



THE WATT



CALVERT AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION
CLUB NEWSLETTER
MARCH 2012

CLUB QSO – Fox Hunting – Repeater

At the club meeting held on March 1st 2012, there was another impressive assembly of members. 21 club members attended and were provided with a presentation about Fox Hunting by Shawn -- N3AE. Fox Hunting or Transmitter hunting is locating a hidden transmitter using directional finding equipment and skill. Shawn discussed the practical designs of several pieces of equipment including several of his own antennas. Shawn entire presentation can be seen on the club's web site by clicking on the CARA projects button on the left hand side of the screen or by clicking here. http://www.k3cal.org/cara_projects.html . Dave - W3PQS, Club President has asked that anyone interested in participating in a Fox Hunt to let him know.

In other news the interference affecting the 146.985 club repeater has been repaired. Dave – W3PQS worked with Motorola technicians to correct the fireboard interference. On February 27th Dave – W3PQS was informed that the fireboard interfering transmitter had been repaired. The repeater has been fireboard transmission free ever since. Bob N3PPH and John, a close friend of Bob, spent several hours on Saturday March 3rd 2012 testing and tuning the repeater. John a career repeater technician donated his time and the use of his test equipment to the club, John's work paid off dramatically. The repeater has never sounded better and some stations are able to use the repeater with HT's in area's where mobiles radio use to struggle to hold open the receiver. "All the adjustments on the repeater have been centered within their specification" said Bob N3PPH. "This repeater doesn't get any better

than it is right now”. Future plans for the repeater include replacing the coax, adding antennas on the Sunderland tower and installing remote receiver in the Southern parts of the county to provide better coverage.

Be sure to check out the CARA club website at www.k3cal.org or keep an eye on the newsletter and an ear on the club’s repeater for more information. – 73 – KB3WFV

CQ CQ CQ – CARA club news and announcements

- Want to become a member of the Calvert Amateur Radio Association? You can find the membership application forms and more information about a CARA membership on the CARA web site or click on the link provided for you here: [K3CAL Join CARA](#)
- Be sure to join the CARA club net every Monday night @ 7:00 pm on the 146.985 repeater, negative offset with a 156.7 PL.
- Club breakfast meeting are held every third Saturday of the month. This month the breakfast will be at Dream Weavers on March 17TH @ 9:00 am.
- The next club meeting will be held April 5th, 2012 @ 7:30 pm at The County Services Building 158 Main Street Prince Frederick, Md. 20678.
- Field Day 2012 will be held June 23rd and 24th. Field Day Coordinator Dave Moore N3TZO can be contacted at nutzo488@comcast.net
- The Greater Baltimore Hamboree & computer show will be held on March 31 2012, in Timonium Maryland. **Note** that there have been major changes to this show. This year’s show will be held entirely indoor and only for one day. Be sure to visit the show web page at <http://www.gbhc.org/> for more details.

- Jack KB3WUM has paid for a spot at Hamboree in Timonium. Jack as offered some space on his tables for any club member with items to sell. The space will be provided to members at no charge. For more information or to arrange for an item to be sold at Jack's tables contact him by E-mail at KB3WUM@[gmail.com](mailto:KB3WUM@gmail.com) or call him at 240-419-1924.
- International Light House and Lightship Weekend (ILLW) will be held August 18th and 19th 2012. At Cove Point Lighthouse.

On The Air – Wire your station for safety

On a recent club net CARA club member Charlie -- AB3LE passed along a story of a 12 Volt D/C electrical fire that occurred at his station. Thankfully neither Charlie nor any of his equipment suffered any damage. The cause of the fire was improper fusing on some 12 Volt D/C wiring connecting a power supply to a radio. A wire with too large of a fuse installed, shorted out, overheated melting the wire insulation setting fire to itself and adjacent wiring. Since the fuse was too large for the circuit the short never blew out the fuse leading to the over heated wiring and the fire.

Charlie cautioned everyone listening to the net that night to check his or her own station for proper wiring and fusing.

There is a huge amount of information on how to properly wire a 12 Volt D/C circuit. So much so that it is impossible to cover everything that needs to be known in this article. More detailed information on electrical safety can be found on the Internet. A quick search will produce dozens of sources including the National Electrical Code and the ARRL handbook. With that said, here is some very basic information.

12 Volt D/C wiring can be just as much a fire hazard as 120 volt A/C. A 12 Volt D/C wire that is under sized for it's intended load, improperly fused or not fused at all is a fire waiting to happen.

Keep in mind that a fuse is a safety device it's purpose is to interrupt or stop current from flowing on a circuit when the current on that circuit exceeds a specific value. The job of a fuse is more so to protect the wiring than it is to protect equipment such as a radio. A properly selected fuse connected to properly selected wiring in a

properly installed circuit will not allow wiring to overheat and start a fire.

When connecting 12 Volt D/C equipment, ALWAYS follow the equipment manufactures manual for proper installation information.

Be sure to first select a wire size or gauge large enough to safely carry the current required by the equipment. The length of the wire needed to connect between a power source and equipment can also affect what size wire to use. Charts can be found that list how much current can be supplied on a given wire size for a given distance. Refer to these charts when selecting wire size for installing equipment.

Then be sure to select the correct fuse size for the wire used to connect the equipment. Again there are charts that list what size fuse to use on a given size wire. A fuse that is too small will constantly blow out. A fuse too large will not blow out before the wiring overheats possibly leading to a fire.

The fuse should be install in the positive wire as close to the power source as possible. Place the fuse near the battery or at the connection to a power supply. Locating a fuse here protects the entire circuit. It will prevent fires in the event that the wiring to the equipment or the equipment it's self happens to short out. Note that some equipment manufacturers specify that fuses be installed in BOTH the positive AND the negative side of the circuit. Remember that fuses need to be installed close to the power source.

Be sure to observe the polarity of the equipment. Connecting a negative ground wire to a positive power source and the positive wire to a negative ground connection can bypass the fuse protection in some circuit designs. Reversing the polarity or in other words hooking up a circuit backwards will most defiantly cause equipment damage and possible led to a fire.

The idea here is to select a wire size that is just big enough to supply all the current that the equipment needs. Then select a fuse that will stop the current on that wire if the current exceeds the rating of that wire size.

Improperly installed 12 Volt D/C circuits can and do cause fires. The basic information presented here is just that basic. It can be and should be applied to all 12 Volt installations of equipment in a fixed station, a mobile station even a portable station such as those used at field day. Do the research when installing the wiring and fuses. If

done correctly there will never be a problem. If it somehow happens that there is a problem the fuse will do it's job and prevent a fire.

73 – KB3WFV

ARES REPORT – Dennis Bowling - N3QHC



The Amateur Radio Emergency Service® (ARES) consists of licensed amateurs who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment, with their local ARES leadership, for communications duty in the public service when disaster strikes.

**The Amateur Radio Emergency Services Coordinator (EC)
for Calvert County is:
Dennis Bowling - N3QHC.**

Dennis - N3QHC has no ARES news to report for the month of March.

The following pieces of information were taken from an ARES email that Dennis N3QHC had distributed earlier this month.

Upcoming Events:

- CALV Exercise: Saturday, March 17: CALV ARES will meet in a local park and send/receive WinLink messages to PRGE ARES. Steve/N3IDX will set up a portable station up to demonstrate WL2K. The location TBA and depends on the weather.
- HFHN: Wednesday, March 21, 1930 (L) on 3.820 MHz

- ARES Second Quarter Health Care Coalition Drill on Monday, April 2, 2012.
- Check into MEPN, 1800 (L) daily. If you do not know how to do traffic they will slow down to help you copy.

What YOU can do now:

- Fill in & return CAL ARES Registration form. We need ALL members who are interested in ARES (past, present and future) to fill this out and return to n3qhc@verizon.net. Thanks Jim/K3UGA for making this form fillable.

(editors note: The form should be available soon on the ARES web page on the K3CAL website. If you need the ARES registration form now contact Dennis directly at: n3qhc@verizon.net) -- KB3WFV

- Contact anyone on the CALV ARES Planning Committee with your ideas for our ARES group.
 - Dennis/N3QHC: n3qhc@verizon.net , (H) 410.286.0180, (M) 410.610.9220
 - Jim/K3UGA: jimtetlow@chesapeake.net
 - Shawn/N3AE: donleyst@comcast.net
 - Steve/N3IDX:
 - Wayne/N1WR: n1wr@chesapeake.net

73 – KB3WFV

For more information about ARES contact Dennis Bowling at mailto:n3qhc@verizon.net or visit <http://www.arrl.org/ares>

RACES Report – Bill Hacket – N3MXZ



The Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) is a standby radio service provided for in Part 97.407 of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules and regulations. It consists of only those amateur radio operators who have previously registered with State and local governments to provide or supplement communications during emergencies where normal communication systems have sustained damage.

The RACES Officer (RO) for Calvert County is Bill Hacket N3MXZ

Bill – N3MXZ has no RACES news to report for the month of March.

73 – KB3WFFV

For more information about RACES contact Bill Hacket at n3xmz.md@gmail.com or visit <http://www.usraces.org/>

SKYWARN



Many Americans feel the effects of severe weather every year. To obtain critical weather information, NOAA's National Weather Service (NWS), part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, established SKYWARN

SKYWARN is a volunteer program with nearly 290,000 trained severe weather spotters. These volunteers help keep their local communities safe by providing timely and accurate reports of severe weather to the National Weather Service.

Plans to hold SKYWARN classes in Calvert County have stalled on the desk of Bobby Fenwick. Club President Dave Weaver – W3PQS frustrated with this lack of action, has contacted SKYWARN directly about providing a small class for CARA. Details on the possible classes will be published as soon as they are available.

Spring is here and so is thunderstorm season. Below are a couple of links that may help to keep an eye on severe weather.

A lighting-tracking map, data from the U.S. National Lighting Detection Network

<http://thunderstorm.vaisala.com/explorer.html>

Radar from the National Weather Service Sterling Virginia radar site

<http://radar.weather.gov/radar.....>

73 – KB3WFFV

For more information about SKYWARN visit
<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/skywarn/or> <http://skywarn.org/>

The Amateur Behind The Microphone – John – N3EDD

John – N3EDD is a familiar voice to many of CARA club members. As the net controller for CARA's Monday night nets, he has a history with the club that dates back to the days when the repeater was stationed at the Naval Research Lab in Chesapeake Beach. John who is married to the daughter of Club founder Don WB3JKV remembers the removal of the repeater from the NRL facility and its installation at the current Mount Hope location in Sunderland Maryland.

He particularly recalls a sweltering hot summer day where he, his father-in-law and the late Vince – KB3FS were working on the original tower. Suddenly Vince passed out while hanging in the air on the tower. With the assistance of Don, John was able to get Vince safely to the ground. Vince was taken to the hospital and treated for the heat exhaustion that had caused him to pass out.

Licensed in 1983 John holds a General class ticket and enjoys holding the Monday night nets on the club repeater. He also enjoys checking in to other nets and special events whenever he can. He holds several certificates from special events such as The Original 13 Colonies Independence week Special Event. An annual event held each year to celebrate America's birthday. John's interest in the special events that honor America may be explained by a direct family connection to early American history. Eleven of John's relatives served in the Civil War. John continues to honor his country and his relatives as a member of the 20th Maine Company E. A group dedicated to preserving the history of the Civil War and honoring the contribution of the soldiers involved in it. He participates in Living History reenactments teaching his fellow Americans about the Civil War soldiers and their way of life. Wearing period correct clothing with period correct equipment he travels throughout the area to places like Gettysburg working with other reactors to bring an important part of American history to life. Spectators can see live what it was like to be a soldier in America during the Civil War.

On the air or on a battlefield John's dedication to his country and his fellow Americans is a trait that any Amateur Radio operator should be proud to have.

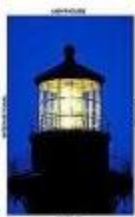
73 – KB3WFFV

Field Day 2012



Field Day coordinator Dave – N3TZO is currently scouting locations for Field. One promising place is an old school house located off of Broom's Island Road. Dave hopes to have the possible location for Field Day checked out and a decision made soon.

International Lighthouse and Lightship Weekend



The International Lighthouse and Lightship weekend (ILLW) is taking shape according to Brian – KB3WFFV. With the help of Wayne - N1WR CARA has received

tentative approval from the Calvert Marine Museum to use the Cove Point Lighthouse grounds for the event. The application to ILLW to register the Cove Point Lighthouse and the club call K3CAL for the event will be submitted soon. The basic objective of the event is to promote public awareness of lighthouses and lightships and their need for preservation and restoration, at the same time to promote amateur radio while fostering International goodwill. This 48 hour HF event will be held this year on August 18th and 19th 2012. Stay tuned more details about this event. More information about the ILLW can be found on line at <http://illw.net/>

The Blind Side – Stray RF and White Noise from KB3WV

We all have heard about the recent massive tornado out break in the Midwest. But have you heard that the volunteers rushing to help have been asked to stay away from the area?

In an article titled “Disaster volunteers, please curb your enthusiasm!” Denise Derrer, public information officer for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security issued a statement discouraging volunteers from just “showing up” at the scene of tornado-destroyed towns. The influx of people trying to help is hindering the professional emergency volunteers that are already in the area to help.

The article published on the US News website hosted by msnbc.com can be seen by clicking here [US News article](#) .

The article became a topic of heated discussion on the QRZ website where a thread was started about it. If you want some mind numbing reading, the entire thread can be seen here [QRZ.com thread](#) . (You may need to login to the QRZ web site to view the article). Perhaps I shouldn’t say mind numbing some of the replies and comments to the thread are thought provoking and bring up lots of good points. But some are well, lets just say some comments are just plain dumb. To be expected with forum threads.

In a nutshell the thread voices the displeasure of amateur radio operators with the news article’s negative tone towards volunteer help. This opinion is countered with understanding of why emergency personal are making such a request.

Some amateur emergency service volunteers are frustrated with what seems like the professional emergency providers slow

response to the use of volunteers and sometimes the position of not needing or wanting the volunteer help at all.

The professional emergency service providers feel just as frustrated with the amateur emergency service provides, saying that those volunteers that show up to a disaster lack the training or the organization to effectively assist them. The professional also feels that they spend a lot of wasted time helping or training the volunteer, slowing down the professionals ability to help those in need.

Sound like a real bad case of “IF the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing you can not clap” or in other words lack of communication.

The professional emergency providers do not seem to understand the value or the abilities of the volunteer emergency providers. The volunteer’s do not seems to understand the responsibility or the chain of command of the professionals.

Remember that in a disaster area people need help, they need food shelter and medical care.. It is a race against time; the faster the system to support this can be temporarily put in place the more lives can be saved.

Putting these systems in place and supporting them can be very difficult. Knowing what to do, where to do it and how do it can save a lot of time and possible a lot of lives. Different groups do things different ways. They even communicate differently. Training will help groups to understand not only their own role but also the role of other groups. Working with and supporting each other will be easier because each group understands how to communicate with each other.

Think of it this way, your holding a QSO party or a club contest. You need help operating the radios for the contest. Bunches of people show up with little or no radio experience. Sure you will get the guy who had a Hello Kitty walkie talkie as a kid and the truck driver who has a CB radio so at least a few will know how to key a radio up. But will they know what to say or how to say it. I don’t think “hello can you hear me” or “10-4 good buddy” will get you too many contest contacts. But if these same people had the proper training on what to do and how to communicate with other groups effectively your contest would be very successful.

Being prepared is the key to being effective in any emergency, Knowledge of how the professional system and the volunteer system are suppose to work can be an invaluable time saver when

responding to a disaster. To be prepared and gain this knowledge requires training. Training with in the volunteer group and then more training along side of the Professional group will produce a group of volunteers and professionals that are familiar with each others roles. When properly trained these groups end up knowing how to communicate to each other and able to respond to any emergency at any time no matter what.

“When all else fails .. Amateur Radio” . Right there in that statement it says it all. When nothing else works, when the professionals have run out of all other options THEN and only then do they call on the amateur radio community until then the amateur radio group is to be prepared with the proper training and stand by, ready to go, awaiting direction from the professionals. Personally I hope they never call on the services of the amateur radio community. Because, if they do, it means that all hell has broken loose and the volunteers are the last hope.

73 – KB3WFFV

Suggestion or comments for THE WATT

e-mail us at newsletter@k3cal.org

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February 2012
