

# SHORT CIRCUITS

Newsletter of the Kent County Amateur Radio Club

March 2024

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Officers			Repeaters
President	Jim Moore	KC3BTV	146.970 (-) 77hz pl Dover
Vice-President	Hunter Grier	KC3VTB	146.910 (-) 77hz pl Camden
Secretary	Tim Reisinger	KC3OO	147.300 (+) 77 hz pl N3YMS
Treasurer	Tom Libertore	N3ARX	444.550 (+) 77hz pl Dover (down)
			442.450 (+) 127.3 hz pl Harrington
			449.775 (-) 114.8 hz pl N3IOC Felton

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## Happy Easter

### Happenings

March 9	VE Testing, Wyoming Methodist Church, 09:00
March 12	Membership Meeting, Kent County EOC, 19:00
March 14	AUXCOMM Meeting, 19:00
March 25	Emcomm Meeting, EOC, 19:00
March 27	DARC Meeting, Salisbury, see <a href="https://www.qsl.net/darc/">https://www.qsl.net/darc/</a> for details
April 9	Membership Meeting, Kent County EOC, 19:00
April 11	AUXCOMM Meeting, 19:00
April 24	DARC Meeting, Salisbury, see <a href="https://www.qsl.net/darc/">https://www.qsl.net/darc/</a> for details
April, 29	Emcomm Meeting, EOC, 19:00
May 9	AUXCOMM Meeting, 19:00
May 14	Membership Meeting, Kent County EOC, 19:00
May 22	DARC Meeting, Salisbury, see <a href="https://www.qsl.net/darc/">https://www.qsl.net/darc/</a> for details
May 27	Emcomm Meeting, EOC, 19:00
March 31	<b>Easter Sunday</b>
June 8	VE Testing, Wyoming Methodist Church, 09:00
June 11	Membership Meeting, Kent County EOC, 19:00
June 13	AUXCOMM Meeting, 19:00
June 22 – 23	Field Day, more information coming
June 24	Emcomm Meeting, EOC, 19:00
June 26	DARC Meeting, Salisbury, see <a href="https://www.qsl.net/darc/">https://www.qsl.net/darc/</a> for details
July 9	Membership Meeting, Kent County EOC, 19:00
July 11	AUXCOMM Meeting, 19:30
July 29	Emcomm Meeting, EOC, 19:00
August 8	AUXCOMM Meeting, 19:00
August 13	Membership Meeting, Kent County EOC, 19:00
August 26	Emcomm Meeting, EOC, 19:00
September 9	Membership Meeting, Kent County EOC, 19:00
September 12	AUXCOMM Meeting, 19:00
October 8	Membership Meeting, Kent County EOC, 19:00
October 10	AUXCOMM Meeting, 19:00
October 28	Emcomm Meeting, EOC, 19:00
November 12	Membership Meeting, Kent County EOC, 19:00
November 14	AUXCOMM Meeting, 19:00
November 25	Emcomm Meeting, EOC, 19:00

## Hamfests

- March 16     **Fredfest '24**  
**Frederick Amateur Radio Club**  
Independent Hose Company, 310 Baughmans Ln, Frederick, MD 21701  
Contact: Jeff Fishman , KB3FIO, 905 Twin Oak Ct. Frederick, MD 21701  
Phone: 240-285-6596 Email: [ljfish1@comcast.net](mailto:ljfish1@comcast.net) Talk-In: 146.640 (156.7)
- April 20     **Delmarva Amateur Radio and Electronics Expo, ARRL Delaware State Convention**  
**Sussex Amateur Radio Association**  
Cheer Center, 20520 Sand Hill Rd., Georgetown, DE 19947  
**Contact:** Jamie Ashton , W3UC, 7446 Parker St. Pittsville, MD 21850  
Phone: 410-202-7690 Email: [ashton@mchsi.com](mailto:ashton@mchsi.com) Talk-In: 147.090 156.7
- April 21     **Maryland Mobileers Spring Hamfest**  
**Maryland Mobileers Amateur Radio Club**  
Odenton Volunteer Fire Company, 1425 Annapolis Rd, Odenton, MD 21113  
Contact: Bruce McPherson , AB3AC, 815 Quartz Flake Ct Odenton, MD 21113  
Phone: 410-456-2500 Email: [BMCPHERSON73@VERIZON.NET](mailto:BMCPHERSON73@VERIZON.NET)  
Talk-In:146.805/107.2
- May 5        **Warminster ARC - Annual Hamfest**  
**Warminster ARC**  
Bucks County Community College-Lower Bucks Campus, 1304 Veterans Highway (Route 413), Bristol, PA 19007  
**Contact:** George Brechmann, N3HBT, P.O. Box 113 Warminster, PA 18974  
Phone: 215-443-5656 Email: [WARMrcinfo@gmail.com](mailto:WARMrcinfo@gmail.com) Talk-In: 147.090+ 131.8
- May 26     **MFMA Memorial Weekend Hamfest**  
**Maryland F.M. Association, Inc**  
Howard County Fairgrounds, 2210 Fairgrounds Road, West Friendship, MD 21794  
**Contact:** John Elgin, WA3MNN, 518 Copley Lane Silver Spring, MD 20904  
Phone: 301-641-5313 Email: [marylandfm@verizon.net](mailto:marylandfm@verizon.net)  
Talk-In: 146.76/224.76/444.0 PL107.2
- July 27     **CVARC Annual Hamfest**  
W3ACH  
Chambersburg Steam and Engine show grounds, 1500 Criders Church Road, Chambersburg, PA 17201  
**Contact:** Jim Stephens, KB3ICU, PO Box 121 Chambersburg, PA 17201  
Phone: 717-382-8834 Email: [cvarcw3ach@gmail.com](mailto:cvarcw3ach@gmail.com) Talk-In: 147.120+ 100 PL tone

More hamfests listed at [www.arrl.org/hamfests](http://www.arrl.org/hamfests). Check at the web site, or call the contact person, before going to any hamfest to make sure it has not been canceled.

## Editor's Comments

I got to spend some "vacation" time at the lovely Fox Chase Cancer Center hostel recently. During that time I had an occasion of seeing a nice doctor at Bayhealth earlier before going to Philadelphia who ordered some tests. On Thursday I was getting ready to return home and the doctor at Fox Chase and I got a phone call late in the afternoon from Bayhealth that a test had come back and I had been sent home from Bayhealth with a wrong antibiotic. We got this information to the doctor at Fox Chase and a change was made to my home drugs.

So what's the big deal here? Well this nurse had been trying to call me all day, and AT&T cell service had been down. No calls coming in or out. It was all over the news and people were being told how to call 911 if they needed emergency services.

Why did AT&T go down? No explanation has been given to date, but here on a "normal" day many people lost the ability to make phone calls for whatever reason they have had. Maybe it was to check in at work, or maybe it was about a medication, but those calls didn't go through. On a "normal" day. What about during a real situation? Would you be ready?

In the line of being ready, you thinking about what you want to do for Field Day? It will be coming up on the last full weekend in June, as always, this year is the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. We are planning to be back at Brecknock Park in Camden for the event, but further details are still pending. Come to the meeting and keep up to date with plans for the event.

## President's Column

I am working on getting some presentations for club meetings that hopefully you will find both informative and interesting. I know that the NANO VNA presentation by Barry, K3EUI, went longer than expected but he did cover some good information. Afterward he said he only saw 3 hands raised in response to the question as to ownership of NANO VNAs so he thought a nuts and bolts, step by step, would not be of interest to most. I think he thought to garner interest in the usefulness of purchasing one and once owned the next step is how to use one. I will ask him back later this year to do the "how-to" section.

For the March meeting I have asked Jerry, N3KRX, to do a presentation on the value of contesting in ham radio along with some tips and tricks.

In April, I asked Dave, KC3AM, to talk about the ham radio operations on the battleship USS New Jersey.

Field Day is just around the corner on June 22-23 at Brecknock Park in Camden. This is a fantastic time to get some HF operating, especially if you live in a radio-free HOA. It is also an opportunity to show to the public what we can do and why we do it. We need someone(s) to help put together operating schedules, setup/takedown, and food. You don't have to commit to the whole event but a few hours would be helpful, especially in the evening/night when things worldwide are really hopping.

Get out and have some fun being radio-active!

73,  
Jim KC3BTV

## Vice-President's Column

On February 14th, there was an issue with the 146.97 machine during the time when the Wednesday net should have taken place. Since then the issues have gone back to normal, however it made me think about emergency preparedness. Though we have an annual SET, Field Day, and more to show our ability to operate on a moment's notice, I don't think there would be such a positive outcome if there were to be an actual emergency given no prep time.

One of the best ways to be prepared is to know your equipment, and even better, regularly testing your equipment. At February's Emcomm meeting, we practiced setting up one of the club's Go Kits to a club laptop and sending a WinLink email. After some time, we were able to get the email sent, however we were faced with different errors and troubles during the exercise.

How does this relate to everyday hams? A big part of club activities are being able to successfully transmit information via different methods of communication. A great way to practice these preparedness skills are learning to exchange information, like an RST report, or learning how to properly participate in an information net, like at a community event. Sussex County is looking for volunteers for the CODEL marathon and we also have field day coming up. Both are great opportunities to learn a new skill.

- Hunter G [KCARC Vice President]

73 DE KC3VTB

## From the Section Manager's Shack

Greetings to All Delaware Hams!

As we bid farewell to the winter chill, the promise of spring beckons us outdoors, presenting the perfect backdrop to refine our EmComm skills. I recently joined a group of enthusiastic operators at a local park, troubleshooting antenna and radio intricacies. Remember, our EmComm abilities are akin to muscles - regular exercise keeps them sharp and ready for action.

Our Delaware Section Staff convened in Dover on February 10th, engaging in a series of enlightening discussions on a variety of topics including DTS/NTS, Skywarn, DEMA, WinLink, DEVOAD, and legislative matters, among others. With the Simulated Emergency Test (SET) on the horizon, planning efforts are gearing up, with preliminary information set to be unveiled at the Delaware State Convention & Hamfest this April.

The "Amateur Radio Emergency Preparedness Act," now under consideration in both the House and Senate, symbolizes a beacon of hope for those living in HOA's. This federal bill, aimed at addressing HOA antenna restrictions, has garnered our full support. Additionally, we're drafting a state-level bill as a contingency plan. Your involvement is crucial; for further details, visit [congress.gov](http://congress.gov) (Bill S.3690) and sign up for updates. The recent AT&T outage underscores the urgency of our advocacy.

A warm welcome to Mike, N1MWU, the new President of the Lewes Amateur Radio Society (LARS). With the club in a phase of transition, Mike's leadership comes at a pivotal time. LARS meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at the Lewes Diner at noon.

Excitingly, Keith, WU3X, (formerly N3SVB) has stepped into the role of Technical Coordinator for our section. With a rich background in electronics and a passion for amateur radio, Keith is a valuable asset to our community. Those interested in technical support or collaboration are encouraged to reach out via Keith's contact information posted on the ARRL Delaware's webpage. If you are interested in providing technical support to hams in your county as a Technical Specialist contact Keith. Sussex's TS is Eric,

WG3J, who lives in Ocean View. Eric has a vast knowledge of HF, antenna builds, baluns, and contesting.

Like many radio operators in the section, I will be participating in the ARRL International DX Phone Contest the first weekend in March. Running a contest station provides valuable EmComm skills. From listening to logging, every minute increases your ability to run a station as NCS, one of the hardest positions to fill during an incident. Like POTA, contesting provides other benefits such as learning your radio's settings, understanding propagation on HF bands, and increasing computer skills, just to name a few. These events also foster camaraderie within our vibrant community.

For those yet to join, the ARRL Delaware Section Reflector on groups.io is your gateway to a world of resources, classes, and events. Ensure you're part of this dynamic platform to stay informed and engaged.

I extend a warm welcome to new/upgrading amateurs in our community:

AC3LG            Zhaohan Dong  
KC3AEA        Mark Mullenhour

March brings the popular ARRL International DX Phone Contest. This phone contest is being held the first full weekend in March; March 2-3, 2024. A look ahead tells us the Delaware State QSO Party is the first weekend in May. Visit the ARRL's Contest Calendar for details on these and other contests throughout the year.

Your thoughts, questions, and participation are what drive our community forward. Feel free to reach out to me at any time; let's keep the airwaves alive with our collective passion for amateur radio.  
73,

Steven Keller  
Delaware Section Manager  
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ARRL Sections - Delaware

## The Emcomm Corner

I maintain a digital station utilizing both PACTOR (hardware modem) and VARA (software modem) as the third region high frequency RRI digital traffic hub. The reason I have both is that some stations that connect to me use VARA and some use PACTOR. Of course the two protocols are not compatible with each other like DMR and CFM. Typically about 150 messages a month come into my station. The radio, an IC-718, and the computer run 24/7 scanning selected frequencies seeking traffic.

One day the corded mouse attached to the computer died and I replaced it. A day later one of the stations that checks my station for incoming traffic, WA3QPX, said that he was unable to connect with my PACTOR modem. The VARA software modem continued to work properly. I tried power cycling the modem and restarting the computer (Microsoft's answer to everything) but no success. I called Jim Kutsch, KY2D, who helped set up my system, and did some troubleshooting over the phone to no avail. Finally he suggested I try unplugging and replugging the cables from the PACTOR modem. I have a signal combiner that takes the two modem output signals and sends them to the radio without interfering with each other. The combiner is set up using a breadboard type setup. When I was unplugging the PACTOR cable I noticed that there was a dangling wire not connected to anything. Closer examination showed that it had broken off at the connection point on the breadboard and it happened to be one of

the audio lines into the PACTOR modem. Apparently I had hit it when replacing the mouse and broke it off. I reconnected it and the PACTOR modem was working once more.

What does my modem problem have to do with emergency communications? Two things come to mind. First, in EMCOMM situations things sometimes go bad and you have to know your equipment well enough to be able to diagnose the cause and fix it in the field. How to do that? Use the equipment regularly. I should have recognized on the modem display that it was not receiving an input signal. Second, doing one thing can affect others in a way that is totally unrelated and unexpected. Careful logical troubleshooting takes time and effort and requires knowledge of everything that happened, whether you think it is relevant or not. Who would have thought changing a mouse would disable a hardware modem?

73,  
Jim KC3BTW  
Kent County EC

## **AUXCOMM News**

It's March. Beware the Ides of March. "A funny thing happened on the way to the Forum, said Caesar".

Warnings are given for a purpose. That purpose is usually to inform and educate the target audience. Now if that audience is an at-risk population, one would think they should heed what is contained in that warning. Well, people being people, and what they are, some in that at-risk population will heed the warning, and follow their Family Emergency Plan. Others in that target population will wonder what they should do, and still others will ignore the warning. Which of the three categories of response are you in?

You and your family should have a Family Emergency Plan. You should keep it updated. You should have family discussions about it at least two to three times a year, so everyone in the family is familiar with it. The website FEMA.gov has about everything you would need to know for just about every peril your family might face. Have a plan, work the plan!

The current popular term in the Emergency Management community is "Community Resilience". It's not a new term, it's been around a while, popping up now and again. So I guess this is again. Wikipedia defines it as, "the sustained ability of a community to use available resources to, respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations". There is a larger plan behind a community's ability to recover from a disaster at the county and state level.

What do we face here on this "island" we inhabit? Yes, "island" there are five bridges to get off of this sand spit that will shut down when the sustained winds reach 45 MPH. We can have, and have had all or some of the following, depending on your frame of reference. Winds from Nor'easters, Hurricanes and Tornadoes. Earthquake, yes we experienced one that didn't do any lasting damage, just took the cellphones out for a couple hours. Inundation, a fancy term for coastal flooding, beach erosion, and Tsunamis. Fires, natural and manmade. Precipitation in large amounts, snow and rain. Then let's add the "Terrible T's", Technological and Terrorism, frequently coming together. Will you and your family be ready?

All you have to do is watch the evening news to see what can happen here, that is happening all over the country right now. Did you catch the recent comment that the National weather service has reported more Tornadoes in February than it ever has? How about the report from Texas on the 850,000 acre wildfire. That's an area larger than Sussex County! And, 12 to 15 feet of snow predicted for the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Disasters are occurring daily all over the country. The families and communities that are ready with a plan, are the ones most likely to come through the experience in better shape than those without a plan.

Sussex County AUXCOMM has taken a step to help serve the people of the county with a broader program and hopefully develop a few communities that will be a bit more resilient. The AUXCOMM Group and Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), a FEMA program, will be co-operating programs, sharing combined support resources, at the Sussex County EOC. Shared resources will include Administration and Logistics support. This new approach, combining the CERT program, which is suddenly growing again in the county, with the AUXCOMM operation, brings together community level and county level response groups working cooperatively. There will be some cross-over training for both groups in the coming year.

The CODEL is coming April 14th, mark your calendars now. More information will be coming out. Bill Saunders, N3ID, will be directing the operation. Following on the success of the Rehoboth Marathon last December with teaming CERT with AUXCOMM, we will again be doing it for the CODEL. Also, in working with the CERT program, AUXCOMM now has use of the CERT Trailer as a mobile communication resource. It's currently being refurbished and will have its first official roll out for the CODEL as the Alternate Net Control location. Additionally, located in a high traffic area for the event, it will be publicity for both groups, CERT and AUXCOMM.

Watch for some Family Preparedness programs coming in the near future as a spin-off of the training that the two groups will be sharing. Dates and locations will be advertised as they get scheduled.

73, K3PFW

## Club Happenings

### Dr. Bob Heil, SK

From the Heil facebook site:

Our beloved founder, Dr. Bob Heil, K9EID, is now a Silent Key. Bob fought a valiant, year-long battle with cancer, and passed peacefully surrounded by his family. Bob's lifelong passion for amateur radio was clear to everyone involved in the hobby. Everything Bob did for the betterment and growth of amateur radio - from his instructional handbooks and countless presentations to his support of the ARRL and youth programs - was based on the foundation and spirit of service. Bob was an Elmer to all of us. While Bob's presence will dearly be missed, his impact on the hobby and everyone in it will forever be felt. On behalf of Bob to all ham radio operators worldwide, 73.

### Antenna Bills Introduced

On January 30, 2024, US Senators Roger Wicker (MS) and Richard Blumenthal (CT) introduced S.3690, the Senate companion bill to H.R.4006, introduced last June. Both bills reflect the Congressional campaign efforts by ARRL to eliminate homeowner association land use restrictions that prohibit, restrict, or impair the ability of an Amateur Radio Operator to install and operate amateur station antennas on residential properties they own.

Maybe something will be done to enable hams in HOA's the ability to have an antenna on the outside of their residences. See more information in the ARRL news at [www.arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org).

### NANO VNA Presentation

If you have never heard of a NANO VNA, or wanted to know how one worked, you missed a very good presentation at the February club meeting. Barry, K3EUI, from Philadelphia did a very nice Zoom presentation for the club. The presentation also covered some basic antenna theory and was entertaining. Our president will be having Barry back for part two in the future.

## **Delmarva Amateur Radio Club**

The Delmarva Amateur Radio Club (DARC) is circled in the Salisbury, MD area and hosts one the best two meter repeaters on the Eastern Shore, 146.82! Their repeater, with the call sign K3DRC, has excellent coverage and I personally have talked with a ham East of Salisbury while I was West of Baltimore on I-70 en route to Hamvention. That's coverage!

DARC holds its meetings at the Wicomico Presbyterian Church, 129 Broad St, Salisbury, MD, and meetings start at 7:00 PM. Check out their website at <https://www.qsl.net/darc/>. This month's meeting will have the program "Winlink for Emergencies" – J.C. Taylor W3JCT. You can check out other future programs at their website. The "Happenings" section of the newsletter will list their meeting dates.

## **Useless Facts of the Month**

Americans eat approximately 100 acres of pizza each day, or 350 slices per second. (And Carolyn gladly does her part!!)

January 20, 1981

Iran released 52 Americans held hostage for 444 days, minutes after the presidency had passed from Jimmy Carter to Ronald Reagan.

In a fascinating tidbit of music trivia, the iconic Beatles song "Yesterday" was initially titled "Scrambled Eggs." The entire melody came to Paul McCartney in a dream one night. Rushing to a piano before the notes faded, he penned improvised lyrics, using "Scrambled Eggs" as a whimsical placeholder for the title. The initial verse, "Scrambled eggs/Oh my baby how I love your legs / Not as much as I love scrambled eggs," served as a temporary foundation until he crafted the perfect words to complement the melody. The song went on to become one of the most covered and beloved tracks in music history.

## **Tidbit of Information of the Month Department**

### **How Did the AT&T Outage Thursday Affect FirstNet?**

(TNS) — The federal government has invested billions of dollars in a national public safety communications network known as FirstNet, but that didn't prevent disruptions to the emergency response system during Thursday's wireless outage involving Dallas-based AT&T Inc. Police and fire departments across the country took to social media early Thursday to offer customers advice on how to contact them if cellphones were showing an SOS.

So what is FirstNet and how is AT&T involved?  
What Is FirstNet?

FirstNet is a wireless broadband network designed solely for first responders during times of crises like natural or human-made disasters. FirstNet is not a commercial network and only organizations authorized by the First Responder Network Authority, which is responsible for operating the FirstNet network, are allowed to use FirstNet. FirstNet came into existence after the 9/11 terrorist attacks revealed issues in how emergency services communicated with the public and one another. Radio systems used by law enforcement, fire services, EMS, and emergency management were often not easily accessible or reliable. Landline and mobile networks also quickly got jammed by the high volume of calls in the wake of the attack.

In 2012, Congress established the First Responder Network Authority through the Middle-Class Tax

Relief and Job Creation Act and with recommendations from the 9/11 Commission Report. The goal of the program was to create a stronger alliance between the private sector and governments so public safety officers get first priority for coverage and calls. "The vision of FirstNet is to connect large metropolitan cities to the smallest rural areas so that our first responders and public safety community can talk to each other and communicate," said Kay Kapoor, former president of AT&T's global public sector, in a 2017 YouTube video. Along with the goal to extend to smaller towns, Congress allocated 20 megahertz of spectrum and \$7 billion as part of the Public Safety Spectrum and Wireless Innovation Act to create a network built solely for first responders in 2012. More than 25,000 public safety agencies across 2.91 million square miles now use FirstNet, according to the service.

In March 2017, FirstNet and AT&T agreed to a 25-year deal to build out and maintain the network. Its price tag has been estimated as high as \$100 billion. In 2018, the network launched along with the FirstNet Core, a physically separate piece of infrastructure that connects radio networks to phones, computers, tablets and more. Earlier this month, the First Responder Network Authority committed an additional \$6.3 billion to AT&T to expand 5G capabilities and mission-critical services over the next 10 years.

How Did the Outage Affect FirstNet?

Because of the outage, some emergency services had to use maps to get to their destinations because FirstNet went down, Matt Zavadsky, chief transformation officer at MedStar Mobile Healthcare, told NBC5.

"When the system went down at 2:30 ... area law enforcement, fire agencies, first responders all over lost connectivity with their field units," Zavadsky said. "So we had to revert to radio dispatching and actually using maps and ambulances to get to calls because the mapping systems weren't working because the cell system was down." By 1pm Dallas time, FirstNet was fully operational again, said White House national security spokesman John Kirby.

Thanks to Government Technology online

## **GO KITS WITH GREEN DOT**

My Go Kits are important to me. However, I commonly call them "Dash Kits". This is because in case I get called out, I "dash" to their storage location, pick the labeled kit(s) I will need, and try to "dash" out the door. For those that do not know me, or aren't aware of my current health problems, the first thing about dashing out the door would be getting past my guardian, aka my wife.

History: I have been on the slippery slope with my health since last April culminating with a near death event last August. Since then I have slowly been getting my strength back and being able to resume a large portion of my former activities, except for flying. As such, I have a lot of time to do radio projects.

I have been busy building antennas for POTA; winding toroids for radio projects; not only for me, but my home club. I have acquired three new QRP radios. A QRPLABS QCX Mini for 40 and another one for 20M. ([www.qrplabs.com](http://www.qrplabs.com)). They output nominally 5 Watts. Each radio has a very long list of high end features. They even do WSPR. Check them out, they are small, feature rich, but do not come with an internal battery or ATU. For a small ATU I use my Elecraft T1. For a battery, I use a rechargeable Lithium 12V, 6800ma battery. It is slightly larger than a deck of playing cards. The battery, ATU, and cables fit inside their own Dash Kit bag, Orange in color so I can't easily miss it.

Lastly, I picked up a Xiegu X6100 HF radio. I love, and dislike this radio simultaneously. It is under two pounds, it has a great color screen, a great ATU, and it's highly portable and travels well, with many desired features. However, it suffers from the normal Xiegu software bugs. On the bright side, Oleg,

R1CBU has been writing his own software. Since the X6100 is really a small computer running Linux, you can easily carry both softwares, Xiegu's and RCBU's in memory and on a micro SD card. In this way you can boot to either software once you understand the steps. You can pick what software you want to run based on the needs. FYI, R1CBU's software is not totally complete; but neither is Xiegu's. Currently there is no charge for R1CBU's software.

The X6100 is in its own "Dash Bag". The radio has a built in ATU, a 3000mA internal battery, can decode and send CW, RTTY, PSK-31, all with message memories, and now FT8 installed in the radio with third party software. The Dash Kit also has a portable random wire antenna with a micro 9:1 Unun that is sold by K6ARK. It's on a PCB BNC and its components mount on the back of a PCB BNC connector. It is tiny! Lastly, the Dash Kit bag has a 1/2" wide Green Dot on its label. Why?

The "Green Dot" means the contents in the bag are totally complete. The radio, power source (internal battery), antenna, throw line and weight, iambic key, microphone, earbuds, and all accessory cables and connectors, and some spares. It is complete and requires nothing else for the radio to be put into service, except my Microsoft Surface for digital modes. For FT8 I can do that directly on my iPhone if need be. If the deployment will be more than 2 hours, as they often are, I also bring my Xiegu DH100 battery power source. The battery/ AC inverter pack weighs about 2 pounds.

If a Dash Kit does not have a Green Dot it means it is incomplete and needs to be checked before use. Maybe the bag does not have an antenna, or a power source, or missing cables, connectors borrowed for other uses, etc. The Green Dot signifies the bag is ready to "GO" and is ready to be a "Go Bag". When you need to be deployed, that is not the time to conduct an inventory!

Just some ham mental food for thought. I do not know about you, but I have been on several past deployments that people have showed up with something missing from their GO Bag. Oftentimes I try to be the supplier of the missing item(s), so I tend to over pack and I try to be over prepared.

Go forth, propagate and enjoy the hobby!

72  
Paul, W2PB

## **First CW Contact**

A memorable #001 CW Contact.

A few months ago I made my first CW contact. I was trying to re-trim a 20/40 meter delta-loop that had come down in a storm. I dialed in K6KPH's frequency on 40 meters and listened for a while, sent out a QRL?, then listened again. It was quiet, not a soul around. To check my VSWR while I was trimming the antenna I would transmit "K6KPH" a few times and check the reflected power. I didn't want to just transmit a constant short carrier and then an ID. I thought it would be more efficient to call K6KPH when I wanted to make a test transmission just in case someone was monitoring, not really expecting K6KPH to hear my meager transmission. While I was still under the desk completing the antenna trimming I reached up one final time and tapped K6KPH (by this time I had gotten pretty good at sending K6KPH on a straight key upside down under a desk). Things looked pretty good on the SWR meter so I decided to go ahead and button everything up. At that moment I heard what I thought was a "DE" from somewhere. I listened more closely; there it was again, DE. OH NO it's got to be K6KPH answering. Now what do I do? WHAM... the first thing hit my head trying to get out from under the desk. Where's the key, there's that sound again "DE". Grab the key, ok now what, DON'T THINK just send your call, and stop shaking just send your call. Tap...tap...tap...N3ZU.... N3ZU...K, by now it was quiet once again. I was a bit relieved as I was not prepared for my first QSO (for that matter how does one completely

prepare for their first QSO?). The heart rate started settling and I was finally beginning to relax. Then out of the speaker came the nice clear sweet note "N3ZU de K6KPH.... Here we go again...where's some paper, where's a pencil. What are all these tools doing all over the desk? Just wipe all this clutter on to the floor. Heart rate is again skyrocketing, what's he saying, where the hell is my pencil. Ok paper, pencil starts writing, DON'T THINK just write!

I never thought my first QSO would be on my knees surrounded by a smattering of electrical tools. It was a most memorable contact, not only for my dilemma but actually to have K6KPH as CW contact Number 001.

My heart rate once again began to slow down to something closer to normal. I began the tedious process of sorting through the mess I had created on the floor of the shack. As I sorted I thought more of that first contact. To me it was a "right of passage". It was a mixture of panic, an unclear head, shaky hands, sweaty palms, and to be sure absolute pleasure. I wondered how many of those superb operators at coastal stations like KPH and on board distant ships had at one time in their lives experienced such feelings on their first contact.

I stood up from the floor, walked back to the desk and found myself staring at my key. The key that I had made contact with K6KPH was modeled after the Marconi PS213 used by UK Marconi Coastal stations. It's known as a Rugby or Portishead key. They were manufactured in the 80's at the GPO workshops, Rugby England and replaced the old original PS213's. I just stood there staring for a moment at its inscription. "Last Radio Officer North Foreland Radio (GNF) 31<sup>st</sup> March 1992". The first thing that ran through my mind, ZUT!

I must say RD it was quite an experience. I don't think my heart rate returned to normal till sometime that afternoon. Yes the Marconi molecules were aligned in the Ether that Saturday morning. It's a day I'll never forget. Keep up the great work you're doing at KPH. If by chance you need some volunteer help with a project don't hesitate to give me a shout.

Thanks for CW contact 001!

All the best,  
David  
N3ZU  
SKCC#4759

Thanks to MRHS Incredible Radio Tales

## **Joke of the Month**

### **New Pastor**

A new pastor moved into a town, and he went out one day to visit his parishioners. All went well until he came upon this one house. It was obvious that someone was home, but no one came to the door even after he had knocked several times.

Finally he took out his card, wrote on the back "Revelation 3:20" and stuck it on the back of the door. Revelation 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with me."

Later in the week, as he was counting the offering, he found his card in the collection plate. Below his message was the notation "Genesis 3:10."

Genesis 3:10: "And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked: so I hid myself."

## Quote of the Month

“A man does not know what he is saying until he knows what he is not saying”

G K Chesterton, English writer, philosopher,