



# *Di-Dah-Dit*

Official Newsletter of the Parkersburg Radio Klub  
1733 Gihon Rd. Parkersburg, WV 26101

## ARRL: A PROUD HISTORY OF DEFENDING AMATEURS' RIGHTS

The fall operating season is just around the corner. Whether it's because radio conditions improve or just because attention returns to indoor pursuits as the days get shorter, on-the-air activity always picks up at this time of the year.

Do you operate on 40 meters? "If you haven't been on the band lately, you're in for a real treat!" said ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ. "Years of patient effort by the ARRL and by our sister members of the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) have paid off. The band is more useful now than it's been in more than 70 years. When you think of 40 meters, you probably think of interference from foreign broadcasters. Here in the Americas, amateurs always have had access to 7,000-7,300 kHz - but we had to tolerate broadcasters in the rest of the world in the upper two-thirds of the band."

Sumner said he can recall the "futility" he felt as a 13-year-old Novice, "trying to make myself heard through the racket with just two crystal-controlled transmitting frequencies to choose from. I remember taking the crystal holders apart and putting pencil lead on the

crystals in a vain attempt to slip in between the broadcasting behemoths." At the 2003 World Radio-communication Conference (WRC-03) -- 40 years later -- he had the privilege of being present in Geneva when it was agreed that amateurs had made the case for a wider worldwide amateur band, free of broadcasting interference." For the first time in the history of radio communication, an HF broadcasting allocation would be shifted in order to accommodate the needs of another radio service -- the Amateur Radio Service!

Sumner called the WRC-03 decision "very gratifying," but said an important question remained: Would the broadcasters really move? "The International Telecommunication Union has no enforcement authority," he explained, "and operation in contravention of the international Radio Regulations is not exactly unknown. In fact, the transition turned out to be quite dramatic. On the last weekend of March, on Friday evening 7,100-7,200 kHz was full of broadcasters as usual -- but as the new seasonal broadcasting schedule took effect on Saturday night the band cleared of all but a few. For the very first time our overseas friends could

hear us on 40 meter phone without having to breach the wall of broadcasters! Over the past six months the situation has continued to improve as more broadcasters have complied with the WRC-03 decision. Nighttime operation above 7,200 kHz remains a challenge, but it's not an exaggeration to say that 40 meters is like a whole new band."

Sumner explained that moving hundreds of broadcast transmitters in dozens of countries out of a band didn't just happen: "It took years of patient effort by a global team of volunteers and ARRL professionals, working through the IARU, to overcome objections and marshal the necessary support. It was an expensive undertaking, and it never could have been accomplished without the voluntary contributions - above and beyond their basic dues - of thousands of ARRL members."

Even as we celebrate our reborn 40 meter band, Sumner said that we, as amateurs, must remember that it takes hard work just to hang onto what we have. "As much as we like to pursue new and improved ham bands, most of our effort must go toward frequency defense," he said. "Every day, new uses of the radio

spectrum are being conceived. Each one competes for spectrum access with incumbent radio services, including ours. Not only must we defend our allocations against well-heeled backers of licensed services, we must also try to prevent the pollution of the radio spectrum by unlicensed devices. The fight goes on in Washington, Geneva and around the globe -- and there's no end in sight."

Decisions for WRC-12 are being made now that will determine how many administrations -- including the United States - will support a new secondary allocation to the Amateur Service at 500 kHz, and whether proposals for allocations to oceanographic radars will threaten some of our existing HF bands. "We are hard at work meeting these challenges, but we need your help," Sumner said, in asking for support for the ARRL Spectrum Defense Fund. "Members' past response helped us to keep commercial satellites out of the 144 and 420 MHz bands, to gain access to frequencies around 5 MHz, and to win our court challenge of the FCC's flawed Broadband over Power Lines (BPL) rules. New challenges keep cropping up. Currently we are working to ensure that new short-range medical devices do not impact our ability to use our UHF and microwave bands."

To help in the ARRL's ongoing mission to protect our valuable spectrum, please visit the Spectrum Defense area on the ARRL Web site <<https://www.arrl.org/forms/fdefense/>>. You can also reach ARRL Chief Development Officer Mary Hobart, K1MMH, at

860-594-0397 or via e-mail <[k1mmh@arrl.org](mailto:k1mmh@arrl.org)>. Special gifts are being offered for contributions, including a mug and pin. More details on thank you gifts can be found on the donation form for the Spectrum Defense Fund.

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## Alpha Radio Products Now RF Concepts:

On September 15, Michael Seedman, AA6DY, announced that his company, RF Concepts <http://www.rfconcepts.com/>, had purchased Boulder, Colorado-based Alpha Radio Products <<http://www.alpharadioproducts.com/>>. Seedman explained in a press release <[http://www.rfconcepts.com/dear\\_alpha\\_customers.asp](http://www.rfconcepts.com/dear_alpha_customers.asp)> that when he contacted Alpha to purchase a new amplifier, he was "disappointed to learn that I would not receive it for months." He was told that as each amplifier is made by hand, there was not enough shelf inventory to send a new one right away. Working with Alpha Products president Molly Hardman, W0MOM, "we created a way to capitalize the company in order to put amplifiers in inventory for immediate availability. Customers will no longer have to wait weeks or months to add an Alpha product to their station." Seedman said that RF Concepts "will focus on shipping our backlog of Alpha amplifiers and building sufficient product to ship from stock. We will honor our existing customer commitments -- including warranties, customer and technical support and repairs -- and keep our extensive parts inventories

to support the more than 10,000 Alpha amplifiers in the market." Hardman will be staying on as Vice President of Sales for RF Concepts.

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## Faster Than a Speeding Pigeon?:

In South Africa, an information-technology company proved that it was faster for them to transmit data with a carrier pigeon than to send it using Telkom, the country's leading Internet service provider. Internet speed and connectivity in Africa's largest economy are poor due to a shortage of bandwidth and its high cost. Local news agency SAPA reported that on September 9, an 11 month old pigeon named Winston took 68 minutes to fly the 50 miles from Unlimited IT's offices near Pietermaritzburg to the coastal city of Durban with a data card strapped to his leg. Including downloading, the transfer took two hours, six minutes and 57 seconds -- the time it took for only four percent of the data to be transferred using a Telkom line. APA said Unlimited IT performed the stunt after becoming frustrated with slow internet transmission times. The company has 11 call centers around the country and regularly sends data to its other branches. Internet speed is expected to improve once a new 11,000 mile underwater fiber optic cable linking southern and East Africa to other networks becomes operational before South Africa hosts the soccer World Cup next year.

## Minutes July 13, 2009

There were 17 members and guests present at Mary's Plane View Restaurant for the July meeting of the PARK club.

President Blaine Auville WA8IOE called the meeting to order at 7 PM. The 50/50 drawing of \$15 dollars was won by Georgia Milhoan. The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. The treasurer's report of a balance of \$2734.72 was given by Carol KC8TUD.

Dave N8NWV reported that the repeater site was mowed by N8NWV, K8BOT and N8TWV. Dan WV8X reported on field day. 343 voice contacts were made for a total score of 946 including the bonus points. Three VHF contacts could not be counted because of the 1Alpha classification.

The Fort Boreman Park shelter has been reserved for the September 14 picnic. A combined picnic with the Marietta club was not discussed at their last meeting. Connie N8IO will invite them to our picnic at their meeting tomorrow night.

Curt K8UC had SERA membership information that he turned over to Blaine WA8IOE. The dues are now \$30 per year. Connie moved and Curt seconded to renew our membership for two years. Contacts to be changed are: Curt K8UC to be removed and Ray KC8RUJ to be added.

Larry Hawkins W8IBI submitted an application for membership. Curt K8UC moved and Connie W8IO seconded to accept him. Motion carried.

Jackson's Mill will be August 22. No nominations were made for ham of the year.

Carol KC8TUD read a letter from Ray KC8RUJ's son. He described the new offensive against the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Georgia announced that Danny Graham WB8YSM has Alzheimer's disease.

Connie announced that the Ohio VEC will have a power point presentation at the Marietta club meeting tomorrow night.

Dave N8NWV moved and Dan WV8X seconded to adjourn at 7:30 PM.

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## Minutes August 10, 2009

There were 17 members and guests present at Mary's Plane View Restaurant for the August meeting of the PARK club.

President Blaine Auville WA8IOE opened the meeting at 7 PM. There was no 50/50 drawing and no treasurer's report.

The minutes of the July meeting were read and approved.

The WV state convention will be August 22nd at Jackson's Mill, Weston.

The 146.97 repeater needs mowing again. There were no volunteers. The September 14 club meeting will be a covered dish picnic at Fort Boreman Park. The meat will be furnished by the club. Robin Betts will help Irene and Libby on the picnic committee.

Blaine talked about how the BPL interference is now a dead issue. He

also mentioned how the ARRL has helped with many issues of benefit to the amateur radio hobby over the years.

Connie reported on the expiring licenses of N8LQO, KB8DRQ and N8KTH.

Announcement was made of Kevin KC8LNE's mother about to have a liver transport in Canada and the family requesting donations and/or prayers.

It was questioned if Carol KC8TUD could be authorized to sign club checks in the absence of the treasurer. No action was taken. Blaine WA8IOE accepted nominations for the various offices for the coming year.

For president, Dan WV8X nominated Connie N8IO.

For vice presidents, Dan nominated Jim K8BOT, Libby nominated Dave N8NVX, and Connie nominated Dan WV8X.

For treasurer, Dan nominated Ray KC8RUJ and Carol KC8TUD. For secretary, Dave nominated Ray N8TWV.

Upcoming hamfests: Cambridge August 23, 8 AM, Findley September 13, 8AM.

Dan made a correction on the field day points. Correct total is 936. Irene reported that Georgia is not doing too well.

Jep K8BOT moved and Dan WV8X seconded to adjourn at 7:35 PM.

## Minutes September 14, 2009

There were 19 members and guests present at the September picnic meeting at Fort Boreman Park. Good food and fellowship was enjoyed by all. President Blaine Auville opened the meeting at 7 PM and introductions were made.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. The treasurer's report was given by Ray KC8RUJ.

The 146.970 repeater site was mowed by Jep K8BOT, Herb KC8JHM, Curt K8UC and Ray N8TWV. Somehow while they were mowing, a tree grew up between Curt's truck and trailer which required a chain saw to free it. Jep reported that the 146.970 repeater now has a new controller and has been put back into service. The December Christmas meeting will be at the Washington community building on the 12th.

There were no nominations for officers from the floor. Connie N8IO moved and Libby KA8FUA seconded that the slate of officers be elected by proclamation. Motion carried.

New officers are: President, Connie Hamilton N8IO; Vice Presidents, Jim Palmer K8BOT; Dave Wright N8NWV; and Dan Betts WV8X, Secretary Ray Bodie N8TWV, Treasurers Ray Johnson KC8RUJ and Carol Johnson KC8TUD.

Connie N8IO reported on the Finley Ohio hamfest. The Ohio Single Sideband meeting had to be moved due to the large turnout of those requesting tables.

Blaine WA8IOE mentioned the need to start classes to get more new hams interested in the hobby.

Jep K8BOT moved and Ray KC8RUJ seconded to adjourn at 7:21 PM.

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## New Officers!

Monday evening, the PARK club held their yearly picnic at Fort Boreman Park. There was plenty of good food. A business meeting was held after the meal and new officers were elected.

The new officers are: President, Connie Hamilton N8IO; Vice presidents, Jim Palmer K8BOT, Dave Wright N8NWV and Dan Betts WV8X; Secretary, Ray Bodie N8TWV; Treasurers, Ray Johnson KC8RUJ and Carol Johnson KC8TUD.

The next meeting will be held at Mary's Plane View restaurant on October 12 at 6 PM if you want to eat, and the business meeting to start at 7 PM. Visitors are welcome too.

73, Ray N8TWV

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## More CubeSats in Orbit:

Early Thursday morning (UTC), an Indian PSLV-C14 rocket carried the Oceansat-2 satellite <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oceansat-2>> to orbit, along with four CubeSats and two RubinSats. The RubinSats are 8 kg research modules that will remain attached to the PSLV-C14 booster. CubeSats are very small satellites, typically only a few inches on each side. As they are a relatively inexpensive research spacecraft, they've become

increasingly popular with university science programs. A number of CubeSats use Amateur Radio frequencies to downlink telemetry, as is the case with this latest group. Early reports indicate that all of the CubeSats are active. You can check out the frequencies and modes of the four satellites on the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2009/09/23/11090/?nc=1>>.

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## Public Service: Ham Appointed Chief of Army MARS

On September 25, veteran Army communicator Jim Griffin, KE7LJA, became Chief of the Army Military Affiliate Radio System ([MARS](http://www.armymars.org)). Major General Susan Lawrence, Commanding General of the 9th Signal Command (Army), named Griffin to succeed Stuart Carter; Carter has held the Chief's post since December 2006. MARS, the Defense Department-sponsored organization of Amateur Radio operators who volunteer for communications support in emergencies, is a component of the 9th SC(A).

As a uniformed member of the Signal Corps and subsequently a civil servant, Griffin has amassed 52 years in government service. Before Friday's appointment, he served for two years as Deputy Chief of Army MARS, tasked with the responsibility for construction of its new gateway communications station at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. For more information, click [here](http://www.armymars.org).



## NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL RESPONDS TO ARRL: NO EVIDENCE OF "SIGNIFICANT CRASH RISKS" WHILE OPERATING MOBILE

**A**RRL President Joel Harrison, W5ZN, wrote a letter to National Safety Council (NSC) President Janet Froetscher in July expressing the ARRL's concerns that Amateur Radio not become an unintended victim of the growing public debate over what to do about distracted drivers <[http://www.arrl.org/news/files/NSC\\_Letter7-30-09.pdf](http://www.arrl.org/news/files/NSC_Letter7-30-09.pdf)>. Froetscher has now replied, saying the NSC does not support bans or prohibitions on the use of Amateur Radios while driving <[http://www.arrl.org/news/files/NSC\\_Response\\_to\\_ARRL.pdf](http://www.arrl.org/news/files/NSC_Response_to_ARRL.pdf)>.

Noting that there is significant evidence that talking on cell phones while driving poses crash risk four times that of other drivers, Froetscher observed that the NSC position calling for bans on the use of cell phones while driving is grounded in science. "We are not aware of evidence that using Amateur Radios while driving has significant crash risks," Froetscher wrote in her August 24 letter. "We also have no evidence that using two-way radios while driving poses significant crash risks. Until such time as compelling, peer-reviewed scientific research is presented that denotes significant risks associated with the use of Amateur Radios, two-way radios or other communication devices, the NSC does not support legislative bans or prohibition on their use."

Froetscher said that while "the specific risk of radio use while driving is unmeasured and likely does not approach that of cell phones, there indeed is some elevated risk to the drivers, their passengers and the public associated with 650,000 Amateur Radio operators who may not, at one time or another, not concentrate fully on their driving." She points out that the "best safety

practice is to have one's full attention on their driving, their hands on the wheel and their eyes on the road. Drivers who engage in any activity that impairs any of these constitutes an increased risk."

ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ, said the ARRL "appreciates NSC President and CEO Janet Froetscher's clear statement that the NSC does not support legislative bans or prohibitions on the use of Amateur Radio while driving. We applaud the NSC for taking positions that are grounded in science. At the same time, all radio amateurs should heed her call to concentrate fully on driving while behind the wheel. It is possible to operate a motor vehicle safely while using Amateur Radio, but if it becomes a distraction we owe it those with whom we share the road, as well as to our passengers, to put safety first."

On January 30, 2009, the ARRL Executive Committee adopted the ARRL's Policy Statement on Mobile Amateur Radio Operation

<<http://www.arrl.org/govrelations/MobileAmateurRadioPolicyStatement.pdf>> that states "Amateur Radio mobile operation is ubiquitous, and Amateur Radio emergency and public service communications, and other organized Amateur Radio communications activities and networks necessitate operation of equipment while some licensees are driving motor vehicles. Two-way radio use is dissimilar from full-duplex cellular telephone communications because the operator spends little time actually transmitting; the time spent listening is more similar to, and arguably less distracting than, listening to a broadcast radio, CD or MP3 player. There are no distinctions to be made between or among Amateur Radio, public safety land mobile radio, private land mobile radio or citizen's radio in

terms of driver distraction. All are distinguishable from mobile cellular telephone communications in this respect. Nevertheless, ARRL encourages licensees to conduct Amateur communications from motor vehicles in a manner that does not detract from the safe and attentive operation of a motor vehicle at all times."

In his letter, Harrison explained to Froetscher that Amateur Radio operators provide essential emergency communications when regular communications channels are disrupted by disaster: "Through formal agreements with federal agencies, such as the National Weather Service, FEMA and private relief organizations, the Amateur Radio volunteers protect lives using their own equipment without compensation. The ability of hams to communicate and help protect the lives of those in danger would be strictly hindered if the federal, state and local governments to not ensure that Amateur Radio operators can continue the use of their mobile radios while on the road."

Froetscher replied that she "appreciate[s] your focus of Amateur Radio for emergency communications during disasters. I encourage ARRL to adopt best practices for the safe operation of vehicles that confines use of Amateur Radios while driving only to disaster emergencies."

The Policy Statement asserts that the ARRL "is aware of no evidence that [mobile] operation contributes to driver inattention. Quite the contrary: Radio amateurs are public service-minded individuals who utilize their radio-equipped motor vehicles to assist others, and they are focused on driving in the execution of that function."

## CHANGES IN STORE FOR THE ARRL LETTER

**A**fter asking for feedback from ARRL Letter subscribers and reviewing surveys sent to ARRL members, we are changing the way you receive The ARRL Letter. Starting next week -- October 1 -- The ARRL Letter will be available to subscribers in an HTML formatted version. Each message will contain both an HTML and a plain-text version of the Letter, and the recipient's mail program can choose which version to display. For our members who prefer a plain-text version of the Letter, there will be simple instructions on the ARRL Letter Web page that describe how to view the plain-text version in some of the more common mail programs.

According to ARRL News Editor S. Khristyne Keane, K1SFA, this new format

will allow for more graphics and pictures, as well as occasional articles that feature the technical side of Amateur Radio. We will also be running portions of popular QST features, such as "The Doctor Is IN" and "Hints & Kinks."

"I am very excited about presenting The ARRL Letter in a completely new format," Keane said. "Not only will we be able to add features such as pictures and video, but by offering the Letter in HTML, readers will be able to navigate directly to those stories they are most interested in."

The ARRL already offers two other newsletters -- The ARRL Contest Update and The ARRL ARES E-Letter -- in an HTML version. We have received a lot of positive feedback on these two newsletters."

The ARRL Letter first appeared in 1981 as a print publication, available by subscription from the League. In 1991 -- following the technology of the day -- it moved from being a print publication to being published electronically and sent via e-mail as a free service to ARRL members. "Now, once again, we at the ARRL are following technology's path and publishing The ARRL Letter in a new way, moving from plain text to a graphically pleasing interface," Keane explained.

We think you will enjoy this new format, and we welcome your comments. Tell us what you like -- and don't like -- by sending an e-mail to Keane <k1sfa@arrl.org>, with "ARRL Letter Feedback" in the subject line.