



PCARA Update



Volume 8, Issue 1

Peekskill / Cortlandt Amateur Radio Association Inc.

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13cm security

Well, I went and did it big time! I've officially entered the 21st Century. I bought a new laptop and



Linksys WRT54GS

have gone totally IEEE 802.11g (i.e., Wi-Fi, WLAN, wireless internet; 2.4 GHz, 54 Mbps). It wasn't what I was planning, but the XYL said no more wires running all over the house. Who was I to fight City Hall?!

The next thing to come to mind was wireless security. I knew enough to enable the security/encryption that was recommended by the wireless router vendor (WEP), and disable the SSID broadcasts. I also played with MAC address filtering options. Then I visited Network Stumbler (<http://www.netstumbler.com>) to download their monitoring software (ver. 0.4.0) to let me know what other APs (access points) were in my neighborhood. I found that at any one time I can see 3 to 4 other APs. What is really surprising is that 50% to 66% are not running any type of security, running wide open and vulnerable (NetStumbler indicates this with their software). I guess people just set up their system right out of the box and as long as it works they don't bother doing anything else. In today's world, you'd think people would be much more aware. Go figure!

So here we are at the beginning of a new year. As in years past, I ask that you bring your ideas and suggestions for the year ahead to the January 7th meeting, at 3:00 PM at Hudson Valley Hospital Center.

I wish each of you and your families a Very Happy, Healthy, and Joyous New Year!

- 73 de Greg, KB2CQE

Newsletter contest we're #2

Since August 2005, the ARRL Hudson Division has been selecting a "Newsletter of the Month" from club publications in the Division. Winning newsletters are posted on the Hudson Division web pages at <http://www.hudson.arrl.org/pages/newsletterawards.htm>.

At the recent Hudson Division Awards Dinner, Assistant Directors selected the "Hudson Division Club Newsletter of the Year" from among the monthly awards. For 2005-2006, the award went to the October 2006 **Hall of Science ARC** newsletter. The first prize is a plaque, to be presented at the January Hudson Division Cabinet/President's Meeting, for the editor's efforts at keeping club and division entertained and informed.

Second place went to **Peekskill/Cortlandt Amateur Radio Association** for the October 2005 issue of the **PCARA Update**. Congratulations and thanks to all our newsletter contributors!

Third place was awarded to the December 2005 **Saratoga RACES** Newsletter.

These results appeared in the December edition of the Hudson Division "Beacon", <http://www.hudson.arrl.org/beacon/2006/200612hudsonbeacon.htm>.

- NM9J

Net night

Don't forget that the PCARA weekly net now takes place on **Wednesday** evenings at 8:00 p.m. You can call in to the net on the 2 meter repeater, 146.67 MHz, offset -0.6 MHz, 156.7Hz CTCSS.

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PCARA Officers

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Greg Appleyard, KB2CQE kb2cq@arrl.net

Vice President:

Joe Calabrese, WA2MCR; wa2mcr@arrl.net

Secretary/Treasurer: *open*.

Adventures in DXing

– N2KZ

Holiday Cheer

You never know what you will find when you dig through a junk bin, especially if the junk bin is at work! I have just been introduced to the dead storage area at my new place of employ. This is where all unwanted technologies are retired before their final trip to the crusher. Welcome to the “What should I do with this? We can’t throw it out” pile. In this case, it is a huge two-storied room of everything collected during two decades or more by dozens of engineers and technicians.

During one of my visits foraging for treasures needed for a project, I found a gem buried in the bottom of a discarded cardboard box. It was a Simpson 260 analog multi-meter completely covered with surface dirt. The indicator needle was bent into a crescent and the chassis was held together with Scotch tape. Someone had taken out the four screws needed to secure the cabinet and lost them, I presume. I couldn’t let this meter die!

I found an opportunity to revive the dead during a sleepy Sunday afternoon shift. I cleaned the cabinet, disassembled the innards to access the meter face and straighten its needle and repaired a broken land created by a hard fall. I also cleaned all the rotary switch surfaces. Beware! When you disassemble the two rotary switches you play a game called



Simpson 260 analog VOM as restored by Karl.

“Surprise Four Ball Bearing Pickup!” You only do this once! Luckily for me, the switch pieces and shafts are all nicely keyed making reassembly easy. Upon cleaning the cabinet a second time, I noticed something scratched into the top of the meter. It was an amateur radio call sign! KB9FO. I quickly entered the call

into QRZ.com and discovered its original owner: Henry AA9XW in Crown Point, Indiana. KB9FO used to be his call sign years ago! I e-mailed him with the details of my archeological find and he verified my findings!

“You have a treasure. There were five of us doing all the maintenance work there, and then we were all laid off on the same day. We didn’t really have time to search out all our personal stuff. We had a huge party and over 500 of us hit the streets. I had already secured a job at NBC at 30 Rock and worked both places for seven weeks while building my own radio station near Cincinnati. (I felt the earthquake coming early, when all the HR people suddenly left.) I realized much later that I had left the Simpson and an Apple IIe computer, but was back at NBC Chicago by then. Thanks for looking me up. Only another ham would do that!”

A couple of days later, the newly restored Simpson 260 was on its way, via Parcel Post, to its original owner in Indiana. They had only been separated for about thirty years! A finer amateur radio Christmas story can not be written! Following the Golden Rule brings results!

Happy Birthday?

December 15, 2006 was quite a day. I received a double-edged birthday present not to be forgotten. The newly “refarmed” amateur band allocations went into effect handing more than half of the 80 meter CW band over to SSB “quacky duck” phone operators nationwide. The 40 meter CW band was trimmed, as well. The double punch came late that Friday night when the FCC announced their intention to drop all Morse Code requirements. No longer would code proficiency be required for future amateur radio licenses. All this on my fifty-third birthday!

The “refarming” of 80 meters took place quietly and without any notable activity. The old Novice CW segment, 3675 to 3625 kHz, was nearly silent during the last few days of its existence. A large solar storm was probably a large factor. The 40 meter Novice segment was equally mute. Few operators were to be found to say ‘goodbye’ to the old spectrum. I experienced my very first QSO on 3700 kHz seven years ago nearly to the day.

When the new allocations came into effect at the stroke of midnight December 15th, not one SSB operator was heard at my QTH across the newly extended portion of 75 meters. It was not until Saturday night, December 16th, that the duck quacks became evident. I actually heard a lone CW conversation in progress around 3695 kHz that evening. CW is still legal up there, but you have to tolerate newfound neighbors holding microphones!

My only regret was a thought for the future. Would new hams lose all interest in experimenting with amateur radio’s oldest mode? Time will tell. I was also surprised that The International Morse Preservation Society, known as Fists, barely mentioned these two pivotal events on their website. Were the changes much

ado about nothing? Personally, I will miss giving the code tests at VE sessions. People passing this element tended to be wildly exuberant! Life goes on...

CW Podcasts

Hopefully, you'll still want to study code and improve your CW speed! May I introduce you to a new alternative to the ARRL's W1AW broadcasts: One of the founding members of the Straight Key Century Club (SKCC,) Tom KC9ECI, has begun posting a weekly set of CW podcasts. Some days feature simulated QSOs; some will be filled with amateur radio news and other tidbits including radio related history and trivia quizzes. The speed of transmission varies daily: Mondays are at 5 wpm, Tuesdays at 7 wpm, Wednesdays at 10 wpm, Thursdays at 12 wpm, Fridays at 15 wpm, Saturdays at 17 WPM and Sundays at 20WPM. Subscribe and listen to Tom's shows at <http://code.podshow.com>.



(SKCC,) Tom KC9ECI, has begun posting a weekly set of CW podcasts. Some days feature simulated QSOs;

Daytime Alien Invasion!

If you are just too tired to stay up all night to listen to "Coast to Coast AM" with hosts George Noory and Art Bell, go to Guam! News-talk KGUM K57 in Hagatna, Guam airs their nightly talk show at midnight Chamorro Standard Time which is 9 a.m. in New York. Hear their free rebroadcast at: <http://www.k57.com/>. You'll find the "listen live" icon button at the top right of their home page. Be patient! It takes awhile to load the audio stream from their server in the mid-Pacific. Learn all about the show, founded by Art, W6OBB, at <http://www.coasttocoastam.com/>. If you think the aliens have landed, you will find you are not alone! It is a very entertaining show and just good old-fashioned radio.



Coast to Coast AM hosts George Noory (top) and Art Bell W6OBB (bottom). On Dec 27, Art Bell returned to Nevada after an eight month sojourn in the Philippines.



Straight Key Night

There is still time to participate in the best night of amateur radio! Straight Key Night begins at 7 p.m.

Eastern Time Sunday night and continues for 24 hours through New Year's Day until 7 p.m. Monday night. It's not really a contest. It is an on-the-air gathering of thousands of amateurs sending Morse code with old-fashioned straight keys. No electronic keyers allowed! You'll hear a beautiful chorus of manually sent code produced by a wide variety of fists. Long rag chews are encouraged! It is also a time to put vintage gear back on the air. Many operators use tube gear and homebrew emitters of continuous waves. (Look for the



Karl, N2KZ's shack showing Heath DX-20 crystal-controlled CW transmitter, far right. [See PCARA Update, Oct 2006.]

sound of my Heathkit DX-20 at 3559 or 7118 kHz!) It would be wonderful if you joined in, but make sure you listen! You won't hear a more pleasing sound until the peeper frogs arrive in early summer!

Thanks To All!

My thanks to everyone I met on the air during 2006 and to all PCARA club members for their support, kindness and generosity. Be sure to join us each Wednesday for The Old Goat's Net on the 2 meter PCARA repeater: 146.67 MHz, -600 kHz offset, 156.7 PL. We gather on-the-air at 8, so don't be late! Happy New Year to everyone - de N2KZ "The Old Goat." dit dit



HD Radio



Ray, W2CH reminds us, with this shot of his Accurian display, that HD radio brings back the oldies on WCBS-FM.

Tangled web of tech

In a competitive battle for your dollars and eyeballs, telecommunication and entertainment companies are weaving a tangled web of technologies. Verizon continues its \$20 billion plan to roll out **fiber optic** service to the home. In late November, the town board of Eastchester unanimously approved a **video franchise** for Verizon, becoming the sixth Westchester municipality to do so. Eastchester joins the pioneering Town of Greenburgh plus Irvington, Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry and Tarrytown, where Verizon cable TV service has already been approved.



The next approval in early December was at Mount Kisco. These recent agreements will follow the pattern of previous ones—the signed agreement between the town and Verizon must go to the New York State Public Service Commission for final approval, before TV service can be introduced. (See *PCARA Update*, Nov 2006, page 9).

Verizon is now taking orders for FiOS TV service in Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry and Tarrytown, as well as Greenburgh and Irvington.

This town-by-town approach may be bypassed if New York State legislators ever pass a statewide video franchising bill proposed in May 2006 by Assemblyman Richard Brodsky (D-Westchester County). Despite the lack of progress, there are concerns that such a statewide approach could wipe out public access channels. Meanwhile, over in the Garden State, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities just approved its first state-issued video franchise on December 15, allowing Verizon to offer FiOS TV in some 100 communities.

Verizon's TV service is intended to be a fierce competitor for standard cable-TV and satellite TV — in our area, that means Cablevision, DirecTV and Dish



Network are all in Verizon's sights. Verizon aims to provide all the services bundled by cable companies in their "triple play" — in other words video, broadband Internet and voice. Just to confuse things further, Verizon also acts as a reseller of DirecTV. And to make life even more interesting, Verizon signed a deal in November with Cablevision's Rainbow Media Holdings for the right to distribute Rainbow's cable channels over FiOS, including AMC, WE tv, IFC and MSG Network.



While we still have Cablevision in mind, that company just had its franchise renewed by the NYPSC for the town of Putnam Valley.

At the end of December, in an \$11 billion deal,

Rupert Murdoch sold News Corp.'s controlling stake in DirecTV to Liberty Media and John Malone. Liberty Media is expected to concentrate on expanding DirecTV's offerings for Internet service, in competition with the cable and phone companies. John Malone



also has a stake in Current Communications Group, a privately held company based in Germantown, MD that provides Broadband over Powerline (BPL) services to electric distribution companies. (Do you see what I mean about a **tangled web**?)

Along came a spider

To ease the entry path of Verizon and other telephone companies into the TV and broadband marketplace, the FCC made an interesting decision on December 20. The Commission voted by a 3-2 margin to make it easier for competitors to enter the cable TV field by streamlining the franchise process. Local franchising authorities will no longer be able to impose undue delays on negotiations, unreasonable build-out requirements, excessive fees — or unreasonable obligations on the new market entrant to provide public, educational or government channels. Cable operators called the FCC action unfair, saying it would give new franchise applicants major advantages over themselves. In contrast, Verizon and AT&T were no doubt *very* pleased with *their* Christmas present from the FCC.

Perhaps it did not come a moment too soon. One estimate claims that 6 million homes will have switched to cable phone service by the end of



2006, a gain of 2.5 million for the year. Verizon is confident that its expensive FiOS build-out, bringing fiber-to-the-premises, is the best way to compete. AT&T is planning its own broadband service called U-verse. This technology can employ conventional copper phone wire to the customer premises rather than Verizon-style fiber optic cable to the premises and would transmit video using IP multicast to a set-top-box rather than Verizon's combination of 55-870 MHz RF/video transmitted over fiber.

So long, copper

While AT&T sees a future for copper cable, Verizon is getting out of copper as soon as it can. You may not realize it, but if you have FiOS Internet installed, Verizon will convert your existing phone service from traditional copper pair to fiber optic. In the event of a power outage, phone service would then rely on a back-up battery powering Verizon's optical network terminal, mounted outside the home.

Once FiOS is available and being used at customer

premises for phone service, the old interface equipment and even the overhead copper wires could be removed. Verizon feels that its passive fiber optic field infrastructure will provide more reliable service than the 130 year-old technology of copper wires. Removing connection to the old copper cables would prevent competitors from making use of Verizon's wires, for example for DSL. Unlike the previous situation with copper, the FCC allows phone companies to invest in fiber *without* requiring them to share their infrastructure with third parties.

Verizon states that Verizon Online DSL customers who move to FiOS Internet service will have their Verizon Online DSL permanently disabled after their FiOS conversion.

That tangled web woven by the telecommunication companies may just have had one of its many strands pulled right out of it.

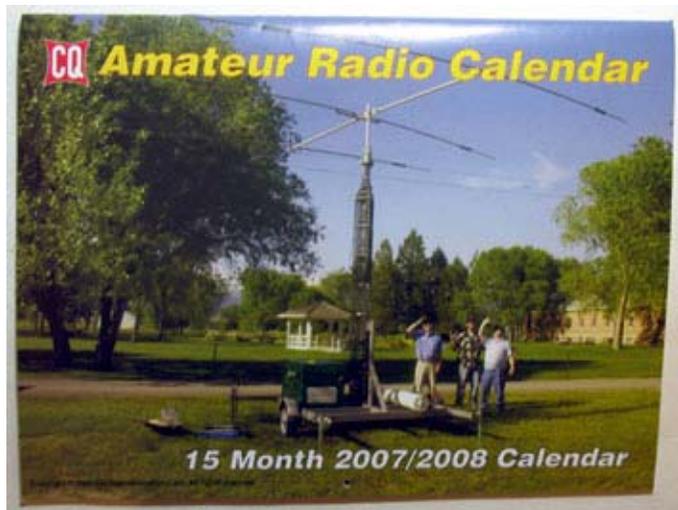


"This is not what we mean by Cat 5 cable!"

- NM9J

Radio Calendar

Every radio room needs a calendar – and a good choice is the *CQ Magazine* "Amateur Radio Operators Calendar". Each year, *CQ's* photographer Larry Mulvehill, WB2ZPI goes across the country hunting for impressive pictures of shacks, equipment and mighty



CQ Magazine Amateur Radio Operators Calendar

towers to characterize each of the fifteen months covered by the calendar. The publication itself is doubly useful, showing not only holidays but also significant radio events such as Field Day, contests and meteor showers.

In past *CQ* calendars, the magazine has taken care to include a wide selection of radio amateurs – from youngsters to old-timers – alongside a mixture of equipment old and new. The calendar for 2007-2008 is noteworthy for a bunch of pictures from Michigan in 8-land plus Illinois and Indiana in 9-land.

One thought that struck me about 2007 is... we need more, younger hams! Most of the pictures for this year feature senior amateurs with equally vintage equipment. The result might be attractive for boomers who recall famous names such as Hallicrafters, Drake and Heathkit... but I doubt it will have much appeal to gen-Xers.

One piece of advice... if Larry Mulvehill ever calls to take a picture of *your* shack, **tidy up** and **find a stand-in** who will look good in a glossy 8 x 10" picture.

Order details: <http://unix8.sunserver.com/cq/Detail.bok?no=117>

- NM9J

Holiday dinner

PCARA's holiday dinner took place on Sunday December 3 at the "At the Reef" restaurant on Annsville Circle. In place of the December meeting, members and friends enjoyed fine weather and a fine meal organized by Ray W2CH and Marylyn KC2NKU.



PCARA members and friends enjoy their 2006 holiday dinner on December 3. Photo supplied by Ray, K2RCQ, from his latest Nikon Coolpix 6.2 Megapixel 5X zoom camera. Ray can be seen far left.

Peekskill / Cortlandt Amateur Radio Association

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Newsletter contributions are always very welcome!

Archive: <http://home.computer.net/~pcara/newslett.htm>

PCARA Information

PCARA is a **Non-Profit Community Service Organization**. PCARA meetings take place the first Sunday of each month* at 3:00 p.m. in Dining Room B of the Hudson Valley Hospital Center, Route 202, Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567. Drive round behind the main hospital building and enter from the rear (look for the oxygen tanks). Talk-in is available on the 146.67 repeater. *Apart from holidays.

PCARA Repeaters

W2NYW: 146.67 MHz -0.6, PL 156.7Hz

KB2CQE: 449.925MHz -5.0, PL 179.9Hz

(IRLP node: **4214**)

N2CBH: 448.725MHz -5.0, PL 107.2Hz

PCARA Calendar

Sun Jan 7: January meeting, 3:00 p.m. Hudson Valley Hospital Center.

Hamfests

Sat Jan 27 2007: NLI Section Convention/Ham Radio University, Briarcliffe College, 1055 Stewart Avenue, Bethpage NY.

VE Test Sessions

Jan 7: Yonkers ARC, Yonkers PD, 1st Precinct, E Grassy Sprain Rd, 8:30 a.m. Contact D. Calabrese, 914 667-0587.

Jan 8: Split Rock ARA, Hopatcong HS, Hopatcong, NJ. 7:00 p.m. Contact Sid Markowitz, (973) 663-0518.

Jan 16: Yonkers ARC, Pelham Town Ho., 20 Fifth Ave, Pelham, NY 10803. 7:30 p.m. Contact D. Calabrese, 914 667-0587.

Jan 22: Columbia Univ ARC, 612 W 115th St, Columbia Univ-Morningside Hgts, Watson Labs, 6th floor, New York, NY. 6:30 PM. Contact: Alan Crosswell, (212) 854-3754.

Jan 26: Bergen ARA, Westwood Regional HS, 701 Ridgewood Rd, Washinton Township, NJ 07676. Contact Donald C Younger (201)265-6583.



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