

Washington Amateur
Communications, Inc.
c/o Ed Oelschlager N3ZNI
60 Carl Avenue B-2
Eighty Four, PA 15330-2829

The WACOM

HAM

APRIL
2006



Serving
Washington
County

Prez Says: **W3C 2006:** The special event

station at the 2006 Washington County Sports Show was a great deal of fun. Despite the propagation problems that have troubled us all lately, we managed to make a good number of contacts all around the world. We even had a QSO with our southern outpost member, Dave, K3LGM in Springtown, TX. We had quite a few interested people stop by and a number expressed interest in our upcoming Technician Licensing class this April. We had Scoutmasters and Scouts, both Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, visit us on two evenings. Hams from out of the area — folks just shopping at the mall — stopped by and introduced themselves to us.



W3C: Scouts In Action: Photo courtesy of & ©Copyright 2006 Jacqué Gosselin N3ZEL

Set-up was done by Bud, N3TIR, Damian, KB3JHM, Bill, KB3LIX, and Ed, N3ZNI, with tear-down (in a snow storm!) done by Bob, KB3IN, Damian, KB3JHM, Gene, KB3JHR, Susan, KB3JHQ, and Ed, N3ZNI. We had a number of our members stop by during the event to operate, to talk to visitors, and to help in many ways. Thanks to Jim, KC3WH, and his patience in explaining everything to the scouts, to Bill, KB3LIX, Damian, KB3JHM, Susan, KB3JHQ, and Ed, N3ZNI for manning the station all day and night, thanks (Prez Says Continued on page 3)

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UPCOMING MEETINGS!



Next WACOM Monthly Meeting:
Thursday, April 6, 2006, 7:30 PM
Room 103, Washington County Building,
Downtown Washington.

Next WACOM Board of Directors Meeting:
Thursday, April 27, 7:30 PM
Krispy Kreme, Washington

All Welcome!



ARRL Atlantic Division News

Bill Edgar N3LLR & Tom Abernethy W3TOM

On Saturday, March 18, the Atlantic Division leadership held the division cabinet meeting in Frederick, MD. In addition to the Atlantic Division Director and Vice Director and the speakers, attendees were:

- ♦ Frank Filipkowski AD3M — Delaware Section Manager
- ♦ Eric Olena WB3FPL — Eastern PA Section Manager
- ♦ Jim Cross WI3N — Maryland/DC Section Manager
- ♦ Tom Valos in WB2KLD — Northern NY Assistant Section Manager
- ♦ Ralph Ofchinick Jr, W3ZPI — Western PA Official Observer Coordinator
- ♦ Lloyd Caves N2PU — Atlantic Division Assistant Director
- ♦ Al Nollmeyer W3YVQ — Atlantic Division Assistant Director
- ♦ Gene Pressler W3ZXV — Atlantic Division Assistant Director
- ♦ Debra Johnson K1DMJ — ARRL Development Office

Presenters and topics were:

- ♦ Bill Edgar N3LLR — Atlantic Division Director: Atlantic Division Priorities — Grass Roots, Increased Member Contact and Education.
- ♦ Mary Hobart K1MMH — ARRL Chief Development Officer: Why Development and What It Does For Us.
- ♦ Chris Imlay W3KD — ARRL Corporate Counsel: Amateur Radio Regulation, What's on the Plate this Year?
- ♦ Bob Josuweit WA3PZO — ARRL PR Committee Member: Field Day is Not Enough, PR tools and opportunities to tell our story.
- ♦ Al Nollmeyer W3YVQ — RadioEmail Overview.
- ♦ Doug Lindsey KB3HER — Maryland/DC Section Emergency Coordinator: RadioEmail Demonstration.

Atlantic Division Assistant Director, John Rodgers N3MSE, was scheduled to give a presentation on Atlantic Division Educational programs but was unable to make it due to the birth of his first grand-child.

Congratulations to parents, Mike and April N3PPU. Parents and daughter, Paige, are doing well! We'd like to thank each of the speakers and the attendees for making this cabinet meeting such

a success.

The Atlantic Division has several new ARRL Banners in use at conventions, hamfests and meetings where the Director and Vice Director are. These colorful banners have plenty of punch and pizzazz — they emphasize the four basics of the ARRL.

Congratulations are in order to the Mt Airy VHF Radio Club for their 50th anniversary!

Good job to the hams in Laurel, MD for getting their ATV operation broadcast on WTTG-TV FOX5 in Washington, DC on Monday, March 6, 2006!

Tip of the hat to Ron Polityka WB3AAL for his picture and an article about hams helping out in the local newspaper on January 27, 2006.

Upcoming Atlantic Division Conventions:

- 07/29/06 — MD State Convention, Antietam Radio Assn Hagerstown MD
- 08/12/06 — WNY Section Convention, Lancaster ARA, Williamsville NY
- 09/09-10/06 — MD Section Convention, FARFEST, Gaithersburg MD
- 09/10/06 — WPA Section Convention, Butler County ARA, Butler PA
- 10/07/06 — NNY Section Convention, Northern NY ARA, Lake Placid NY

Upcoming Atlantic Division Hamfests:

- 03/25/06 Baltimore ARC, Timonium, MD
- 04/01/06 Drumblins ARC, Marbletown, NY
- 04/02/06 Delaware Valley Radio Assn, Hamilton Twp, NJ
- 04/22/06 PRO's Club, Sardinia, NY
- 04/23/06 York Hamfest Foundation, York, PA
- 04/30/06 Two Rivers Hamfest, Boston, PA
- 05/06/06 Binghamton ARA, Owego, NY
- 05/07/06 Antietam Radio Assn, Hagerstown
- 05/07/06 Warminster ARC, Wrightstown, PA
- 05/13/06 Appalachian ARG, Fredericksburg, MD
- 05/28/06 Maryland FM Assn, West Friendship, MD



A more complete list of hamfest can be found at: <http://www.arrl.org/hamfests.html>

More W3C-2006 Photos

all photos courtesy of & ©Copyright 2006 Jacqué Gosselin N3ZEL



Adding the Inverted "V"



Setting Up: Bill, Damian, Bud & Ed



Having Fun! Scout's Honor!

(Prez Says Continued from page 1)

to Dave, N3IDH, Bob, KB3IN, Hank, KB3FNM, Don, AA3UV, and to anyone else that I have missed — my apologies.

We had quite a good time at [WASHfest](#) this year, visiting with folks and promoting our upcoming Technician Licensing Class to be held in April. Bud, N3TIR, and Norma, N3YJJ, of B & N Electronics, generously donated a Satellite radio for the club to raffle off as a fundraiser. We raised \$126 for the club by selling chances during the day. The winner was Rick, N3ZCH, a very happy man as you can see. He is going to install the radio in his wife's vehicle — not only a happy man, but a very diplomatic one as well!!! Congratulations, Rick."



I received a telephone call from a former ham in the Mt. Lebanon area who was looking to get his license again. Tom's license had expired in 1999, so he was well beyond the grace period. He contacted the ARRL, found out what he needed, and started studying for his exam. He also took the practice exams on [www.QRZ.com](#). Since Tom is vision-impaired, we arranged a special test session for him. Bud, N3TIR, Ed, N3ZNI, Bill, KB3LIX (who has just received his VE credentials) and I met with Tom at the Peters Township Library on Wednesday, March 29th. He did very well, and we will publish his new call sign as soon as everything is official and posted. Hopefully Tom will be heard on the air very soon!

Well, spring appears to be here at last, so we'll have to get to some of that outside work soon. Good time to look at our antennas and do preventative maintenance. I know there's a rope that needs changed on our dipole.

Our next meeting is on April 6th at 7:30 p.m. in the Washington

Upcoming Events

April 3 — Opening Day 2:30 PM Miller Park, Milwaukee
 April 10 — Home Opener 1:30 PM PNC Park
 April 16 — WPRC Quarterly Meeting, Washington PA
 April 22, 23, 29 — WACOM Technician Licensing Classes
 April 30 — WACOM VE Test for Licensing Classes
 April 30 — 2 Rivers ARC Hamfest, Boston PA * New Date *
 May 19, 20, & 21 — Dayton Hamvention
 May 27 & 28 — CQ WPX CW
 June 2 & 3 — US Power Squadron's Amateur Radio Net Special
 Event operating from W1AW
 June 4 — Breezeshooter's Hamfest
 June 24 & 25 — ARRL Field Day
 July 9 — North Hills ARC Hamfest, Wexford PA
 July 16 — Somerset Co ARC Hamfest
 September 10 — Butler Co ARA Hamfest & WPA Convention
 October 7 & 8 — California QSO Party
 October 14 & 15 — Pennsylvania QSO Party
 October 28 & 29 — CQ World Wide DX Contest SSB
 November 4 & 5 — ARRL Sweepstakes CW
 November 5 — WACOM Hamfest, Washington Co Fairgrounds
 November 18 & 19 — ARRL Sweepstakes SSB

County Building. We'll be discussing a little bit of everything for the coming year. There's our Technician Licensing classes in April, and it looks like we should have a very good turnout. Class dates are April 22, 23, and 29, with the exam on April 30 at 1:00 p.m. at

the EOC center. The exam session is open to everyone and anyone wanting to take an exam. We will have material there for all classes of exam including the code test. Please contact Bob, KB3IN, at kb3in@hotmail.com if you are interested. We need to get the order in so we have enough books.

For those who are interested in weather, and aren't we all?, there is a Skywarn class on April 10th at the Washington County Emergency Center. There are two sessions, one at 1:30 p.m. and another at 6:30 p.m., which makes it convenient for almost everyone to be able to attend.

Next in the year is Dayton, so if you aren't sure of going, give your shopping list to someone who is.

From there it is downhill to Field Day. This year we are going to network laptop computers with logging software, and we'll be discussing that at the meeting.

Believe me, there is a LOT going on this year at WACOM, so do come out and enjoy some of our activities! We'll look forward to seeing you!

—73, Jacqué Gosselin N3ZEL
 President, WACOM

JOIN WACOM ON THE AIR

2 meter net: Every Tuesday at 8:30 PM on
the W3CYO repeaters, 145.49 and 443.30
MHz

YL Net: Every Wednesday at 7:30 PM
on 146.79 MHz (OM's are welcome too!)

10 meter net: Every Tuesday at 9:00 PM on
28.340 MHz

FCC Directs Manassas BPL System to Act Following Ham's Interference Complaint

ARRL Web Extra and ARRL Letter courtesy of the American Radio Relay League

NEWINGTON, CT, March 9th, 2006 — Responding to a radio amateur's interference complaint, the FCC has directed the City of Manassas, Virginia, and its BPL system operator COMTek to conduct measurements to ensure its system complies with FCC Part 15 rules. The Commission also instructed the city to "resolve any continuing harmful interference." FCC Spectrum Enforcement Division Chief Joseph P. Casey on March 7 called on the city and COMTek to follow up on a complaint filed January 19 by ARRL member Dwight Agnew, A14II. Agnew, who frequently travels through Manassas and operates mobile, alleges harmful BPL interference along Virginia Business Route 234.

"I had been talking to a friend in Ohio while on my way home from work," Agnew told Casey via e-mail. "I could no longer hear him over the interference on 40 meters (7.2 MHz) while driving through the city. Was able to hear him after I left the city." Agnew characterized the effect of the interference as "like a giant, fuzzy mute."

COMTek operates the Manassas BPL system using Main.net equipment on frequencies between 4 MHz and 30 MHz over a city -owned power grid. The FCC wants the city to take measurements at locations Agnew cited in his complaint "during the hours of peak usage of the system by BPL customers" and submit them to the Commission within 30 days. Casey made it clear that the city "must either eliminate any continuing harmful interference" to Agnew's operations or reduce BPL emissions in the area to 20 dB below the Part 15 limit. In the past, the League has challenged the assumption that this level of attenuation necessarily will resolve interference issues.

To date, the FCC itself has not taken any measurements on any part of the Manassas BPL system. When radio amateurs have filed interference complaints involving BPL systems elsewhere, the Commission typically has tended instead to rely on measurements made by system operators.

If the city's measurements reveal any portion of the system to be out of compliance with Part 15, the FCC wants the report to describe what steps the city took to remediate the problem. Casey also wants Manassas and COMTek to advise of any plans they have to upgrade present "grandfathered" BPL equipment in the system to FCC-certified equipment.

In January, after COMTek failed to meet its own commitment to resolve longstanding interference complaints from local radio amateurs dating back nearly two years, the ARRL again demanded the system's immediate shutdown. Agnew's complaint is a new one, however.

In a separate letter March 7, Casey asked four Manassas radio amateurs with complaints already on file to provide "further information." Copies of that

letter also went to ARRL, Manassas and COMTek. Casey made clear that Amateur Radio licensees addressed in his letter who want to continue pursuing their complaints must respond within 30 days or the FCC "will take no further action." In the same letter, the FCC, which has yet to respond to any of the earlier ham radio complaints, conceded that it continues to receive reports of harmful interference. It also noted that "ongoing discussions" involving the earlier complainants, the city and COMTek "have ended without a satisfactory resolution."

To expedite the information-gathering process, the ARRL on March 8 alerted all radio amateurs living in ZIP code 20110 (Manassas) that "now is the time" to submit harmful interference complaints relating to the city's BPL system.

"The first step is to verify that BPL is actually the source of the interference," ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, advised. He suggested radio amateurs contact George Tarnovsky, K4GVT — an earlier complainant — for assistance in determining if BPL is causing any harmful interference. Tarnovsky has volunteered to coordinate radio amateurs' efforts to address the interference. The League's correspondence reiterates the filing requirements Casey specified in his March 7 letter.

Sumner stressed that while the League's measurements and observations "have shown that the potential for harmful interference is widespread," the League is not asking amateurs to file BPL interference complaints unless they have actually experienced BPL interference.

"Note that it is not just the amateur bands between 4 and 30 MHz that may be affected by BPL interference," Sumner cautioned. "Shortwave broadcasting, WWV reception and CB all may be affected." He asked complainants to copy their reports to the city, COMTek and ARRL.

"Manassas is often touted as a success story for BPL, while the truth is quite different," Sumner said. "BPL proponents gloss over or ignore the fact that the Manassas system has proved to be a significant source of radio spectrum pollution and that COMTek's efforts have failed to correct it."

Concluded Sumner: "With the FCC finally taking official notice of the presence of harmful interference in Manassas, the tide finally is beginning to turn."

Two Rivers ARC 34th Annual Hamfest & Computer Show

Sunday, April 30th 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM

The Spectrum in Boston, PA

6001 Smithfield Street, Little Boston, Elizabeth Twp, PA 15135

Talk-In on 146.730 — Mobile Check-In on 146.520

Breakfast and Lunch will Be Available

VE Testing Available (48 Hour Pre-Registration Required)

Admission \$5.00

For more information, call (412) 664-1683 On-Line www.qsl.net/w3oc or w3oc@arrl.net

52nd Annual Breezeshooter's Hamfest

Sunday, June 4th, 2006 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Sponsored by the Breezeshooters

Butler Farm Show Grounds / Roe Airport, State Route 66, Butler PA

(The Farm Show Grounds are West of Butler between Butler and Evans City)

Talk-In on W3UDX/R 147.360+ Repeater

ICOM, Yaesu, Kenwood & MFJ Prizes from KJI Electronics:

1 st Prize:	IC-7000	6 th Prize:	MFJ-259B
2 nd Prize:	TS-2000	7 th Prize:	LDG AT-100 PRO
3 rd Prize:	TS-480ST	8 th Prize:	Astron RS-35A
4 th Prize:	FT-897D	9 th Prize:	MFJ-1279
5 th Prize:	IC-208H	10 th Prize:	Daiwa CN-101

Ten Half-Hour Prizes consisting of Five ICOM IC-V8 and Five Yaesu VX-170 Hand Helds

Prize Tickets \$2.00 Each or 3/\$5.00, 7/\$10, 15/\$20

For more information please go to

<http://www.breezeshooters.net/hamfest/hamfest.htm>

North Hills ARC 21st Anniversary Hamfest

Free Admission! Free Parking! A Real Old-Fashioned Hamfest

Saturday, July 9th 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Northland Public Library, 300 Cumberland Road, Wexford PA

Talk-in on 147.090 MHz

1st Prize: ICOM IC-706 MkIIIG

2nd Prize: ICOM IC-T7H

For more information, contact John Gormand N3RQD (412) 487-9254

On-Line www.nharc.pgh.pa.us or n3rqd@earthlink.net

In Honor of National Safe Boating Week, the United States Power Squadron's Amateur Radio Net will be operating from the Maxim Memorial Station, W1AW, on June 2 & 3.

All are invited to join USPS & ARRL on the air!

For more information on this event or on the USPS, please contact Don Stark N3HOW at stark84@nb.net

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We're On the Web!
www.wacomarc.org

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The editor welcomes articles and timely information of interest to members and the general amateur community.

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PLEASE SEND YOUR 2006 DUES AND APPLICATION INFORMATION

Annual WACOM membership dues are only \$15 .
A couple pays only \$22.50.
Send your check payable to WACOM to:

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WACOM e-Mail Reflector

An e-mail reflector has been set up for WACOM members.

What's a reflector? It's a mailing list which lets you send one e-mail message to the list address — wa3com@yahoogroups.com — and have it "reflect" to all members of the list. Unlike a personal mailing list, you don't need to know all of the e-mail addresses for every single member of the list. Only group members can send e-mail to other members of the reflector — no spam allowed!

E-mail reflectors are being used by many area Amateur Radio clubs as a means to facilitate news and information at a moments notice. Yahoo! Groups (formerly eGroups) provides this service for free to anyone who wants to avail themselves of their list server. Yahoo! also provides calendar, file storage, & additional services.

To join the WACOM reflector, simply send a blank e-mail to:

wa3com-subscribe@yahoogroups.com