

The Oscillator

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ARRL Requests Expanded HF Privileges for Tech Licensees

Upcoming Meetings & Events

March Meeting --- An Introduction to FT8

Friday, March 16, 2018, 7:30 PM. The meeting will be held at the Hazel Crest Village Hall. There will be a business meeting. The program for the evening will be An Introduction to FT8 by Todd Schumann, KA9IUC. As always, refreshments and raffle will be available and be sure to bring a friend.

April Meeting --- General Meeting

Friday, April 20, 2018, 7:30 PM. The meeting will be held at the Hazel crest Village Hall. There will be a business meeting. The program for the evening is under development. As always, refreshments and raffle will be available and be sure to bring a friend

From The President's Shack

Best regards and 73, Todd, KA9IUC.

2018 is well underway and hopefully measurable snowfall and really cold temperatures are behind us. It is time to start planning those summertime projects and checking the calendar for upcoming events to participate in. If you have not already done so, please renew your Club membership.

It is with sadness that I report the passing of Life Member Doug Lee, W9SPC on February 28th. Doug was a very active member until he relocated to North Carolina. He then went on to Georgia to be with family. Also, Peter Shaper, KE9YX lost his father in February.

Disappointing was the demise of the Bouvet 3Y0Z DXpedition. We cannot understand how the crew must have felt after all that time and money was invested only to make 9000+ Maritime Mobile contacts while on the ship for over a month. We thank them for their efforts and hope they try again.

Tri-Town welcomes back a former member. Jimmy Frank, N9DKY, has relocated back to the area from southern Illinois. He has rejoined the Club and can't wait to get back on the air.

Plans seem to be going forward for the Driving the Dixie on June 16th. Things might be a little up in the air regarding a special event station at the caboose in Beecher since Mark, KA9MDJ has moved from the area.

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Check out the Club Website: WWW.W9VT.ORG

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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.

Club Hangouts:

The Club's Repeater 146.805 WD9HSY/R & 146.49 Simplex 442.375 Homewood, 441.300 Grant Park WA9WLN/R, "Waldofar" 443.325 Frankfort WD9HSY/R & 147.165 Kankakee Co. WD9HSY/R All UHF's use a 114.8 PL & All VHF's use a 107.2 PL

Club Nets

2 Mtr FM 49'ers Net Wednesday, 8:00 PM Local, The Club's Repeater 146.805 -600kc 107.2 PL 2 Mtr FM Preparedness Net Sundays, 8:00 PM local, The Club's Repeater 146.805 -600kc 107.2 PL 10 Mtr SSB Net Thursdays, 8:00 PM Local, 28.490 SSB USB. 40 Mtr Tri-Town Alumni Net Weekdays, 2200 UTC 7.285 SSB LSB 80 Mtr SSB Net Saturdays, 9am local 3.860 SSB LSB

Tentative 2018 Event Calendar

March	General meeting, Program on FT8, Friday March 16th, 7:30 PM at the HazelCrest Village Hall.
March	Police and Fire Department swap meet, Saturday March 17, 8-2, Will County Fair Grounds,
April	General meeting, Friday April 20th, 7:30 PM at the Hazel Crest Village Hall.
May	Social Night at the Bunker, Friday May 18th, 7:30 PM (Hamvention Weekend).
June	General meeting, plans for Field Day 2018 and Driving the Dixie, Friday June 15th, 7:30 PM VH.
June	Driving the Dixie and Special Event Station, Saturday, June 16th.
June	Field Day 2018, June 23-24 at the Club Station.
July	Vacation, no meetings.
August	Social Night at the Bunker, Friday August 17th, 7:30 PM
September	Annual Club Picnic, Monee Reservoir, 11-4.
October	General meeting, Friday October 19th, 7:30 PM at the Hazel Crest Village Hall.
November	White Elephant Sale, Show and Tell and Officer Nominations 7:30 PM at the Club Station
December	Annual Christmas Party and Election of Officers. Details TBD.

Board of Directors Meetings – 2nd Monday of the Month, 7:30 PM at the Club Station. Members are welcome.

February Program on 3D Printing Very Informative

At the February Tri-Town meeting, Mark, KA9OOI, gave a very informative presentation on 3D printing. Mark displayed his 3D printer, computer and items he has made with the equipment. He explained the printing process and demonstrated the various pieces of software needed to print objects. While he was giving the presentation, the 3D printer was making a washer for a faucet. He pointed out that one of the best uses for the printer is to make parts that are not available from any source. He showed us some gears he made to fix the tuning mechanism of an older HF rig that are not available from the manufacturer. Thanks Mark for a great program. Thanks also to Bruce, WD9GHK, for the pictures.



Valerie Hotzfeld, NV9L, is Hamvention “Amateur of the Year”

The Hamvention® Awards Committee has announced that Valerie Hotzfeld, NV9L, of Crescent City, Illinois, is the 2018 “Amateur of the Year.” The committee — chaired by Michael Kalter, W8CI, and Frank Beafore, WS8B — revealed the Hamvention 2018 award winners this week.

“We would like to thank everyone who nominated a candidate,” the committee said in announcing the award recipients. “The process is always difficult.”

First licensed in 2006, Hotzfeld has been very active in local Amateur Radio clubs and in ARES. Once she “discovered” HF, she became obsessed with DXing and contesting. In the past few years, she has enjoyed inviting new hams to her station to DX or contest. She has been the pilot or lead pilot for four major DXpeditions.

Hotzfeld is a co-host of the netcast “Ham Nation” and has created several how-to videos on YouTube for the ham radio community. She also enjoys giving presentations on various topics via Skype to Amateur Radio clubs across the US.

She is currently the treasurer for her contest club and the prize chairman for W9DXCC and SMC-fest. In 2017, she became very active in public service, traveling to Texas in the wake of Hurricane Harvey to help rescue small animals. She was subsequently deployed to Puerto Rico with the American Red Cross for 3 weeks as part of a group of volunteer Amateur Radio operators, facilitating critical communications after Hurricane Maria. Hotzfeld has said that Amateur Radio has enriched her life because of the challenges and great friends the hobby brings.

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Obituary for Rev. Douglas Howard Lee W9SPC

Courtesy of Ward-Dobbins Funeral Home, Marietta, GA

Douglas "W9SPC" Howard Lee passed on to his heavenly home on February 28, 2018, after a valiant battle with a long illness. His devotion to his family and his firm belief in God supported him in his struggle. He will be dearly missed by his friends and loved ones who celebrate he is now at peace with his Lord.

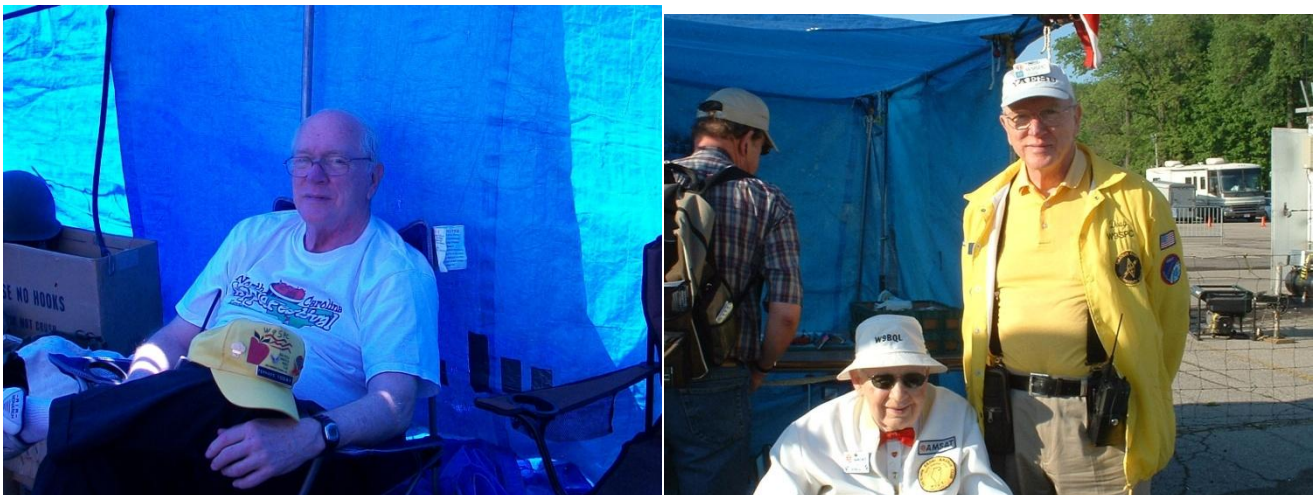
Douglas was born to the late Douglas and Elizabeth "Mae" (Otis) Lee, in Chicago Heights, IL on June 19, 1934. He was immersed in the Christian community which would become his lifelong calling and support. He was most active in the Berean Bible Society. He was a graduate of Bloom High School in Chicago Heights, IL, and from Grace Bible College in Wisconsin.

He was pastor at Faith Bible Church in the Chicago area, where he was actively involved with the church through bible studies, mission support and spreading the word of God. In addition, Douglas worked for and retired from Ford Motor Corp. as an electrician. His favorite hobby was as a member of Amateur Radio Clubs (W9SPC) both in Homewood, IL and Hendersonville, NC.

He was blessed with a large and loving family. Douglas was married to his wife Ruth for over 50 years, whom he met while attending bible college in Wisconsin. Douglas and Ruth were blessed with four boys; Timothy, Stephen, Daniel and Samuel.

He is survived by his sons Tim (Annette), Steve, Dan (Mindy) and Sam (Jennifer Hooker); his grandchildren, Angila Dixon (Jeff), Paul Wilmot, Christian Lee, Stephen Lee (Emily), Joshua Lee (Nicole), Elizabeth Stacy (Joe), Jessica Lee, and 10 great-grandchildren. He is preceded in death by his wife Ruth, his brother Eugene, and his parents.

A celebration of his life will be held on Sunday, March 4 at 4:00PM with the Rev. Dr. Sam Matthews officiating. A Visitation prior to the service will be held from 3:00 to 4:00PM. Mayes, Ward-Dobbins Funeral Home, Marietta, GA. Donations may be made in lieu of flowers to Tranquility Wellstar Hospice Foundation, Marietta, GA.



Thanks to Bruce WD9GHK for these pictures of Doug at Dayton, with Clark W9BQL.

TRI-TOWN VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR DRIVING THE DIXIE

Following the 2017 Driving the Dixie event, which was the 16th annual event and the 12th that Tri-Town has participated in, it was unclear whether this annual event would continue. The main reason being that the A's-R-Us Model A Ford Car Club had indicated they would likely participate but no longer wanted to carry out the main organizing role for the event.

At a February 24, 2018 meeting in Crete attended by Trish (N9WDG) and Martin (WD9JGG) as Tri-Town representatives, it was agreed that a 2018 event similar in format to prior years would occur. A number of local Blue Island organizations (i.e. their Chamber of Commerce, Historical Society, etc.) said they would assume the lead organizing role previously carried out by the Car Club.

Therefore, Trish (N9WDG) will once again be seeking Tri-Town volunteers for +/- two hours of service at some point during the day for this year's Saturday, June 16 event. Along with a mobile Net Control operator and sometimes a Special Events Station, basically Tri-Town tries to get a radio operator stationed in each of the 12 participating communities from Blue Island to Momence. These communities are: Blue Island, Posen, Markham, Hazel Crest, Homewood, Flossmoor, Chicago Heights, Steger, Crete, Beecher, Grant Park and Momence.

Please mark your calendar as Sat, June 16 being the 2018 Driving the Dixie Day and then let Trish (N9WDG) at the_jaggards@sbcglobal.net (708-828-8592) know of your willingness to participate in the 2018 event.

CQ Contests de W9VT

Jerry, K9PMV and Todd, KA9IUC activated W9VT for two recent contests. They were the CQWW 160M SSB and the ARRL SSB DX Contests. The approach to these contests was not "Hardcore" but let's spend a few hours having fun and see what happens. Plus it was a chance to see how the equipment at the Club station performed. The only problem or it should be called an inconvenience, was that the 160M dipole is not broad banded and had to be returned as we went up and down the band to keep the SWR under control. In the short operating time, 82 contacts were made during the 160M contest and 50 were made during the SSB DX contest. Logs have been submitted for the contest contacts and to LoTW.

MARS Team Provides HF and Amateur Radio Communication Training on USNS Mercy

On February 21, contractor Tim Millea, AJ7UU, and MARS Volunteer Doug Smith embarked on the USNS *Mercy* from San Diego to Hawaii. Their mission during the first leg of the voyage has been to conduct Technician and General class Amateur Radio classes for more than a dozen military and civilian personnel crewing the *Mercy*, and to provide training in military HF communication procedures.

The pair has been providing two or three training classes a day for the crew, who take the classes following their work shifts. Classroom training has been interspersed with on-air activities in the ship's Amateur Radio room. The *Mercy* is also utilizing the Weak Signal Propagation Reporting (WSPR) tool, using K6MRC. On March 3, the *Mercy* is scheduled to dock in Hawaii, where the crew will pick up a group of local Volunteer Examiners to administer Technician and General license exams to the students.

After a weekend of shore leave, the *Mercy* crew will deploy on a humanitarian assistance exercise called "Pacific Partnership 18," which will take them to a number of countries throughout the Pacific region. — *Thanks to Robert Mims, WA1OEZ, Region 1 US Army MARS Director*

3Y0I Bouvet Island DXpedition Revived

Peripatetic Polish DXpeditioner Dom Grzyb, 3Z9DX, and four other operators announced over the weekend that their postponed plans to mount the 3Y0I DXpedition to Bouvet Island are back on. This comes as the 3Y0Z DXpedition team members, who were unsuccessful in landing on the remote South Atlantic island, are currently en route to South Africa on their way back home. According to the latest ClubLog DXCC Most Wanted list, Bouvet now is the second most-wanted DXCC entity, behind North Korea.

“Our trip planned originally at the end of 2017 was canceled at the request of the organizers of the 3Y0Z expedition,” an announcement said. “Due to the cancellation by the [3Y0Z] organizers, we are now returning to the implementation of our project and preparations for our trip as a matter of urgency.”

DX-World has reported that the 3Y0I license has been renewed and a landing permit — good for 1 year — issued by the Norwegian Polar Institute. While no specific dates for the DXpedition have been announced, the 3Y0I team said its plans call for operating during the subantarctic summer, which suggests they could be on the air late this year.

The 3Y0I team said it has chartered a seagoing yacht adapted for extreme weather conditions to make the 12-day, 2,800-nautical mile trip from South Africa to Bouvet Island. The team anticipates operating for about 2 weeks. The participants have financed the trip out of their own pockets.

In addition to 3Z9DX, the 3Y0I operators will include Stanislaw, SQ8X; Leszek, SP3DOI; Branko, YU4DX, and Frans, J69DS.

3Y0I Bouvet DXpedition Invites 3Y0Z Team to Join Forces

The 3Y0I Bouvet Island DXpedition team this week publicly invited the members of the ill-fated 3Y0Z team to join forces as part of “rebooted preparations” for the venture, but 3Y0Z team co-leader Bob Allphin, K4UEE, told ARRL that his group has other plans. Dates for the 3Y0I DXpedition, meanwhile, remain up in the air at this point, but the team said it would announce its expected dates of operation soon.

“Our preparations...are taking place in extraordinary times and under unusual conditions,” the 3Y0I team said on its website over the weekend, noting that it had suspended its initial plans to activate Bouvet Island late last year at the request of the 3Y0Z DXpedition, which subsequently was forced to abort its landing and head home.

In its announcement, the 3Y0I team, headed by Dom Grzyb, 3Z9DX, said a joint DXpedition would give the 3Y0Z team members a chance to realize their initial plans and that the 3Y0I team’s “unprecedented decision” opens “new fantastic opportunities.” Preparations for the 3Y0I DXpedition continue.

The 3Y0I DXpedition team also announced that it has contracted for a larger transportation vessel “at really bargain rates,” which would permit more passengers. “The vessel’s crew is experienced in troop landing at Bouvet and other subantarctic islands.” The 3Y0I announcement said. “Our cruise plan doesn’t change; we’ll depart from and sail back to Cape Town, which will reduce time and cost involved to possible minimums.”

“The landing procedure will be supervised by landing troops and will utilize special boats that will allow the team to transport our gear, and to land at the island safely,” the announcement explained.

The 3Y0Z DXpedition team had planned to transport personnel and equipment between its vessel, *Betanzos*, and the island via helicopter. High winds and rough seas, as well as problems with one engine, prompted the *Betanzos*’ captain to abort any attempted landings and head back. Bouvet Island, a dependency of Norway, is currently the second most-wanted DXCC entity. — *Thanks to OPDX and the The Daily DX for some information*

Two Ham Astronauts Return Safely to Earth from ISS

Two ham astronauts were among three members of the International Space Station (ISS) Expedition 54 crew that returned to Earth on February 27 after about 6 months in space. Astronauts Mark Vande Hei, KG5GNP, and Joe Acaba, KE5DAR, landed in Kazakhstan in a *Soyuz* spacecraft, along with cosmonaut Alexander Misurkin. Their time on station marked the beginning of the first long-term increase in crew size on the US segment, enabling NASA to double the time dedicated to science.

Vande Hei logged 168 days in space on his first mission and conducted four spacewalks. Acaba completed one spacewalk and has now accrued 306 days in space on three missions. Both participated in Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) school contacts and other educational events.

Now operating the station are Expedition 55 Commander Anton Shkaplerov and Flight Engineers Scott Tingle, KG5NZA, and Norishige Kanai. Astronauts Ricky Arnold, KE5DAU, and Drew Feustel and cosmonaut Oleg Artemyev head to the ISS on March 21.

ARRL Repurposes AM Broadcast Tx for Ham Radio Use

Thanks to a joint effort by ARRL and the Vintage Radio and Communications Museum of Connecticut (VRCMCT), a classic Gates BC-1T AM broadcast transmitter will enjoy a second life on the Amateur Radio bands for occasional use under W1AW or under the ARRL Headquarters Operators Club call sign, W1INF. Spearheaded by broadcast engineer Dan Thomas, NC1J, VRCMCT volunteers restored the 1-kW transmitter to operating condition, after obtaining it from the National Capital Radio and Television Museum in Bowie, Maryland. The VRCMCT will retain ownership of the transmitter, while the League houses, and maintains it on loan. The transmitter will be located in the ARRL Lab, and Assistant Lab Manager Bob Allison, WB1GCM, said the transmitter could be on the air as W1AW during such operating events as the AM Rally and the Heavy Metal Rally.

ARRL turned to AM guru and veteran broadcast engineer Tim “Timtron” Smith, WA1HLR, of Skowhegan, Maine, to handle shifting the BC-1T from 1340 kHz to the ham bands. Timtron not only has been an AM mainstay on 75 and 40 meters over the years, he’s engineered all manner of AM, FM, and HF broadcast transmitters in his extensive career. This combination of familiarity and experience made him a logical choice to handle the conversion to amateur use of the Gates BC-1T, which once transmitted country music from KPGE in Page, Arizona.

The plan was to accomplish the conversion in two phases, with the first to be completed in a few days and include basic crystal-controlled functionality on 160 and 75. The second phase will include adding remote control, relay band switching, and external RF drive for frequency agility, to be completed later.

Each RF stage was converted, starting with the Colpitts oscillator — which offered two octal tube sockets to hold broadcast crystals, and a selector switch. As most veteran radio amateurs may recall from their Novice license days, an octal socket will accommodate FT-243-case crystals; in this case, only minor rewiring was needed. More complicated was changing out feedback and loading capacitors in the oscillator stage, along with the buffer tank circuit. The driver tank circuit was next. Removing one-half of the windings on the multiple tank, changing some connections, shortening long leads on RF bypass capacitors, and modifying the neutralization circuit were necessary.

The output tuning circuit proved to be the easiest to convert; parallel capacitors that enabled broadcast-band operation were rewired in series to resonate on the amateur bands. A spare inductor, not required for higher frequencies, was repurposed in place as a dc safety shunt. The modulator just needed only minor changes. All was documented.

Initial tests conducted at 250 W on February 22 demonstrated the success of the modifications and marked completion of the first step toward a new lease on life for the BC-1T as ARRL’s flagship AM amateur band transmitter. *Thanks to Clark Burgard, N1BCG, and Bob Allison, WB1GCM*

ARRL Requests Expanded HF Privileges for Tech Licensees

ARRL has asked the FCC to expand HF privileges for Technician licensees to include limited phone privileges on 75, 40, and 15 meters, plus RTTY and digital mode privileges on 80, 40, 15, and 10 meters. The FCC has not yet invited public comment on the proposals, which stem from recommendations put forth by the ARRL Board of Directors' Entry-Level License Committee, which explored various initiatives and gauged member opinions in 2016 and 2017.

"This action will enhance the available license operating privileges in what has become the principal entry-level license class in the Amateur Service," ARRL said in its *Petition*. "It will attract more newcomers to Amateur Radio, it will result in increased retention of licensees who hold Technician Class licenses, and it will provide an improved incentive for entry-level licensees to increase technical self-training and pursue higher license class achievement and development of communications skills."

Specifically, ARRL proposes to provide Technician licensees, present and future, with phone privileges at 3.900 to 4.000 MHz, 7.225 to 7.300 MHz, and 21.350 to 21.450 MHz, plus RTTY and digital privileges in current Technician allocations on 80, 40, 15, and 10 meters. The ARRL petition points out the explosion in popularity of various digital modes over the past 2 decades. Under the ARRL plan, the maximum HF power level for Technician operators would remain at 200 W PEP. The few remaining Novice licensees would gain no new privileges under the League's proposal.

ARRL's petition points to the need for compelling incentives not only to become a radio amateur in the first place, but then to upgrade and further develop skills. Demographic and technological changes call for a "periodic rebalancing" between those two objectives, the League maintains.

"There has not been such a rebalancing in many years," ARRL said in its petition. "It is time to do that now." The FCC has not assessed entry-level operating privileges since 2005.

The Entry-Level License Committee offered very specific, data- and survey-supported findings about growth in Amateur Radio and its place in the advanced technological demographic that includes individuals younger than 30. It received significant input from ARRL members via more than 8,000 survey responses. "The Committee's analysis noted that today, Amateur Radio exists among many more modes of communication than it did half a century ago, or even 20 years ago," ARRL said in its petition.

Now numbering some 378,000, Technician licensees comprise more than half of the US Amateur Radio population. ARRL said that after 17 years of experience with the current Technician license as the gateway to Amateur Radio, it's urgent to make it more attractive to newcomers, in part to improve upon science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education "that inescapably accompanies a healthy, growing Amateur Radio Service," ARRL asserted.

ARRL said its proposal is critical to developing improved operating skills, increasing emergency communication participation, improving technical self-training, and boosting overall growth in the Amateur Service, which has remained nearly inert at about 1% per year.

The Entry-Level License Committee determined that the current Technician class question pool already covers far more material than necessary for an entry-level exam to validate expanded privileges. ARRL told the FCC that it would continue to refine examination preparation and training materials aimed at STEM topics, increase outreach and recruitment, work with Amateur Radio clubs, and encourage educational institutions to utilize Amateur Radio in STEM and other experiential learning programs.

"ARRL requests that the Commission become a partner in this effort to promote Amateur Radio as a public benefit by making the very nominal changes proposed herein in the Technician class license operating privileges," the petition concluded.

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Hamvention Online Flea Market Exhibit Reservations Open

Online reservations for **Hamvention®** 2018 **flea market** and **inside exhibit** spaces are now available. Vendors who had spaces last year are being encouraged to log into their accounts to reserve them for this year's event. Online sales were delayed after it became apparent that an additional building would not be built before Hamvention, prompting scheduling and planning adjustments. The addition of Building 4, which not available last year, also has made room for more inside exhibits. Hamvention organizers said this week that both the flea market and inside exhibits committees have been working hard to respond to vendors as quickly as possible. Hamvention General Chairman Ron Cramer, KD8ENJ, asked vendors to be patient once they have entered their information for 2018. "The staff is working to confirm requests as quickly as possible," Cramer said. "Additional e-mails or information requests will only slow the process."

Inside exhibits Chairman Brian Markland, N8UDQ, said that any exhibitor who completes an online order for the same spaces by April 15 will be guaranteed those spaces. Vendors who were in tents during Hamvention 2017 will have the option of keeping tent space or entering the pool for the additional spots in Building 4 — the former furniture store.

"Since we expect more people to want to move to the building than there are spaces, we determined that a lottery was the only fair way to assign those spaces," Markland said. Vendors staying in tents during 2018 will be moved inside in 2019, when the new building is available, he added.

Because some vendors will be moving inside, and to address some issues that arose last year, layouts inside tents may change slightly; affected tent vendors will be contacted by the exhibits committee.

Both Cramer and Markland urged vendors to read the 2018 inside exhibits and flea market rules and instructions before registering. Incomplete or incorrect applications only slow the process. Contact the **flea market, exhibits, or tickets** committee, as appropriate. Sending e-mails elsewhere will only cause delays, Hamvention said.

Cramer thanked those who have already purchased spaces and tickets and said that the committee is working hard to make the second year at Hamvention's new location at the Greene County Fairgrounds and Expo Center in Xenia, Ohio, even better than the first.

Still Time to Sign Up for Dayton Contest University

Student registration remains open for the 2018 Contest University (CTU), Thursday, May 17, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in downtown Dayton, Ohio — the day before Hamvention® in Xenia. The all-day session for contesting veterans and newcomers will touch on all aspects of Amateur Radio contesting.

CTU scholarships (registration fee paid) are available through a grant from the Northern California DX Foundation (NCDXF) for students age 25 and younger. Contact CTU for more information.

Registrants who have given (or will give) a Hamvention presentation or who have given a hamfest or group presentation on Amateur Radio since May 17, 2017, may qualify for a \$10 registration fee discount. Choose the "Registration with Club Talk Discount."

CTU sponsors including Icom America, DX Engineering, the Northern California DX Foundation, The Yasm Foundation, the Radio Club of America, and CQ Magazine. The May 2018 session will mark the 12th consecutive year for CTU Dayton. More information is on the CTU website. — *Thanks to Tim Duffy, K3LR, CTU Chairman*

Awesome Activity for the 2018 ARRL International Grid Chase

“On-the-air activity for the 2018 ARRL International Grid Chase (IGC) has been awesome!” ARRL Contest Branch Manager Bart Jahnke, W9JJ, said this week. “The year also began with DXpeditions, as well as several contests at both HF and VHF, to boost numbers. Facebook and social media (Facebook, Twitter #ICG) are abuzz with chatter about the event, the excitement, the grids worked.”

Jahnke said the statistics show the highest overall activity on 40 and 20 meters — not surprising in the winter — and especially strong digital activity. He expects phone and CW activity to perk up this month and next, with the ARRL International DX Contest CW weekend February 17 - 18, and the phone weekend March 3 - 4. He also anticipates that February’s statistics will come on strong as participants re-work January grid squares to boost their February scores. As of the January activity upload deadline of February 10 at 2359 UTC, some 23,300 station sites were active in the IGC.

“The leader board reporting system continues to evolve, with much helpful participant feedback,” Jahnke said. That user input is improving how ARRL reports participation.

“From the statistics, it’s clear that during this period of low sunspots and low winter E-skip and F2, most of the activity on the mid-to-lower bands is digital modes,” Jahnke said. “As we get into the summer E-skip season, we expect to see activity above 15 meters begin its ascent in the totals.”

Jahnke said it’s apparent that participants are taking advantage of CW (and FT8 and other digital modes) on HF to overcome some of the weakened propagation on the low- to medium-frequency bands, and of FT8, JT65, and FSK144/MSK144 on 6 meters and above to rack up impressive totals. “Not to be outdone, in comparison to overall band totals, phone contacts on 80, 40, 20, and 17 meters are strong, and 2-meter and 70-centimeter contacts were strong in January as well,” Jahnke added. Several contests in January, including the ARRL RTTY Roundup and ARRL January VHF Contest contributed to these strong phone and digital numbers.

During January, IGC-eligible contacts matched in Logbook of The World (LoTW) topped 22,000 on 40 meters and 23,000 on 20 meters — the two bands with the greatest activity — with nearly half the contacts being made on digital modes in both bands. On the new 630-meter band, 31 IGC-eligible contacts turned up in LoTW.

Ducie Is. 2018 DXpedition Plans Coming Together for this Fall

The Perseverance DX Group (**PDXG**) reports that its plans to activate the protected marine area of Ducie Island from October 20 to November 3, 2018 are starting to jell. The last Ducie Island DXpedition was VP6DX in 2008. Ducie is currently the 21st most-wanted DXCC entity according to Club Log. The 2018 DXpedition would operate as **VP6D**. A team of 15 operators will be on the island for up to 14 days, departing from Mangareva, French Polynesia, aboard the expedition ship *Braveheart*. Seven operating positions are planned for 160 to 10 meters, SSB/CW/digital, including FT8. VP6D has added 6-meter Earth-moon-Earth to the mix and hopes to make the first ever 6-meter moonbounce contacts from Ducie Island.

“The logistics plan is coming together,” the team announced on February 8. “Our equipment will be consolidated in Fremont, California, for testing, packaging, and shipment to the *Braveheart* in New Zealand.” The team reported that its antenna plans are coming together, with 2-element vertical dipole arrays on the high bands backed up by a couple of horizontal beams; 4-squares on 30 and 40 meters, and verticals on 80 and 160. Top Band receive antennas are still under development. An uninhabited atoll, Ducie Island is a British Overseas Territory in the Pitcairn Islands in the South Pacific. Direct questions to **Team Ducie**.

ARRL Suggests FCC May Need to Intervene to Ensure Effective Antenna Rights

Commenting in response to an FCC *Public Notice* (DA 17-1180) released last month, ARRL addressed the extent of Amateur Radio's response to recent hurricane disasters and efforts needed to expand the use of Amateur Radio services when it comes to planning, testing, and providing emergency communication. The comments point out that Amateur Radio not only has been "far more than a hobby;" it is a ubiquitous, infrastructure-independent communication resource that's always ready to deploy effectively whenever and wherever needed. The League cited the remarks of former FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate, KK4INZ, that Amateur Radio "oftentimes is our last line of defense." ARRL raised three areas where action by the FCC could ensure and enhance the ability of radio amateurs to provide emergency communication, including the current Amateur Radio Parity Act of 2017 (S. 1534), now in the US Senate.

"HOAs can preclude amateur antennas in common areas. HOAs can enact reasonable written rules governing height, location, size and aesthetic impact of, and installation requirements for, outdoor antennas and support structures for amateur communications, but the effective outdoor antenna requirement is paramount," ARRL noted in its comments. "The bill is currently before the Senate Commerce Committee. If, however, Congress is unable, as has been rumored, to pass *any* telecommunications legislation this term, it will be incumbent on the Commission to take the action on its own initiative that would be called for by this legislation. The future of Amateur Radio emergency communications is dependent on it."

ARRL asserted that it "is critical to have stations located at one's residence in order to regularly participate in disaster preparedness training exercises and drills."

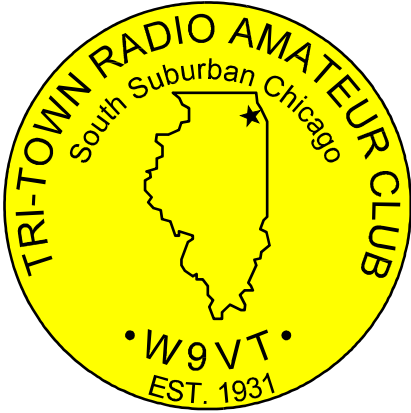
Another "noteworthy and urgent need" that might call for some regulatory involvement by the FCC, ARRL said, "relates to an outdated regulation that limits data rates in HF Amateur communications, precluding certain digital emissions that have recently proven extremely important in Amateur Radio hurricane relief efforts." ARRL noted that the FCC has yet to act on the League's *Petition for Rule Making* (RM-11708), filed in November of 2013, proposing to amend the Amateur Service rules to eliminate the symbol rate limit relative to data emissions in allocations below 29.7 MHz.

That *Petition* also called for establishing a 2.8-kHz maximum occupied bandwidth for data emissions in those bands. ARRL has argued that this deregulatory action is necessary to allow the use of PACTOR 4, an effective and efficient digital communication mode that has proven valuable in disaster-relief efforts. In July of 2016, the Commission released a *Notice of Proposed Rule Making* in WT Docket 16-239, proposing only to remove limitations on the symbol rate applicable to data emissions.

"Equipment dispatched with the 'Force of 50' [volunteers] to Puerto Rico included data transmission equipment capable of PACTOR 4 operation, but it could not be legally used in the Hurricane Maria disaster relief effort," ARRL noted. The League prevailed upon the FCC to grant a temporary waiver to permit use of PACTOR 4 by radio amateurs involved in the emergency response. "However, it should not have been necessary to wait more than 4 years for the underlying rulemaking proceeding to have been resolved, and it should not have been necessary to ask for a temporary waiver of a hopelessly outdated rule that limits data speeds for no useful reason," ARRL added in its comments.

Tri-Town Radio Amateur Club Inc.
PO Box 1296
Homewood, IL 60430-0296

March 2018



Tri-Town Radio Amateur Club Membership Application

Name _____ Call _____

Address _____ License Class _____ ARRL Member Y / N

City, State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Email Address: _____

_____ Regular Membership	\$ 25.00
_____ SWL Membership	\$ 25.00
_____ Extra Family Membership	\$ 6.00

\$ _____ Total Paid by Club Member

For Example: Regular Member, with Family (25+6) = \$ 31.00

Dues are Due!

Club dues expire the first of the year so 2018 dues are now due. Your dues pay for the continued expenses for insurance, repeater operation . Your continued support of the raffles and the refreshment jar also helps. Dues can be paid at any meeting or sent to the clubs mailing address. Please include a membership form so we can keep the Club's roster up to date.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/tritownrac>
Check out the Club Website: WWW.W9VT.ORG