



PCARA Update



Volume 3, Issue 7

Peekskill / Cortlandt Amateur Radio Association Inc.

July 2002

CQ Kid's Day...

CQ Field Day... — KB2CQE

June was a busy month for PCARA! Between Kid's Day and Field Day we had plenty of practice setting up HF stations and hanging dipoles! I'm confident that if we were called upon in a communications emergency, we could be up and running in a short time. As usual, we had a good turnout from the membership to help with all of the activities. Thank you!

At the conclusion of Field Day, the drawing for the annual raffle was held. Rich, N2ZKX a member of the QSY Society was picked as winner of the first place prize, a Yaesu FT-1500M VHF mobile. The second place prize, a one year subscription to CQ Magazine, went to Mike, N2HTT. Congratulations to both!

Have a nice Summer! — 73 de Greg, KB2CQE

Kid's Day

PCARA set up two separate Kid's Day stations on Saturday June 15 at St. Patrick's School, Yorktown Heights. The youngsters who turned up were able to make contacts with Kid's Day stations around the country on 20, 15 and 10 meters.

Kid's Day is organized by Boring Amateur Radio Club with ARRL, and BARC provides certificates for the young participants. See: <http://www.jzap.com/k7rat>.



KC2JKW's son enjoys Kid's Day with Joe, KR2V and Sean KC2IDN.

PCARA Drawing

PCARA's raffle drawing took place on Sunday June 23 at the Bear Mountain Field Day site. Two graduates from PCARA's Technician classes, Monica KC2IAY and Adam KC2JNW were called on to pull the winning tickets out of the hat.

First prize, a Yaesu FT-1500M 2m transceiver, was won by **Rich Otis, N2ZKX** of Middletown NY. Second prize, a one year subscription to CQ magazine, was won by PCARA's own **Mike Aiello, N2HTT**. The radio has been delivered via Shirley, N2SKP and the CQ subscription has been ordered for Mike.

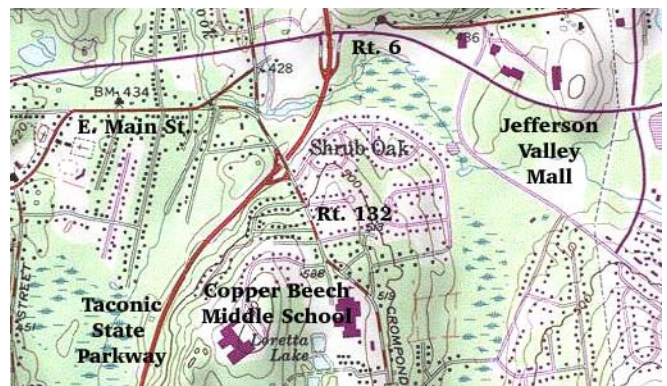
Proceeds from the raffle will be used to cover PCARA's largest yearly operating expense, payment of the club's insurance fee.



Monica, KC2IAY shakes the ticket stubs in the hat, in preparation for PCARA's raffle drawing.

VE Test Session

Peekskill/Cortlandt Amateur Radio Association will be holding a VE Test Session at Copper Beech Middle School, Rt. 132, Yorktown Heights, Thursday July 18 from 7:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. Don't forget that the new Extra Class question pool is in effect from July 1.



DSP according to Mark

I recently bought an Icom IC-718 HF transceiver. This is an excellent radio. I had compared it to the Yaesu FT-840 (the other model in this price range... \$599), and apart from the Icom lacking FM, the good reviews on *eHam* (<http://www.eham.net>) and overall features of the IC-718 won hands down.



Icom IC-718 HF transceiver

I'm happy to report that the radio lives up to its reputation. It has all the features most of us

could want in a 160-to-10 meter rig. The modes are: LSB, USB, CW, RTTY and AM.

What I am really writing about though is the DSP (digital signal processing) function that you get with the optional UT-106 module. I got the DSP unit free because I bought the radio before March 31, 2002 and Icom was including a coupon for the free unit as a promotional item.

I had to wait eleven weeks for the UT-106 because Icom said they had underestimated the number of units needed, and had to wait for another shipment from Japan. Apparently they had sold more radios than they expected.

Well, I must say it was worth the wait. Installing the unit required removing the bottom cover from the radio and slipping an insulating sleeve over the UT-106 board, removing a plug from the main board and plugging it into the unit, then connecting a flat ribbon cable from the unit to the main board. After that it was just a matter of turning the board over, coiling the excess wire underneath, then replacing the bottom cover of the radio.

Having done this I turned the radio on and tuned in a station on 20 meters. There was the usual amount of noise — minor hum, static crashes etc.

I pushed the noise reduction button on the keypad and was very surprised to hear all that disappear — at least 99% of it did. It must be understood that this is DSP in the audio frequency stage and the unit has to deal with the noise after it has been amplified. This is



Icom's UT-106 digital signal processing unit adds an automatic notch filter (ANF) and noise reduction (NR).

not the case for IF DSP and so it is superior. This is not a problem though, as most of the noise is gone or greatly reduced so it is no longer a problem. There is also an auto notch filter, which when engaged eliminates heterodynes and tuning up signals.

The noise reduction level is adjustable in 15 steps via the menu.

After listening to it for a while, I noticed that the audio has a slight processed sound to it. This does not bother me as I can now hear what people are saying much easier. The fatigue that comes from listening through the background noise is gone. I can now listen for extended periods without getting as tired as I used to. It certainly makes the radio nicer and more fun to use. I especially noticed that I can hear the other side of QSOs or just very weak signals I could not hear before.

Well to sum it up I will say that in my opinion DSP in a radio is well worth having. If the unit had not been free, I would have bought it anyway.

— Mark, AB2ML

Have you been googled yet? — NM9J

Your editor is always pleased to see a new contributor to the newsletter, as we welcome Mark Dugan, AB2ML to the pages of *PCARA Update* for the first time.

The newsletter is available on the Internet in PDF format, linked from the PCARA web site, <http://www.pcara.org>. One consequence of appearing in the newsletter is that your name and callsign will be visible to the various Internet search engines that suck up pages from the World Wide Web.

The top search engine at the moment is Google, <http://www.google.com>. If you are looking for information on somebody you met recently — or maybe somebody you met twenty years ago — you can enter their name as a search phrase in Google and see where they are mentioned on the Internet.

There is a new verb to describe this activity — to **google** someone. You can find the goods on people in the twinkle of an eye. Just remember it might be good news or bad news!

Radio amateurs have an additional advantage over the common herd — we have our own **callsigns** that are unique throughout the world. So, if you want to find information on somebody with an amateur radio license, just type their callsign into Google.

Your editor has had several e-mail messages from radio amateurs and short wave enthusiasts he knew some thirty years ago as a result of people carrying out this type of search. So — write an article for the newsletter and standby for the results!

— Malcolm, G3VNZ, NM9J

Field Day — where were you in 2002?

Did you come to PCARA Field Day over the June 22-23 weekend this year? If not you missed a great time, and a few bugs.

The first bugs you would have missed were the kind that bite! Bug spray was in high demand on Saturday morning, to keep the mosquitoes and no-see-ums at bay. The tree trunks at the top of Bear Mountain were all covered in fat, squishy caterpillars — as Bob,



Bug spray was in demand.

N2CBH and your editor found to their cost. Tree-hugging was not recommended.

The other type of bug you might have come across at Field Day creates a different rhythm from the annoying whine of a mosquito. Karl N2KZ, was especially taken with the bright red paddles of the MFJ Iambic Key Paddle at the 20 meter station, which had been set up under a large, blue tarpaulin, strung between two trees.



Karl, N2KZ trying out the bug key at the 20 meter station

Karl was also impressed with Joe, WA2MCR's method for launching antennas into trees. In the past, PCARA has employed sling-shots to fire lead sinkers in the approximate direction of a likely tree branch. Joe had a much more elegant technique, using a fishing pole to cast the line straight over the topmost branch. As a result, the main antennas went up without delay



Karl, N2KZ learns from Joe, WA2MCR how to cast antennas over trees for best DX .

and exactly as intended. The two Field Day stations employed G5RV wire antennas, with a full size model for the 80/40 meter station and a half-size G5RV for the 20/15/10 meter station.

Power for Field Day was provided night and day by Jim, N2KLC's generator. Past experience had shown this was a very quiet model, so it was positioned closer than last year to the two transmitting stations.



Bob, N2CBH and Jim, N2KLC cover the generator with a tarpaulin.

The 80/40 meter station was set up in PCARA's brand new club tent, with its blue and orange color scheme. The tent performed well, keeping all the occupants warm and dry — too warm in fact, when the temperature outside was in the eighties. Perhaps next year we can arrange air conditioning. Greg, KB2CQE had built a "station on a shelf" consisting of an Icom IC-706MkIIG transceiver, Alinco DR-330MV power supply and MFJ-945E mobile antenna tuner. This performed almost exactly as well as the Icom-706MkIIG at the 20/15/10 meter station, for a total of 300 plus contacts in each of the logs.



Greg, KB2CQE operates his "station on a shelf" from the very warm 80/40 meter tent. Note the cooling fan.

Ray, W2CH and Marylyn had not been seen at PCARA events for a while, but both came to Field Day this year. The photo shows Marylyn operating the 20/15 meter station under Ray's supervision.



Marylyn and Ray, W2CH

Field Day is a 24 hour+ event, so we should express special thanks to all who stayed operating overnight — including Bruce KC2CXY, Monica KC2IAY, Joe WA2MCR and Jim N2KLC.

At the time of writing, the final scores for Field Day had not been tallied, but you can be sure that everyone who attended had a good time. Join us next year for more of the same... and perhaps the facilities at the top of the mountain will have been completely repaired by then! (The water pipe has a leak).

— Malcolm, NM9J

Postage Increase

The U.S. Postal Service has announced that the cost of First-Class Mail increases from \$0.34 to **\$0.37** for the first ounce from June 30, 2002. Additional ounces will cost \$0.23. Remember to send some extra stamps to your QSL Manager.



For those who still send QSL cards without an envelope, the rate for postcards increases \$0.02 to **\$0.23**.

Newsletter stamps

The *PCARA Update* is currently sent to ten members by U.S. Mail and to forty members by electronic mail. The increase in postage from June 30 will only cost PCARA \$3.60 a year... but think about the advantages of receiving your newsletter electronically. There is no delay in delivery, the photographs come through in full color, and your copy arrives in pristine condition straight out of your computer's printer. In addition, the web links are live in the electronic version.

If you would like to convert to electronic delivery, make sure the PCARA secretary has your e-mail address on file, and that you subscribe to an Internet Service Provider that allows moderate-size e-mail attachments. The Adobe PDF format used by the newsletter requires a file size of 200 - 300 kilobytes, depending on the number of pages and the number of photographs.

Upgrade Class

Suggestions have been made for PCARA to hold a General upgrade class, possibly in the Fall. This would include **CW training** for those who do not have the 5 wpm code qualification yet. If you would be interested in such a class, please contact a member of the PCARA Tech training team (including KR2V, N2CBH, NM9J) and make your views known.

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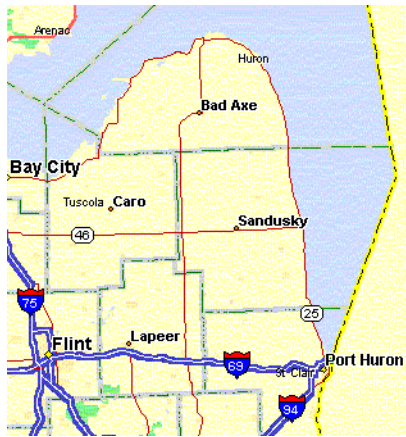
Secretary/Treasurer:

Joe Ellman, KR2V

kr2v@arrl.net

The Old Goat's Net – N2KZ

Dear PCARANS: Here's what I did on my summer vacation.



My wife, two daughters and myself pile into our minivan and drive 14 hours to Michigan. We pass through Binghamton, Syracuse, and Buffalo. We cross Ontario and head for Michigan's Thumb region. If you look at Michigan on a map, it looks like an outstretched mitten. We stay in the Thumb.

The trip is a very long day of Barney and sing-along tapes and kid's books along with hours of Pokemon on the Gameboy. There is some adult time when they nap. I grab the occasion and hop on ten meter CW.

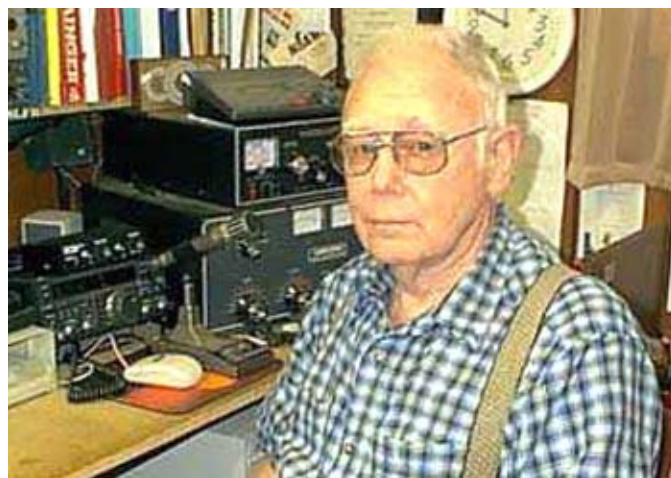
Typically, this time of year, the band will start to open at about 10 am and go until 3 or 4 pm or later. European stations appear in the morning. Domestic and trans-equatorials into South and Central America join us for lunch for a few hours. On a good day, Pacific Rim and Australia and New Zealand stations will start around dusk. This can be great fun. CW mobile, with just 25 watts to a mag mount whip is not exactly QRO! I often sked with a pal from work, K2TV, on 10 meter SSB. We hook up at 11 am on 28.380 MHz. Usually we wind up in a three way QSO with someone in Texas or California who is kind enough to act as a human repeater. It's a blast!

So, what's an Old Goat? The big town in the Thumb of Michigan is Bad Axe. This is where the N8LFR two meter repeater is. It is the equivalent of the WECA repeater in Westchester on 147.06 MHz. Although there are some other machines around, the Bad Axe repeater is the common thread for local hams over an area of 50 miles or more. There is no PL, so when there is tropospheric skip, you can bring up several repeaters at a time easily. You drop your carrier and hear a succession of courtesy tones beep at you. Tropo can be enormously strong in the Great Lakes region. The Old Goats meet on this repeater every morning, except Sunday, at 8:30 am with a long check-in followed by at least a couple of rounds of conversation. Sometimes up to 20 hams join in. Their cumulative age can reach 1500 years! As a 48 year old, I am a mere child with this group.

I am convinced that this crowd gets together to

say 'hello' and verify each other's continuing existence on a daily basis. We all exchange greetings and reports of what we did the past day, how the weather was, and even brief messages to those listening on scanners. In an informal way, this net is a well-known local newscast produced by all the area's hams. It is quite a daily event listened to by many more souls than just the participants.

There are some great characters on the net. The mainstays are the repeater custodian, Bill N8LFR, and



Repeater custodian Bill, N8LFR

his old friend "Goose" K8EFA. "Goose" is the signature voice on the net with a hoarse distinctive style. His name fits his voice. "Good Morning. This is Goose, K8EFA. Good Morning to everyone joining us this morning and hello to all the short-wave listeners." (These are the folks who tune in on scanners.)

The talk ranges from hamfests to doctor's visits. How is the medicine working? Who passed away? Who's going to the fish fry at The American Legion lodge? It's a wonderful town meeting with check-ins from as far away as Oscoda, Sandusky and even Owen Sound, Ontario. (Get out your maps!) My only regret is that I can only participate about 25 days a year during the summer. I religiously check in and chew the rag with all the rest of my fellow old goats. See you tomorrow morning at 8:30 and...



- 73 from N2KZ Karl.

Repeater Directory

PCARA's three repeaters are now listed under "Mid-Hudson" in the ARRL Repeater Directory for 2002/2003. The only hiccup is that KB2CQE's repeater on 449.925 MHz is shown with N2CBH's call sign.

Peekskill / Cortlandt Amateur Radio Association

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Newsletter contributions are always very welcome!

PCARA Information

PCARA is a **Non-Profit Community Service Organization**. PCARA meetings take place the first Sunday of each month at 3:00 p.m. in Dining Room B of the Hudson Valley Hospital Center, Route 202, Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567. Drive round behind the main hospital building and enter from the rear (look for the oxygen tanks). Talk-in is available on the 146.67 repeater.

PCARA Repeaters

W2NYW: 146.67 MHz -0.6, PL 156.7Hz

KB2CQE: 449.925MHz -5.0, PL 179.9Hz

N2CBH: 448.725MHz -5.0, PL 107.2Hz

PCARA Calendar

Sun July 7: July meeting, 3:00 P.M., HVHC.

Thu July 18: VE Test session, 7:00 p.m. Lakeland Copper Beech Middle School, Rt 132, Yorktown Heights

Hamfests

Sat July 6: Southern Berkshire ARC, Goshen Fairgrounds, Rt 63, Goshen CT.

Sun July 14: Sussex County ARC, Sussex Co Fairgrounds, Plains Rd, Augusta NJ.

Sat Aug 17: Ramapo Mountain ARC, American Legion Hall, 65 Oak St., Oakland NJ.

Sun Sep 22: Candlewood ARA, Edmond Town Hall, Rt 6, Newtown CT.

VE Test Sessions

Jul 7, Aug 4: Yonkers ARC, Yonkers Police Dept., 1st Precinct, East Grassy Sprain Rd, 9:00 A.M. Contact: Daniel Calabrese, 914 667-0587.

Jul 9: Crystal Radio Club, Rockland Co Fire Trg Ctr, Firemans Memorial Drv, Pomona NY, 7:00 P.M., contact Robert Chamberlain 845 354-7340.

Jul 13: LIMARC Levittown Hall, 201 Levittown Pkwy, Hicksville, NY, 9:00 A.M. Contact Allen Bender, 516 623-6449.

Jul 15: Columbia Univ ARC, Watson Labs, 612 W 115th St. New York, NY 10025, 6:30 P.M. Contact Alan Croswell, 212 854-3754.

Jul 16: W5YI VEC Pel Hams, Pelham Doronco Town House, 20 5th Ave, Pelham NY. 7:30 P.M., contact Michael Cifferi, 914 738-5775.

Jul 18: PCARA, Lakeland Copper Beech Middle School, Rt 132, Yorktown Hgts. 7:00 P.M., contact Malcolm, NM9J, 914 736-0368.

Jul 19: Bergen ARA & Fair Lawn RC, Fair Lawn Cultural Center, 12-56 River Rd., Fair Lawn, NJ. 7:30 p.m. Contact D C Younger, 201 265-6583.

Aug 8: WECA, Fire Training Center, Dana Rd., Valhalla NY. 7:00 p.m. Contact Sanford Fried, 914 273-2741.



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