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## Washington Amateur Communications



*HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY !!!*

# The W. A. COM Ham

Volume 1 Issue 6 July 2008

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## From "Bud" Plants, N3TIR, President....

The President's Corner

It was a great Field Day! We as club members should be very proud of the WACOM effort.

I want to thank the WASHINGTON SPORTSMEN ASSOCIATION for the use of their building and grounds again this year. Without their building we would have had a very rough time with the weather.

The Washington Observer-Reporter did a very nice article on Field Day in Sunday's paper June 29th. We also were able to get the Observer's reporter Michael Jones on the GOTA station to make several contacts.

A long-ago member of WACOM Jim McNutt, NW3X from the Observer helped on the 600 Ft. HF Loop and is very interested in attending our meetings. The State Police gave all club members a chance to see their communication abilities with a trooper presenting a demonstration. Washington County Commissioner Larry Maggi was available for questions about the county interest in Amateur Radio Communications.

We also had some interest from other hams that stopped in to see our operations and some new people who are interested in becoming hams.

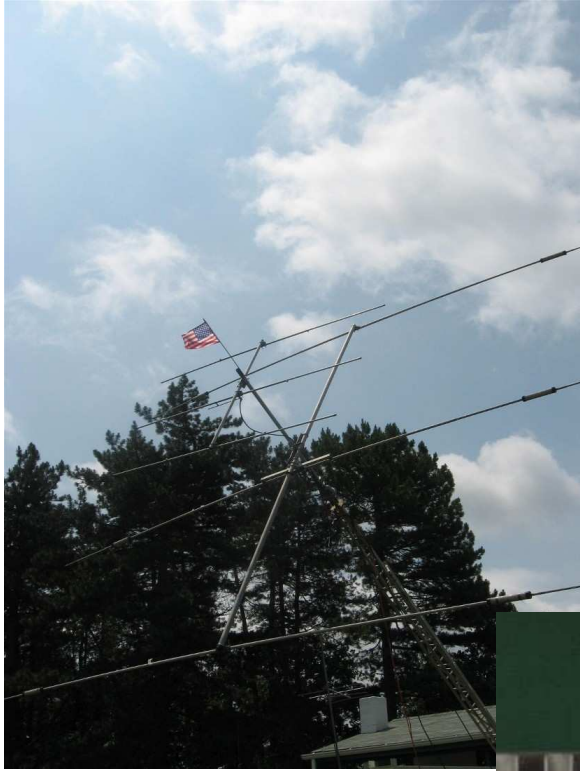
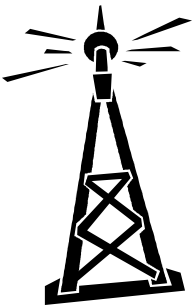
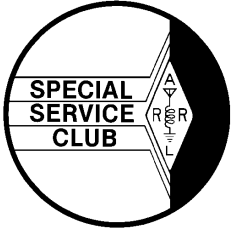
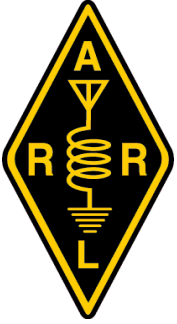
As always the food was the high point--Joe WA3WMB did a great job again this year on cooking and selection. Also I would like to thank everyone for the help on the food they brought to the event. It was a great Club effort and the food was great.

And I can't say enough about Bill KB3LIX; he put lots of hours in putting the event together {even though at 3:00 am he had all 4 antennas and I had to beg for one}. He also was the only operator who was at his radio for 24hrs, a 100 % effort, Bill, and Thank You!

Thanks to everyone for the great help and effort for a Great Field Day 2008. We will discuss at the July meeting the 2008 Field Day adventure.

73, Bud





**FIELD  
DAY**

**2008**



# Volume 1 Issue 6

From The Times (from the UK)

July 1, 2008 **SOS: the signal that has saved thousands turns 100**

Fran Yeoman

“Send SOS,” one of the *Titanic’s* radio operators supposedly said to another after the famous ship struck that infamous iceberg. “It’s the new call and besides this may be your last chance to send it.”



That “new call” is 100 years old today, and people around the world who owe their lives to that piece of Morse code may reflect this morning on its importance.

In the past century, “SOS” has become a firm part of popular culture used in everything from DIY programme titles to Abba hits. But it began life in a far more serious setting after being adopted by the international community on July 1, 1908, as the globally recognised distress signal for ships at sea.

At that time voices could not yet be carried across the airwaves and sailors needed a standard means of saying, in Morse code, that they were in trouble.

Until then, the most commonly used distress call was the “CQD” signal, which was open to misinterpretation. After much deliberation, SOS was chosen to replace it because the signal – three dots, three dashes and three more dots – is such a clear message to send in Morse code.

There was some early success for the new system a year later when the Cunard liner the *SS Slavonia* was stricken off the Azores. She sent out an SOS and not a single life was lost.

Even so, not everybody was convinced instantly, and it took the tragedy of the *Titanic* to reveal just how vital a universal system was. After the collision in April 1912, the ship’s radio operators sent out both the old CQD and the new SOS signals, but some ships in the area ignored both, thinking that they were having a party. They soon learnt otherwise, as international headlines told how Jack Phillips, the *Titanic’s* first radio operator, and 1,500 others had been lost along with the “unsinkable” ship. The new SOS distress signal was rarely ignored after that.

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Don’t forget, if you have a question you’d like to have the Tech answer, just email Joe, WA3WMB, at [j\\_furjanic@verizon.net](mailto:j_furjanic@verizon.net)



**Some really good reference material !! Sent in by Charlene, KA3RXY****Some Amateur Radio Definitions**

For those new to ham radio, here are some useful definitions, pertaining to antennas and DX-ing.

- S.W.R. -- A term, applied to any part of the antenna system, which means: "Savings-to-Watt Ratio". Based on the inverse relationship of dollars in the bank and effective radiated power. Characteristic Impedance The usual reaction of your spouse when told about the proposed antenna system.
- Traps -- Devices installed in antennas to collect rain-water, to keep it from running further down the antenna.
- Wind Loading -- The measure of how much more awkward it gets to handle a big beam as you ascend the tower.
- Balun -- (Pronounced: "balloon" by many). An anti-surveillance device, installed in coaxial lines at the antenna, to prevent nosy neighbors from eavesdropping on you through their TV sets.
- Transmatch -- A device mistakenly believed to decrease S.W.R.. The premise is that this device allows you to load up into a mis-matched antenna. Unfortunately, it the cost of one that lowers your S.W.R.
- House Bracket -- A device which secures the house and the tower together. It lets the tower do double-duty by holding up the house during severe windstorms.
- Rotator Control Box -- A device which is designed to let you monitor antenna "windmilling".
- Windmilling -- A technique whereby prevailing winds are allowed to rotate the antenna, enabling the operator to "scan" the radio horizon.
- Dummy Load -- A measure of the stress exerted on a tower by a ham who climbs the tower without a safety belt.
- Coax -- (Usually mis-pronounced as two syllables). A term applied to the maneuvering of a piece of transmission line through the attic or walls of a house.
- Db's Gain -- A bunch of yellow-jacketed wasps found a great place to build their nest, at the bottom of the rotator housing on my tower.
- Db's Loss -- Fortunately, lightning struck the tower and the wasps were totally destroyed.
- Vertical -- A much-maligned antenna, said by some critics to "radiate equally poorly in all directions". This is not true, as many who have built one know. In fact, the vertical can have directional characteristics, and not radiate at all in some directions. I hope this clears up that myth once and for all!
- Sloper -- A variation of the vertical, where high winds have affected thin-walled aluminum tubing used in the construction.
- Inverted Vee -- A clever, but inferior, reverse adaptation of the true, "upright Vee", which allows the use of a single support instead of the usual two.
- Dipole -- Another modification of the true "Vee", and used where it is not possible to get the center feed point close to the ground.

*Continued on Page 5*

**Reference Material** — *Continued from Page 4*

- **Ground Plane** -- Usually, an array of 1/4-wavelength arms extending from the base of some verticals (or "slopers"). These arms are not recommended unless a rotator is also used, to take advantage of their directional features.
  - **Directional Coupler** -- A device inserted into the transmission line which monitors the environment outside the shack, by utilizing the antenna as a remote sensor. For example, when the antenna responds to weather conditions such as severe icing or heavy winds, the coupler will produce indications of these responses. A special directional coupler has even been designed, presumably, to tell you when BIRDS are sitting on your antenna!
  - **Smith Chart** -- An alias, to be used when you don't want people to know what chart you really used to design your antenna.
  - **Long Path** -- The direction you are told to aim your antenna, to work a rare DX station, as suggested by the other fellows in the pileup.
  - **Element Spacing** -- A critical antenna design factor which is optimized to place the tunable traps on a beam as far out of reach as possible, from the tower.
  - **Diversity Effect** -- A property in which the quad-type antenna far excels over the yagi-type antenna. It relates to the number of directions an antenna can collapse into, under heavy winds.
  - **Selective Fading** -- A quirk of propagation, whereby a signal arrives at a distant point by multipath, and where the different signal components arrive with varying phase relationships. This causes the signal to be "canceled out" at some points. This wonderful effect helps eliminate some of the QRM from distant DX stations when you are trying to copy the pileup.
  - **"Off the back of the Antenna"** -- A technique used by more experienced DX-ers, where the antenna is pointed away from the station being contacted. This creates a challenge similar to running QRP.
  - **QRP** -- Restricting final input power to the transmitter to anything less than 500 watts, on 20 meters.
  - **Speech Processor** -- A "state of the art" device which permits one to communicate with as many others at the same time as possible. However, beginner operators need to learn how to use one properly, to expand the signal beyond a narrow, 3 KHz bandwidth.
  - **"IMOKINCALLBK"** -- An expression used in a CW QSO, to say: "you send me your QSL card first, turkey, and then I'll send you mine".
  - **IRC** -- An economic instrument, administered by the Postal Service, to control the balance-of-trade deficit.
  - **Parasitic Element** -- A person who takes lists for DX-stations.
  - **LISTS** -- A method of making DX contacts, where some self-appointed person takes a list "on the air" (aka: his buddies on 2-meters) of people who wish to "work" a person in some DX location. This makes it easy for hams who do not have the patience or time to learn real DX skills to get a quick, easy contact. In fact, if you can't hear the actual report from the foreign station, the list-controller will often help ("...OK, there, WB6xxx, did you hear Jose give you a '59' signal report?").
  - **QSL Manager** -- The station you worked in Juan De Nova tells you to send a "Green Stamp" to a ham in Germany who is called a "QSL Manager". It is his duty to send your card to a ham in California, who then (after holding it for 8 months) sends you a QSL card.
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# Classified

FOR SALE CUSHRAFT 26B2 STACKED 13 ELEMENT BEAMS  
\$300.00

26B2 - 26 Element Wideband Boomer

This antenna offers the highest gain of any 2 meter FM antenna in the world. The 26B2 includes two complete 13B2 antennas, stacking boom and phasing harnesses.

Model 26B2

3dB Beamwidth, Degrees E-Plane 2x 18

3dB Beamwidth, Degrees H-Plane 2x 9.5

Boom Length ft.(m) 15(4.57)

Electrical Wavelength 2.2

Forward Gain, dBi 18.8

Frequency, MHz 144-148

Front to Back Ratio, dB 26

Longest Element in(cm) 39.75(101)

Mast size range, in.(cm) 1.5-2(3.8-5.1)

No. Elements 26

Power Rating, Watts PEP 2000

Side Lobe Atten., dB, E-Plane >60

SWR 1.2:1 Typical 2:1 Bandwidth, MHz >4

Turning Radius ft(m) 10.4(3.18)

Weight, lb(kg) 21.5(9.75)

Wind load ft (m) sq 4.84(.45)

Bud Plants, N3TIR

FOR SALE: 2-meter, 80 watt Amplifier. \$100.00 Contact Ed, N3ZNI n3zni@arrl.net

FOR SALE: The following older CB Radios. Contact Nick Samila at 724-222-5244 if interested.

Regency CR 123B : Regency CR 123 : Old Johnson Messenger 2, 10 Channel



## Minutes of the General Membership Meeting June 2, 2008

### General Membership Meeting June 2, 2008

Meeting called to order by N3TIR

Minutes of May General Membership Meeting distributed

Mot to accept: WA3WMB Sec: KB3IN

**Treasurers Report:** Read into the records.

Mot to accept: N3IDH Sec: KB3OMH

**Repeater:** OK

**RACES/ARES:** Reminder about Walk for Alex on Saturday June 7, 2008

KB3IN: Pictures for ID badges will be taken tonight after meeting. Region 13 equipment is finally received and inventoried

**Nets:** OK

**By Law Committee:** Kevin KB3JHO to schedule a meeting

**Flag Pole:** Bud is meeting Davies Tree Service Saturday morning to get Flag pole project completed.

**FD:** Review of plans, Adam will be safety officer for FD, N3TIR, KB3IN & N3IDH

Going to commissioners meeting on June 19 at 2pm regarding FD and Pgh 250.

**Pgh 250:** Review on plans for August 2 & 3, will operate from Observatory at Mingo Creek County Park.

**Candy:** None available tonight, \$ 179 sold at Breezeshooters HamFest

**HamFest:** WACOM doing food this year, Norma has relative that will do cooking

Certificate presented to Denny Schwing for completing class.

**Picnic:** N3IDH will check on availability of South Strabane FD Pavilion. N3TIR will check availability of county facilities, no date set until a location is determined.

New meeting format: Short business meeting, then a demonstration or class on different subjects.

Motion to adjourn: WA3WMB Sec: N3ZNI

Attendance: KB3IN, N3IDH, KB3AAG, WA3WMB, N3TIR, W3CYO, KA3VOM, KB3JHQ, N3ZEL, N3ZNI, KD8IMH, KC3HW, N3GHR, KB3OMH, N3XAR, N3YJJ, N3WMV, KB3JHO, KB3JHP, KB3JHM, KB3JHL, N3XE, Sue Furjanic, Deb Schwing,

KB3LIX

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# PITTSBURGH 250 NEXT MEETING: SATURDAY JULY 19TH AT STEEL CITY CLUB

2008 Marks the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the City of Pittsburgh. Nine southwestern Pennsylvania area amateur radio organizations have banded together and decided to operate a Special Event station to commemorate the anniversary.

On the weekend of August 2 & 3 2008, the organizations will set up operations and use special call sign designators and make contacts with amateur radio operators around the country and the globe to celebrate the anniversary.

WACOM will be setting up and operating from Mingo Creek County Park in Washington County near the observatory. We plan operation both days during daylight and early evening hours. Exact times have not yet been established, but will be posted when they are known. We will be using the call sign WA3COM/250.

Announcements for the special event will be published in the major amateur radio and communications magazines in the next few months.

Individuals wishing to confirm their contacts with the Special Event stations will be able to request a commemorative certificate from the organizers by mail. At this time, the proposed certificates are a full color picture of the City of Pittsburgh along with a brief history of the city and information necessary to confirm the contact.

To date, the organizations that have committed to participate in the Special Event Station are:

- Washington Amateur Communications (WaCOM)
- Breezeshooters Inc.
- Two Rivers Amateur Radio Club
- North Hills Amateur Radio Club
- Skyview Radio Society (New Kensington)
- Steel City Amateur Radio Club
- Greater Pittsburgh VHF Society
- Wireless Assoc of the South Hills
- USS Requin Amateur Radio Club



At the meeting May 24th. L to R: Bob, KB3OMB; Bob, KG3F; Bob, KB3NUQ; Adam, KB3OMH; John, N3RQD; Ed, N3ZNI; Larry, K3VX; Art, WA3BKD; Walt, KA3YNO. Not in photo: Bob, W3CO; Bill, KB3LIX; Bill, W3WH; Jacque, N3ZEL.

## RESULTS OF WACOM'S LATEST EXAM SESSION



WACOM held an exam session on Saturday, June 13th at the EOC center. We had three candidates, all of whom were successful. We welcome Tom Danes, Jr. as a new Technician with the call KB3RJL.

On the left Ed is with Denny Schwing, KD8IMH, who passed his Amateur Extra Exam.

On the right Ed is with Adam Quigg, KB3OMH, who also passed his Amateur Extra Exam.

Congratulations to all and enjoy the hobby.





## Washington Amateur Communications

## Club Officers

President: Bud Plants, N3TIR;

[bud@bnelectronics.com](mailto:bud@bnelectronics.com)

Vice President: Kevin Beatty, KB3JHO;

[KB3JHO@arrl.net](mailto:KB3JHO@arrl.net)

Secretary: Bill Sheehan, KB3LIX;

[sheehanbill@hotmail.com](mailto:sheehanbill@hotmail.com)

Treasurer: Ed Oelschlager, N3ZNI;

[n3zni@arrl.net](mailto:n3zni@arrl.net)

## Board of Directors

Director: Bob Ketzell, KB3IN,

[kb3in@yahoo.com](mailto:kb3in@yahoo.com)

Director: Jim Burtoft, KC3HW;

[jburtoft@verizon.net](mailto:jburtoft@verizon.net)

Director: Dave Demotte, N3IDH;

[n3idh@hotmail.com](mailto:n3idh@hotmail.com)

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Editor: Jacque Gosselin, N3ZEL

[n3zel@fyi.net](mailto:n3zel@fyi.net)

**We're RadioActive!!!**

We're on the Web  
[www.wacomarc.org](http://www.wacomarc.org)

**Have you been a radio amateur for 25 years or more?  
Were you originally licensed 25 years ago or more,  
even if not continually?**

Well then please join us at the Quarter Century Wireless Association, Chapter 6 quarterly luncheon at Rocky II's. Located on PA Rt. # 51, just north of McKees Rocks, in Stowe Twp. at the Fleming Park bridge.

Join our members who are like you, the foundation of amateur radio. There is much we can learn from them and from each other. And it's fun too.

No reservation necessary.

Our next quarterly luncheon will be in June, 2008, so you have lots of time to plan ahead to join us.

Contact Jacque, N3ZEL at [n3zel@fyi.net](mailto:n3zel@fyi.net) for information.



## YLS AND XYLS

There is an organization for you. It's called the  
Young Ladies Radio League.

Come join other Lady Hams and enjoy the fellowship.

See all we have to offer at

[www.qsl.net/yrl/index.html](http://www.qsl.net/yrl/index.html) or contact Jacque,

N3ZEL at [n3zel@fyi.net](mailto:n3zel@fyi.net)

## HAMFESTS

### July 13th 2008

North Hills ARC hamfest. Northland Public Library, 300 Cumberland Road. McCandless Township 15237. Talk-in 147.090+. Contact: Gorman, N3RQD [n3rqd@earthlink.net](mailto:n3rqd@earthlink.net) <http://www.nharc.org> Breakfast and lunch served

### July 20th 2008

Somerset County Amateur Radio Club. Location: Somerset County Vo-Tech School Talk-in: 147.195 123.0pl. Contact: Stewart Saylor, AK3J [ak3j@arrl.net](mailto:ak3j@arrl.net) <http://www.k3smt.org/>

### August 24th 2008 ARRL Section Convention!

Skyview Radio Society 48th annual Swap N Shop! Location: Skyview Radio Society clubhouse grounds. 2335 Turkey Ridge Road. New Kensington, PA 15068. Talk-in: 146.640 - 131.8pl. Contact: Robert Boehmer, KG3F at [SkyviewHamfest2008@verizon.net](mailto:SkyviewHamfest2008@verizon.net) Map and directions at [www.skyviewradio.net](http://www.skyviewradio.net) Breakfast and lunch served

### August 30th 2008

Uniontown ARC Gabfest. Location: Uniontown ARC club grounds, on Old Pittsburgh Road just off of Rt. 51 and Rt. 119. Talk-in 147.045+ 131.8pl. Contact: Tony Alviar, KA3VOR (724) 430-1277 (M-F 8-4); [newsletter@w3pie.org](mailto:newsletter@w3pie.org) [www.w3pie.org](http://www.w3pie.org) Breakfast and lunch served, free admission

### September 7th 2008

Butler County Amateur Radio Association BCARA Swapfest: Unionville Firehall, Butler, PA. Time 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. See flyer included in this newsletter.

### November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2008

WACOM ARC Hamfest. Location: Washington County Fairgrounds on Main Street Extension. Talk-in 145.490- 131.8pl. Contact Ed Oelschlager, N3ZNI (724) 986-9371 or [n3zni@arrl.net](mailto:n3zni@arrl.net) Free coffee all day, breakfast and lunch available. Map and directions at [www.wacomarc.org](http://www.wacomarc.org)

**PLEASE NOTE: BECAUSE OF THE SIZE OF FLYERS AND THE TIME IT MAY TAKE FOR DOWNLOADING, FLYERS WE RECEIVE FOR UPCOMING HAMFESTS WILL BE POSTED AT OUR WEB SITE TO BE VIEWED OR DOWNLOADED AS WANTED OR NEEDED. THANK YOU.**