



Di-Dah-Dit

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

A Brief History of Modern Day 160 Meters

By ARRL News Editor S. Khrystyne Keane, K1SFA

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the ARRL 160 Meter Contest. In 1970, the ARRL Board of Directors authorized this new event at their meeting in May. According to the announcement that appeared in the October 1970 edition of *QST*, the ARRL Contest Advisory Committee (CAC) and "numerous 'top banders'" provided the guidance for the contest; based on their recommendations, they created its initial format.

Those licensed prior to May 1981 can surely remember the limitations on 160 meters due to the LORAN-A (Long Range Aid to Navigation) stations. These stations -- developed during World War II -- used signals that were transmitted on frequencies in and around our present-day 160 meter band. The LORAN-A stations were responsible for reduced Amateur Radio operations -- including frequency and power limitations -- on 160 meters in the United States.

If you look at license manuals from this time, you will find a chart (Part 97.61,

Authorized Frequencies and Emissions) that dictated how much power amateurs could use on topband. This was broken up into band segments of 25 kHz, going from 1800 kHz up to 2000 kHz. In band segments of 25 kHz, it lists each US state and dictated how much power could be used during the day *and* during the night. For example, amateurs in Connecticut on 1844 kHz could use 100 W during the day, but had to go down to 25 W at night; Connecticut hams were not even allowed on during the day *or* night between 1850-1975 kHz! Conversely, Oklahoma hams had daytime topband privileges of 1000 W and could use 200 W at night on 1800-1825 kHz.

On May 21, 1981, US amateurs got some good news when the FCC lifted most of the restrictions on 1800-1900 kHz: For the first time, kilowatt powers were authorized for both daytime and nighttime use as the LORAN-A stations were being phased out. In 1979, the Coast Guard began replacing the LORAN-A sta-

tions with LORAN-C stations. These newer stations operate on 100 kHz, enabling the restrictions on 160 meters due to LORAN functions to be dropped.

Most amateur transceivers didn't even begin to include 160 meters until the influx of Japanese imports began in the 1970s. As a result of that -- as well as the elimination of the HF LORAN system -- 160 meters has grown in popularity over the past couple of decades. Now in its 40th year, the ARRL 160 Meter Contest is still growing. From the first running in 1970 with 270 logs submitted, to 2008 with 1280 logs submitted, more amateurs are becoming fascinated with all that topband has to offer. If you've never been on 160 before, try making a few contacts. If you're a topband veteran, this is the chance to strut your stuff. For more information on 160 meters, check out [DXing on the Edge: The Thrill of 160 Meters](#) by Jeff Briggs K1ZM. *Now you know*

Santa's a Ham!

By ARRL News Editor S. Khrystyne Keane, K1SFA

For 37 years, Mickey Hicks, WO6T, played Santa Claus to hundreds of children. These children never sat on Santa's lap to tell him that they had been good boys and girls and what they wanted for Christmas. They did it in a much more simple way -- they picked up a microphone and told Santa on the air. Each year, Hicks, a ham for almost 50 years and a long-time Amateur Radio instructor, would get on the air for 10 days each December as W6S (Whiskers-6-Santa). Unfortunately, Hicks became a Silent Key earlier this year.

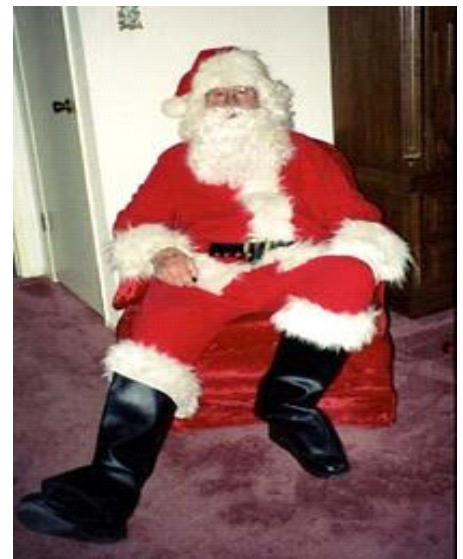
Hicks said that the first year he operated as W6S was a hit with the operators -- and their children. Most children, he noted, are a bit apprehensive of talking over the radio, let alone to Santa. One of the most challenging parts of operating was when he heard a parent say

"This one is shy and won't talk." That was never a problem for Hicks -- after a few warm-up questions, such as "Can you say hello to Rudolph?" -- he said he could strike up a conversation that lasted a few minutes. He had even heard back from parents that they weren't able to get the microphone away from the kids afterward!

Back in 2001, Hicks [told the ARRL](#) that his Santa's Workshop was a great ham radio recruiting tool. One of his most memorable experiences was when a young girl he'd once spoken with on the air as Santa came by with her ham ticket in hand to thank him in person for getting her interested in Amateur Radio. "I had tears in my eyes, of course," he said. One of the most enjoyable moments of Hicks' Santa career occurred when he was speaking with a young child and realized he had spoken with their parents

and grandparents when they were youngsters!

Mark Slater, WI6J, was Hicks' QSL manager. With the blessing of Hicks' wife, son and daughter-in-law, Slater will carry on the W6S tradition for 2010 and beyond. "Mickey's shoes are so much bigger than I could ever hope to fill," he told the ARRL, "but I know Mickey would have wanted Santa to keep getting on the air and speaking with the children." Slater said you can find him most evenings, as well as the weekend of December 19-20, on 14.270 MHz, Santa's favorite frequency.



David L. Mays - SK

David L. Mays, 67, of St. Marys died Nov. 7, 2009, at the Marietta Memorial Hospital, Marietta.

He was born Sept. 7, 1942, in Charleston, a son of the late Bernard Haven and Vera Rose Beller Mays. He was a 1964 graduate of Alderson-Broaddus College, Philippi, W.Va., with a degree in chemistry. He was retired from Allegheny Power after 31 years service. He was a member of the St. Marys United Methodist Church. He was the initial Scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop 225, serving for 10 years and was active in scouting for many years on the council level. He had been scoutmaster for a National Jamboree Troop and he taught merit badge midway. He was recipient of the Silver Beaver Award and the Cross and Flame Award of the United Methodist Church. He was active in ham radio, having been licensed for 50 years and was president of the Quarter Century Club. He was editor of the Blennerhassett Bicycle Club newsletter and a member of the Mountaineer Woodturners Club. He was a counselor and friend to men with prostate cancer. He was a friend to anyone who needed anything. His hobbies were numerous, including woodworking.

He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Patricia Hines Mays; two children, Dr. Melissa Glasser and her husband, Daniel, of Marion, Iowa, and Ibrahim Hakki (Carl David Mays) and his wife, Gayle, of Parma, Ohio; grandchildren, Zahra Hakki, Omar Hakki, Laila Hakki, David Glasser and Michael Glasser; foster parents, Florence and Ned Reneau of Grafton, W.Va.; two sisters-in-law, Luster Smith of Pennsylvania and June Snodgrass of North Carolina; brothers and sisters, Sara Eckert of Ironton, Ohio, Bernard Mays Jr., Paul Frederick Mays, Maria Mays and Vera Mays, all of Milton, W.Va., and Edward Mays of Charlotte, N.C.; and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Services will be noon Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2009, at the St. Marys United Methodist Church with Pastor Pam Shuman officiating. Friends may call from 2-4 and 6-8 p.m. Tuesday at the Ingram Funeral Home, St. Marys.

The family requests that memorial contributions may be made to Boy Scout Troop 222, c/o St. Marys United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 100, St. Marys, WV 26170; the American Cancer Society, c/o Carrie Carder, P.O. Box 117, Belmont, WV 26134; or the St. Marys United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 100, St. Marys, WV 26170.

An online guest register is available at www.ingramfh.com



PARK MINUTES

October 12, 2009

There were 24 members and guests present at Mary's Plane View Restaurant for the October meeting of the PARK club.

The 50/50 drawing of \$12 was won by Dave Wright N8NWV. President Connie Hamilton N8IO called the meeting to order at 7 PM.

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

Irene Fouse N8KYP, Georgia Milhoan and Libby Auville KA8FUA were named for the food committee for the December Christmas party.

Under unfinished business, the ham classes were further discussed. Blaine WA8IOE will look for a location, possibly Emmanuel Baptist Church, and Carl Long K8OWL was suggested as an instructor. An announcement of the classes could be put in the newspaper and on the TV bulletin board. New business:

A card was signed to thank Joe Wigal W8JTW for his help in repairing the 146.970 repeater.

The Buffalo net is held on Thursdays at 9 PM on 28.405. Jerry Wharton KA8NJW has sent out the club newsletters by e-mail.

Jerry KA8NJW moved and Dave N8NWV seconded to adjourn at 7:21 PM..

November 9, 2009

There were 22 members and guests present at Mary's Plane View Restaurant for the November meeting of the PARK club.

President Connie Hamilton N8IO opened the meeting at 7 PM and introductions were made.

A moment of silence was observed for Dave Mays W8UI who became a silent key on November 7th.

Blaine WA8IOE moved and Jep K8BOT seconded that instead of flowers, we send an ARRL scholarship in the amount of \$30. The motion carried.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved.

Under unfinished business, a report on the Christmas party was made. The meat, drinks and plates will be furnished by the club. Connie N8IO has lined up two so far for intertainment. Mark KR5N will play the neuphonium and Jane N8MOW will accompany him. The meeting will be held at the Washington Community Building on December 12th at 6 PM.

Under new business, there was nothing new to report on the ham classes.

Connie N8IO had three licenses that were about to expire and asked for volunteers to try to contact them.

Carol KC8TUD gave the treasurer's report.

The 50/50 drawing of \$10 was won by Lynn N8IIM.

Dave N8NWV moved and John W8IDW seconded to adjourn at 7:18 PM.

ARRL's Logbook of The World Reaches New Milestones

To date, more than 30,000 hams have entered more than 250 million QSOs into Logbook of The World (LoTW), the ARRL's online logging program. At this time last year, 22,959 hams had made just more than 192 million QSOs, marking an upswing in both users and QSOs of about 24 percent. The LoTW system is a repository of log records submitted by amateurs from around the world. When both participants in a QSO submit matching QSO records to LoTW, the result is a QSL that can be used for ARRL award credit. While US amateurs do not need to be members of the ARRL to use LoTW, only members can use LoTW to apply for ARRL awards, such as DXCC and Worked All States (WAS). Some awards, like the Triple Play Award, only use LoTW credits instead of traditional QSL cards (foreign amateurs do not need to be ARRL members to apply for ARRL awards).

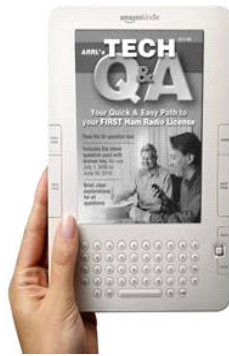


Scott Robbins, W4PA, to Purchase Vibroplex

Scott Robbins, W4PA, of Knoxville, Tennessee, told the ARRL that he has signed an agreement to purchase The Vibroplex Company, Inc from present owner Felton "Mitch" Mitchell, W4OA, effective December 21, 2009. "Vibroplex represents the great tradition of CW operation in Amateur Radio going back many, many years," Robbins told the ARRL. "I'm tickled to be able to continue the more than 100 years of history that has gone into this company."

Robbins -- who has been employed with Ten-Tec Inc since 1995 (he has been Product Manager for Ten-Tec's Amateur Radio equipment line since 1997) -- will leave his position in mid-December to take over full-time management and ownership of Vibroplex.

"It's a great opportunity to continue the more than 100 years of tradition that the Vibroplex name represents," Robbins said.



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Those who have the Kindle application installed on their [Apple iPhone](#) or [iPod touch](#) can also download the book for use on these devices. When you download the *Tech Q&A*, you can gain access quickly and easily, smoothing the path to your first ham radio license. This ideal study tool -- whether you're at home, in the office, traveling or just on the go -- lets you review the questions and answers from the entire Technician question pool so you can pass the 35-question exam. Kindle versions of the *General Q&A* and the *Amateur Extra Q&A* will be available sometime in January. All three can be purchased from Amazon.com for \$9.99 each.

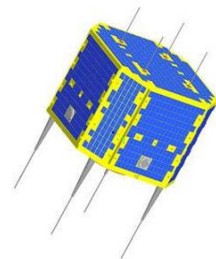
First Chinese Amateur Radio Satellite Now in Space

AMSAT China ([CAMSAT](#)) reports that at around 0230 UTC on December 15, China launched its first Amateur Radio satellite -- named [XW-1](#) -- into space. The microsatellite -- a secondary payload aboard the CZ-4C rocket launched from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center -- was launched into a Sun-synchronous orbit with an apogee of approximately 1200 kilometers.

XW-1 successfully reached orbit at 0253 UTC. Members of the XW-1 launch team reported they received a beacon from the satellite shortly after the satellite deployed. In the first few days, the XW-1 team will work on the satellite's FM and store-forward transponder mode and its linear transponder mode.

Once those tests are complete, they will upload a new flight program to set up the payload schedule. The satellite's communications payload includes a beacon and three crossband transponders operating in FM, SSB/CW and digital modes.

Uplink and downlink frequencies can be found on the [CAM-SAT Web site](#). For the latest Keplerian elements for XW-1 and other satellites, check out the [W1AW Keplerian Bulletins](#).



PARK Christmas Dinner 2009 - Good Food and Great Fun was had by all. The last picture is from our first snow storm. The snow was pretty, but Heavy!

Note Most of the news in this letter was VIA the ARRL Letter. KA8NJW, Jerry

