articles and graphics in most IBM-PC formats are OK. You can leave items on PEPMBX, at Packet address:

KDILE@N1FT.NH or
pozerski@net1plus.com

NVARC Flea Market

The Following items are listed by Dave N1MNX

Cordless Phones used	2	BO
New Nortel Desk Phone		BO
w/lots of features	1	BO
Standard 2M HT Exp Coverage	1	BO
10/11 meter AM HT	1	BO
Ranger VHF Marine New w/war	3	