News from the North Side
by Pat Patterson, AD4GJ

Spring is here and ain’t it great! Time to start getting things done around the house and time to start doing a lot of things with the N.F.A.R.L.

We’ve got some great events coming up this year to keep your interest, such as the auction in May, Field Day in June. A lot of us will be working the Olympics and Paralympics in July and August, and I know that Steve, KC4YBO and Nicole KE4NPF will have lots of things for volunteers to do this year.

Our new officers have promised us to make our club bigger and better, but they can’t do it alone. They need your help. In this issue is a form for you to fill out to express your opinions and ideas on how we can go about making our club the best in Georgia. Please take the time to offer your suggestions and mail it back. You may not think that your opinion counts, but believe me, it does!

This form serves another purpose, in that we are trying to build a database of all the members that have E-mail ID’s and/or Internet access. We hope to, within a short time frame, have a home page on the Internet, so that we can publish our newsletter to the world. With an E-mail address, we can at least send it out electronically. Hopefully, this will substantially reduce the cost of publishing the newsletter, so that we can again start publishing it monthly.

So, PLEASE, fill out the form, and mail it back to me. I will compile the results it back to me, and publish them in the next Squelch Tales.

Meantime, get active. This club can only be as great as the people in it. Right now, we’ve got a great bunch of people, but I know that we’re going to get bigger and better.

73
Pat

President’s Corner
Steve Mays
KS4KJ

Well, here it is, March in Atlanta. Just when you think things are warming up, the temperature drops into the low tens. Today, on the other hand, it’s in the sixties and it is trying to rain. But from here out things will improve and get warmer so that we can all get outside and do the things we have been putting off. Things like repair and maintenance on your house that you knew in January needed to be done. Things like finally washing your car and waxing it so you can actually see what color it is. Things like fixing that antenna that broke during the first real ice storm we had this year (a G5RV maybe). There are lots of things to do now that the weather is improving, and I hope you will make some time for radio-related things as well.

The public service season is getting ready to kick off in a big way, with lots of events that are fun to participate in, and will help our community as well. Sure, you have to get up early and put in a few hours of work, but you get to be outdoors AND talk to people—what could be better?

The hamfest season has already started (by the time you get this both the Dalton and Kennebecchee hamfest will have occurred—did you have fun? Any money left?) and there will be plenty of (continued on page 7)
Additional copies of the FCC License Status

Contact your local FCC office for details. All
9920-0777 for details. All
NFAA QRP
directly to the NFAR.

N = Number To Dial

30 CTS Command
25 User Hang-up Code
14 Session Phrase
13 Reconstitute Name
12 Change Password
10 Open Main
8 Panel Status
7 User Panel
6 On-Emergency Patch
5 Play Announcement
4 Send Command Out
3 Display Mail
2 Repeat Test
1 Time

Open Commands

#9 Link
#8 Send Command Out
#7 Display Mail
#6 Repeat Test
#5 Time
#4 DMF Test
#3 Definition Test
#2 Echo Test
#1 Open Commands

The Mil Class - Author Information

North American Radio

Quality Lies...
Atlanta VEC
Schedule

(All days are once a month for each notation)

1st Saturday  Jonesboro
    9:00 AM  George White
            KN4NG 361-6850

1st Sunday    Lawrenceville
    2:00 PM  Duane Reynolds
            WB2YAD 962-9582

1st Monday    Roswell/Marietta
    7:45 PM  Delaine McCarthy
            KM4FV 993-9758

2nd Saturday  Cartersville
    3:00 PM  Mark Swicord
            KD4EYF 975-1309

2nd Tuesday   Snellville
    7:00 PM  Wayne Taylor
            WD4CCA 498-7759

2nd Saturday  Stone Mountain
    8:30 AM  Hal Martin
            K14RD 978-9160

3rd Saturday  Marietta
    9:00 AM  Larry Huff
            WA4CQZ 955-3171

4th Sunday    Atlanta
    2:30 PM  John King
            AB4GK 381-5291

4th Friday    Lilburn
    7:00 PM  Howie Gould
            W4NVF 921-8362

Metro Atlanta Area Nets and Roundtables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Net</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>NFARL Net</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Conover ARES Net (PL 162.2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>ARES Net (Decatur)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Swap Net</td>
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<td>Mon</td>
<td>MATPARC Net</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue</td>
<td>Want, Swap, Sell &amp; Info (GARS)</td>
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<td>Tue</td>
<td>CW Practice Net (GARS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tue</td>
<td>Insomniac Net</td>
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<td>Wed</td>
<td>QCWA Net</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>Packet Net (GARS)</td>
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<td>Wed</td>
<td>BSRG Net (PL 188.8)</td>
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<td>Wed</td>
<td>LARC Net</td>
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<td>Thu</td>
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<td>NE Ga ARC (1st Thu @ 9:30 PM)</td>
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<td>Thu</td>
<td>Simplex</td>
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<td>AMSAT</td>
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<td>Fri</td>
<td>Amateur Television (ATV)</td>
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<td>Fri</td>
<td>GA Traders Net</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>Turnip Truck Net (PL 107.2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>Swap Net</td>
<td>8:00 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>Turnip Truck Net (PL 107.2)</td>
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<td>Sun</td>
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<td>Brown Bag Net (PL 107.2)</td>
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<td>WX &amp; Skyclimber</td>
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<td>Daily</td>
<td>Sassafrass Mtn. Net</td>
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(Thanks to the Gwinnett Amateur Radio Club (GARS) for the initial listing.) This is a “living list” which means it will be constantly changing. If you know of any nets or RoundTables that could be listed here, please contact the editor.

HAMFEST CALENDAR

April 5-6  Albertville, AL  June 8  Wins-Salem, NC
April 20-21 Birmingham, AL  June 8-9  Atlanta
April 27-28 Greenville, SC  June 14-15  Albany, GA
May 4  Dayton, OH  July 6  Salisbury, NC
May 4  Greenville, SC  July 27  Asheville, NC
June 1  Nashville, TN  August 3-4  Jacksonville, FL

Courtesy of SERA Repeater Journal and ARRL
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<td>KE4VFI</td>
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<td>KE4WLQ</td>
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<tr>
<td>KE4WLR</td>
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<tr>
<td>KE4WOC</td>
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<td>Render</td>
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<tr>
<td>KE4WYV</td>
<td>Daniel</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Thanks

Keep your Repeater privileges intact if you haven't paid your dues yet and

DID YOU FORGET
# HamWatch

**by Nicole KE4NPF**

Hello, my name is Nicole Reynolds, callsign is KE4NPF. I would like to take a moment to tell you about Roswell-Alpharetta Hamwatch. Hamwatch is a volunteer organization specializing in training for emergency communications. Public service events, classroom and specialized training are the base of our activities.

Hamwatch meets the first Wednesday of every month. The current location for these meetings is at the Alpha-Soda in Alpharetta on Haynes Bridge Road. Dinner is at 6:30 PM; meeting at 7:30 PM.

Hamwatch holds a radio net every Sunday evening at 8:00 PM on the N.F.A.R.L. 145.470 MHz (-600 kHz) repeater. In addition Hamwatch holds a training exercise, generally, the third Sunday of every month. You can also call the voice attended information line at (770)410-3928 for more information about Hamwatch, meetings, and Public Service Events. You may also leave a message for a Hamwatch representative to contact you.

The following is a list of upcoming Public Service Events. Any time you can donate is greatly appreciated.

- **When:** April 6, 1996
- **Where:** Roswell, GA
- **What:** St. Andrews Rowing Regatta
  - **Contact:** Susan Mays, KE4JKN, 770-429-1346, ke4jkn@radio.org
  - **Comments:** Rowing Regatta. Commit time: 0700-1300

- **When:** April 13, 1996
- **Where:** North Fulton, South Cherokee, and South Forsyth Counties
- **What:** MS Spring Classic
  - **Contact:** Nicole Reynolds, KE4NPF, 770-449-7978, williamr@msn.com
  - **Comments:** Bicycle Tour. Multiple courses. Commit time 0700-1700

- **When:** May 5, 1996
- **Where:** Lake Lanier Islands, Hall and Forsyth Counties
- **What:** American Diabetes Foundation Tour de Cure
  - **Contact:** To be determined
  - **Comments:** Bicycle tour. Multiple courses. Commit time: 0700-1700

- **When:** May 24, 25, 26, 1996 (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday)
- **Where:** Emory University
- **What:** Georgia Special Olympics Summer Games
  - **Contact:** Bob Langford, WW4K, 770-921-8083, Signature electronic@sid.net
  - **Steve Finger, KB4DNQ, 770-979-4712
  - **Comments:** Olympic style event. Multiple locations. Multiple days. Very large number of operators required.

Come out and join us for a good time (and generally a good meal!)

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**Total Income:** 1,110.00

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<thead>
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<th>Income:</th>
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<td>ARRL Renewal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auction Income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contribution Income (Tickets)</td>
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<td>Contribution Income (Unrestr)</td>
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<td>Dues Income</td>
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<td>Interest Income</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous Income</td>
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**Total Income:** 1,110.00

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<td>(Meals - Christmas)</td>
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<td>(Cook Out)</td>
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<td>(Field Day)</td>
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<td>Taxes (Georgia Corp Tax)</td>
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<td>(Georgia Dept of Revenue)</td>
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<td>(IRS)</td>
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**Total Expenses:** 269.27

**Net Income:** 840.73
CRACKING THE CODE

By BRAD FREEBORN AB6FD

Do you have the technician class blues? Have you hit the wall at 10 wpm and can't quite pass the 13 wpm code test? How many of us have been a good friend, relative, or spouse upgrade request us to general or beyond?

Because of the 13 wpm Morse code requirement, many will be codeless techs for the remainder of their amateur lives. There are some of us too, that are angered that a Morse code test is required to gain voice privileges on 7 and refuse to pursue the upgrade.

Some of the main reasons people do not upgrade are legitimate and some are simply excuses to justify procrastination. Whatever the case, it is a fact that the frequencies above 50 MHz offer a multitude of interesting and practical operations. The modes available are overwhelming, with packet, fm, data, sb, satellite, thompos, microwave and television just to name a few, can usually satisfy a no code tech's appetite for the hobby.

However, there are some that desire to operate above 50 MHz, but have no world class h/f station with ssb and extended frequency privileges. For those that truly possess this desire, upgrading is inevitable, but it can be difficult for some.

There are some valuable tips for learning and passing the general code test:

1. Set a target date to take the code test. Six months is sufficient time most. Keep this appointment with yourself!

2. Choose this date in schedule with a V.E. team that might offer a multiple choice code examination. Call in advance to confirm this.

3. Choose a code practice lesson wisely. Select one with a tone pleasant to your ears which seems reasonably paced and best suited for you.

4. It is usually better to use code tapes rather than some of the software programs. Much of the software is good, and can benefit someone. However, do not copy code with a keyboard.

5. The V.E. team will not offer you a keyboard to copy code, only pencil and paper. Learn the code in the same way that the test will be given, with pencil and paper only!

6. Always copy code with pencil and paper while learning or building your code speed. Trying to learn or build code speed while driving in your car is rarely beneficial. Driving requires too much of our attention and introduces many distractions. This makes for a very poor learning environment and could distract attention from driving. Also, sending code with a practice oscillator is a lot of fun, but offers no advantage on test day when copying, not sending is required. Try to practice in a quiet area when and where it is possible. Note that copying code in block letters is undesirable.

7. Your code lessons should include practice QSOs, or sample code tests. Become familiar with the various types of antennas, rigs and abbreviations such as qth, rst, qtr, wx for weather reports, etc. VERY IMPORTANT: Don't stop copying! If you lose rhythm, try to rejoin as soon as possible. Never give up!

To sum all this up, when test day comes you will be better prepared for the test instead of trying to white-knuckle your way through. If the V.E. team administers a 20 wpm code test below the 13 wpm as most usually will, don't be afraid to sit in on it. You have nothing to lose and it will make the 13 wpm seem a bit more tame and who, you know, may even get lucky!

Now to introduce the word _"is"_. _"Is"_ is important because almost all of the information you will need to copy to pass the code test will follow the word _"is"_. _"Is"_ is _"dit-dit, dit-dit-dit"_. It sounds like _"get-set, this-is-it"_. So when you hear _"is"_, it means get set, here comes important information. By practicing qso's, A code test format such as the following example will be no stranger to you. Just try to copy as many letters as you can after the word _"is"_.

Your copy might look something like this: "VVVVVVA-GGe-de-V-Ss-tt-xdxPa-for-the-cal-ur-rst-5-9, 59-. Na-e her- is C-. Qth is -dl-t-, a-n-s is a k-o-o- ts-20 and a-l-arn-s is a v-t-c-t-o-up 1--.eet. Wx her- is -ol-/ree-ng. My a-e is 3- and class is g----. Must qtr for an _ppp-m-m-. D4-- de W-R. ar sik? HERE IS A SAMPLE QUIZ:

1. Call of the sending station: A: KL7FR  B: N4CLA  C: WV5R
2. Name of the sending station: A: Cam  B: Fred C: Jose
3. RST report: A: 58B  B: 588  C: 399
4. QTH of the sending station: A: Nome, AK  B: Atlanta, Ga.  C: Rome, Italy
5. Type of rig: A: Yaesu  B: Icom  C: Kenwood
6. Type of antenna: A: Vertical  B: Beam

For those of you who would just like to learn the Morse code up to 5 wpm, I offer a 5 wpm practice tape for the cost of a blank tape and postage.

Contact me at (770) 433-2905. Good luck with your upgrade. 73's  AB6FD
A year ago the ARRL's Letter to the Editor radio license fee proposal was introduced to the ham radio community. As a result, the ARRL has recommended the political interference on the ham radio bands. Maria has written several articles on the subject for any long term solution. Maria has written several articles on the subject for any long term solution.

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News From Other Amateur Radio Clubs

Rural Club More Than Just A Bunch of Hams

Vale Kuska
Campus News
The Navy's University

Students here at NPS spend most of their free time with their noses stuck in school books. Many, however, somehow find spare time to participate in extracurricular hobbies and activities. Amateur radio is one of these hobbies. "Radio or "ham" operators enjoy a wealth of opportunities, including recreation, as well as being an integral unit in public events and emergency services. The NPS Amateur Radio Club takes full advantage of these possibilities.

The NPSARC is the largest club in the area, boasting over 200 members, both military and civilian. They hold two meetings each month, often featuring guest speakers who discuss all aspects of communication, including fiber optics, the Internet, and of course Amateur Radio. Some recent guests have come from AT&T, The Salvation Army, and many NPS professors.

The organization is also very active in the community. Members serve as vital communication links during many major local events. For the past seven years, the club has been responsible for all communication during the Big Sur Marathon. Ron Coleman [KM6DZ], long time member of the NPSARC, says "The whole purpose is to have communication at every checkpoint, in case of some kind of emergency. We also set up Amateur video sites, where doctors can watch the runners and check for any signs of fatigue."

The club is also used during the Feast of Lanterns, the Fourth of July fireworks show, and the Monterey County Special Olympics, among others.

Membership in the Amateur Radio Emer-

gency Service is very important to the NPSARC. This service provides vital communication between local charities and officials in emergencies. The club practices this once a month.

Lt. Steven Bible [N7HPR] operates the club's station in La Mesa Village. The club boasts contact with just about every country in the world.

Recently, the group put their experience and training into action during the January and March floods. The NPSARC provided communication for all American Red Cross shelters in the Monterey Bay area.

"We had over 100 ham operators spread to all Red Cross chapters and shelters", Coleman says. "Without phone and power, we were the only form of communication."

Dave Johnson, Director of Emergency Services for the Monterey County Chapter of the American Red Cross says, "if it hadn't been for the radio club, we would have been in real trouble. They were the only communication we had for almost 72 hours. They were fantastic!"

For the Internet buff, there is an endless supply of information on amateur radio in the World Wide Web. Over 60 clubs and organizations provide home pages for new and experienced, young and old, and everyone else in between. In addition, there is the Amateur Radio Newsletter, a weekly on-line newsletter dealing with varying aspects of amateur radio.

The NPSARC also has its own home page on the Internet. Here, net surfers can find out more about the club, its events, activities, meetings, speakers, and membership information.

Where does the interest in Amateur Radio come from? Lt. Steven Bible [N7HPR], a self-proclaimed ham and member of the NPSARC, has difficulty explaining his attraction to the hobby. "I started at 12 years old. I read magazines and taught myself through trial and error. It is a fascination. You can wire up a bunch of boxes and talk to other people, meet people with similar interests. The best part is, that the journey getting there is half of the fun."

David Bradley, a ham operator since 1946, says "ham radio is a very auxiliary hobby. No matter what you're doing, you can always bring your radio with you."

For those who feel an interest in Amateur Radio and want to learn more, the group offers free weekly Amateur Radio classes, and holds the test every other month to obtain an FCC license. Anyone can investigate the NPS Amateur Radio Club at the following World Wide Web address:

http://www.sp.nps.navy.mil/npsarc/k6ly.html

or by writing to them at:
NPS Amateur Radio Club
833 Dyer Rd., Room 437
Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey CA 93943-5121

(continue on page 12)

The Declining Solar Cycle

As we approach the solar minimum, in the next few years, what can we expect to encounter on our HF frequencies?
Amateur News From The ARRL

Page 12

Scratch Talks

Question Pool Committee
The Declining Solar Cycle

Scientists, from about 1700 on, have kept track of the sun's activity. They do this by a daily observation of the solar disk and counting the number of "sunspots" on it. Sunspots show up as little dark patches on the face of the sun and they vary slightly in quantity from day to day. The spots are visible due to the temperature of the solar gases in the sunspot being much cooler than surrounding gases. The more areas cooled, the more sunspots will be observed. So, one may say with assurance, many sunspots mean an active sun and few sunspots mean an inactive sun. The sunspots are counted daily by many observatories around the world, but the number that is used in propagation studies is the monthly smoothed number that is used as provided by the solar observatory of Zurich, Switzerland. There is a historical chart of these smoothed sunspot numbers upon which future predicted solar trends are developed.

The average number of years between solar maximums (or minimums) is 11 years; hence, the popular term "the eleven year solar cycle." Actually the 11 year cycle is not symmetrical, that is, it rises faster than it declines. Generally speaking, we think of the solar maximum as being about number 110, and the solar minimum as being about 10. There have been some exceptions to the rule, notably in solar cycle 19 where solar maximum reached Sunspot Number (SSN) 190, considerably higher than the norm of SSN 110.

Now that we know about the solar cycle, what does it mean with regard to radio communications? Well, it does many things, but we will discuss only those associated with high frequency radio amateur bands. The more active the sun, the more dense the ionosphere (as a general rule). Therefore, we might say that at SSN 10, the ionosphere is thick and dense. At SSN 10, the ionosphere is thin and more transparent to radio waves. At SSN 110, due to the characteristics of the ionosphere, very high HF frequencies propagate because the ionosphere will bend them back to earth. At SSN 10, only lower frequencies return to earth.

It is not uncommon during a winter day at SSN 110 to have a predicted maximum usable frequency (MUF) of 40 MHz on a 2000 mile path (of course, most HF equipment only tunes to 30 MHz!). It is common on a winter night during SSN 10 to operate 2000 miles at a 4 MHz MUF. These are the extremes for the path. Simply stated, during SSN MAX, higher frequencies are usable over HF radio paths. During SSN MIN, lower frequencies are usable over the same HF radio paths. Looking at this in a very practical vein, if we take an HF radio system 1500 miles in length in July of 1988 (SSN 110) we might have a MUF of 21.3 MHz. In July, 1995 (SSN 15) the MUF might be 8.4 MHz. You can see, low SSN means a decreased MUF so the higher frequencies will not be useful during these years.

As the solar cycle decreases, so does the usable portion of the HF spectrum. As an example, during SSN MAX, frequencies from 4 to 30 MHz were the most used, but during SSN MIN, frequencies from 2 to 18 MHz will be the most used. The 10 meter band (28 MHz) will be unusable except for local direct wave use and the 15 meter band (21 MHz) will be a "hit and miss" situation depending on the season, direction, and solar abnormality. Current projections are we will hit SSN MIN about October, 1996.

As you are aware (or I hope you are) normally the higher in frequency one operates, the less atmospheric noise is encountered, the less atmospheric absorption is experienced, the fewer number of hops is required on a given radio path, and the more efficient the antennas are. When we start using lower frequencies, the reverse is true. There is a greater level of atmospheric noise on frequencies under 10 MHz. Ionospheric absorption is greater, it takes more hops of a lower frequency to go the same distance as a higher frequency would propagate with fewer hops - hence more loss, and last but not least, the antennas become less directive, more restrictive in bandwidth and have less gain. Although the signal-to-noise requirement, to provide the same type and grade of service, will remain the same, there will be less opportunity to achieve it by virtue of all the other limitations. Unfortunately, this will affect the low powered transmitters the most.

Associated with SSN MAX are Sudden Ionospheric Disturbances (SID), also referred to as Short Wave Fade (SWF) and Ionospheric Storms. These phenomena occur at, or close to, the solar maximum. The active sun has more gaseous eruptions, referred to as solar flares. The immediate result of a solar flare of significant magnitude is a SID/SWF in the daytime portion of the earth. Ionospheric storms are produced sometime after a solar flare has occurred. The charged particles are drawn into the earth's magnetic field causing enhanced ionization of the F layer of the ionosphere. Dependent upon flare severity, sometimes the entire ionospheric structure is enhanced. Anyway, the number of occurrences of the SID/SWFs and Ionospheric storms drops significantly as the SSN MIN is approached. SID/SWFs can cause severe attenuation of the radio signals (especially the lower frequencies) due to increased absorption in the D layer. This normally lasts from a few minutes to a few hours. The ionospheric storm usually lasts from hours to days and it affects mostly the higher frequencies, but can also affect the lower frequencies if the D layer is also enhanced. Abnormal solar-caused outages should be sharply reduced during the quiet years.

I hope this article has given you an insight to the SSN MIN problem, and I also hope it will dispel any unusual notions you might have about the subject. Don't throw up your hands in despair. We can communicate, but it calls for a little more communications savvy, and a little more work.

Chuck, W4MEW
A Little Humor

AMAZING ELECTRONIC FACT: If you feel comfortable while touching a small wire, it's not very likely to be an electrical wire for anything useful, so you might be feeling a wire for your garden hose, a rubber hose for your garden hose, an electrical wire for your wristwatch, or a wire for your watch. But if you're feeling something electrical, you might want to check it out.
N.F.A.R.L. Member Survey and Opinion Poll

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completely Satisfied</th>
<th>More Than Satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Less Than Satisfied</th>
<th>Completely Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with the club, in general?</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>How about the meetings?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How satisfied with the meeting facility?</td>
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<td>How satisfied are you with the auction?</td>
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<td>How satisfied are you with Field Day?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with Squelch Tales, overall?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How about the layout?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How satisfied with the articles?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with the 145.470 repeater? (If not used, don’t answer)</td>
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<td>0. How satisfied are you with the 147.060 repeater? (If not used, don’t answer)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. How satisfied are you with the 444.475 repeater? (If not used, don’t answer)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. If you would be interested in a class to upgrade to General, check this box.</td>
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<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of the club not mentioned here, please start with #13 and write in this box:

No, just kidding. Use this box:

Complete and mail to:
NFARL Squelch Tales Editor
Pat Patterson
2070 Laurel Mill Way
Roswell, GA 30076

Use the reverse side of this page to indicate any ideas or suggestions that you may have to improve the club.
DX Corner

Mike KR4TG

From time to time, you'll hear conversations about working stations in distant parts of the world. The evidence that backs this is in the form of DX magazines and interesting articles in CQ or QST about a QRP Expedition (a grant visited by outside ops). Some very interesting, and some are very common. What is it about?

The Chase: tuning up and down the bands listening for weak signals from a tip from the "Packet Cluster" or for articles in magazines or newsletters. Many people have dedicated many hours of sleepless and nervous nights to "Packet Cluster". These are times that are common for "Packet Openings" to occur. A minor lesson in propagation tells us that the F-layer of the ionosphere splits into two separate parts, allowing longer distances on the lower bands (40, 80, 160 meters). During the mid-morning openings the F-layer is charged to maximum, and will allow signals to be reflected back to earth over a great distance (anywhere in darkness). These openings are commonly called Grey-line openings, and occur at the short period of sunrise - 3 min to 6 min respectively.

I once this DX station is spotted on a band opening, it comes HOT NEWS to those listening around the Packet Cluster. Out of the woodwork stations appear, as if they're waiting for a parade to begin. Then in an instant the once quiet frequency becomes flooded with stations calling from seemingly everywhere. The successful stations who make the contact are usually the ones who spend more time just listening and instinctively pop in when "time is right". Many stations come to learn that patience and perseverance will outperform a kilowatt hands down. I have worked well over 200 countries with only 100 watts, far 100 on 80 meters alone on an inverted-V. So are you have it, armed with only a dipole and 100 watts, all you need is for conditions to be good. You listen for the DX station to describe their location to you, and then respond when his signal matches, or is greater than yours. Then listen for an opening in the DX. When you hear him call respond with your call and call again, listen for the DX to respond to your call and call again. If the DX station does not respond, then try another opening. Each opening will call will be slightly different, but will be similar. It is important to keep an eye on the DX band to see if there is a lot of activity. This will help you determine if it is a good time to make a contact.

The DX Stations: Usually when you hear a familiar call sign they will call out on a given frequency, it's their reflex (or first part of their call before a number) will designate their location on the globe. For example: A, K, W, are usually USA calls or US possessions. EA, DL, SP, are prefix found in the European countries of England, Germany, and Poland. Sometimes you'll hear call signs that are nearly familiar like: T14/KR4TG, meaning that KR4TG (an{s}tomaker of radio equipment) is operating a DX station in Costa Rica. Then again others will sound strange like: HG73DX, designating a Special Event station operating in Hungary (HG). But all in all, with a little help from a DXCC list you could quickly identify the operating station without any problems.

Sometimes during a DXpedition and/or contest operation you might hear the same call sign on two or more bands at the same time. No, you're not hearing things. That is merely the efforts of a Team station. These teams consist of a small group of Amateurs who have dedicated time, money and their personal gear sometimes to put a small island, or remote place "on the air". Remember that it's their effort, in their visit to contact thousands of other hams worldwide.

The Paper Chase: After all is done, and you've made the contact and logged it in your book, consider the Awards that could be achieved from all your efforts. There are many Awards available for various types of operating: Worked All States, Worked All Continents, DX Century Club, and others. The important thing to consider here, is that any of these awards are available for 10, 6 and 2 meters as well. With this in mind, one could be a successful DXer if only a Tetra or Tela license.

When conditions prevail, during Cycle Peak, these bands could also provide lots of DX to work via SSB, CW, RTTY through the use of orbiters or Moonbounce. I hope to be active on 2 meters for Moonbounce during cycle peak. It should prove to be very exciting.

QSL'ing is an Art.... not necessarily. Many stations are very successful in their collecting these sought after postcards from all over. There are a few things to remember however... I'll try to sum this up briefly:
1. Consider the cost of return postage - most countries are more expensive than we are.
2. Overseas mail takes longer - even via air mail the wait can be weeks to months.
3. Does the DX station have a QSL manager? Valuable especially when you live stateside.
4. Consider the DX Bureau - maybe a long wait but much cheaper in the long run.

Consider the DX station - he may have to answer 30,000 people's cards - send an International Reply coupon(s) or a US 15 boll - but remember that in some countries it is prohibited to be in possession of US currency.

In some cases one could have a good "rag-chew" session with a DX station. It is always nice to be able to convey real stories or happenings on each other's side. In fact, you'll find that more DX stations would prefer a good conversation. For example: Two months ago I had talked to a station in the African Nation of Namibia V51BO. His name was Basse, and he informed me of the lack of adequate logging software available in his country. You see, even the DX stations are interested in earning awards as well as we are. "No Problem", I told him and even told him of some frequencies that would better enable him to make the contacts he needs. I sent him some simple logging programs via Air Mail along with my QSL card and a picture of my station for his collection. About a month later, I got a telephone call from a ham in North Carolina, and he told me Basse was on frequency and calling for me. Of course this was a little weird at first, but in turning the radio to 80 meters, I heard him working stations all over the US. After listening for a while, I heard him break from a station and call my call sign... Wow a DX station calling me? Well it was true, and he wanted both thank me for the software, and gave me an almost rare contact on 80. I must have been the envy of all who heard our brief QSO, but it just goes to show that hams are friends anywhere, anytime, and on any frequency. I can hardly wait to hear him on 160 meters one day....CU...DXing etc 73

Mike KR4TG

President's Corner

President's Corner (continued from page 1)

ways to relieve yourself of that "discretionary income" that's clogging your wallet (or purse). Of course, June brings Field Day and the opportunity to help show what NFARL can do.

I have had some suggestions on getting North Fulton members to stage demonstrations of amateur radio in public locations to show the world at large what we do and why it's fun. I like this idea, but it will take YOU, the members, to make it happen. Once again, I will take a few hours (but not getting up at 5am!) to do ourselves and our community some good, and have some fun in the process. So, what do you think?

In this newsletter, you will find a survey form that I really hope EVERYONE will fill out and send back in. This is only to get information and ideas about what you think about our club and the direction you want it to go. It only take a few minutes to fill out and mail back, and 32 cents won't break anyone, so please take the time and a stamp and help us know what you want. If you want to discuss anything, my phone number and email address is below, so use them. We've got a good organization here and it can only get better.

I'd like to announce that we have a new secretary for North Fulton. Her name is Leah Cook and her call is KE4VFI. She has graciously agreed to fill the remainder of Al Fischer's term as secretary, as Al has moved to the vice-president chair to replace Clay Smayson, who has gone to Indianapolis for a one year work contract. (Did you follow all that?)

Here's how things stand:

President-Mr. Goofy KS4KJ
Vice-President-Al Fischer KC4RIB
Secretary-Leah Cook KE4VFI
Treasurer/Repeater-trustee Fred Moore N4CLA
Editor-Pat Patterson AD4GJ

Well, that's all for now. If you feel the need to contact me, call me at 770-429-1346. Email me at 77435.1253@compuserve.com. Catch me on the repeaters. See me at a meeting. Telegrams also work. Bye ya'll.

Steve Mays KS4KJ
Inside This Issue

N.F.R.A.L.
North Florida Amateur Radio League, Inc.
I-95, Mile 304.1
see page 3

SqureTech Tales

Our Goal

July 10 - Open for suggestions
June 22/23 - Field Day
June 12 - Field Day Discussion
May 8 - 5th Annual N.F.R.A.L.

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