



April 2009

# The HARC Spark

The Official Newsletter of the  
Holmesburg Amateur Radio Club  
WM3PEN 146.685 Mhz Repeater  
K3FI CLUB CALLS WM3PEN  
Web Site <http://www.harcnet.org>



## ***YOU'RE INVITED HARC CLUB MEETING***

***Thursday, April 23rd 8:00 PM***

***8<sup>th</sup> District Police Station***

***Academy and Red Lion Roads***

***Philadelphia, PA***

**TOPIC: SKYWARN**

**SPEAKER: Rick Blank, WB3BSA, Philadelphia Skywarn Coordinator**

SKYWARN, founded in the early 1970's is made up of a group of trained, dedicated amateur weather enthusiasts who work in conjunction with the National Weather Service by observing and reporting adverse weather conditions to promote public safety and minimize property damage. In the advent of Doppler Radar, and other technologies, the art and science of weather forecasting has made great strides, but even with all the technology, the National Weather Service still is in need of 'ground truth' observers. It is through training that the NWS teaches interested volunteers to be safe, effective and accurate weather spotters who provide them with the needed ground truths.

Our speaker will cover the local Skywarn program, how you can get involved, ham radio at the Mt. Holly NWS office, and much more. Hope to see you on April 23!

### ***DUES ARE DUE!***

It's that time of year again. Dues are due. Just \$20 a year helps support the club, the repeater, field day, and other activities throughout the year. **Membership renewal form on the last page of the newsletter.** Mail to HARC, 3341 Sheffield Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19136 or bring to a Club meeting.

Warminster Hamfest – May 3  
Grange Fairgrounds, Wrightstown, PA  
Open at 7 A.M. (Vendors at 6 A.M.)

### ***Upcoming Events***

April 23 – Club Meeting, 8<sup>th</sup> District Police Station - Skywarn

May 28 – Club Meeting, 8<sup>th</sup> District Police Station – Show and Tell

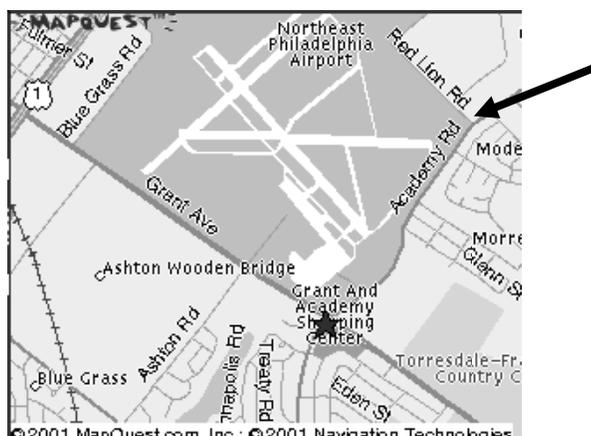
June 25 - Club Meeting, 8<sup>th</sup> District Police Station – Field Day

June 27 -28 – Field Day

## HARC Board of Directors

President - Mike Wurgley, N3LXN  
Treasurer - Bob Josuweit, WA3PZO  
Membership - Charley Johnson, K3CJ  
Technical - Ron Cardullo, K3RJC  
Member-at-Large - Sol Volen, N3UBY  
Webmaster - Rich Shivers, AB3EO  
UPARC Rep - Mike Feeley, KB3NDC  
Newsletter Editor - Bob Josuweit, WA3PZO  
WM3PEN @ AOL.COM

H.A.R.C. Monthly Meetings - The Board of Directors meets on the 2nd Thursday @ 7:30 PM. General meetings are held the 4<sup>th</sup>. Thursday @8:00 PM. 8<sup>th</sup> District Police Station, Red Lion & Academy Rd. Phila PA



H.A.R.C maintains the 146.685 repeater located @ Univ. of PA., Phila PA with inputs in Abington, N.E. Phila, and Cherry Hill, NJ; More Club Information & Member Applications can be had by contacting any of the Directors via E-mail. [WM3PEN@arrl.org](mailto:WM3PEN@arrl.org), the web page <http://www.harcnet.org> or writing to HARC 3341 Sheffield Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19136.

### May 28 Meeting

Show and Tell Night  
Audience participation night. Sort of a brag fest and an antique display combined. A chance to show off your treasures.

We want to see your awards, certificates, operating achievements, interesting QSL cards. Also bring your oldest ham/radio whatever. A piece of equipment, a book/manual, QSL card. Anything electronic related.

Please do not feel limited to just one item if you have a lot to share. There is plenty of room to display items.

## HARC Bulletin Schedule

### Bulletin Station K3CJ

Wed 2000L Amateur Radio News Line  
ARRL Audio News  
The RAIN Report  
Contests / Special Events / Hamfests  
Sun 1000L This Week In Amateur Radio  
Gate Way 160  
Handy Hams  
Contests / Special Events / Hamfests

Newsline and the ARRL Audio News are available locally by dialing (215) 624-0672 and follow the prompts.

## PHILA ARES INFORMATION

All amateurs interested in participating should check into the Phila ARES Net, Sunday's at 9:00 PM, hosted on the Phil-Mont Repeater System; 147.030 MHz (+offset 91.5 PL) ;444.80 MHz (+offset 186.2 PL) When control operators are available, Echolink node 29742, WU3I-L, is on the repeater. Backup link is KB3IV-L.

All interested amateurs are welcomed and encouraged to check in for more information. There is always a different topic of interest to the amateur community discussed with an informal round table of comments and suggestions.

Look forward to having all check in on Sunday nights @ 9:00 pm. See web site for more information.

- Visit the Philadelphia ARES web site  
<http://www.harcnet.org/aresindex.html>



### VE SESSIONS

PhilMont Mobile Radio Club has testing in Ambler, PA on the 4th Thursday of every month. Exams , 1414 E. Butler Pike in Ambler, PA.

Registration begins at 7pm.

Warminster Amateur Radio Club has testing the last Wednesday evening of each month except August and December. The sessions are at the Warminster Recreational and Educational Center on Little Lane, and start promptly at 7:00 PM (registration 6:45 PM). Bryn Mawr - quarterly on a Saturday. Contact Bob Lees, W3ZQN, rjlees@aol.com

**Keep up on the latest HARC news by checking out the Club website**

[www.HARCNET.org](http://www.HARCNET.org)

## **WA3PZO steps down as CQ Magazine Public Service Editor:**

Bob Josuweit, WA3PZO, who has covered amateur radio emergency and public service communications for CQ VHF, and then for CQ, since 1996, is stepping down due to increased time demands at his full-time job. Succeeding Bob will be Richard Fisher, KI6SN, of Riverside, California.

Editor Rich Moseson added, "While I will miss the close working relationship I have shared with Bob Josuweit for over a decade, and wish him all the best in the future, I look forward to working closely with Richard and to the added benefits he will bring to the column as a veteran professional journalist."

Josuweit plans on working with Amateur Radio Newslines on major disaster stories. He also hopes to continue writing, just not on a monthly basis.

## **Conflicting Information About Italian Earthquake Nets:**

Reports on the internet and on the DX Cluster indicate that two to three emergency nets are operating on HF in response to yesterday's earthquake in central Italy. However, it appears that they may be ad-hoc and not connected with the national ham radio organization or relief agencies.

"Daily DX" Editor Bernie McClenny, W3UR, reported this morning that emergency nets were under way on 3643.5 and 7045 kHz, and the ARRL is reporting that Cluster spots indicate additional emergency activity on 3640 kHz.

However, CQ Public Service Editor Bob Josuweit, WA3PZO, reports that Alberto Barbera, IK1YLO, the International Amateur Radio Union's National Emergency Communications Coordinator for Italy, "says he is not aware of any nets operating on behalf of the emergency communications groups on HF at this time for 'User Services.' He believes that any operation on HF related to the earthquake is being done on an individual basis."

In addition, Josuweit reports that IARU Region 1 Emergency Communications Coordinator Greg Mossop, G0DUB, says Barbera is trying to coordinate various groups in light of the recent shutdown of ARI's (Italy's national ham radio organization) national

emergency communications organization. Bob also says that IK1YKO reports that practically all repeaters are still in operation, and that much of the region's cellphone infrastructure is intact as well (although it may be overloaded).

Nonetheless, G0DUB points out that if a station is declaring an emergency on any given frequency, then that frequency should be kept clear. Bottom line: listen before transmitting, especially on the frequencies that have been reported to be in use for emergency nets -- 3640, 3643.5 and 7045 kHz -- and if you are asked to keep a frequency clear for emergency traffic, please comply and QSY.

## **Update on Italian Earthquake Response; Net Active on 7045 kHz:**

CQ Public Service Editor Bob Josuweit, WA3PZO, relays the following update from Greg Mossop, G0DUB, the International Amateur Radio Union's Emergency Communications Coordinator for Region 1 (Europe and Africa):

The 7045 kHz frequency is in use linking local rescue and coordination centres with Protezione Civile in Rome. Cell phone capacity in the area is being increased and a second wave of volunteers and workers are being prepared to go to the area to take over from the first responders. The request to keep 7045 clear remains active and now more important that a formal net seems to exist.

## **From IW5EDI:**

At 01.39 GMT of 6 April 2009 a big earthquake has destroyed many villages around L'Aquila not too far from Rome.

At time writing, over 150 deads and 1500 injured are reported by medias, along to tens thousands of people that will have to spend many night without coming back to their houses.

Ham Radio operators have been the firsts to announce the disaster to the world, and to support communications locally, permitting the rescue machine system to start and coordinate Italian govern from Rome.

Italian public TV Service has recognized to "Radioamatori" a tribute with an [interview](#) on their activity and preparedness in case of similar events.

## APRS Takes on Appalachian Trail

By Bob Bruninga, WB4APR

We are trying to round up as much mountaintop expertise from Georgia to Maine to attempt a packet digipeat all the length of the Appalachian Trail. The sites on Governor Dick Hill and Camelback in Big Pocono state park appear to be good locations in the EPA section.

But we need input from local VHF rovers repeater operators and mountaintop operators in your area to test the paths and give us local detail info... Plus help during event day (late July). For example, we need a list of emitters (preferably 2 meter repeaters) that are on these hills so we can listen for any 2m signals to help us verify paths maybe without having to visit the site for each test.

For packet and for the event, the temporary digipeater station needs be nothing more than a mobile APRS radio. These are all drive-up sites. But we want to make this a team effort and so we need local help.

Here is our web page describing the project:  
[www.aprs.org/at-golden-packet.html](http://www.aprs.org/at-golden-packet.html)

See the specific links to GD Hill and Camelback etc:  
[www.aprs.org/hamtrails/GD-hill.html](http://www.aprs.org/hamtrails/GD-hill.html)

[www.aprs.org/hamtrails/camelback.html](http://www.aprs.org/hamtrails/camelback.html)

Remember, APRS is not a vehicle tracking system. It is a two-way information resource and amateur radio Text messaging system from the front panel of your HT or mobile APRS radio.

### **Bet you didn't know this...**

From: ARRL Contact

Another ham invention is the PC Modem. Dale Heatherington of Roswell, GA, WA4DSY, was a big contributor to the Hayes Modem design. A few references that might be helpful if there are any questions about his contribution.

<http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Dale-Hayes>

Co-founded by Dennis **Hayes** and **Dale** Heatherington, it brought the first modem for home and personal computers to market, and the **Hayes** command set that controlled its modems became an industry standard still in use today.

<http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Hayes-Microcomputer-Products>

Several solutions to the problem were studied, and in the end Heatherington decided the only practical one was to have the modem operate in two modes. In one, *data mode*, all data forwarded from the computer was modulated and sent over the connected telephone line as it was with any other modem. In the other, *command mode*, data forwarded from the computer was instead interpreted as commands. In this way, the modem could be instructed by the computer to perform various operations, such as hang up the phone or dial a number.

## From the ARRL Club News

### Teaching

It has been said that if you stand in the rain you are going to get wet, which simply stated means that if you just show up you are going to learn something.

Everyday we play two important roles in life, the teacher and more importantly that of the student. We can identify these roles through Amateur Radio and our radio club activities.

Often we think of the instructor and student roles in a traditional classroom setting or a training session but when you think about it there are many subtle ways in which we impart knowledge to others or broaden our own understanding of a topic. A lot of what we do in life has been learned from watching others and then trying it ourselves. Think about this when you are on the air. Anyone who has ever tuned a radio receiver is well aware that more people are listening to a conversation on the radio waves than the two stations directly in QSO. Each time we key the transmitter we are teaching by example and hopefully these are all good lessons. Observation and listening on the air is a great way to learn the ropes but eventually we have to experience something to become proficient. Sure, we may stumble in the beginning but experience is a great teacher and provides us with lessons that can never be learned in a classroom. Eventually the student will become the teacher and the cycle continues.

### Know Code

This cute play on words is used by many Morse aficionados who want to world to think that in order to be a "real ham" one must be proficient at telegraphy. Nothing could be further from the truth. In the early part of the twentieth century many ships at sea used Morse code to communicate and knowledge of the code was required so as to not cause interference to seafaring communications.

In the USA and many other countries Morse proficiency is no longer a requirement for any Amateur Radio license but it is still a favorite operating mode for many however if we are to be effective communicators in the twenty-first century then we will need to know a lot more than Morse code. Basic computer skills such as saving and sending files, configuring software programs and interfacing transceivers with computers have become characteristic with Amateur Radio today. A working knowledge of wireless networking and digital communication can prove to be invaluable during an emergency.

With so many facets no single activity can define Amateur Radio. Ham radio has always been a journey of discovery and a quest to learn and experience new things. From spark to vacuum tube to solid state to digital, ham radio has always been on the move. It takes a lot more than Morse code to be an effective radio amateur.

### **Make It Fun**

Hands on demonstrations have always been fun ways to teach new things. It is not uncommon for folks to get set in a routine and after a while they begin to lose touch with current technology. Allowing people experience things like new logging software, digital applications or Logbook of The World is a great way to broaden horizons and expose your club members to all the cool stuff that is out there today.

### **Don't Overlook the Basics**

A symphony is played one note at a time demonstrating that complex functions can be reduced to a series of simple procedures. Mastering some basic skills will make anyone appear like an expert so demonstrating some basics can have a huge impact on proficiency. Some "Basic 101" topics may include soldering, computer file management, making a QSO or whatever your group asks for.

### **Old Dog, New Tricks -- Young Dog, New Tricks**

Nobody is ever too old to stop learning. Exercising the mind as well as the body keeps us healthy. An operator who cut his teeth with Hartley oscillators and vacuum tubes can still master basic computer skills if they approach it with an open mind and the material is presented in comprehensible modules.

Finally a club can develop a pool of people who are knowledgeable about different topics. Some clubs publish an "Elmer List" in the club newsletter or on their website. People requiring help can contact the expert and ask their question. Experience is a good

teacher and an experienced person is a good mentor.

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### **Prehistoric Solution for a Modern Dilemmas**

Soon after the charred stick event caveman discovered that a picture is worth a thousand words. A simple solution for remembering setting for software is to take a screen shot\* of the configuration screen, paste it into a document and save in a folder. Should you have to reconfigure your program simply open your document and compare it to the software configuration screen and make sure that all information is entered correctly and any check boxes that need to be checked are done. I have done this for several friends and I tell them that before calling me for help they should open the file and make their screen look like the picture.

\* Making a screen shot involves two steps.

- 1- Hold down the CTRL key while pressing the PRINT SCR key to capture what is on your computer screen.
- 2- In your word document position the cursor where you want to paste the picture capture in the previous step. Hold down the CTRL key and press the key for the letter V.

Space Weather News for April 2, 2009  
<http://spaceweather.com>

### **Spotless Suns:**

Earlier this month NASA announced that the sun has plunged into the deepest solar minimum in nearly a century. Sunspots have all but vanished and consequently the sun has become very quiet. In 2008, the sun had no spots 73% of the time, a 95-year low. In 2009, sunspots are even more scarce, with the "spotless rate" jumping to 87%.

This is a big event, but it is not unprecedented. Similarly deep solar minima were common in the late-19th and early-20th centuries, and each time the sun recovered with a fairly robust solar maximum. That's probably what will happen in the present case, although no one can say for sure. This is the first deep solar minimum of the Space Age, and the first one we have been able to observe using modern technology. Is it like others of the past? Or does this solar minimum have its own unique characteristics that we will discover for the first time as the cycle unfolds? These questions are at the cutting edge of solar physics.

You can monitor the progress of solar minimum with a new "Spotless Days Counter" on [spaceweather.com](http://spaceweather.com). Instead of counting sunspots, we're counting no sunspots. Daily updated totals tell you how many spotless days there have been in a row, in this year, and in the entire solar cycle.



HOLMESBURG AMATEUR RADIO CLUB  
3341 Sheffield Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19136  
"Serving the Community Through Ham Radio"



## HOLMESBURG AMATEUR RADIO CLUB MEMBERSHIP FORM

HARC, 3341 Sheffield Ave, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19136  
<http://www.harcnet.org>  
WM3PEN/K3FI



All members in good standing are eligible to vote and hold a board office. Dues are \$20.00/year.  
Make checks payable to H.A.R.C. and mail to 3341 Sheffield Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19136.

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