

The WACOM HAM

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REMINDER

The next WACOM Board of Directors meeting is **Thursday, December 18th** at **7 PM** at the WACOM Club room. All are welcome!

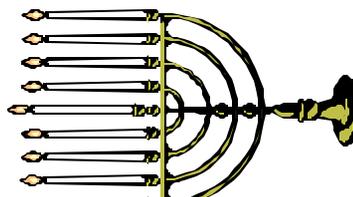
JOIN WACOM ON THE AIR

2 meter net: Every Tuesday at 8:30 PM on the W3CYO repeaters 145.49 and 443.3 MHz

10 meter net: Every Tuesday at 9:00 PM at 28.340 MHz

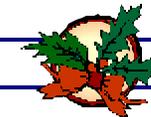
Washington Amateur Communications, Inc.

1696 East Maiden St.
Washington, PA 15301



The WACOM HAM

DECEMBER 2003



Serving
Washington
County



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DX News & Notes

A team of eight French military operators are now active from Europa Island (AF-009) until December 15 as **TO4E**. They were active during the CQ WW CW contest as **TO4WW**. The operators arrived a little ahead of schedule, but have run into difficulties including having to QRT at times at the request of the French military on the island, for power reasons, and allegedly to protect the turtles laying their eggs! Plans are that on the return trip, they will also stop on Reunion Island. On-line logs are not available. QSL both calls via F5OGL

KJ4UY will be QRV as **V47UY** starting on December 2 through 16. He plans to be active in the ARRL 160 meter & 10 meter contests. Other operating times may be limited as this is both a vacation & Dxpedition. QSL via KJ4UY

A NJ group including K2KJI, K2RVH, W5GJ, WA2VUN, W2AZK & KF2HC will be QRV with 2 stations from French St. Martin, 160 - 6 M CW, SSB, PSK31 & possibly satellite, December 3rd - 10th. Look for **FS/W2JJ** during the ARRL 160 Meter contest, otherwise **FS/home call**

K2WE will be QRV from Barbados (NA -021) as **8P9AP** December 2 - 8, 80 — 10 meter CW & SSB. QSL via K2WE

N5XZ has received his license for **TT8XZ**. TT8CB is trying to get him a radio set up, he hopes to be QRV from Chad soon
Cards from **CY9A** (except RTTY) w/sufficient return postage have starting going into the mail.

PA3CNX is QRV as **PJ4/PA3CNX** now thru December 15

PLEASE SEND YOUR 2004 DUES AND APPLICATION INFORMATION

Annual WACOM membership dues are only \$15 . A couple pays only \$22.50.

Send your check payable to WACOM to:
Ed Oeschlager, N3ZNI,
Washington Amateur
Communications Inc.
1696 East Maiden St.
Washington, PA 15301



Check out the
WACOM website
at [www.
wacomarc.org](http://www.wacomarc.org)

Upcoming Events

- December 5, 6, 7 — ARRL 160 Meter Contest
- December 13, 14 — ARRL 10 Meter Contest
- December 31 — Straight Key Night
- January 4 — ARRL Kid's Day
- January 10 — WASH 2 Meter Simplex Contest
- January 18 — WPA Repeater Council Meeting
- February 5, 6, 7, 8 — W3C Special Event Station, Sportsman's Show, Washington Mall. Operators Needed! See Ed N3ZNI for details.
- February 23 — Breezeshooters Groundwave CW
- February 29 — **Corrected Date** — WASHFest 2004, Castle Shannon VFD Memorial Hall, Route 88 Castle Shannon
- March 14 — **Changed Date** — 2 Rivers ARC Hamfest, New Location: The Boston Spectrum, 6001 Smithfield Street, Boston PA
- March 20 — Breezeshooters Groundwave Phone
- May 8, 9 — **New Event** — Mid-Atlantic QSO Party

WACOM e-Mail Reflector

What's a reflector? It's a mailing list which lets you send one e-mail message to the list address — wa3com@yahoogroups.com — and have it "reflect" to all members of the list. Unlike a personal mailing list, you don't need to know all of the e-mail addresses for every single member of the list. Only group members can send e-mail to other members of the reflector — no spam allowed!

E-mail reflectors are being used by many area Amateur Radio clubs as a means to facilitate news and information at a moments notice. Yahoo! Groups (formerly eGroups) provides this service for free to anyone who wants to avail themselves of their list server. Yahoo! also provides calendar, file storage, & additional services.

To join the WACOM reflector, simply send a blank e-mail to:

wa3com-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

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MENTION THAT YOU ARE A WACOM MEMBER FOR A SPECIAL PRICE OF \$18 / MONTH.

NEXT WACOM MEETING:

Thursday
December 4, 2003
Monthly Meeting
Christmas Party
Election of Officers
7:30 PM

South Strabane #1 VFD
1696 East Maiden St.
Washington, PA 15301



Bring a Snack or Dessert to
Share! All Welcome!

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The editor welcomes articles and timely information of interest to members and the general amateur community.

UoSAT-OSCAR 14 QRT

ARRL Web Extra courtesy of the American Radio Relay League

NEWINGTON, CT, November 11th, 2003—The UO-14 satellite has been declared officially dead. The Mission Control Centre at the Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd (SSTL) Center for Satellite Engineering Research reports that the venerable and popular bird "has reached the end of its mission after nearly 14 years in orbit."

Launched in 1990, UoSAT-OSCAR-14 pioneered the PACSAT communication concept as the first 9.6 kbps Amateur Radio data communications satellite, although it became best known in recent years as an FM "easy sat" repeater.

"Since launch, UO-14 has completed over 72,000 orbits and as many charge/discharge cycles of its on-board NiCd battery," said AMSAT-UK Chairman Martin Sweeting, G3YJO. "However recently one of the battery cells has become exhausted and can no longer support continuous operation of the repeater." Sweeting said UO-14's transmitter shuts down shortly after it is commanded "on" due to undervoltage, so the microsatellite's mission has been terminated.

"Thank you UO-14 for your long service!" Sweeting concluded.

AMSAT-NA Board Member Bruce Paige, KK5DO, an enthusiastic UO-14 user, called the AMSAT-UK announcement "sad news."

The popular and heavily used FM satellite quit working in August, but hope remained within the amateur satellite community that UO-14 somehow could be revived. Ground controller Chris Jackson, G7UPN, at one point was able to reset the satellite, but he later determined that UO-14 had suffered a primary power system failure that was causing the spacecraft to shut down during some eclipses.

During its active lifetime, UO-14 served several roles. After some 18 months in orbit as a PACSAT, UO-14 was switched to non-amateur frequencies for humanitarian use by Volunteers In Technical Assistance, which used it for messaging into Africa. After the store-and-forward communications computer proved no longer able to perform that task, UO-14 was turned back to amateur use as a single-channel FM voice repeater, the role for which it was best known. UO-14 worked as an "FM bent pipe repeater satellite" in full duplex mode.

UO-14 again served a humanitarian role in early 2001 when hams assisting with earthquake relief operations in the Indian State of Gujarat took advantage of the satellite to provide communication from the stricken region.

The beauty of UO-14 was that it required minimal gear to make contacts - typically 5 Watts and modest antennas would do the trick. Operators with dual-band handheld transceivers and "rubber duckie" antennas often could make QSOs via UO-14.

AMSAT-NA has said that its new ECHO satellite, planned for launch next March 31st, will take over the role of the now-defunct AO-27 and UO-14 Low-Earth-Orbiting (LEO) satellites.

Ohio Village Tower Ban Overturned! (Variance Granted)

Bob Straley W8KT courtesy of www.qrz.com

Editor's Note: In last month's issue we reported on the tower ban that W8KT ran into when he moved back into his family home. On November 3rd Bob had a hearing before the Village of Leipsic (OH) Council on his request for a variance in order to erect three Amateur Radio antenna towers. Here is his report on what happened... and it is almost a textbook case on how to properly approach such requests in the future:

First, let me say that I approached this matter with great fervor. I spent all weekend and a few other evenings on the Internet searching for documents I could use to explain my various arguments. I started with the package that I had prepared for the zoning commission that contained some background info on what ham radio is and a couple of articles I found on actual emergency situations that hams helped with. Also included were basic papers on what SKYWarn, ARES, and RACES are. Rounding out my initial package was a copy of PRB-1.

Next, I searched the web for copies of zoning ordinances that were similar to the ordinances here. I found quite a few as it seems in Ohio many cities use a "boilerplate" document and insert the correct names and code numbers. Most of the copies I found had a disclaimer in the "telecommunications station" section stating that amateur radio towers and stations were exempt from these ordinances. I argued that this statement was because of PRB-1 and that "possibly" an error had occurred at the printer and this line was accidentally left out.

Next, since the village thought I was a "telecommunications facility" I searched for documents dealing with this subject. I found a list of telecommunications providers in Ohio and of course there were no hams included. I also found a description of a telecommunications facility on the FCC website that stated it was a station designed for the connection of portable communications to the land based phone network. The last document of this type was an application for a telecommunications license from the FCC. This document gave the sections numbers of the code that covered cellular providers. I read the council the opening page of the section of the zoning ordinances they were using to keep my towers down, and the basics were "The purpose of this Ordinance is to regulate the placement, construction, and modification of wireless telecommunication facilities and their support structures in order to protect the public health, safety and welfare, while at the same time not unreasonably interfering with the development of the competitive wireless telecommunications marketplace in the village." I also presented the section of part 97 that says that amateur radio operators cannot be paid etc, etc. Then I argued that since I was not allowed to be compensated for my operations by their own definition, I could not be a telecommunications provider because I am not allowed to "compete". I also asked them to find in the application where Part 97 was listed.

Next, I had downloaded several texts of case law based on PRB-1 and zoning ordinances. I also presented one that a ham sent to me about his case. Of course the only cases I could find were the ones

where PRB-1 prevailed. There was a case of a Kentucky ham that was tried in the Sixth District Federal Court, the same jurisdiction my case would be handled in. I presented these to the village solicitor since he attended the meeting. I argued that PRB-1 was very successful in court and that since the sixth district had already voted in favor of PRB-1 in the Kentucky case, they were unlikely to change their mind in mine. I also furnished the section out of Part 97 covering towers and antennas.

When I wasn't on the net looking for documents, I was on the phone and email. First, I sent a copy of the letter posted here to a few local ham friends and asked them to send it to all the hams they knew. I called the county EMA office and asked the director if he could write a general letter on his (and the county's) support for ham radio. I called the county EOC and asked him for a letter attesting to my participation in the county ARES program. I received a very nice letter from both of these offices. I called the National Weather Service and asked if they could send a letter attesting to the fact that my wife and I were trained spotters and participated in nets during bad weather. Let me say that the Weather Service REALLY supports ham radio. I received a very nice letter from them about our training and our repeater. I asked my old neighbors to write a short letter on any interference issues they had with my old station. (I knew there had only been one problem in 13 years.) I asked my old neighbors to attend the meeting if possible.

I dressed nice for the meeting and arrived early. I picked a seat right in the front so the council could see my wife and I. Soon several of my ham friends arrived. Then my old neighbors. Then the main complainers about my wish to install my towers arrived. Soon the room was nearly full and it was meeting time. I presented all the items listed previously and spent about an hour speaking and distributing papers. Things were going well. Then came time for my new neighbor. They made quite a show about how I would devalue their property and what a nuisance I would be. But, they came sloppily dressed and were ill prepared after the presentation I had made, and had no facts to back up their side of things.

Now it was time for the decision. There was almost no discussion and then a long pause. Finally one councilman made a motion to accept my application for a variance up to the variance limit. (I had originally asked for three towers, one sixty foot, one fifty foot, and one forty foot. During the zoning meeting I had offered to only erect two, the sixty and the fifty, hoping it would help my argument. Now I had a motion to go to the variance limit! The variance limit was one hundred feet! Now my heart was really beating! There was quite a long pause waiting for a second to the motion, but finally it came. The roll was called and one by one the councilmen voted. Soon they had all voted and I could hardly believe my ears, my variance passed

(OH Village Continued on page 4)

A Nice Touch

Andrew Roos ZS1AN courtesy of www.aham.net

I am fortunate to live in, and operate from, the beautiful city of Cape Town, South Africa. Although ZS isn't exactly rare DX, there are enough operators who still need ZS (especially on CW) that I often attract a mini pileup and can easily "run" 20 or 30 stations in succession.

A couple of days ago I was doing just that after getting home from work on a lovely spring evening. I was operating on 15-meters CW, working mostly European stations but with a few US stations reporting unexpectedly strong signals from my 100 W and dipole.

I was working in a condensed QSO format -- not just signal reports, I like to swap names at least to make it more personal, but I was trying to keep the rate up so I could work as many of the waiting stations as possible.

I quite enjoy this -- not all the time, I also have my own country-hunting to do, and also enjoy more relaxed ragchews. But "running" is still enjoyable, despite the occasional idiot who tunes up dead on frequency or can't stop calling while you're in the middle of a QSO.

Anyway after 45 minutes or so, having worked about twenty stations, my wife ZR1SC called me. I always like to tell stations waiting to work me if I have to stop operating, so when I had finished my next QSO I sent "XYL CALLING ME FOR DINNER MUST QRT NW 73 ES CUL DE ZS1AN".

Of course several of the waiting stations continued to call me -- either because they hadn't copied my last transmission, or because they were still hoping for a QSO before I shut down. But that wasn't about to happen -- when I say QRT, I mean QRT, gotta keep the discipline you know...

Then I heard "73 DE N9HT". Just that, no request for a QSO, a simple "thank you and goodbye" from an operator who had clearly been copying me and was polite enough not to continue trying to hustle a QSO.

I quickly scanned my last few contacts, saw that I hadn't worked him yet, and shot off "N9HT 599 BK" and he came back with "599 TU DE N9HT". That's all; 10 seconds and we didn't even exchange names.

The next day I received an email from him, thanking me for the contact and saying he needed ZS for his 15-meter DXCC. We agreed to exchange QSLs direct, and I posted mine the same day.

I've just finished reading W9KNI's excellent book "The Complete DXer", which is full of operating tips for DXers. It is a superb book that I happily recommend to all aspiring DXers. But N9HT taught me a technique that isn't mentioned in the book. He simply listened, and was polite and friendly. And that was enough to get him the QSO and the QSL he wanted. And leave me with a pleasant memory of the session.

Nice touch OM.

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the shack

The rig was turned off and the mike cord lay slack.

The antenna rotor had made its last turn,

The tubes in the linear have long ceased to burn.

I sat there relaxing and took off my specs,

Preparing to daydream of armchair DX,

When suddenly outside I heard such a sound,

I dashed out the door to see what was around.

The moon shone down brightly and lighted the night-

For sure, propagation for the low bands was right.

I peered towards the roof where I heard all the racket,

And there was some guy in a red, fur-trimmed jacket.

I stood there perplexed in a manner quite giddy.

Just who was this stranger - di di dah dah di di?

He looked very much like an FCC guy,

Who'd come to check up on some bad TVI.

I shouted to him, "OM, QRZ"

"Hey, you by the chimney, all dressed up in red."

I suddenly knew when I heard sleigh bells jingle.

The guy on the rooftop was jolly Kris Kringle.

He had a big sack full of amateur gear,

Which made a big load for a prancing reindeer.

Transmitters, receivers, for cabinets and racks,

Some meters and scopes and a lot of co-ax.

He said not a word 'cause he'd finished his work

He picked up his sack, then he turned with a jerk.

As he leaped to his sleigh, he shouted with glee,

And I knew in a moment he'd be QRT.

But I heard him transmit as he flew o'er the trees

"Happy Christmas to all, and to all 73!."

(original author unknown, courtesy of the Kenwood reflector)

(OH Village Continued from page 3)

by a unanimous vote! Now, I can erect three towers, up to the variance limit if I want!

I guess my feeling on this is; if you have this type of problem, prepare yourself! There was no denying the evidence I had presented and I maintained my cool while doing so. I feel that I only made it past this hurdle by really thinking through the situation and presenting my arguments in a rational calm manner with plenty of paper to back them up. If I lived in a larger city or had went any further up the ladder I would have defiantly gotten a lawyer, however my perseverance paid off and now I am free to enjoy the greatest hobby in the world, amateur radio!!!

To All Radio Amateurs in Pennsylvania:

We are seeking case histories of anyone having tower/antenna problems due to municipal action and/or municipal inaction.

Anyone having problems of this type are encouraged to contact ARRL EPA Section Manager, Eric D. Olena, WB3FPL, 284 Blimline Rd. Mohnton, PA. 19540-7810, wb3fpl@arri.org as soon as possible

Thanks for you help.

— 73, Rich Beaver N3SRJ, ARRL WPA SM



OH9SCL Santa Claus Land will be again active during this December from the Arctic circle.

This year there will be a special activity period between 17 until 21 December. Operation will be active CW, SSB, RTTY, PSK31 & SSTV, 80 through 10 Meters. The main focus of digital modes will be during the weekend.

The persons willing to help Santa this year are OH2BH, OH2NWG, OH3BHL, OH9 KL, OH9MDV, OH9MM, OH9RJ and OH9VC. QSL is via OH9UV .

As we all know the real Santa Claus comes from Finland!

- Juha Valimaki OH9MM

For Sale: Hygain TH6DXX 6 Element 10/15/20 Meter Beam. Considering the cost of a beam these days, I'm asking \$250 — and this is a pickup only! Address in QRZ.COM or phone 724-223-9666 — Tom Fox KA3NIY

For Sale: Alinco DJ-G5TH dual band, dual display HT. Comes with 9.6 V/650 mAh NiCad battery, charger, duck, and manual. Also, "Mr. Nicad" 9.6V / 750 mAh NiMH battery and case. 10 out of 10 in looks and operation. \$150. Ted WN3BOJ 412-784-8924 tpinsker@netzero.com