



PCARA Update



Volume 6, Issue 7

Peekskill / Cortlandt Amateur Radio Association Inc.

July 2005

Substitute II

"I'm a substitute for another guy..." This is one of those occasions when PCARA President Greg KB2CQE, was traveling and unable to add his thoughts to the front page... so your editor is standing in for Greg.

The first thing to note is that Field Day was once again a great success, thanks to the efforts of Bob N2CBH, Joe WA2MCR and everyone else who contributed. Your editor thinks it is a minor miracle when hundreds of amateur radio groups throughout North America convert their chosen outdoor spot into a home-from-home with shelter, food, power, lights, antennas, tables, transceivers, computers and keyers appearing in no time at all. After operating for 24 hours, everything disappears twice as quickly, leaving the "field" to revert to its normal wilderness state. What can the deer think?

Field Day fills all sorts of roles. It's a test of emergency preparedness — operating outdoors on emergency power is no small challenge. Field Day is also educational — who hasn't seen something new or different at Field Day then decided to try it for themselves? Field Day is competitive — can we make more points than our friends in the neighboring group? And Field Day is practical — everybody has a chance to operate from a great site with a large antenna.

With so much going for Field Day, the question arises — why isn't everyone waiting to rush up Bear Mountain when the gate opens? Field Day weekend can be a busy time of year — with graduations, weddings and vacations. Field Days are not what they were... the sunspots have declined, the facilities have no water and gasoline costs twice as much. But your fellow amateurs would still love to see you at our premier operating event.

"I look pretty young, but I'm just back-dated..." In 2005, ARRL introduced a bonus for Field Day Youth Participation. Twenty points were available for each participant age 18 or younger who completed at least one contact. Unfortunately PCARA's youth element was notably absent... so what's gone wrong?

In your editor's opinion, the current license structure is a **disincentive** to youth. The Technician Exam covers just about everything a radio amateur needs to know to run full power on the HF and VHF

bands. There is a huge emphasis on rules, regulations and RF safety. Many of the questions are phrased in language that young people find hard to understand. And all this just to operate a handi-talkie on 2 meters!

I've seen too many dispirited youngsters struggle with the current Tech exam. There is an urgent need to match the effort required with the associated operating privileges. Let's hope the ARRL, VECs and FCC can substitute a licensing structure that *attracts and retains* youngsters — and anyone else with an interest in RF technology for that matter. In days gone by, that "old man" at the far end of a QSO was inevitably a very young man. If we are not careful, we'll all become *literal* OMs.

One person we did not see at Field Day this year was Clint KB2ZRJ — but it was for a very happy reason. Congratulations to Clint and Jane, who became parents of little **Samantha Beth** on June 24.

Congratulations also go to our PCARA Fox Hunt winners Mike N2EAB and Jim W2JJG.

Two things to bear in mind this month. First, there is **no** July meeting, thanks to proximity of the July 4 holiday, celebrating Britain's loss of the American colonies. And over the weekend of July 9-10 we have our Special Event Station **W4H** at Muscote Farm's 4-H Summer Fair. See you there, from 11:00–4:00 EDT.

- 73 de OM Malcolm, NM9J, G3VNQ



Field Day fun.

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Field Day 2005

PCARA's 2005 Field Day began Saturday morning, June 25. First to ascend Perkins Memorial Drive after the gate opened were Ray W2CH and Marylyn KC2NKU. They were followed by Joe WA2MCR and FD Chairman Bob N2CBH. Bob contributed his Homelite generator for the second year and brought it up to Bear Mountain in his truck, along with antenna components from WA2MCR.



Bob N2CBH, Joe WA2MCR, Marylyn KC2NKU, Ray W2CH and Mike N2EAB raise the TH-3JRS HF Yagi.

New for 2005 was PCARA's first HF beam courtesy of Joe, WA2MCR. Joe had obtained a Hy-Gain TH-3JRS three element tri-band Yagi. The only question was — how to raise such a large antenna on top of Bear Mountain? Joe's solution was to use a collapsible step-ladder with horizontal wooden boards bolted between the steps. The boards were drilled to take bull float handles from Home Depot. These six foot alloy tubes are threaded and tapped at opposite ends so they can

be screwed together – rather like a chimney sweep's brush. The tubes are normally used with a 'bull float' for smoothing out large areas of poured concrete that would normally be out of reach.



Karl N2KZ and Joe WA2MCR operating on 20 meters.

The TH-3 antenna was carefully assembled, then attached to tubing sections above the step ladder. Additional sections were then pushed into place from below until we reached a height of 24 feet. This may not sound very high, but remember that the base of the antenna was already at 1284 feet, on top of Bear Mountain.



Mike N2EAB operates 20 meter CW.

Joe had brought along his recently-acquired Yaesu FT-920 transceiver for use with the HF beam, and the pair seemed to get on well together on 20 meters and 15 meters. Later, Joe also produced his Kenwood TS-530 transceiver for the lower frequency bands, where the full-size G5RV antenna was put to good use. Best DX on 20 meters was Los Angeles and Utah. On 80 meters there were 84 phone and 82 CW contacts. Karl, N2KZ and Mike N2EAB contributed to the CW operations.

Meanwhile NM9J's IC-706MkIIIG was reunited with the multi-band wire dipole and kept busy on 40 meters both day and night. The 40 meter score was 350



Mike N2EAB operates the 40 meter station.

contacts on phone and 77 on CW. Best DX was KH6J, the Koolau ARC in Hawaii.

Under the same tarpaulin was the VHF station, manned by Ray W2CH and Marylyn KC2NKU. Ray was once more running his Yaesu FT-897 into 3 element Yagi antennas for 6 meters, 2 meters and 70 cm. Six meters produced 87 phone and 13 CW contacts, with best DX in Mississippi.



Ray W2CH and Marylyn KC2NKU operate the VHF station.

The weather was hot and sticky all weekend, but fortunately the threatened storms stayed away until Field Day was over. Electric fans were arranged to cool both operators and equipment.

A big thank you to all operators who took part. That includes PCARA members N2CBH, N2KZ, N2EAB, W2CH, KC2NKU, WA2MCR, W2JJG and NM9J, plus our guest operators Bill K3JNZ and Tony KA2SNZ — Tony also lent a table for 20 meters.



Jim W2JJG and Bill K3JNZ operating the 40 meter station.

Gadgets: Here's a recommendation for three products that helped Field Day along... The W3NQN bandpass filters from Array Solutions allowed our three transmitting stations to operate in close proximity with

very little mutual interference. Memory keying on 40 meters was provided by a CMOS SuperKeyer II from Idiom Press. And Win-EQF from EQF Software speeded up the duping process and calculation of the final score. Speaking of which, here's a preliminary estimate of the score for Field Day 2005, plus comparison figures from previous years.

Peekskill/Cortlandt ARA, W2NYW

| | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
|---------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|--------------|
| QSOs: | 450 | 718 | 733 | 968 | 857 |
| Power | | 2 (<150W) | | | |
| Participants: | 16 | 15 | 11 | 12 | 10 |
| Total score: | 1,540 | 2,096 | 2,328 | 2,996 | 2,802 |

We were a little behind the excellent score of 2004. Possible explanations include the state of the sunspot cycle (solar minimum), the smaller number of operators and the lack of any QRP/natural power operation this time.

That gives us something to aim for next year! Perhaps we can also round up some of the youngsters who have attended PCARA's Field Days in the past and claim points for the new "Youth Element".

— NM9J

Raffle Drawing

PCARA's Spring Raffle drawing took place at the conclusion of Field Day on Sunday June 26. Alan, junior op of Joe WA2MCR drew the winning ticket from the cardboard box — this turned out to be ticket number 19 from **Jim W2JJG**. Jim took home the prize — an Icom IC-2100H 2 meter mobile transceiver. This may be the first time that the PCARA raffle has been won by a PCARA member on-site! Congratulations Jim.



Alan pulls the winning ticket from the 'hat' at PCARA's Spring Raffle drawing. Lucky winner Jim W2JJG is in the middle of the back row.

Foxhunt '05

PCARA's fifth foxhunt took place on June 4. Shortly before 3:00 p.m. that Saturday afternoon, teams of hunters gathered at the Beach Shopping Center, between CVS and Radio Shack. There was Karl N2KZ; Will KC2FYY and his brother Jason KC2KIX; Mike N2EAB and Jim W2JJG plus your editor with Joe WA2MCR and Alan. Various antennas were being prepared for the fray, from Yagis to flat-tops.

At 3:00 p.m., the airwaves on 146.565 MHz were interrupted by the first transmission from Ray, W2CH. Signals were not very strong and the direction seemed to be northeast from the Beach Shopping Center. As the carrier faded at 3:05 p.m., everyone set off along Route 6 with the feeling that Ray and Marylyn must be some distance away.

The PCARA Foxhunt rules only allow five minutes between the end of the first transmission and the beginning of the second. With busy traffic on Route 6, there was not much time to find a second spot to take a bearing. Most hunters turned off the main road to park, monitored the subsequent transmission from Marylyn describing their recent visit to Dayton, then continued down Route 6.

The general direction was still northeast and it wasn't long before attention began to concentrate on the intersection of Route 6 and Lexington Avenue. Bearings from Route 6 suggested a position northward, somewhere along Lexington Avenue. Other foxes were spotted in this area trying to localize Ray and Marylyn's position.

The former Franciscan High School at the corner of Lexington Ave and Strawberry Road has been in the news as the possible site of a new mosque and community center. However, vehicle access to the location was blocked, so attention shifted to the adjacent George Washington Elementary School. No sign of any foxes there, though the signal was strong and due south. Next stop was the Tom Thumb Theater off Route 6, familiar to Joe WA2MCR – but no foxes were found

there. The bearing from the Theater area was north northwest. This only left the institution between Tom Thumb and George Washington School – the Treetops Rehabilitation and Care Center on Lexington Avenue. There was no sign of any foxes at the front of Treetops, though



Horizontally polarized antenna as used by the foxes.



Foxes Ray W2CH and Marylyn KC2NKU in their June 4 hiding place.

there did appear to be a track, not shown on the map, leading between the trees around the back of the care center.

Following the track led to a blue Monte Carlo – with Ray and Marylyn concealing themselves inside the vehicle by slumping down in their seats! They had arranged their horizontally polarized antenna by fastening a mag-mount whip on the rear trunk. The height of their location was 460 feet, with a good take-off in the Peekskill direction.

First to find the foxes was the team of Mike N2EAB and Jim W2JJG, at 4:00 p.m. They were followed ten minutes later, by Malcolm NM9J, Joe WA2MCR and Alan.

After the last transmission at 4:30 p.m. foxes joined hunters at Applebees in the Cortlandt Town Center. The weather was warm so an outdoor post-hunt meal seemed appropriate. Certificates were awarded to the successful hunters, notes were compared and everyone declared the event to be another successful PCARA foxhunt.

- NM9J



Marylyn KC2NKU presents Mike N2EAB and Jim W2JJG with certificates for first place in the June foxhunt. Karl N2KZ is first on the left and Ray W2CH is on the far right.

Special Event W4H

PCARA's next Special Event station takes place on July 9-10 at Muscoot Farm in Somers.

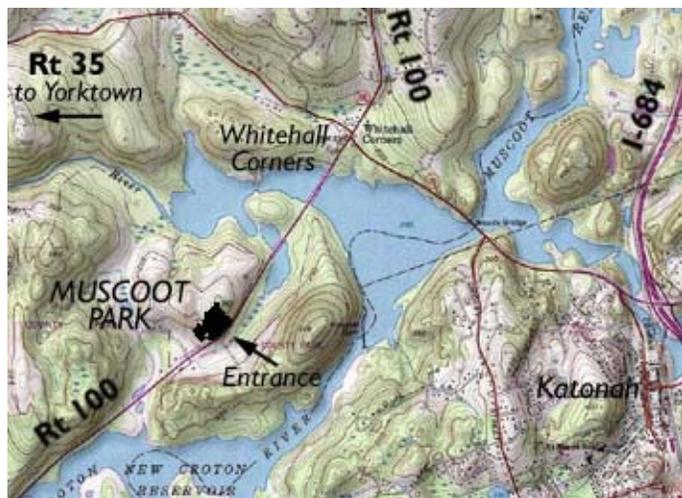
Jim W4JJG writes: "Our Special Event at Muscoot will run from 11:00 a.m. 'til 4:00 p.m. local time each day. We need to meet on Friday evening, July 8 to rig the antennas. For those who are familiar with the site, we'll draw power from the old farm house and will set up in the east end of the picnic grove. This Special Event is a learning opportunity for youth and parents and a membership recruiting opportunity for PCARA — so any other thoughts please let me know."

Here is the official ARRL announcement from the July 2005 edition of *QST*:

Jul 9-Jul 10, 0900Z-1600Z, Somers, NY. Peekskill Cortlandt Amateur Radio Association, W4H. 4H Fair at Muscoot Farms. 21.310 14.275 7.255. QSL. W2NYW Peekskill Cortlandt Amateur Radio Association, PO Box 146, Crompond, NY 10517. (0900 GMT? -Ed.)

Muscot Farm was originally established as a "Gentleman's Farm" by New York businessman Frederick Hopkins in the 19th century. The Hopkins Family used the property as their summer estate and dairy farm from 1880 to 1924. In 1924 the family moved to the farm year-round and continued the dairy business until 1967, when Westchester County acquired the property. This year Muscoot Farm is celebrating its 30th anniversary as a Westchester County Park. A dairy herd is still maintained at the farm, along with other animals for visitors to enjoy.

Over the weekend of Jul 9-10, the New York 4-H organization will be organizing its annual Summer Fair at Muscoot Farm. 4-H is an educational program to provide youngsters with a variety of experiences that



will help them become skilled and responsible adults – a perfect fit for amateur radio! In our area, 4-H programs are part of the youth development program of Cornell Cooperative Extension in Valhalla. If you want to know what 4-H stands for, it's "Head, Heart, Hands, and Health", the four values that 4-H members work on through various projects and programs.

Fair-goers will have the opportunity to meet rabbits and birds cared for by 4-H students plus the cows, goats, pigs and horses that live full-time at Muscoot Farm. There will also be arts and environmental exhibits, pony rides, craft vendors, food and a talent show. The event is intended to showcase the projects undertaken by 4-H members in Westchester County and to promote 4-H values – community service, leadership, teamwork and a healthy lifestyle.

Roving member

PCARA member Charlie WA2WGJ has been roaming the World again. Our latest "Where's Waldo" picture was taken during Charlie's BridgeClimb on a recent visit to Australia.



Charlie, WA2WGJ is shown first on the left (with thumb up) standing on top of Sydney Harbour Bridge. That's Sydney Opera House visible in the left background.

PCARA Officers

President:

Greg Appleyard, KB2CQE kb2cq at arrl.net

Vice President:

Joe Calabrese, WA2MCR; wa2mcr at arrl.net

Secretary/Treasurer:

Jim Grefig, W2JJG; w2jjg at arrl.net

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.

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 July 3: NO JULY MEETING

July 9-10: Special Event Station **W4H**, Muscoot Fm.

Sun Aug 7: PCARA August meeting, HVHC, 3:00 p.m.

Hamfests

Sun Jul 10: Sussex Co ARC Hamfest, Sussex County Fairgrounds, Plains Road, Augusta, NJ. 8:00 a.m.

Sun Aug 14: Tristate ARA Hamfest, Matamoras Airport Park, Airport Park Pavilion, Matamoras, PA. 8:00 a.m.

Sat Aug 20: Ramapo Mtn ARC Hamfest, American Legion Hall, 65 Oak Street, Oakland, NJ. 8:00 a.m.

Sun Sept 18: Candlewood ARA Western CT Hamfest, Edmund Town Hall, Rt 6, Newtown CT. 8:00 a.m.

Sat Oct 8: Bergen ARA Hamfest, Westwood Regional HS, 701 Ridgewood Rd, Washington Township NJ. 8:00 a.m.

VE Test Sessions

Jul 3: Yonkers ARC, Yonkers PD, 1st Precinct, E Grassy Sprain Rd, 8:30 a.m. Contact D. Calabrese, 914 667-0587.

Jul 11: Columbia Univ ARC, Watson Labs, 612 W 115th St. New York, 6:30 p.m. Alan Crosswell, 212 854-3754.



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