



PROSPECT HILL INTERMOD

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WALTHAM AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION
& THE HEAVY HITTERS

www.wara64.org

SPRING 2011

INSIDE THIS ISSUE!

- **Volunteer Work**
- **DXpedition**
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- **Guess Who?**

- Snacks (cereal bars or nuts, etc.)
- Money (in case the event doesn't provide lunch)
- Roll of electric or duct tape
- Hand and foot warmer packs

PUBLIC SERVICE EVENTS

Debbie Carleen, AB1IC

When volunteering at a public service event (like a road race or boating event.) Amateur Radio Operators need to arrive well prepared. Prior to the event, the organizers will provide the volunteers with important information regarding their job function, where and when they should report, which operating frequencies to program into the radio as well as any special clothing (uniform) to be worn. Typically jeans are not acceptable. White collared shirts and dark chinos seemed to have been acceptable for the events that I have worked recently. The organizers also occasionally ask for clothing without logos as the event sponsors request this. Clothing (like a jacket or cap) may be issued to help differentiate the event workers from the by-standers.

The following is a list of what a well prepared "ham" radio operator should bring along when volunteering.

- Amateur radio license
- Photo ID such as a driver's license.
- Any medications required by the operator
- Paper, pens and pencils
- Cell phone
- Radio programmed with event frequencies
- Headset is very helpful along with spare fully charged battery packs. Extra disposable (AA) batteries and holding case (if available).
- Radio manual
- Sunscreen (even in winter)
- Insect repellent (can skip in winter)
- Drinking Water



Layered clothing is key, you can remove or add more as the temperature changes during the day. Remember that if event is along a river or shoreline that extra clothing may be needed. Rain gear not only helps keep you dry, it is also helpful during windy conditions.

The hand and foot warmers can be a lifesaver on chilly days. They work very well and can keep you comfortable for many hours. The warmers can easily be found at any of the popular outdoor sporting good stores.

Be sure to maintain a good and positive attitude. Sometimes event organizers need to make last minute changes such as, if a volunteer doesn't show up, one might need to pick up their duties. So be sure you are on time. Volunteering

can be an exciting and very enjoyable experience especially having the opportunity to meet so many interesting people working these events. Be prepared and have a great time.

For information on what to bring along, check on line for 12-hour "Go" kit or try this link.
<http://www.qsl.net/sfares/forms/gokit12hr.pdf>

Special thanks goes to Charles Suprin, AA1VS who keeps mentoring me through events and to all the WARA 440 guys that help me figure out where to go.

ST. JOHN DXPEDITION / VACATION

Eliot Mayer, W1MJ



Last summer brought a major surprise. My best friend Rick "Bones" Palm, K1CE (former editor of PHI), sent me an Elecraft K3 kit as a gift. While building the kit, I showed my wife Irina a photo in QST, pointing out that this radio that Bones gave me was being used by some serious DXpedition. Irina, who thinks ham radio is a bit silly but understands that somehow it makes me happy, said, "When you finish the kit, we'll have to go somewhere and try it". Wow! Of course, Irina was implying a tropical vacation trip that included a little ham activity, which had done a couple times before. BTW, though Irina is not a ham, you have probably heard her voice on 64, saying "W1MHL-R Echolink".



So in March, it was off to St. John in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Irina rented a small cottage in the woods for us, where nobody would mind a wire antenna for HF. The swimming and snorkeling on St. John were superb, but the ham radio part of the trip got off to a bad start.



First, I discovered that I had forgotten a double-male UHF adapter to connect the balun to the radio. My dipole was fed with TV twin lead, and I had installed the K3's optional auto-tuner in time for the trip. A ham on the St. John 2M repeater offered to lend me an adapter, but could not meet up with me for two days. I impatiently tried to kluge an adapter out of extra antenna wire. It seemed to work, but ...

When I fired up the K3, smoke started coming out! Horror! Fortunately, the primitive cottage, while having geckos running around and water that wasn't safe to drink, had WiFi. Fortunately, Elecraft has incredible customer support. When I emailed

them the details of the problem, they guessed correctly that the smoke was from a non-critical trap on the auto-tuner board.



They provided details on bypassing the trap for the short term (and a replacement part was delivered to my home QTH before I even got home). George, KP4G, lend me a short coax cable to replace the missing UHF adapter, and I was finally on the air as KP2/W1MJ.



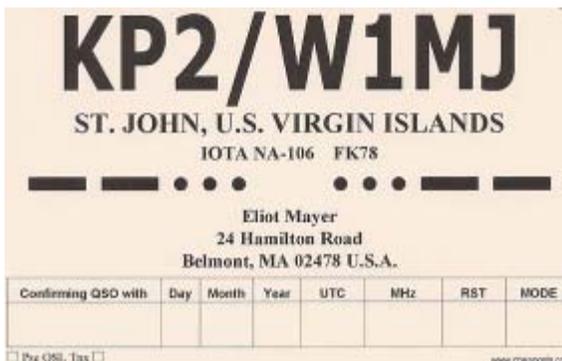
Most days, I checked into the daily weather net on the local 2M repeater at 6:40 AM. There was a nice friendly group of local hams there. They even invited me to their Saturday morning breakfast, though unfortunately that didn't fit into our plans. If you ever go on vacation and don't want to hassle with an HF operation, I suggest at least bringing a 2M walkie-talkie.



For the sake of marital harmony, most of my HF operation was in the early morning or late at night. The exception was an awesome hour-long, late afternoon pile-up on 15M SSB during the ARRL DX Contest, fit in between beach and supper. The other ham highlights were a couple of late night 40M CW pileups. On my last night, before going QRT, I worked two South African stations, and one and Israeli on 40M CW. It is challenging to work such DX from my home QTH in a condo, and here these guys are calling me! There was also a first for me – a mixture of old and new technology – a CW sked with W1ES arranged on Facebook.



I QSL'd almost daily using the ARRL Logbook of the World (www.arrl.org/logbook-of-the-world). Since not everyone uses LoTW, I also got some basic QSLs printed when I got home (www.cheapqsls.com).



Pictures of the vacation / DXpedition are available on <https://picasaweb.google.com/eliotmayer/StJohn#>.

It's fun being on the other side of a pile-up. If you ever have the opportunity to do so, I highly recommend it. If you don't want the challenge of finding a ham-friendly rental and packing all the equipment without forgetting a critical component like I did, there are ham DX vacation rentals available. One example is The Hamlet, www.vp5jm.com – I did not stay there, visited during a vacation and it looks good. An Internet search for “DX vacation rental” will show you many more, and also points to reviews of such rentals on eham.net.

FIELD DAY 2011

Field Day will be June 25th and 26th at the Clay Center, 20 Newton St, Brookline. Be sure to check our website for updates. You can find the FD link on the wara home page in the update section. <http://www.wara64.org/>

ECHOLINK IS ON THE AIR

Bob Martinson, K1REM

A special thanks goes out to Brian, WO1VES, who volunteered to repair our EchoLink PC. He picked up the PC from Jim's house (K1UGM) & took it back to his workshop where he found the hard drive was having excessive read errors, which is a sure sign it's dying. He was able to find a used hard drive which was donated to WARA by John, WA1RHN. He transferred the data from the old hard drive to the new one, and all worked fine. The system was reinstalled in Jim's house and tested OK. Brian may be contacted at 781-368-3413 or

brian@shamelesswolf.com for assistance with computers, networks and home theater systems. His web page at www.shamelesswolf.com/ has more details.



Photo by Arthur, N1KZC

W.A.R.A. REPEATERS

Please check the “Repeater” page on our website for updates. There will be another change to the 440 machine regarding PL in the near future. The 88.5 is only temporary until we can eliminate the interference that currently plagues 449.075.

Input	Output	PL in	PL out	Call
6m off	6m off	6m off	6m off	off
**146.04	146.64	none	136.5*	W1MHL
223.34	224.94	none	103.5	W1MHL
444.075	449.075	88.5	none	WA1PBU
902.1375	927.1375	131.8	100	W1MHL

*Use PL to mute P25 transmissions.

**2 Meter EchoLink Node 490278

440 / 6m REPEATER UPDATE

Kim Peck, WA1PBU

440: repeater is working to the satisfaction of most users at this time. We do have a new intermod product which is quite tiresome. It has stubbornly defeated my efforts to remove it in 2 long sessions at the site (6 hours +). The temporary fix for this, is that we are tone access for the first time. The tone is 88.5 Hz, and there is NO tone on the repeater



output. When the intermod situation is fixed, we will be back to carrier access. I also have a new controller ready to install, which will change the call sign to W1MHL, and solve some minor issues with false decoding of touch tones, which briefly interrupt the RX audio. (only those who can copy Morse code, should notice then change) I plan to add tone to the output, but the noise fix has higher priority, and access to the site, is more difficult than in the past, due to added security.

The TX tone (when implemented) WILL be different than the input tone, so that any intermod (such as we currently suffer) will not activate our input tone decoder, defeating the purpose. This may make the output tone less than useful for may users with "imported equipment", which does not support a split tone.

Users are urged to use "reverse burst" or "STE" (squench tail elimination) depending on the manufacture. This helps prevent the long burst of noise at the end of transmission before the squelch closes. The tone detection system is very narrow bandwidth, and so has poor response time. "Reverse burst", is a brief burst of tone at 180 degrees of phase from the tone which was being transmitted. This helps the system stop "ringing" at the tone frequency, and end the tone detection quickly. Not all radios support it, but a quick and unscientific survey shows that many of those who do have the feature, probably don't know about it.

An important note to the user community:
PLEASE DO NOT initiate ANY communication on my behalf, or on behalf of the WARA to any other persons or entities whom you might think is causing interference to the repeater. The downside of our otherwise terrific and enviable repeater site, is that there is always plenty of very loud signals to be found. That makes life difficult for a repeater system (and its operator), as there are always at least 2 signals which can mix and get into our system. Sometimes the problem is external to our system, but usually not. When some well meaning user elects to pursue the owner of a system who's ID is heard on our system, before all the facts are known, it just makes us (mostly me) look incompetent. Please don't do it. If the other transmitter is found to be at fault, please let me handle the communications (yes I have done this once or twice).
Keeping us "carrier access" has been a major

challenge over the 20 + years I have had the repeater. Not everyone appreciates this, but I still have equipment which has no tone capability, and I suspect others do as well.

6M: Progress continues on a new 6M machine. We have a MICOR solid state repeater in hand. A frequency has been assigned, and we are waiting for crystals (this takes several weeks). The main component which we are still missing is the duplexer (an expensive and increasingly rare part). We hope to have the system on the air by the mid summer. Alan Tasker (WA1NYR) is leading the effort to build this machine with help from Al Muize (K1NZQ) and others whom I may have missed. My thanks to all who have helped or donated.

W.A.R.A. OFFICER WANTED

If you would be interested in taking the position of Clerk, aka Club Secretary, please step forward.

W.A.R.A. OFFICERS

PRESIDENT - Richard Amirault **N1JDU**
VICE PRESIDENT - John Flood **KB1FQG**
TREASURER - Bob Martinson **K1REM**
ASSISTANT TREASURER - Eliot Mayer **W1MJ**
SECRETARY- Open

GUESS WHO?



(Photo 1) "Life is good in the desert". (440 Regular when he lived here)

(answers below)



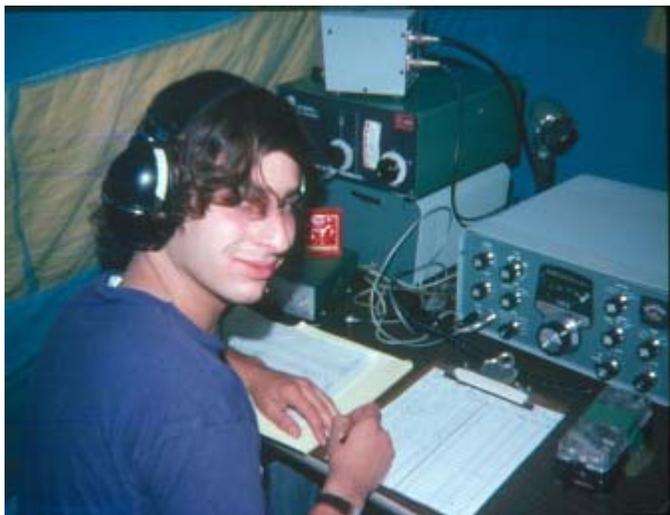
(Photo 2) Photo Taken in 1978



PHI NEWSLETTER STAFF

EDITOR - Mark Bolls **K1KGG**

Submit all articles to k1kgg@yahoo.com



(Photo 3) Previous call was WA1MYK

Thank you to all who have contributed to this issue of PHI. We greatly appreciate the time you took in sharing your knowledge! We are always looking for articles and new material to publish. Please send in your photos, announcements, story or short article (Technical or Non Technical) at any time, for the next issue of PHI !

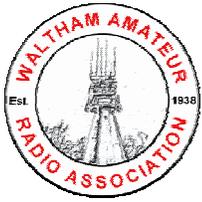


The Waltham Amateur Radio Association is affiliated with the A.R.R.L.

We would like to see YOUR photo in the next issue of PHI. Do you have a photo of yourself operating your equipment? Someone else's equipment? Even an old school or prison mug shot will do fine! Simply submit your "Guess Who?" photos to the PHI staff for 15 minutes of fame!

Guess Who? Answers
Photo 1: Dick, W1KSZ
Photo 2: John, K1BOS
Photo 3: Eliot, W1MJ





WALTHAM AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

MEMBERSHIP FORM

The Waltham Amateur Radio Association operates repeaters on 6 Meters, 2 Meters, 220 MHz, 440 MHz, and 900 MHz. The repeaters are free and open for everyone to use. But repeaters have bills to pay, just as you do. A \$20 annual membership would help support these repeater expenses, as well as help to keep you informed about club activities and other aspects of ham radio. If you cannot afford \$20, please send what you can. If you are inclined to donate more, we will put it to good use. Please complete this form legibly, and return it to:

**Waltham Amateur Radio Association
Post Office Box 411
Waltham, MA 02454**

Name _____ Call Sign _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone # _(_____) _____ Are you an ARRL member? _____

Email _____

This year's donation enclosed (\$20 nominal): \$ _____

How would you like to receive our club newsletter?

Email

First Class Mail

Check if you would like to get involved in any of the following Waltham ARA activities:

_____ Repeater Maintenance/ Construction _____ Speaker for Club Meetings

_____ Public Service Activities _____ Public Relations for W.A.R.A.

_____ Newsletter Writing or Production _____ Photographer for W.A.R.A. events

_____ Contribute to the W.A.R.A. web site

Visit the W.A.R.A. web site at: www.wara64.org

