

The Oscillator

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From the Chairman's Shack:

By: Brian N9BTH

Happy New Year to all! It has been a year since I wrote my first and only article for the Oscillator. Boy does time fly! First off, I would like to offer my heart-felt thanks to all the officers, the board, the committee members, and our volunteers for their work and efforts in helping to make our club viable.

In 2006, I ran for, and you elected me to, the position of Board Member – Past Officer. When I attended my first board meeting in 2007, I was elected Chairman.

I am probably the last person in the club who should be chairman of an amateur radio club. I haven't had a radio on in over 5 years - not even my old chicken band rig. I even took my tower down a few years ago. I am an ARRL member and read QST and I make every club/board meeting when I am in town. But that doesn't mean I am an active ham. I haven't been to a field day in so many years and when I did go, I never operated a single radio.

So, why did I accept the board position and the position of Chairman? I feel that if I am a member of an organization, I am part of that organization and as part of the organization; I have a commitment to help make the organization the best it can be. If I can't commit, I shouldn't even be a member. I feel the same with my village commission, my charity groups I am involved in and my various professional organizations. If I want something out of an organization, I must be prepared to put something into the organization.

If you look around our club, you will see the same officers being recycled into different offices and the same volunteers doing the same jobs. One reason is the same reason as mine – they are honoring their commitment to the club. The other reason is that no one else wants the job. In other words, it doesn't seem that many club members feel an obligation to help the club succeed.

I was stuck in Akron due to weather problems so I missed the election last month. I was really saddened to see that no one was elected president. You can't continue to ask the same people to run the club. They put in their time and they need a break. We have had, and still have, good, dedicated officers, but we need new blood to bring in new ideas and to help keep the club in business.

Most of you don't remember, but we use to have two meetings a month. That meant two programs a month. We also use to meet in the summer. Now we have only 9 meetings and not all of them have programs. As a result, the load on the officers and committees has been reduced substantially. So, a commitment to the club now is nowhere near the commitment it was a few years ago, as far as time is concerned. The commitment of the officers/board/volunteers, however, is as strong now as it was years ago.

I'm going to ask - no beg - each and every one of you to look inside yourself and see where you stand in relation to Tri-Town. If you want to see us continue and improve, please volunteer for a position - officer or committee. If you don't care and you want to see Tri-town limp along, don't do anything.

As for me, as long as I'm a member, I will help to the best to my ability, even if I don't operate my radios. Where do you fit in????

See You at the Club Meeting this Friday Jan 18, 2008 !!

Officers, Board Members, & Committee Heads for 2007:

Jerry Dagenais,	K9PMV	President and W9VT Station Mgr	708.385.2866	K9PMV@msn.com
Rich Poortinga,	KB9IPS	Vice President	708.957.4421	richardpoortinga@juno.com
Jim Everand,	WD9GXU	Secretary	708.748.6798	None
Sharon Gunderson,	KA9IIT	Treasurer	708.957.7944	sgunderson@gwclow.com
Mark Thompson,	KA9MDJ	Director	708.946.2877	cinjontim@juno.com
Todd Schumann,	KA9IUC	Director	708.423.7066	tschum3063@aol.com
Brian Denk	N9BTH	Chairman of Board	708.389.7481	bjdenk@comcast.net
Matt Schumann	N9OTL	Raffle Chairman	708.423.7066	mattschuman@yahoo.com
Dave Dell	N9LGP	Field Day Chairman	708.235-1703	n9lgp@aol.com
Bruce Haffner,	WD9GHK	W9VT Trustee	708.614.6134	WD9GHK@earthlink.net
Tom Gunderson	W9SRV	Webmaster, W9VT	815.466-0245	webmaster@w9vt.org
Brian J. Bedoe,	WD9HSY	Repeater Trustee & Oscillator Editor	815.469.1383	Bbedoe@aol.com

Members of the Tri-Town Radio Club Inc. publish the Oscillator 6 times a year. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Officers or members of the Tri-Town RAC, but of the contributors. All articles may be reprinted as long as full credit is given. Other publications are asked to reciprocate their newsletter. Some Articles printed here are from AMSAT, ARRL Letter, TAPR, World Radio, and Other Amateur Radio Publications

Club Meetings & Nets

Club meetings are the **3rd Friday** of each month at the **Village of Hazel Crest Village Hall**, 170th and Holmes. All are welcome and refreshments will serve. Don't forget to bring a Friend.

Official Club 2 Mtr hangouts: 146.49 Simplex, & The Club's Repeater 146.805 -600kc 107.2 PL
Unofficial Club Hang Outs 442.375 WA9WLN/R, & 443.325 WD9HSY/R both using 114.8 PL +5mhz

2 Mtr FM 49'ers Net - Wed, 8:00 PM Local, 146.490.
40 Mtr SSB Net - Saturdays, 8:30 AM Local, 7.2625.
10 Mtr SSB Net - Thursdays, 8:00 PM Local, 28.490.
Cracker Barrel Net - Monday-Friday 3:00 PM Local 146.49

2 Mtr FM Weather Net - Sundays, 8:00 PM local, on **The Club's Repeater** 146.805 -600kc 107.2 PL

The **W1AW Operating Schedule** may be found on the web:

<http://www.arrl.org/w1aw.html>

27 Jan 2008 WCRA Mid-Winter Hamfest Wheaton Community Radio Amateurs
<http://www.w9ccu.org> Talk-In: 145.39 (PL 103.5)

23 Feb 2008 WeLCARS TechFest Western Lake County Amateur Radio Society
<http://welcars.org> Talk-In: 145.755 Simplex and IRLP node 4239

9 Mar 2008 Sterling-Rock Falls Amateur Radio Society
<http://www.sterlinghamfest.com> Talk-In: 146.85 (PL 114.8)

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WISCONSIN ARES ASSIST WITH TORNADO AFTERMATH

A rare January EF3 tornado in Wisconsin destroyed houses and knocked out power shortly after 4 PM (local time) Monday, January 7, displacing about 160 people. The Red Cross activated members of the Kenosha County and Racine County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) groups to provide logistical communications at the two relief shelters in Kenosha County, as well as from a communications station at the Kenosha County Emergency Operation Center. Riding along with Red Cross teams, ARES members helped relay damage assessments back to the Red Cross building in Racine.

"Providing communications is essential," said Assistant Emergency Coordinator for the Racine County ARES Alex Voss, N9RGX. "We set up a communications network at the Red Cross building in Racine, outside of the affected area. We were ready to go when activated. I couldn't be more proud of our volunteers. We will work with the responding agencies as long as they need us. We'll take what we've learned this time and use it to improve our response in the future."

According to ARRL Wisconsin Section Emergency Coordinator William M. Niemuth, KB9ENO, Wheatland, Somers and the city of Kenosha were hardest hit by the storm. "In Wheatland, 20 homes were destroyed and at least 50 homes had some kind of damage. In Kenosha, six homes were destroyed and almost 30 were damaged. There were a handful of homes in other parts of the county with minor damage." An unknown number of cars were blown off the road on Highway 50 near Highway O, said Sgt Gil Benn of the Kenosha County Sheriff's Department.

"It was a severe storm with a lot of damage," Kenosha County Sheriff David Beth said. "In all my time here, I have never, ever, seen any damage to this degree. This is something I've only seen on TV that happens in other places, but during the middle of January this is something absolutely incredible that happened for us." Until the storms on Monday, there has been only one tornado in January since 1844, according to data from the National Weather Service.

Twelve people were treated at area hospitals for storm-related injuries, but none of the injuries was major. There were no fatalities.

NEW PREFIX FOR BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

In response to a request from the Ministry of Communications and Transport of Bosnia and Herzegovina in August, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) withdrew the call sign prefix allocation T9A-T9Z for Bosnia and Herzegovina and made a new allocation, E7A-E7Z. The change was made initially on a provisional basis under authority of the ITU Secretary-General and was confirmed by the 2007 World Radiocommunication Conference to be effective November 17, 2007.

According to International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) Secretary David Sumner, K1ZZ, the Ministry of Communications and Transport (BiH) held a press conference in Sarajevo on December 18 to formally announce the change. Minister Dr Bozo Ljubic explained the desirability of changing a prefix that initially was allocated during wartime and how it was now being replaced with one that has no connection to that troubled time; similar steps have been taken with regard to passports, drivers' licenses and automobile registrations, he said. Ljubic also observed that the costs associated with the change were minimal compared to the benefits. Amateur Radio station licenses bearing E7 prefixes will be issued beginning in January 2008, and the use of other prefixes will be phased out.

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CYCLE 24 HERE, EXPERTS SAY

With the appearance of Sunspot 981 -- a high-latitude, reversed polarity sunspot -- on Friday, January 4, experts at NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) said that Cycle 24 is now here. "This sunspot is like the first robin of spring," said solar physicist Douglas Biesecker of the Space Weather Prediction Center (SWPC), part of NOAA. "In this case, it's an early omen of solar storms that will gradually increase over the next few years."

Solar physicist David Hathaway of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama concurred, saying that new solar cycles begin with a "modest knot" of magnetism, like the one that appeared on December 11 on the east limb of the Sun: "That patch of magnetism could be a sign of the next solar cycle. New solar cycles always begin with a high-latitude, reversed polarity sunspot." The region of magnetism that appeared back in December achieved high latitude (24 degrees North) and was magnetically reversed, but no supporting sunspot appeared until 25 days later.

Reversed polarity describes a sunspot with opposite magnetic polarity compared to sunspots from the previous solar cycle. High-latitude refers to the Sun's grid of latitude and longitude. Old-cycle spots congregate near the Sun's equator; new-cycle spots appear higher, around 25 or 30 degrees latitude. Sunspot 981's high-latitude location at 27 degrees North and its negative polarity leading to the right in the Northern Hemisphere are clear-cut signs of a new solar cycle, according to NOAA experts. The first active regions and sunspots of a new solar cycle can emerge at high latitudes while those from the previous cycle continue to form closer to the equator.

While experts vary in their predictions on when the solar cycle will peak and how strong it will be, NOAA, in April 2007, in coordination with an international panel of solar experts, predicted that the next 11-year cycle of solar storms "would start in March 2008, plus or minus six months, and peak in late 2011 or mid-2012." In the cycle forecast issued in April 2007, half of the panel predicted a "moderately strong cycle of 140 sunspots, plus or minus 20, expected to peak in October 2011. The other half predicted a moderately weak cycle of 90 sunspots, plus or minus 10, peaking in August 2012. An average solar cycle ranges from 75 to 155 sunspots. The late decline of Cycle 23 has helped shift the panel away from its earlier leaning toward a strong Cycle 24. The group is evenly split between a strong and a weak cycle."

NASA's Hathaway, along with colleague Robert Wilson at a meeting of the American Geophysical Union in San Francisco last month, said that Solar Cycle 24 "looks like it's going to be one of the most intense cycles since record-keeping began almost 400 years ago." They believe the next solar maximum should peak around 2010 with a sunspot number of 160, plus or minus 25. "This would make it one of the strongest solar cycles of the past fifty years -- which is to say, one of the strongest in recorded history." Four of the five biggest cycles on record have come in the past 50 years. "Cycle 24 should fit right into that pattern," Hathaway said.

According to Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA, "As for improvement in propagation on the higher bands, we still have a way to go before that happens, and it depends on the magnitude of Cycle 24. The Solar Cycle 24 Prediction Panel has published predictions for Cycle 24, but unfortunately the panel did not reach one consensus prediction. If the larger of the two predictions comes true, we should expect consistent F2 propagation on 10 and 12 meters to start toward the end of 2009. If the smaller prediction comes true, this will be delayed about one year." Luetzelschwab, who writes the column "Propagation" for the National Contest Journal (NCJ), continued: "While we wait for improved high band conditions, don't forget the low bands. Around solar minimum and for the next year or so, the Earth's geomagnetic field is at its quietest. This is good for low band propagation. Thus, right now is the time to start (or add to) your 80 and 160 meter DXCC efforts."

According to NASA's Tony Phillips, many forecasters believe Solar Cycle 24 will be big and intense. "Solar cycles usually take a few years to build to a frenzy and Cycle 24 will be no exception. We still have some quiet times ahead," says Hathaway.

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OREGON GOVERNOR ALLOCATES \$250,000 FOR DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

The State of Oregon's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) received \$250,000 from Governor Ted Kulongoski's Strategic Reserve Fund to further develop and enhance a statewide Amateur Radio digital communications network, announced ARRL Oregon Section Manager Bonnie Altus, AB7ZQ.

"This network, the Oregon ARES Digital Network (OADN), already uses a combination of different radio equipment and spectrum segments, computers and the Internet to provide a robust backup communications system in times of disaster. With its enhancements, all Oregon counties will be able to communicate with the state OEM," she said. "In December, this system proved its usefulness in the storms and floods by utilizing Winlink stations in Lincoln and Clatsop Counties to communicate with OEM. Early in that activation, the OEM's Amateur Radio Unit found they were not able to keep up with maintaining a complete log of communications when using voice communications, but Winlink activities maintained an automatic log for them."

According to Altus, the primary purpose of the OADN is to provide back-up digital communications capabilities between county Emergency Operations Centers and Oregon Emergency Management and other state agencies in Salem, in the event that normal communications systems fail in an emergency.

During the December storms, Amateur Radio operators were there to help. After a visit to one of the severely affected towns, Governor Kulongoski said, "I'm going to tell you who the heroes were from the very beginning of this...the ham radio operators. These people just came in and actually provided a tremendous communication link to us." Oregon's OEM said the radio operators were "tireless in their efforts to keep the systems connected. When even state police had difficulty reaching some of their own troops, ham radio worked, setting up networks so emergency officials could communicate and relaying lists of supplies needed in stricken areas."

Through an Intergovernmental Agreement between the individual county Emergency Managers and Oregon's Office of Emergency Management, ARES/RACES groups in each county will be responsible for installation, maintenance and operation the network.

SOLAR UPDATE

Tad "He Loves to Lie a-Basking in the Sun" Cook, K7RA, this week reports: We just saw eight days of sunspots, but now the solar disk is spot-free. The big story this week is the sighting of the first spot of Solar Cycle 24. The sunspot -- Sunspot 981 -- has now faded away, but a new spot is emerging near the solar equator and it has the same polarity as the Cycle 24 spot last week. This is odd, because the spots from the new cycle should emerge at high latitudes, like last week's did. Sunspot numbers for January 3 through 9 were a mean of 13.3. The 10.7 cm flux was a mean of 78.1. Estimated planetary A indices were a mean of 9.3. Estimated mid-latitude A indices were of 7.9. For more information concerning radio propagation, visit the ARRL Technical Information Service Propagation page <<http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/propagation.html>>. To read this week's Solar Report in its entirety, check out the W1AW Propagation Bulletin page <<http://www.arrl.org/w1aw/prop/>>.

ARRL Warehouse Experiencing Shipping Delays

Due to the exceptionally high demand for new ARRL books, as well as our annual inventory audit, the ARRL Warehouse experienced some delays for orders placed on or after December 25. ARRL Marketing and Sales Manager Bob Inderbitzen, NQ1R, said, "Our staff is working extended shifts and we are quickly re-approaching our service standard. Most of the orders being processed today (Friday) were received on Monday and Tuesday this week. We'll likely be all caught-up early next week. We sincerely apologize if you experience

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From the Treasurer's Chair

73's Sharon, KA9IIT

Thank you for electing me to another term as your treasurer. Due to the generosity of many members, our Christmas party was paid in full without the use of the Tri-Town's treasury. Also, we did well with the raffle and many members paid their dues the night of 12/21. The treasury is in the black once again. But we still have to watch our pennies. Your bills have gone up, so has the club's. If you have not paid your dues, please do so. Keep supporting your club by your generous donations (i.e. refreshments & raffle) at club meetings. Every bit helps. Thanks to all.

Classic Gil Cartoon Book Now Available

"Gil: A Collection of Classic Cartoons from QST" is more than a book of illustrations -- it is a tribute to a legend, a man who, over a span of 40 years, created more than 1500 cartoons and drawings for QST and the ARRL. The work of Philip "Gil" Gildersleeve, W1CJD, became a tradition. In tribute to this talented, creative and devoted artist and ham, the ARRL presents in this book a reprint of a portion of the best of his work. Gil was an avid radio amateur, devoted family man and exceptionally active in the community. For several years he worked as a radio operator aboard merchant ships, later becoming News Editor of the Middletown (CT) Press. Although he became a Silent Key in 1966, his characters live on. Still today, Gil's conceptions remain alive in the minds of both old-timers and newcomers to Amateur Radio. Get your copy today at the ARRL Online Store <<http://www.arrl.org/catalog/?item=0364>>.

New Amateur Extra Class Question Pool Released

The National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC) has released a new pool of 741 questions and 12 graphics <<http://www.ncvec.org/page.php?id=338>> for the Amateur Extra class license. This pool will become effective for examinations given on or after July 1, 2008, and should be in service until June 30, 2012. It can be downloaded from the NCVEC Web site in Word, PDF or RTF formats. If you have any questions concerning the new Amateur Extra question pool, please contact the NCVEC's Question Pool Committee via e-mail <qpc@ncvec.org>.

ARRL QSL Bureau Sees Rise in Number of Cards Sent

Despite the fact that sunspots have been virtually non-existent, the ARRL Outgoing QSL Service is doing a brisk business. "We are seeing bigger numbers this year as compared to last year," says ARRL Outgoing QSL Service Manager Sharon Taratula. "It's amazing, considering where we are in the sunspot cycle." In 2007, the Outgoing QSL Service sent out 1,035,225 QSL cards, she says, compared with 1,000,475 cards sent during 2006 -- a difference of 34,750 QSLs. The volume of outgoing QSL cards reflects the trend, although not all cards received -- especially those destined for rarer DXCC entities -- go out right away in the monthly mailings to foreign bureaus. In 2005, the Bureau sent out 1,137,550 cards. "Now that the new solar cycle is here, we should see even more cards," Taratula said. In the last solar cycle (Cycle 23), the number of cards shipped via the ARRL Outgoing QSL Service topped 1.9 million cards in the 2001-2002 period. The Outgoing QSL Service sorts and forwards QSLs received from US radio amateurs to bureaus in more than 220 countries. For more information on the ARRL Outgoing QSL Service, please visit their Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/qs/qsout.html>>.

any inconvenience or delay in the receipt of your orders, and we look forward to serving you in this New Year. "

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Tri-Town Radio Amateur Club Membership Application

Name _____ Call _____

Address _____ License Class _____ ARRL Member Y / N

City, State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Email Address: _____

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____ Regular Membership \$ 20.00
____ SWL Membership \$ 20.00
____ Extra Family Membership \$ 6.00
____ Bunker Buddie \$ 5.00

____ Auto Patch w/1 Speed Slot \$ 25.00
____ Extra Speed Slots \$ 5.00

\$ _____ Total Paid by Club Member

For Example: Regular Member, with A/P and Bunker Buddy (20+25+5) = \$ 50.00

Tri-Town Radio Amateur Club Inc.

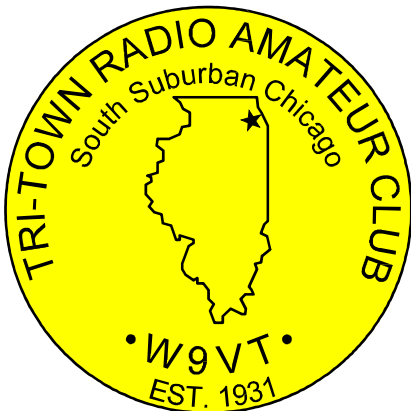
PO Box 1296

Homewood, IL 60430-0296

January 2008

Dues are Due!!

First Class Mail



Visit Tri-Town's Web Page!

WWW.W9VT.ORG