



# PCARA Update



Volume 2, Issue 12

Peekskill / Cortlandt Amateur Radio Association Inc.

December 2001

## Emergency

### Preparedness – Greg, KB2CQE

January is a time to evaluate goals and objectives for the year that lies ahead. The events of the last few months have served to remind us that there are times when our skills for providing noncommercial emergency communications are needed.

For the year ahead, I would like for us as an organization to focus on emergency preparedness, so that we are better prepared both as individuals and an organization to respond to the need for providing emergency communications.

I wish each of you and your loved ones a safe, happy, and healthy New Year.

73, Greg, KB2CQE

## Update goes electronic

This issue of the *PCARA Update* is being distributed electronically for the first time. The newsletter has been produced as an Adobe PDF file (Portable Document Format), which should be readable by Adobe Acrobat Reader version 3.0 or higher. If your entry in the club roster does not show any e-mail address, your newsletter will have been mailed out in the time-honored manner on paper.

## Tech class begins

PCARA is organizing a Technician training course in 2002 to prepare students for the FCC Amateur Radio License. Classes will start Tuesday February 5 and run for 8 weeks until March 26. A VE Test session will be organized to coincide with the final class on March 26, 2002.

Classes will be held at the Hudson Valley Hospital Center, from 7:00 - 9:00 P.M. Cost of the course is \$35 including *Now You're Talking* book and other materials. There will be a special rate of \$20 for students aged 18 and under.

For more details and to register in advance, please send an e-mail to [W2NYW@arrl.net](mailto:W2NYW@arrl.net). PCARA members

who would like to join in the teaching duties should contact Joe, KR2V if they have not done so already.

In association with the class, Karl, N2KZ will be holding code practice sessions on the W2NYW 146.67 repeater at 8:45 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The first session takes place Wednesday Feb 6.

## License Plates

PCARA license plate frames are available for \$5.00



PCARA License Frame

per pair. This is a great way to get the PCARA name out into the community and express support for your club.

To order, please send payment to PCARA, PO Box 32, Crompond NY 10517, or contact PCARA at [w2nyw@arrl.net](mailto:w2nyw@arrl.net). License plate frames are also available at PCARA meetings.

New York's "Liberty" license plates are currently being replaced by new "Empire State" plates. Since January 2001, new registrations have been issued with plates bearing the new design. Existing "Liberty" plates will be replaced as their registrations are renewed.

You can order custom "Ham Radio" license plates bearing your callsign from NYS

Department of Motor Vehicles in Albany. They are classed with other emergency service plates such as Civil Air Patrol and Volunteer Firefighter. Cost for the "Ham Radio" plates is \$18.00 plus a \$5.00 annual fee, and you'll need



New Ham Radio License plate

to include a copy of your FCC license with the application. The application form is available as a PDF at the following web site:

<http://www.nydmv.state.ny.us/emerg.htm> .

## License changes?

If you obtain a new license or upgrade your existing license, be sure to share your news with the PCARA secretary ([kr2v@arrl.net](mailto:kr2v@arrl.net)).

# Become a Ham in 46 years or Less - Karl, N2KZ

Good things take time. I *really* took my time. I'll explain:

My dad was a casual DXer of AM radio, listening to distant exotic stations on an All-American 5 tube radio which sat above our refrigerator for decades. Every morning, before work, he would tune it to places that were far away – New Brunswick, Chicago, Atlanta and even New Orleans and Texas. My fascination had just begun.

When I was about 5, my Uncle Tom gave me a yellow 2 transistor AM radio he received as a gas station premium. A novelty at the time, it had a medalion on the front that boasted it was “all transistor.” It came with its own miniature whip antenna! This became my first rig.

The following summer, I brought it with me on a family trip to the Berkshire Mountains and discovered it picked up very little. My Dad cured the problem by giving me a spool of wire with an alligator clip to replace the tiny whip. Suddenly, I held the sounds of the world in the palm of my hand. At night, the possibilities were endless. I remember hearing stations from Swan Island and Miami. To fuel my habit, my Dad would buy me 9 volt batteries by the pack. I eventually even wore out the fiber washer part of the power switch attached to the volume control. A couple of other transistor radios followed, and my little logbook of stations grew.

My Dad rewarded me with quite a prize in 1965: A four tube Hallicrafters S-120 general coverage receiver. It quickly taught me all about shortwave: sending reception reports to stations all over the world and collecting exotic QSLs to my delight. I also became acquainted with amateur radio, especially the AM nets on 75 meters. Some experimenting followed with 100 milliwatt CB walkie-talkies, and my friends and I created little nets of our own.

Three years later, my Dad sensed I was ready for the next step and purchased a Heathkit for us to build. It was a CW-only novice transceiver: a HW-16 with a matching HG-10B VFO. I assembled it with great care and it worked on the first try.

My family lived in a tiny apartment in Queens. We just barely had room enough for the 15 meter dipole we installed in our attic. I listened and listened and listened trying to learn the code. It was frustrating, but I almost learned all the letters. Then, an event occurred that would deter me for decades. My Dad thought I was ready to take the novice code test and invited his cousin, a general class ham, over to our apartment to see if I could copy code. I wasn't ready, and the element

of surprise only made it worse. I failed miserably and lost hope of ever learning code. The HW-16 went into a box for about 30 years!

I recovered from defeat and radio continued to be a passion. As a teenager, I became a proficient AM, FM and TV DXer creating various antenna arrays and other homebrew projects. I launched a broadcasting career and worked at several local radio stations and the ABC Radio Network. I became President of an international AM radio DX club, the IRCA; and was a monthly columnist in *Monitoring Times* and *Popular Communications*. My experiments included part 15 Morse code beacons on medium wave and DXing one watt stations in the 160-190 kHz longwave band.

1995 brought great changes. I became a father and went into television management.

Several years in management made me yearn for an avenue to revive my technical skills and boost my self-esteem. I missed being “hands on.” Luckily, my workplace was filled with dedicated seasoned hams. I was challenged by my peers and quickly got my no-code technician license and passed the code test.

On New Year's Day 2000, I made my first QSO: a 80 meter CW contact with an octogenarian W1EES (a great call for a first contact!) His name was Harold and had the same callsign since the early 1930's. I could not wish for a sweeter indoctrination!

I studied avidly during the next few months and earned an extra class ticket. Not to be stopped, I studied further and earned my GROL – the commercial general radiotelephone license. This was a breakthrough, too. My first attempt at a commercial ticket was in 1970!

So, the Heathkit HW-16 has come out of its box and is now on the air almost daily. I have become a devout advocate of Morse code, preaching the gospel of dits and dahs to all who will listen. If I only had an encouraging Elmer in the late 60s!

It's never too late to catch up on all the fun and experience. Let me suggest a New Year's resolution: encourage others to join the ham radio fraternity and help them as they learn along the way. Becoming an Elmer may be a pivotal step towards another's fun and self-esteem and will bring you many smiles too!



- de N2KZ Karl

# Editor's scribble

Let me first say a big thank you to **Joe, KR2V**. Joe has edited *PCARA Update* from Volume 1, Issue 1 in March 2000 when he was still KC2DWP, all the way up to the last issue for November 2001. Let me also thank those members who sent in contributions for this issue of the newsletter – keep up the good work.

While Joe was occupying the editor's chair, the pages of *PCARA Update* have been distributed by regular snail mail. Handing over to a new editor coincides with PCARA's decision to distribute the newsletter electronically. This change set me reminiscing about previous newsletters and earlier technologies I've been involved with on both sides of the Atlantic.

As a youngster, I'd played around with movable rubber type and spirit duplicators but my first real newsletter was strictly low tech – it was produced with a manual typewriter and pen, then pinned onto the classroom wall during my first year of grammar school in Southport, England. The Trans-X class newsletter did have a **sports reporter**, who dropped off his copy at my home after viewing each Saturday's soccer match.

Newsletter number two was put together for Cambridge University Wireless Society (G6UW). I was still using a manual typewriter, but by now I had the ribbon shifted out of the way in order to cut through a Gestetner stencil sheet. Make a mistake on the stencil and you had to apply plastic white-out, then type over the mistake and hope it all held together. Newsletter production took place in the Student Union basement where the stencil was wrapped around the drum of a self-operated rotary duplicator. Inky fingers were practically guaranteed by this process.

My next newsletter was for Southport's local RAYNET group (Radio Amateurs' Emergency Network). By then I had graduated from a manual to an elderly electric typewriter, and the titles were added using Letraset rub down letters. Production was on an early photocopier using coated paper.

Newsletter number four made a leap into 1984 high tech. I had just acquired an IBM-PC clone, manufactured by local defense contractor Ferranti, after they lost a government contract and decided to switch production from missiles to PCs. I even had a tour of their automatic circuit board assembly line in Oldham while waiting for a ROM-BIOS upgrade! Anyway, I edited Bury Radio Society's *Feedback* newsletter for a year using WordStar on my diskette-based Ferranti PC and printed out masters on a Juki daisywheel printer with an IBM Selectric carbon ribbon. I added headlines using Rotring pen-stencils then handed over production to another club member on a Xerox-style copier.

Editorial duties were interrupted in 1986 when my employer relocated a bunch of people, including myself, from northwest England to Naperville, Illinois.

Later that year, I found myself editing Bolingbrook Amateur Radio Society's newsletter *CQ BARS*. E-mail was far from universal in the 1980s, so I would set up my PC as a bulletin board and



let contributors upload their articles, with coordination on two meters. Over a period of four years, I upgraded from DOS-based Multimate to WordPerfect to Microsoft Windows 3.0 and Aldus PageMaker. Printing began with a daisywheel printer, followed by an Epson 24-pin dot matrix printer capable of proportional spacing, and ending with that miracle of 1989, a sub-\$1,000 HP LaserJet IIP. The LaserJet was wonderful for newsletter production, allowing me to download PCL fonts, add Freelance graphics and scan-in black and white photographs with a Logitech ScanMan. A cheery club member who serviced large-scale copy machines was responsible for production.

Depending on how long you've been around, some of this early technology might be familiar to you. Most of the techniques and trademarks were abandoned long ago, but Windows, PageMaker and HP LaserJets are still in use today – in this very newsletter!

- 73 de Malcolm, G3VNO, NM9J.

## Field Day Results

One of PCARA's more popular events of the past summer was our first entry in **Field Day**. The 2001 Field Day results are published in December's *QST*; PCARA's entry in section 2A is shown on page 103. Here are the numbers:

Peekskill/Cortlandt ARA, W2NYW	
QSOs:	450
Power:	2 (<150W)
Participants:	16
Total score:	1,540
ARRL Section:	ENY

## List Server

PCARA maintains a List Server courtesy of Joe, KR2V. This is a facility for sending e-mail messages automatically to all club members who subscribe. To join, just send an e-mail to the following special address: [w2nyw-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:w2nyw-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

To post a message to the List Server, simply send an e-mail message to: [w2nyw@yahoogroups.com](mailto:w2nyw@yahoogroups.com).

To unsubscribe from the group, send an e-mail to: [w2nyw-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:w2nyw-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com).

# Peekskill / Cortlandt Amateur Radio Association

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**Web site:** www.pcara.org

**PCARA Update Editor:** Malcolm Pritchard, NM9J

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*Newsletter contributions are always very welcome!*

## 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. Meetings are suspended during July and August.

## PCARA Repeaters

**W2NYW:** 146.67 MHz -0.6, PL 156.7Hz

**KB2CQE:** 449.925MHz -5.0, PL 179.9Hz

**N2CBH:** 448.725MHz -5.0, PL 107.2Hz

## PCARA Calendar

**Sun Jan 6:** January meeting, 3:00 PM., HVHC.

**Tues Feb 5 -Tues Mar 26:** PCARA Tech class, 7:00 PM.

**Wed Feb 6:** PCARA on-air CW practice starts, **Mon/**

**Wed/Fri:** 8:45 PM. on 146.67 repeater.

**Sun Feb 3:** February meeting, 3:00 PM. HVHC.

## Hamfests

**Jan 20:** Great South Bay ARC, North Babylon NY.

**Feb 24:** LIMARC, Hicksville NY.

**Mar 2:** Splitrock ARA, Parsippany NJ

**Mar 3:** CANCELLED Gt S. Bay & Suff Cty, Lindenhurst

**Jun 1:** Bergen ARA, Washington Township NJ.

## VE Test Sessions

**Jan 6, Feb 3:** Yonkers ARC, Yonkers Police Dept., 1st Precinct, East Grassy Sprain Rd. Contact: Daniel Calabrese, 914 667-0587.

**Jan 15:** W5YI Pel Hams, Pelham Doronco Town House, 20 5th Ave. Contact: Michael Cifferi, 914 738-5775.

**Feb 14:** WECA, Fire Training Center, Dana Rd., Valhalla. Pre-registration required, contact: Sanford Fried 914 273-2741

**Mar 26:** PCARA (Final session of Tech Class), HVHC, 7:30 p.m. Contact NM9J, 736-0368.



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