



SIGMA



de NINC

December 2010 Volume 19 Number 12

This Month's Meeting

This month's meeting is Thursday December 16th at 7:30 at the Pepperell Community Center.

The December homebrew and January short subjects meetings are local content. We need your participation to make them a success.

From The President

As we enter the winter months the possibility for extreme weather is ever present. The N1MNX repeaters are our meeting place in an emergency. The repeaters have emergency power and should be available. On the other end are you ready? Do you keep your hand held batteries charged? Do you have an adapter to power it from an external source such as a gel cell or regular batteries. Do you have batteries for the VHF and UHF radios at home? There is still time to prepare so think about how you can get or stay on the air if the need arises.

Stan KD1LE

Last Month's Meeting

Last months' meeting program was given by Dave N1MNX who talked about the evolution and current status of the N1MNX repeaters.

John KK1X talked about his experiences with D-STAR type digital repeaters and radios.

Stan KD1LE gave a wrap up and some statistics on the October QSL Card Sort. This was followed by some discussion on how we could improve the accuracy of the sort.

NVARC Net

The NVARC net meets on 442.900 N1MNX repeater Mondays at 8:00 PM. The net is for sharing information and asking questions. Recent topics were meeting programs, antenna suggestions for new hams (Girl Scouts that attended FD), Les' Bermuda DXpedition.

Bring your questions and topics for discussion so that we can all learn something..

Recent checkins Jim N8VIM, N1MNX, Stan KD1LE, Gary K1YTS, Skip K1NKR, Dick W1LTN, Bob W1XP and Roland NR1G, KB1ESR .Larry NCS.

PSLIST

No events currently listed.

See www.n1nc.org/Events for the latest information

Board Meeting

Reminder that if you have a homebrew item let us know.

Ralph gave the treasurers report which is reported in its own section.

There was a discussion on ways to improve the Monday night net in terms of content.

Renewed John Kelly GM3TCW Honorary Membership.

Meeting programs were discussed. Skip K1NKR is working to schedule programs. We are always looking for a short subject or show-and-tell to add to each meeting. Skip discussed the calendar of programs as far as it was known. The December program will be Homebrew Night. January is Members

Short Subjects. Please contact one of the officers if you have a presentation for January so that the meeting can be planned.

In attendance were Stan KD1LE, Skip K1NKR, John KK1X, Ralph KD1SM

Adopt A Highway

The November road clean up took place Sunday November 21st



Courtesy KD1SM

Thanks to (L-R) Rod WA1TAC, Stan KD1LE, Nancy KB1KEF, and Gary K1YTS, and Ralph KD1SM (behind the camera) who made the cleanup. We picked up 9 bags of trash. This was the last cleanup for the year. Next clean up will be in April 2011.

Treasurers Report

Income for November was \$30 in membership renewals, and \$19.17 in bank interest. Expenses were \$83.56 for outgoing QSL Bureau and \$17.60 for future newsletter postage leaving a net expense of \$51.99 for the month.

Current balances:

General fund	\$3,814.50
Community fund	\$4,336.41

As of 2 December we have 44 members who are current with their dues and 23 renewals outstanding. Please check your renewal status on the roster circulated at the monthly meeting or ask Ralph.

If your ARRL membership is ready for renewal, you can let Ralph mail it in for you and the Club will get a commission. If you're interested in joining the ARRL and do so through Ralph the Club will get a bigger

commission. ARRL membership checks should be made payable to NVARC so that our commission can be deducted before we forward your membership to Newington.

Ralph KD1SM

ARRL Letter

Regulatory: Amateur Allocation at Lower MF Gains Formal Support in the Americas

A secondary allocation to the Amateur Radio Service at 461-469 and 471-478 kHz gained inter-American support in meetings held earlier this month in Bogota, Colombia, with the Permanent Consultative Committee II of the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL) adopting the US position for the MF allocation. World Radiocommunication Conference 2012 Agenda Item 1.23 calls on participants "to consider an allocation of about 15 kHz in parts of the band 415-526.5 kHz to the Amateur Service on a secondary basis, taking into account the need to protect existing services." Read more here.

On the Air: Saddle Up for the 2010 CW Rookie Roundup!

Grab your paddle and mosey on into the ARRL CW Rookie Roundup!

The ARRL's newest on-the-air operating event is designed to help newly licensed amateurs build their operating skills on HF. Three Rookie Roundups -- one each for SSB, RTTY and CW -- are held each calendar year. The CW running of the Rookie Roundup will take place Sunday, December 19 from 1800 UTC through 2359 UTC. This is a contest specifically for those new to Amateur Radio, similar to the ARRL Novice Roundup that ran from 1952 until 1995. The Rookie Roundup combines a competitive event with some on-the-air training, bringing the fun and Elmering of the old Novice Roundup into the 21st century. The Rookie Roundup is a single-operator event only. Stations are allowed a maximum of 100 W. Elmering is encouraged and use of spotting networks is allowed. Read more here.

ARRL Publications: ARRL Introduces Book on Selecting, Using Antenna Tuners

Antenna tuners are devices often misunderstood in the Amateur Radio world. While not every station requires an antenna tuner to transmit radio signals, without one an incompatibility between the transmitter and the antenna system can result in poor performance. The ARRL Guide to Antenna Tuners: A

Radio Amateur's Guide to Antenna Matching by Joel R. Hallas, W1ZR, will help you understand how to select the right tuner for your needs and how to use it in your shack.

The ARRL Guide to Antenna Tuners discusses the details of the different configurations and requirements of antenna tuners. It explores the design, construction and applications of the different types available. You'll be able to determine if one is necessary in your station, what type of tuner is needed and where to install it for maximum improvement. This book will give you a better understanding of your antenna system and the way it can be improved through the selection and use of the appropriate antenna tuner. Read more here.

DXCC: Eight African Operations Approved for DXCC Credit

ARRL DXCC Manager Bill Moore, NC1L, reports that eight operations in Africa -- 9Q/DK3MO (Democratic Republic of the Congo), 3C0C (Annobon), 3C9B (Equatorial Guinea), 3V9A (Tunisia), 3V0A (Tunisia), TS7TI (Tunisia, also includes /p operation), TS8P (Tunisia, also includes /p operation) and TS9A (Tunisia) -- have been approved for DXCC credit. All operations -- with the exception for the 9Q/DK3MO -- are 2010 operations. The 9Q/DK3MO operation is good for operations commencing in 2007 through the present.

New QuickStats Poll Now Available on ARRL Web Site

Four new poll questions have just been published on the QuickStats page on the ARRL Web site. Let your voice be heard!

Questions in this month's QuickStats poll include:

- * Do you use CW on a regular basis?
- * If your out-of-warranty transceiver failed, what would you do?
- * Do you own a tablet computer?
- * Does your ARES® group use the ARRL Public Service Activity Report form to document SKYWARN activity?

Visit the QuickStats page and be sure to bookmark it in your browser. Results from this QuickStats poll will be published in the March 2011 issue of QST on the QuickStats page, located in the rear advertising section of the magazine. Along with monthly poll results, QST QuickStats offers colorful charts and graphs that highlight interesting Amateur Radio statistics.

This Week on the Radio

This week:

- * December 10 -- NCCC Sprint Ladder
- * December 11 -- Feld Hell Sprint
- * December 11-12 -- ARRL 10 Meter Contest; International Naval Contest; MDXA PSK Death Match
- * December 11-16 -- NA High Speed Meteor Scatter Winter Rally
- * December 12 -- SKCC Weekend Sprint; CQC Great Colorado Snowshoe Run
- * December 15 -- NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint

Next week:

- * December 17 -- NCCC Sprint Ladder; Russian 160 Meter Contest; AGB-Party Contest
- * December 18 -- OK DX RTTY Contest; RAC Winter Contest
- * December 18-January 2 -- Lighthouse Christmas Lights QSO Party
- * December 18-19 -- Stew Perry Topband Challenge; Croatian CW Contest
- * December 19 -- ARRL Rookie Roundup (CW)
- * December 20 -- Run for the Bacon QRP Contest
- * December 22 -- SKCC Sprint

All dates, unless otherwise stated, are UTC. See the ARRL Contest Branch page, the ARRL Contest Update and the WA7BNM Contest Calendar for more info. Looking for a Special Event station? Be sure to check out the ARRL Special Event Stations Web page.

Public Service: ARES®, SKYWARN Activated as TORNADOS Swing Through the South

This image shows the location of the seven tornados that swept through Mississippi the night of November 29. Click here for a larger image. [Image courtesy of the National Weather Service, Jackson]

On the evening of Monday, November 29, a series of severe storms swept through Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, and hams provided support from the National Weather Service office in Jackson, Mississippi. According to the NWS, seven tornados were embedded in the storm system, with at least six counties reporting damage. There were no deaths in the latest storms, though 15 people were hurt in Mississippi and buildings were badly damaged there and in Louisiana. Schools were closed in Alabama and tornado watches were posted in Tennessee and parts of North and South Carolina on Tuesday as the storms moved east.

BPL: ARRL Strengthens the Case for Mandatory BPL Notching

The ARRL filed an ex parte submission with the FCC on November 30, providing additional support for its position that the FCC should require mandatory notching of the amateur bands by Broadband over Power Line (BPL). The ARRL's filing stated such devices can cause harmful interference to Amateur Radio operators, and requested that the FCC "establish rules that are appropriate for unlicensed BPL systems and which minimize the interference potential."

After the FCC released its Request for Further Comment and Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making in July 2009, the ARRL filed comments and reply comments and made oral and written ex parte filings, urging the adoption of Part 15 Rules which reflect both the capabilities and practices of the bulk of the BPL industry, and which are sufficient to protect licensed radio services in the HF and VHF bands.

"It has been painfully apparent that the present rules permit the deployment of BPL in configurations which cause severe, ongoing harmful interference if operated on radio spectrum that is in use locally," the ARRL asserted in its filing. The ARRL, in its numerous filings on this issue has "strenuously urged" the FCC to require full time, mandatory notching of all amateur allocations to at least 35 dB notch depths. "This level of notching is both achievable by present BPL systems and is typically, but not universally, implemented by the BPL industry."

Amateur Radio in Space: ISS Expedition 24/25 Crew Back on Terra Firma

Astronaut Doug Wheelock, KF5BOC, chats with Craig Fox, N6RSX, of Brea, California while on board the International Space Station.

After more than 160 days in space, ISS Expedition 25 Commander Doug Wheelock, KF5BOC -- along with Flight Engineers Shannon Walker, KD5DXB, and Fyodor Yurchikhin, RN3FI -- has returned to Earth from the International Space Station (ISS). Their Soyuz spacecraft landed in Kazakhstan on Friday, November 26. While on board the ISS, both Wheelock and Walker participated in the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) program, and made 22 ISS-to-school and ISS-to-camp QSOs. In addition, Wheelock averaged about two dozen casual QSOs each week while on board the ISS.

On the Air: Soar High in the ARRL 10 Meter Contest

Brock Thomsen, W6GMT, of Marcell, Minnesota, ran as QRP mixed for the 2008 ARRL 10 Meter Contest. He operated from the San Pedro Campground near Del Rio, Texas, using solar and battery power. [Photo courtesy of Brock Thomsen, W6GMT]

The highest of the HF bands will be the central operating focus of many amateurs in the ARRL 10 Meter Contest, December 11-12. During the event, many propagation modes will be available: Sporadic-E will help you work stateside stations, a touch of meteor scatter in the morning will give you split-second chances to work stations -- you'd better be quick, though! -- and DX stations could find their way into the log, thanks to some recent signs of life from the F-layer. "Ten meters was open from the United States to Africa, Europe and South America during the CQ World Wide DX CW contest on the weekend of November 27," said ARRL Contest Branch Manager Sean Kutzko, KX9X. "Let's see if those conditions remain for the second weekend in December.

On the Air: The Spratly Islands DXpedition Gets Wings

The 37 operators from 15 countries who make up the DX0DX DXpedition Team that will go to the Spratly Islands is finalizing preparations for the almost month-long DXpedition that begins January 6, 2011. Instead of going by boat, the team will instead fly to Thitu Island where they will set up their operation. Thitu is the second largest island in the Spratly Islands. The Spratlys are a group of more than 750 reefs, islets, atolls, cays and islands in the South China Sea between Vietnam, the Philippines, China, Malaysia and Brunei. They comprise less than 4 square kilometers of land area, spread out over more than 425,000 square kilometers of sea.

ARRL Recognizes: Joe Taylor, K1JT, and Bruce Walker, W1BW, Win November QST Cover Plaque Award

The winners of the QST Cover Plaque Award for November are Joe Taylor, K1JT, and Bruce Walker, W1BW, for their article "WSPRING Around the World." Congratulations Joe and Bruce! The QST Cover Plaque award -- given to the author or authors of the best article in each issue -- is determined by a vote of ARRL members on the QST Cover Plaque Poll Web page . Cast a ballot for your favorite article in the December issue today.

This week:

- * December 3 -- NCCC Sprint
- * December 3-5 -- ARRL 160 Meter Contest
- * December 4 -- TARA RTTY Melee
- * December 4-7 -- ARS Spartan Sprint
- * December 8 -- CWops Mini-CWT Test

Next week:

- * December 10 -- NCCC Sprint Ladder
- * December 11 -- Feld Hell Sprint
- * December 11-12 -- ARRL 10 Meter Contest; International Naval Contest; MDXA PSK Death Match
- * December 11-16 -- NA High Speed Meteor Scatter Winter Rally
- * December 12 -- SKCC Weekend Sprint; CQC Great Colorado Snowshoe Run
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Upcoming ARRL Section, State and Division Conventions and Events

- * December 4-5, 2010 -- ARRL West Central Florida Section Convention, Palmetto, Florida
- * January 8, 2011 -- ARRL Delta Division Convention, Hammond, Louisiana
- * January 9, 2011 -- ARRL New York-Long Island Section Convention, Bethpage, New York
- * January 15, 2011 -- ARRL Southern Florida Section Convention, Fort Myers, Florida
- * January 28-29, 2011 -- ARRL Mississippi State Convention, Jackson, Mississippi

On the Air: Warm Up Your Chilly December with the 2010 ARRL 160 Meter Contest

The ARRL 160 Meter Contest -- an all-CW event -- is tremendous fun! As the object of the contest is for DX stations to contact American and Canadian stations (and vice versa), everyone will be seeking you (especially if you live in a rare section like North Dakota, Nebraska or any of the rare sections from November's Sweepstakes contests).

Gene Shea, K7BQ, of Bozeman, Montana, operated the 2009 ARRL 160 Meter Contest from the QTH of Todd Gahagan, WA7U, also in Bozeman. Shea clears the snow away from the base of WA7U's base-insulated 80 foot tower to make sure all 66 radials were still connected and ready to go.

In this contest, Alaska (KL7) and Hawaii (KH6) count as DX, as do the Caribbean US possessions (KP1-KP5) and all of the Pacific Ocean territories (KH0-KH9). According to ARRL Contest Branch Manager Sean Kutzko, KX9X, if you don't have an antenna for 160, you should just load up whatever you have through an antenna tuner and give "top band" a try -- even a 40 meter dipole through a tuner will make QSOs.

Since ARRL and RAC Sections are worth 2 points each and count as multipliers, the ARRL 160 Meter Contest is a good way to begin working -- or finishing up! -- your Worked All States (WAS) award. But don't forget about those DX stations -- each DXCC entity is a multiplier and is worth 5 points.

The ARRL 160 Meter Contest runs from 2200 UTC Friday, December 3 through 1559 UTC Sunday, December 5. Logs must be e-mailed or postmarked no later than 1600 UTC Tuesday, January 4, 2011. Paper logs should be sent to ARRL 160 Meter Contest, 225 Main St, Newington, CT 06111.

Amateur Radio in Space: ARISS Aiming to Raise Its Educational Profile

NASA will assume more direct sponsorship of the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) program as an educational project. Among its activities, ARISS oversees the project that enables schoolchildren to speak via ham radio with astronauts aboard the International Space Station. NASA also will embrace ARISSat as an educational project for the ISS National Lab. A reconfigured, yet-to-be-named education planning group will pick up the mission of the ARISS Communications Council. These changes were among the outcomes of a meeting of NASA and ARISS International officials who gathered November 12-13 at ARRL Headquarters.

Amateur Radio in Space: Hams Invited to Listen for New Satellites

Five research satellites were carried to orbit on November 19 aboard a Minotaur V rocket from Kodiak Island, Alaska. All the satellites use Amateur Radio frequencies and hams have been invited to participate in their missions by monitoring and collecting data.

An artist's conception of the FASTRAC satellites separating after reaching orbit. Two of the satellites are FASTRACs -- relatively small "nanosatellites" -- built by students at The University of Texas in Austin. They enter orbit as a single spacecraft, but then

separate into FASTRAC 1 (known as "Sara Lily") and FASTRAC 2 (referred to as "Emma"). Both satellites use 1200 or 9600 baud AX.25 digital communication and transmit at 1 W output, so they should be receivable with omnidirectional VHF or UHF antennas and decodable by ordinary packet radio hardware and software. After their scientific missions are complete, the satellites will be reconfigured to function as digipeater relays for Amateur Radio use, as part of the Automatic Packet Reporting System (APRS).

Out and About: "Coming Home" to HamJam 2010

On November 13, Georgia hams and others enjoyed HamJam 2010. According to HamJam organizer Mack McCormick, WB4MAK, the event's goal is to encourage members of Amateur Radio clubs in the region to come together for a day of learning and fellowship. Members of more than a dozen clubs from Alabama, Florida, South Carolina, Tennessee -- and of course, Georgia -- were on hand. "HamJam is an example of how the traditional hamfest is evolving to incorporate education and social elements," said H. Ward Silver, N0AX, who attended as a guest speaker. "Change hasn't left behind the traditional raffle prizes, as high-end manufacturers sponsored equipment donations, allowing attendance to be free, with Georgia Tech providing the meeting space."

ARRL Recognizes: Deadline Approaching for Nominations for ARRL's Leonard Award

Bill Leonard, W2SKE

Television, radio, magazines, newspapers, blogs, Webcasts -- Amateur Radio has been featured in all of them in 2010. And now it is time to thank the professional media people who made it happen by nominating them for the Bill Leonard, W2SKE, Professional Media Award. This national level annual award is sponsored by the ARRL and honors three professional journalists whose outstanding coverage in audio, video and print formats best reflect the enjoyment, importance and public service value of the Amateur Radio Service. The deadline for nominations is December 10.

Dayton Hamvention®: Nominations Sought for 2011 Dayton Hamvention Awards

The Dayton Hamvention® is accepting nominations for its 2011 awards. Do you know an outstanding amateur in your club, community or from on-the-air contacts? Does this person excel in some phase of Amateur Radio? Do you feel this person deserves worldwide recognition? Is there an Amateur Radio club that you know of that has an outstanding record

of public service? All radio amateurs and Amateur Radio clubs are eligible. The deadline for nominations is January 15, 2011. The winners will be recognized at the 2011 Hamvention, May 20-22.

Hints & Kinks: Sealing PL-259 UHF Plugs and SO-239 UHF Connectors

Don Dorward, VA3DDN, of Pickering, Ontario, sent us this idea for seals for PL-259/SO-239 connectors. Contact Don via e-mail for more information.

The popular and low-cost PL-259 UHF plug and its mating SO-239 UHF connector were never designed to be waterproof. In spite of this, many of us find ourselves having to use these connectors out-of-doors for an antenna or cable connection and then have the experience of trying to apply some form of weatherproofing.

If this is not done, and done well, then intermittent connections soon result, especially with wet freezing and thawing conditions, resulting in moisture and corrosion getting into the connectors and even into the coax itself.

Place the O-ring(s) at the base of the SO-239 barrel and use the PL-259 coupling ring to compress them into a weather-tight seal.

One well-known solution is to use a bondable rubber tape wrapping. That often seems to work using one of the soft, moldable, stretchable tapes that are available for the purpose. In practice, I have found that the hardest area to seal effectively using this method is the area from the rim of the male PL-259 shell to the mating SO-239 socket face. This is especially true when the SO-239 socket is located partially inside the cowl of the antenna mount (such as the Solarcon/Antron vertical or other similar types) and it is impossible to get sealing tape up into this tight location.

To overcome this problem, simply slip as many tight fitting O-ring(s) over the SO-239 barrel (see Figure) as needed to fill the space between the base of the SO-239 and the coupling ring. Lubricate the O-rings with a generous amount of silicone grease, often sold in the automotive part stores as "dielectric tune-up grease."

Important: Check that when the mating PL-259 plug is installed and tightened down, the outer rim of the PL-259 shell butts up against and slightly compresses the "O"-ring(s). The "O"-rings I used were ones I had on hand, about 9/16 inch ID x 0.10 inch thick. I am sure anything that's a snug fit will work. Of course, you will still need to wrap the lower half of

the PL-259 shell and the spot where the coax exits the connector with tape to seal that part.

ARRL Publications: ARRL Introduces Exam Review Software for Ham Radio Licensing

ARRL announced today that it will begin including practice examination software with all of its popular license manuals. "The first book to include the new bundled-in software is The ARRL Ham Radio License Manual -- used by tens of thousands of prospective hams as their first introduction to Amateur Radio," said ARRL Marketing Manager Bob Inderbitzen, NQ1R. "The book includes everything to prepare for a 'first' ham radio license -- the Technician class license. A CD-ROM tucked into the back of the book contains the new software, which we've named ARRL Exam Review. The software includes the complete examination question pool, plus short explanations of every question to help make sure you understand the answer."

2010 Flea Markets/Conventions

None listed9

Advertisements

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Tell them you saw it in the Signal. Advertisers should contact the NVARC Treasurer for information.



Nashoba Valley Amateur Radio Club

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