

SHORT CIRCUITS

Newsletter of the Kent County Amateur Radio Club

April 2024

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

Happy April's Fool Day

Happenings

April 9	Membership Meeting, Kent County EOC, 19:00
April 11	AUXCOMM Meeting, 19:00
April 14	CODEL, Rehoboth, more below
April 20	Georgetown Hamfest, more below
April 24	DARC Meeting, Salisbury, see https://www.qsl.net/darc/ for details
April 27	VE Testing, Wyoming Methodist Church, 09:00
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 https://www.qsl.net/darc/ for details
May 27	Memorial Day
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 https://www.qsl.net/darc/ 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
December 25	Christmas Day

Hamfests

- 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 **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
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 **Talk-In:** 147.090+ 131.8
- May 11 **Hamfest at the Shore**
Old Barney Amateur Radio Club
Surf City Firehouse, 713 Long Beach Island, Surf City , NJ
Contact: Richard Kennard , N2RPQ, 15 Jumping Brook Lane Barnegat, NJ 08005
Phone: 732-620-5252 **Email:** n2rpq@arrl.net **Talk-In:** 146.835 -6 127.3
- 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
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 **Talk-In:** 147.120+ 100 PL tone

More hamfests listed at 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 canceled, as many are and have been.

Editor's Comments

First, we all need to congratulate our two club members Hunter, KC3VTB, and Tim, N3WAS, who passed their Extra exams and are now full fledged Extras. Congratulations to both for passing that "interesting" test.

Their upgrades are just in time for some really good propagation. With my 100 watts and my all band dipole, I have made contacts in to India, Easy Kiribati, Lesotho, and Israel, all on CW. With the new contacts I've moved my total up to 268 with 2 pending applications, and when I decide to pay the money, I'll have 270. I added two more I didn't have that haven't been uploaded to LoTW yet, Madeira Island and Lithuania. So I'll have a 272 total as soon as the operators upload their logs and I upload mine. And as I type this, I can hear an A6 station (A65HS) on 17 meters at about a S3 with some QSB.

Checking over my awards on LoTW, I see that I have WAS mixed, phone and CW, but only 25 on digital. As you can see I will never get my "Triple Play Award" since there are few people on PSK31, most are FT8 or FT4 (the "Dark Side") and I'm not set up for either. So that piece of paper will probably never hang on my wall!

One thing about the Straight Key Century Club (SKCC) is their awards are free. The certificates are downloaded and printed on your printer, but there is no cost for any except for the "Marathon Award" plaque, which is about \$70, but then the plaque is not required and is optional. My buddy in Tennessee has just qualified for his "Marathon Award" (working 100 QSOs of 60 minutes or more) and has already cleared a space on the wall for his plaque, his XYL helping him do the clearing! But all of the awards I have obtained from SKCC have been free, WAS, WAC, DXCC, Ragchew Award (obtaining points for working people for at least 30 minutes), Prefix (something similar to CQ WPX), and Senator Award. Just paid for the paper and the ink! All the paper will make good fodder for the kid's campfire when they clean out the radio shack when I croak!

Talking about propagation, think about working during the eclipse on the 8th. There should be some really "interesting" propagation as the darkness falls on the land. Might be fun seeing just where you can end up reaching. Read more in the Section Managers column.

And lastly this month, I read an interesting quote in one of the ham radio newsletters I read every month. Try and guess which one it came from; "CW; It's like FT8, but for men."

President's Column

I like to play with antennas. Currently my main antenna is a doublet with the peak at thirty feet and the ends at fifteen feet. A 450 ohm window line serves as the feed line going to a balanced line tuner at my operating station. I am able to have an SWR of less than 1:1.4 from 10 meters down to 80 meters including 30 meters. Aah, the wonders of window line. I downloaded an antenna modeling program, EZNEC Pro2+, and thought I would look at the far field radiation patterns of the doublet. As I expected, it is a cloud-burner on 80 and 40 which is fine for my local HF nets. As the frequency increases the plot goes from an oval to flowers with all sorts of lobes. Even though I have snagged all 50 states and over 135 dx entities, I thought I would look to see if I could do better.

I researched alternatives that are supposed to be good for DX. One alternative is the half square antenna. It is a monoband antenna consisting of two $\frac{1}{4}$ wave verticals with a $\frac{1}{2}$ wave phasing section across the top. The antenna is fed by coax (50 ohm) at a top corner. One vertical is connected to the coax shield and the coax center is attached to the phasing section which then turns down to form the other vertical like an inverted ell. It is directional and has a low take-off angle. I built one for 20 meters and put it up in my backyard. I tried it on the air and was unable to tell much difference. I did some

A-B-C tests with my 4BTV vertical and the doublet listening to WWV at 15 mhz with an SDR. The half square was about 4dB quieter than my vertical but about 2 dB noisier than my doublet. As far as signal strength, the s/n of the half square was between the vertical and the doublet with the doublet doing the best by as much as 6dB. So, it appears that the half square is better than my vertical (with 66 radials) but worse than my doublet. I will keep looking.

That is part of the fun of ham radio – try new things.

73,
Jim KC3BTV
President KCARC

Vice-President's Column

With Summer field day in the near future, I have stepped up as Field Day Coordinator. As of the time of writing this we have been approved to use Brecknock Park again this year and also to use N3Y as the special event callsign. Currently, everything that needs to be done is going well and everything is going as planned. I'll keep this month's section short.

Hunter Grier, KCARC VP
73 DE KC3VTB

From the Section Manager's Shack

ARRL Delaware Section Manager Newsletter – April 2024

Warm Greetings to All Delaware Hams! As spring unfurls its colors, bringing both beautiful weather and a fair share of rain, it's a gentle reminder for us in the amateur radio community to stay alert and prepared. Recent coastal flooding warnings from DEMA underscore the importance of situational awareness—a principle just as crucial in our daily lives as it is in our roles as radio operators.

Skywarn System Activation:

Be the Eyes and Ears for NWS In light of the changing weather, I encourage everyone to actively use your local repeaters for updates. Delaware's comprehensive Skywarn System is in full swing, and your participation as 'boots on the ground' provides invaluable, near-instant data that bolsters community safety. Your reports are critical to the National Weather Service, informing updates that are shared with the public.

Legislative Update:

Amateur Radio Emergency Preparedness Act The "Amateur Radio Emergency Preparedness Act" continues to make strides forward. Soon, all radio licensees will be invited to support the bill, primarily through advocating to our legislators. As your Section Manager, I'll be visiting club meetings and events to gather your signatures on a collective letter to be presented by our Section Staff to legislators. Please note, there have been reports of unrelated surveys circulating—these are not issued by ARRL or the Delaware Section. If received, contact me directly for review. Additionally, with the federal bill's progress, we'll be introducing a complementary bill in the state legislature to address the needs of those in HOAs, ensuring all our licensees are covered.

April 8, 2024, Solar Eclipse:

A Call to Support Scientific Endeavors The upcoming Solar Eclipse presents a unique opportunity for amateur radio operators to aid scientific research. With potential communications disruptions anticipated, CISA has published a "Solar Eclipse Communications Planning and Resource Guide." The eclipse, boasting a maximum totality of 4 minutes and 28 seconds, promises to be an event unlike any since 2017. Wendy, W3NRN, our SEC, is coordinating participants via the ARRL Delaware Section groups.io forum. Your contribution, especially in gathering data for HamSCI and the Case Amateur Radio Club, is invaluable.

A Warm Welcome to Our Newest & Upgrading Members:

Join me in welcoming the latest additions to our vibrant community:

- KC3YOC, Charles Bates
- KC3YOW, Frank Savery
- KC3YQC, Bryan Benini
- KC3YRA, Alexander Muravya
- KC3YRB, Jason Johnson
- KC3YRC, Ronald Johnson
- KC3YRI, David Stewart
- KC3YRJ, Jennifer Callard
- KC3YRN, Jedediah Coy

Upcoming Events and Contests:

Don't miss the CQ World Wide WPX Contest, a highlight of the HF contesting calendar, from March 30-31. For those looking for a taste of contesting closer to home, consider participating in Parks on the Air (POTA) events in Georgia and Florida. Also, mark your calendars for the Delaware State QSO Party in May, along with other State QSO Parties this April. Details can be found on the ARRL Contest Calendar.

Let's Stay Connected Your insights, questions, and active participation are the lifeblood of our community. I'm here to support and engage with all of you, whether you're new to the hobby or a seasoned operator. Together, we can keep our passion for amateur radio thriving.

73, Steven Keller Delaware Section Manager

Email: kc3dso@gmail.com

Cell: 240.515.0620 Office: 302.604.7470

ARRL Delaware Section Reflector (<https://groups.io/g/ARRLDelawareSection>)

ARRL Sections – Delaware (<https://arrl.org/sections/view/delaware>)

The Emcomm Corner

Hurricane season will be here before we know it. Early indications are pointing to an active season with Atlantic Ocean temperatures very warm and the Pacific Ocean cooling. Some forecasters say that the Gulf coast of Texas and Louisiana are especially vulnerable. Of course things can change between now and June but it is best to be prepared.

Topmost is your own preparation. Do you have a place to go if you must evacuate? Do you have a way to notify other family members of your status if cell phone service is interrupted? That might be a good opportunity to check out your radio go kit. Do you have a personal go kit prepared for a three day trip – including medicine and money? Do you keep a stock of non-perishable food if you lose power when you shelter in place? There are good checklists available on-line at www.ready.gov.

Once your family is taken care of, you may consider being available to staff the EOC or a shelter if the ARES group is activated. The ARES group is preparing for the worst and hoping for the best. The time to train is before an event, not during.

73,
Jim KC3BTV
Kent County EC

AUXCOMM News

Change is constant and inevitable...

“Joe Thomas has left the building”. As of March 28th, Joe officially retired as the Emergency Operations Director for Sussex County. After 27 years and three months as the Director, I think it’s safe to say, “It’s the end of an era”. Joe and the Hams at the EOC have been around for about the same length of time. The Hams were first there for Hurricane Gloria in 1985, and Joe came as a Dispatcher in 1986. All this was at the “old EOC”, now the County Records Center, and east of the new Emergency Services Complex at the dead end. Back then the Hams were organized under the ARRL, ARES program. The RACES designation was adopted in 2008 with the opening of the new EOC, to give the Director control of the amateur radio resource. The AUXCOMM program came later, about 2012, to conform to the requirements of the Incident Command System (ICS).

Change and evolution are going to happen. Particularly in the ever changing world of Emergency Management. New threats require new thinking. Denser populations are at a greater risk. Dependence on critical infrastructure creates chaos when it fails. The structure, training and scope of an emergency management organization must adapt to the changing conditions. As the hobby has evolved from “Spark” to digital, our service to the public has continued. Therefore our training in the ancillary subjects required in emergency management activities must continue to evolve. We as Ham radio operators should look at being included in this change and growth as a positive expression of the value of what we do in public service.

Talking about change, the AUXCOMM Group at the Sussex EOC is now partnered with the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program with shared administrative staffing. Now, for many of the Public Service events, AUXCOMM and CERT Team members will be deploying together in teams of two. With the combining of the two public service groups a 24 foot trailer was part of the combining, and is now available for both groups to use. Currently undergoing renovations and additions it will have amateur HF through UHF, County 800 MHz and County UHF with twelve portables (HT’s) for use by the CERT Teams. A generator and air conditioning contribute to operator comfort. The trailer will also function as a CERT supply cache that can respond to support a CERT Team that has activated for an emergency in their community. There are currently three active teams in eastern Sussex, with another one starting. Renovations on the trailer are not yet complete, but the unit will see service at the coming Coastal Delaware Running Fest (CODEL) May 14th, as the Alternate Net Control position.

Why the partnership? It brings together two public service groups that can support the activities of the other. The CERT Team members bring a varied skill set applicable to public service events and emergency operations. The AUXCOMM Group provides communication. Both groups stress emergency preparedness and can benefit from shared training programs. It also is prominently placing the value of amateur radio as a communication resource in organized communities that have taken an interest in their collective welfare by developing CERT Teams. It is providing a “back door” way to get hams in these communities appreciated, and some accommodation for their hobby. We are also seeing an interest from individuals in both groups to learn more about what the other does. It’s beginning to look like a win – win situation.

Other changes that have occurred; there has been a reorganization of the AUXCOMM Management Team structure with the addition of some additional positions to facilitate CERT management. The management structure, very much ICS, is similar to the recent changes in the Kent County Department of Public Safety, and the coming changes in the Sussex County Emergency Management structure. Also, Paul Rieger, KC3OIN, was recently appointed as Logistic Section Lead for Sussex AUXCOMM, just in time to take on the challenge of inventorying the trailer acquisition. In the coming months there will be several other new appointments for the CERT portion of the management.

Later, 73 de K3PFW

Club Happenings

Georgetown Hamfest This Month

Remember that the Delmarva Amateur Radio and Electronics Expo, ARRL Delaware State Convention in Georgetown happens this month, on April 20. The gate opens at 7:30 AM for tailgating and the doors open at 8:00 AM. Admission is \$8. KCARC will have a table there and you can bring a couple items to put on the table for sale. There promises to be some good bargains for those little things you just can't live without! There will also be some interesting forums with great information.

More information can be had by contacting Jamie, W3UC, at the email address above, or by phone. Hope to see you all there!

CODEL in Rehoboth This Month

The Coastal Delaware Running Festival (CODEL) occurs Sun April 14 2024 and begins at 7:00 AM on the boardwalk at Rehoboth Beach. It ends on the boardwalk also. CODEL is three races at the same time using parts of the same marathon course. The marathon course covers four jurisdictions and two fire districts going from Rehoboth to Lewes and back to Rehoboth for its 26.2 miles. It is also a qualifier for the Boston Marathon.

Volunteers are needed to help monitor the progress of the participants and to look out for any problems that may occur. With 26.2 miles to look over, the more volunteers the better. Think about donating your time for a worthy cause.

April 8 Eclipse

Unless you live under a rock, you've heard that on April 8 we will be having a solar eclipse that will cross the United States in a Southwest to Northeast direction. The shadow will not cross directly over us here in Delaware, however there will be some darkening of the sky, and an opportunity for hams to experience some "interesting" propagation. There have been posts on Delaware Section reflector and Steven has information about it in his report above.

According to USA Today, the eclipse will begin in Texas at 1:27 PM. CDT and ends in Maine at 3:35 PM EDT, but the exact time of the eclipse varies by where you are in its path. Delaware will see a partial eclipse for 2 hours 27 minutes, from about 2:06 PM to 4:34 PM. Approximately 85.2% of the sun will be obscured by the moon at the peak in our area. You can get more information by going to the USA Today website and looking for the article.

Chairman Named for Field Day

At the March meeting, our Vice-President, Hunter, KC3VTB, volunteered to chair Summer Field Day. Field Day will be held on the fourth full weekend in June, this year the 22nd and 23rd of June. Plans are now being made, and application filed, for the event to take place at Brecknock Park in Camden. Further plans will be finalized during the next two meetings. So volunteer and give Hunter all the help he needs to make this a fun and productive Field Day 2024.

Looking At Field Day

Field Day (or "file Day" as an old repeater controller used to say) started in 1933 by a "one column announcement" by F.E. Handy, W1DBI, in QST that said in part, "The real object of this contest is to test 'portables' wherever they may be available.... If successful, we want to make it an annual affair." Take note that Handy said "contest" in his announcement.

Since that time Field Day has changed quite a bit, forming into what it is today. In 1939 all antennas had to fall within a **100 foot** circle. Try fitting a 160 meter dipole into that!! Quite a change from the 1000 foot circle that we now have these days.

Field Day is now an "event" and can be many things to many people. To some, still a contest. To others a social event where one can get some good food and conversation. Others look at it as a learning opportunity, and still others use it as a chance to work some HF. For whatever reason you see Field Day as, plan on coming out to the KCARC Field Day and having a good time with others that share your love for the hobby.

ARE YOU NEW to CW?

Then check out our CW Beginner's Corner page. It has plenty of basic information about CW operations that will help turn those first CW QSOs from jitters to joy.

If you want personalized, on-air help, check out our Morse Elmers page. You'll find contact information for members who have volunteered to serve as CW mentors. Drop one an email to set up an on-air schedule. Or just visit the club's sked page. You'll see a list of members logged in and can use the page's messaging functions to reach a member to arrange an on-air contact.

You have lots of help available to you as you become more adept at using the original instant-messaging mode! You'll find links to the Beginner's and Elmer pages in the navigation column at left under Getting Started. The link to the Sked Page appears under SKCC Community.

Thanks to the SKCC web page.

Useless Facts of the Month

Cenosillicaphobia is the fear of an empty beer glass. (Now that's a real fear for some!!)

Vending machines kill 13 people per year. (They say snacks can't kill!!!)

A group of pandas is called an "embarrassment." (Maybe 'cause they're not wearing pants??)

The 2011 earthquake near Japan increased the Earth's rotation speed, shortening the day by 1.8 microseconds. (Wonder if our aging has decreased too??!!)

Nestled in the the Caribbean, Saint Lucia holds the distinction as the only country in the world named after a woman. Saint Lucia is named in honor of Saint Lucy of Syracuse, the patron saint of the blind who died in the 4th century. The island originally bore the name "Louanalao," bestowed upon it by the Indigenous Arawak people as early as 200 AD. In 1502, when French sailors found themselves shipwrecked on its shores, they christened the land "Sainte Alousie" to honor Saint Lucy. Over time, the name evolved into the present-day "St. Lucia."

In the late 19th century, facing issues of pollution and sanitation due to the river's flow into Lake Michigan, engineers undertook a massive endeavor to permanently reverse the river's flow, sending its polluted water to the Mississippi River instead. The project involved constructing an intricate network of canals, locks, and channels, ultimately connecting the Chicago River to the Illinois River system. Completed in 1900, this eight-year project effectively reversed the flow of the Chicago River, diverting the polluted water away from Lake Michigan.

Tidbit of Information of the Month Department

AT&T CEO on outage: “We let down many”

Written by Donny Jackson

AT&T CEO John Stankey addressed the carrier’s massive Feb. 22 outage that impacted FirstNet and commercial service, stating in a letter to company employees that “we let down many of our customers” and apologizing, but the exact cause of the hours-long disruption remains murky. In the letter released on Sunday, Stankey noted that AT&T’s restoration efforts on Feb. 22 prioritized service on the FirstNet nationwide public-safety broadband network (NPSBN) that the carrier has been building and maintaining since March 2017.

“The outage began in the early hours on Thursday, and we know that about three-quarters of our customers were able to access our network as they started their days around 5 a.m. CT,” according to Stankey’s letter. “We prioritized FirstNet service restoration, in line with our commitment to our nation’s first responders. The remaining customers were reconnected throughout the morning. Teams worked hard to successfully normalize the network by around noon CT. “No matter the timing, one thing is clear—we let down many of our customers, including many of you and your families. For that, we apologize.”

In terms of the outage’s cause, Stankey’s letter largely reiterates a statement released by AT&T last week.

“Our initial review of the cause of Thursday’s outage indicates it was due to the application and execution of an incorrect process used while working to expand our network,” the Stankey letter states. On its website, AT&T stated that its initial review indicated that the outage was not caused by a cyberattack, which was a concern raised in the immediate reporting about the situation. In addition, AT&T does not believe any customer data was compromised during the outage. “We have not seen any evidence and have no reason to believe the Feb. 22 outage involved a third party or that customer data was compromised during the event,” according to the AT&T website.

Multiple media reports have described the cause of the outage as a “coding error”—citing AT&T as the source of the information—but an AT&T spokesperson would not confirm or deny the accuracy of these reports when asked by IWCE’s Urgent Communications. An AT&T spokesperson did not respond to a question from IWCE’s Urgent Communications about whether the error occurred in the AT&T commercial core, the FirstNet core, or at cell sites—or in some combination of these pieces of the AT&T network. In his letter, Stankey applauded the efforts of AT&T employees in response to the outage. “Whenever a challenging or unexpected event impacts this company, I can always count on everyone to rise to the occasion and the last few days have been no exception,” Stankey states in the letter. “Our frontline employees demonstrated expertise under pressure as our network teams took immediate action to restore service for our customers. “Teams across the company—from retail and call centers to product, marketing, communications, and technology—continue to work tirelessly to live up to our commitment to serve customers first and fulfill our responsibility as one of the nation’s critical-infrastructure providers. I commend the effort and collaboration in this challenging moment, and I am appreciative of all the extra effort and hard work. “Moments like these are a test of resilience. This is not our first network outage, and it won’t be our last—unfortunately, it’s the reality of our business. What matters most is how we react, adapt, and improve to deliver the service our customers need and expect.”

Multiple interviews conducted by IWCE’s Urgent Communications with FirstNet users revealed a variety of experiences for NPSBN subscribers during the outage. Those who experienced a FirstNet outage confirmed restoration of service hours before nationwide AT&T commercial service was fully returned. However, some FirstNet customers stated that they did not experience any outage—including some entities that are located near a geographic area that did suffer a FirstNet outage.

Thanks to All Things ECC newsletter

PUBLIC NOTICE

THE OFFICE OF MANAGING DIRECTOR ANNOUNCES IMPLEMENTATION OF ADDITIONAL SECURITY SAFEGUARDS FOR USERS OF FCC'S COMMISSION REGISTRATION SYSTEM (CORES)

To strengthen existing cybersecurity measures and safeguard user accounts, starting on March 29, 2024, users of the FCC's Commission Registration System (CORES) will be required to undergo a two step login authentication process each time a user logs into CORES or its associated FCC User Registration System (<https://apps2.fcc.gov/fccUserReg/pages/login.htm>). All applicants and licensees are required to access CORES to pay any application or regulatory fees, manage or reset a password on an existing FRN, or request a new FRN. When accessing the system, users will be prompted to request a six digit secondary verification code, which will be sent to the email address(es) associated with each username. The user will then need to enter the code into CORES before they can continue. This additional layer of security will further safeguard against unauthorized access, thereby enhancing the overall integrity of information contained within the CORES system and improving the security of user data.

We recommend registrants confirm they have access to their Username Account E-mail and add a secondary email address, if appropriate. Please consult the article [Updating Your Username Account](#) for detailed instructions.

Going forward, the FCC is in the process of adopting new technology to meet the "high confidence" Authenticator Assurance Level standard for identity proofing in order for a user to create or access an account within the CORES system.

For inquiries or assistance regarding the implementation of multi-factor authentication on CORES, please submit a help request at <https://www.fcc.gov/wtbhelp> or call 877-480-3201 (Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-6 p.m. ET). For further information, please contact Warren Firschein (warren.firschein@fcc.gov), Counsel, Office of Managing Director, (202) 418-2653.

From the FCC Notices

The Importance of Bulk Greeting Messages

In December 2023, I attended a meeting at New England Sci-Tech, a STEM/Makerspace in Natick, MA. Also attending were: ARRL First Vice President Mike Raisbeck, K1TWF; Western MA ACC Larry Krainson, W1AST; and Eastern MA ACC Bruce Blain, K1GB. We were involved in planning the 2024 ARRL New England Division Convention. A young ham, Francesco Tron, KC1TTJ, of Wellesley, Massachusetts, also happened to be at New England Sci-Tech that morning.

The Makerspace leader interrupted us briefly and asked if Francesco could come in and show us something. Francesco walked in and proudly displayed a paper that he received via the US Mail from a local traffic handler. It was a "Welcome to Amateur Radio" message originated by Glenn Killam, VE1IJ, from Saint Alphonse, Nova Scotia. Francesco was beaming, excited to have received this simple message affirming his entry into the world of amateur radio.

So, before you dismiss "Welcome to Amateur Radio" messages as unworthy of relay or delivery, please consider the impact that receiving this simple greeting had for this young amateur. I have no doubt that Francesco will treasure that piece of paper for a long time!

Phil Temples, K9HI, Vice Director, New England
Thanks to the NTS Letter

Cosmic explosion will be visible to the naked eye in once-in-a-lifetime stargazing event

Denise Chow Updated March 22, 2024 at 6:18 AM

A rare cosmic eruption is expected to occur in the Milky Way in the coming months — an outburst so bright that a “new” star will seemingly appear for a short time in the night sky. The event, known as a nova, will be a once-in-a-lifetime skywatching opportunity for those in the Northern Hemisphere, according to NASA, because the types of star systems in which such explosions occur are not common in our galaxy. The stellar eruption will take place in a system called T Coronae Borealis, which is 3,000 light-years away from Earth. It contains two stars: a dead star, also known as a “white dwarf,” closely orbited by a red giant. Red giants are dying stars that are running out of hydrogen fuel in their cores; the sun in our solar system will eventually become one, according to NASA.

In systems like T Coronae Borealis, the two stars are so near to each other that matter from the red giant is constantly spilling onto the surface of the white dwarf. Over time, this builds up pressure and heat, eventually triggering an eruption. “As matter accumulates on the surface of the white dwarf, it heats up and you get higher and higher pressure until bang — it’s a runaway reaction,” said Bradley Schaefer, a professor emeritus of physics and astronomy at Louisiana State University. He likened the nova explosion to a hydrogen bomb detonation in space, adding that the resulting fireball is essentially what people will be able to see from Earth. (A nova is different from a supernova explosion, which occurs when a massive star collapses and dies.) At its peak, the eruption should be visible to the naked eye, Schaefer said: “It’s going to be bright in the sky, so it’ll be easily visible from your backyard.”

Astronomers predict that the nova explosion could happen anytime between now and September. The last time this particular star system erupted was in 1946, Schaefer said, and another eruption will likely not occur for another 80 years or so.

Astronomers around the world are monitoring activity in the T Coronae Borealis system. Once an eruption is detected, Schaefer said, the best and brightest views will likely come within 24 hours, when it reaches roughly the same brightness as the North Star. The outburst may remain visible to the naked eye for a couple of days before it begins to fade. Even after it dims, skywatchers will likely still be able to spot the eruption for around a week using binoculars, according to NASA.

The T Coronae Borealis system is normally too dim to see unaided, but skywatchers can find the outburst by locating the constellation Corona Borealis, or the Northern Crown. The constellation will appear as a small, semicircular arc between the more widely recognizable constellations of Hercules and Bootes.

Schaefer, who has done extensive research on the T Coronae Borealis system, said it’s worth trying to catch a glimpse. “This system happens to have a recurrence time scale under a century, but most of them have cycle times longer than 1,000 years or so,” he said. In a paper published last year in the *Journal for the History of Astronomy*, Schaefer discovered two “long-lost” T Coronae Borealis eruptions in historical records — one documented by German monks in the year 1217 and another seen by the English astronomer Francis Wollaston in 1787. “These monks near Augsburg, Germany, didn’t know what it was at the time, but they highlighted the eruption as being one of the two most important events of the year,” Schaefer said. “They called it in Latin ‘signum mirabile,’ which translates to ‘wonderful omen.’ It was thought to be a good sign.”

But pinpointing the exact time when skywatchers will have a chance to see this “wonderful omen” is tricky business. “It could maybe even happen tonight,” Schaefer said. “More probably it’ll be within the next couple of months, and very probably before the end of summer.”

Thanks to AOL News and NBC News

Amateur Radio as Educational Tool Represented to Policymakers in Washington DC

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ARRL and Amateur Radio Digital Communications (ARDC) represented Amateur Radio at a symposium in Washington on February 1 at which the top domestic spectrum policymakers from across the federal government considered implementation of the National Spectrum Strategy (NSS) [PDF].

ARRL ensures that Amateur Radio is represented at sessions such as this so that decision makers understand amateur radio's roles when spectrum decisions are made, including its substantial contributions to student interest and education in STEM subjects at schools throughout the country and its role during emergencies and natural disasters.

In the NSS, released by the White House in November, national policymakers identified some 2,790 megahertz of spectrum to be considered for future commercial needs. No new amateur spectrum was included, with only the ongoing reallocation studies related to 3.1 - 3.45 GHz being addressed.

The NSS was prepared for the President by the National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA) in collaboration with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). NTIA considered input from Federal Executive Branch agencies that use spectrum as well as from other spectrum users, including amateur radio operators. As the NSS was being formulated during 2023, ARRL's Washington Counsel presented information on amateur radio to the policymakers at an NTIA listening session. This was followed with a written submission about amateur radio spectrum concerns, and later with a one-on-one meeting with NTIA's Senior Spectrum Advisor in overall charge of formulating the NSS.

The February symposium followed the release of the NSS in November and was in support of finalizing implementation plans for the strategy that are expected to be announced by the White House in mid-March.

For the symposium, ARRL Life Member Phil Karn KA9Q, a director and past-president of ARDC, participated as a panelist and reinforced amateur radio's important national role in workforce development with personal testimony based on his own career.

Karn's recruitment by Qualcomm in its early days was due directly to his pioneering amateur radio accomplishments with digital wireless projects that included many firsts. Karn retired from Qualcomm as Vice President for Technology in 2011. He shared with policymakers the value of amateur radio to interest and recruit youth into STEM areas and into wireless specifically. Karn's life experience lent special weight to his remarks about amateur radio's role in attracting youth to STEM projects. "I see [amateur radio] - having been involved in it for 52 years now - as fundamental as an educational system... It is a type of hands-on intuitive learning that is almost impossible to get any other way," said Karn.

Thanks to the ARRL News

California County Supervisors Ask AT&T to Keep Landlines

(TNS) — A plan by telecommunications giant AT&T to end landline service to certain parts of Monterey County has raised the ire of the entire Board of Supervisors. A letter dated Tuesday to the California Public Utilities Commission and signed by District 2 Supervisor and board chairman Glenn Church, is asking the regulatory body to nix AT&T's application to halt landline service to certain areas of Monterey County. The application seeks to eliminate what's called the Carrier of Last Resort obligation, which could adversely affect residents of Monterey County who rely mainly on AT&T's basic phone service. The application does not include an approach for transitioning to alternatives. Rural residents in the county have few options for accessing quality and affordable telecommunications services, Church said.

Much of Supervisor Mary Adams' District 5 relies heavily on landlines, as there is no cell reception because of the mountainous terrain. "There are people in Big Sur who have no Internet and have no other way to communicate other than landline telephones," Adams said. "If this application is approved and AT&T is no longer required to service these people, what are they going to do? They'll have no 911."

Supervisors listened to Betty Saxon, AT&T's external affairs representative for the Central Coast, who tried to allay these concerns by repeatedly telling the elected officials that "no customer is being turned off. No one is being left behind," she said. She later qualified her statement by saying even if the application is approved, it would still have to be greenlighted by the Federal Communications Commission and that that process could take years. But in the actual application submitted to the CPUC, AT&T, citing dwindling federal financial support, states that it wants out of being what's called an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier, which is any carrier that is eligible for government support. "Because AT&T no longer receives federal high-cost universal service support, AT&T California should no longer have the obligations of a federal (Eligible Telecommunications Carrier), including the obligation to participate in the federal Lifeline program," AT&T stated in its CPUC application. California Lifeline provides discounted home phone and cell phone services to qualified lower-income households.

Saxon said one of the motivations to halt landlines is that they are becoming increasingly archaic and creates maintenance challenges. "That network is dying," Saxon said. "We can't get the parts. (Landlines) are going to meet their end-of-life cycle. That is a foregone conclusion." Data from the FCC shows the number of landlines in the United States plummeted from roughly 127 million in late 2009 to 27 million in mid-2022. If copper-wire lines continue to decline at the current rate, there will be few or none left by 2029.

But that data doesn't help county residents who rely solely on landlines. These are not people who are afraid of technological changes, rather people who have no alternatives available to them, Adams said. "I don't agree with your presentation," Adams told Saxon. "Because even though it may be in quite a few years, if AT&T is the carrier of last resort, then AT&T has to invest in ensuring they get the parts and they have people who know how to (maintain landlines). "But without that protection, I fear there will be no one advocating for the folks who have no choice but landlines," Adams said.

Church said that the reasoning behind AT&T'S claim that it needs to transition to upgraded technology, such as fiber optic lines, doesn't hold water for a couple of reasons. First off, he said that cellular coverage, as an alternative to landlines, is spotty, particularly in the canyon areas of his district in northern Monterey County. People there depend on landlines, he said. "There are folks who can't get cellular service," Church said. "They are going to need copper wire or a cell tower on every property. So, when you say no one is going to be cut off, what are the alternatives?"

Saxon responded by saying AT&T has applications filed with the county to build more cell towers. "AT&T is still in the process of building out its network, such as fiber (optic), especially in Marina," she said. Supervisor Chris Lopez, whose District 3 runs from east Salinas down to the county border just north of Lake Nacimiento, was also adamant that there needs to be alternatives in place before AT&T pursues ending landline service. He noted there are areas in his district, particularly places in the eastern parts, as well as the Arroyo Seco area that have zero cell phone reception. "It seems we're working toward the removal without working toward the solution," Lopez said. Church wrapped up the discussion by telling Saxon that he was not confident in the way AT&T managed the issue. "The rollout has been bungled in what is basically corporate incompetence," he said.

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Thanks to Government Technology online

Joke of the Month

The Wedding

A little boy was in a relative's wedding. As he was coming down the aisle he would take two steps, stop, and turn to the crowd (alternating between bride's side and groom's side). While facing the crowd, he would put his hands up like claws and roar.

So it went, step, step, ROAR, step, step, ROAR all the way down the aisle.

As you can imagine, the crowd was near tears from laughing so hard by the time he reached the pulpit.

The little boy, however, was getting more and more distressed from all the laughing, and was also near tears by the time he reached the pulpit.

When asked what he was doing, the child sniffed and said, "I was being the Ring Bear."

Quote of the Month

"One of the most cowardly things ordinary people do is shut their eyes to facts."

CS Lewis