

The Oscillator

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Upcoming Meetings & Events

November - Friday, November 18, 2016. A general meeting will be held at the Club Station. The main part of the meeting will be the formation of a slate of Club Officers to be elected for 2017. The program for the evening will be a "Slow and Tell" and a "White Elephant Sale". Please bring something for "Show and Tell" and items for the White Elephant Sale. Refreshments and raffle will be available. Plan to attend and bring a friend.

December - Saturday, December 10, 2016. Our final meeting of the year and Christmas Party will be held at Aurelio's Pizzeria, 9901 W. Lincoln Highway, Frankfort, Illinois. The cost will include assorted pizzas, salad, soft drinks and a raffle ticket for prizes. You must RSVP to Trish at 708 828 8592 or email to the_jaggards@sbcglobal.net. A short general meeting will be held to conduct the election of officers for 2017. All are welcome. Please find additional details elsewhere in this edition of The Oscillator.

Election of Officers for 2017

Nominations are now open for the election of officers and member of the board for Tri-Town Radio Amateur Club for 2017. The nominations will remain open until the time of the election held during the club meeting on December 10, 2016. Nominees are needed for the office of President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer along with one Director who has served as an officer in the past. The club is in need of a person to act as Election Chairman. The chairman is responsible for there being a candidate for each position, running the nominations and the election proceedings. If you would like to serve as chairman or run for a specific office, please any club officer or board member. The Club runs on its membership but we do need Club Officers to guide the many activities we are involved in. Please give serious thought to serving your Club.

From The President's Shack

As we near the end of another year, we have lots to look back on. Meetings, Programs, Driving the Dixie, Field Day and other Club Station activities. They all went well due to your participation in the Club. I only hope that it continues in 2017. As you know, Dues are due January 1st for 2017. I look forward to all members renewing their memberships and maybe gaining some new members. I want this Club to continue to be active, fun, and something to take pride in belonging to. Participation, leadership and the desire to succeed is what it takes to meet our goals.

Remember: Dues are due by January 20, 2017. Check into the Sunday and Wednesday night nets to get the latest Club info. Both nets meet at 8 PM, local time, on the Club repeater, WD9HSY, 146.805 MHz. Please update the Club with any email address changes. Program ideas are always needed. Your comments and suggestions about the Club and its activities are welcome.

Best regards and 73, Todd, KA9IUC.

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Check out the Club Website: WWW.W9VT.ORG

Officers, Board Members, & Committee Heads for 2016:

Todd Schumann, KA9IUC	President	708.423.7066	tschum3063@aol.com
Matt Schumann, N9OTL	VP, Chair. of Board	708.423.7066	mattschumann@yahoo.com
Trish Jaggard, N9WDG	Treasurer	708.957.1973	the_jaggards@sbcglobal.net
Jim Everand, WD9GXU	Secretary	708.748.6798	jimgxu15@outlook.com
Mac Kirkpatrick, WA9CYL	Board Member	708 341-8900	wa9cyl@comcast.net
Pete Schaper KE9YX	Board Member	708.481.4273	p.k.schaper@sbcglobal.net
Bruce Haffner, WD9GHK	W9VT Trustee, Dir	708.614.6134	WD9GHK@comcast.net
Tom Gunderson, W9SRV	Webmaster, W9VT	815.466-0245	webmaster@w9vt.org
Brian J. Bedoe, WD9HSY	Repeater Trustee, Oscillator Editor, Dir.	815.469.1383	Bbedoe@aol.com

Members of the Tri-Town Radio Club Inc. publish the Oscillator 6 times a year. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Officers or members of the Tri-Town RAC, but of the contributors. All articles may be reprinted as long as full credit is given. Other publications are asked to reciprocate their newsletter. Some Articles printed here are from AMSAT, ARRL Letter, TAPR, World Radio, QRZ.COM, Eham, and Other Amateur Radio Publications.

Club Meetings & Nets

Club meetings are the 3rd Friday of each month at the Village of Hazel Crest Village Hall, 170th and Holmes. All are welcome and refreshments will serve. Don't forget to bring a Friend.

Club Hangouts:

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

Club Nets

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

Hamfests in the Area

WCRA Mid-Winter Hamfest 22 January 2017, 8AM to 1PM

Kane County Fairgrounds Expo Center
525 S. Randall Road, St Charles, IL

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Tri-Town Radio Amateur Club Christmas Party



Saturday, December 10, 2016 at 6 pm to 8:30pm.

Aurelio's Pizzeria

9901 W. Lincoln Highway

Frankfort, IL 60423

Assorted Pizzas: Cheese, Sausage, Pepperoni, Combo and Vegetarian;
Dinner Salad and Soft Drinks and Iced Tea

All for \$15.00 per person

Price also includes One Raffle Ticket for Prizes

RSVP to Trish Jaggard, N9WDG by Thursday, 12/07
Number of people to attend

Phone 708-828-8592 Pls leave detailed message or email
the_jaggards@sbcglobal.net

Tri-Town's Tentative 2016 Calendar

- November General meeting November 18th, Nominations of Officers, White Elephant Sale, and Show and Tell, 7:30 PM at the Bunker.
- December General meeting and Christmas Party December 10th. See details elsewhere in this edition.
- January General meeting January 20th, 7:30 PM at the Hazel Crest Village Hall. Program to be announced.
- February General meeting February 17th, 7:30 PM at the Hazel Crest Village Hall. Program to be announced.

Board of Directors Meetings Second Monday of the Month, 7:30 PM at the Bunker.
Members always welcome.

Tri-Town Net Controllers

At present, the Club has three net controllers: Peter KE9YX, Bruce WD9GHK and Todd KA9IUC. August was a vacation month for two of the controllers and it was believed that a plan was in place to cover nets during away times. Murphy stepped in and caused a scramble to cover one of the nets. Thanks to Jim, KB9VR for filling in. It would be great to have a permanent sub who could fill in when needed or a fourth controller to share the load. If you would be interested in becoming a net controller, please see any officer or board member.

Club Station - W9VT -- Workday Results

Replacement of the hoisting rope for the 160M dipole took place on October 29, 2016. Jim, WD9GXU and Todd, KA9IUC preformed the work. The weather was ideal but where did all the mosquitoes come from? The rope replacement was complete after some trials and tribulations. To get the feed point of the dipole to ground level, both ends of the dipole need to be loosened. Upon the reinstallation of the dipole, it was noted that there was a break in one leg of the ladder line near the entry point to the station. It is not know how long this condition had existed. Repairs were made as needed. A few years ago, 100 feet of the ladder line was replaced from the dipole feed point. This left about 20 feet of the original ladder line in service to the station. All of this older ladder line needs to be replaced as it is deteriorated badly. After all the work was completed, the antenna was tested and all is well.

American Legion Amateur Radio Club Sponsoring Veterans Day Special Event

American Legion members will honor fellow veterans with a special event on Veterans Day, Friday, November 11. The American Legion Amateur Radio Club ([TALARC](#)) will sponsor the activity, which will begin on the HF bands at 1400 UTC and conclude at 2130 UTC, using the call sign K9TAL.

Operators who contact the station are eligible to receive a full-color commemorative certificate by sending a 9x12 self-addressed, stamped envelope to The American Legion Amateur Radio Club, 700 N Pennsylvania St., Indianapolis, IN 46204. — *Thanks to Ed Brown, AA3EB*

N9DKO visits Greene Co Fairgrounds, The New Dayton

Rich N9DKO

On our way back home from an RV vacation in October we intentionally stopped for the night at the Greene County Fairgrounds in Xenia, OH. We've been going to the Dayton HamVention continually since the early 1980's (missing only a handful of years) first staying at the Days Inn at I-70/I-75 and after 1986 at the KOA in Brookville, OH. We have a reservation at the KOA for the 2017 HamVention but as it's roughly a 45-minute drive from the KOA to the fairgrounds we wanted to scout the fairgrounds in general and the camping facilities in particular.

First let me say that our first impression of the fairgrounds was positive. The grounds are nicely landscaped and, like the all of the buildings (none of which were open at the time of our visit) appeared to be well maintained. There is a large race track with grandstand that also appears to be in very good condition. Based on what I saw the fairgrounds have all the makings for a great HamVention. The staff we encountered and spoke with were universally friendly and helpful.

There are two RV camping areas, one by the racetrack containing 40+ spaces laid out in two rows and the second on the opposite side of the grounds with 60+ spaces laid out in three rows. All spaces are 20' wide with lengths varying from 25' to 50'. A worker at the fairgrounds office told me that they likely would only be using two-rows in each area with spaces measuring 20' wide by 50' deep. I parked our motor home between the lines and found it was wide enough for our slide out rooms to be extended but our awning extended into the adjacent site. The sites are all on mostly level grass but you'll need pads under your leveling jacks. The only question I have is how well those grass sites drain when it rains but of course it never rains during HamVention. All tow/towed vehicles will have to be parked nearby.

Each site has access to water and electric hookups located on telephone poles spaced at regular intervals in the camping areas. There are individual electrical hookups and water spigots at the poles (with a central circuit breaker box) but depending on how many RVs are expected to hook up to a specific pole you might need an electrical cable and water hose ranging in length from 20' to 60'. It all depends on how the RVs are positioned. The sites by the racetrack seemed to have mostly 50-amp hookup while the other area hookups are all 30-amp with just one 50-amp box. Water pressure was excellent. I measured it 90-psi at the spigot we used so be sure to bring a pressure regulator. There are no sewer hookups but there are two dump stations and the fairgrounds will have a honey wagon available to pump your black and gray tanks.

Being very close to Dayton over-the-air TV reception is good. Those with satellite dishes will have no trouble locking onto Dish or DirecTV satellites save for a single spot by a tree in the area by the racetrack. I was not able to detect any wifi signals during our visit but I had excellent (5-bar) Verizon Wireless coverage.

Back in September I placed my name on a waiting list for an RV space at the fairgrounds. Fairgrounds personnel were not sure how many spaces would be available for the event but during our visit I learned that there were only 60-names on the waiting list. A few days after we returned home I received a packet of information from Greene County regarding the rental of RV spaces. Greene County is renting spaces for 3, 5 or 7-days at a cost of \$450, \$650 and \$770 respectively (\$150/\$130/\$110 per night respectively). That includes 2-HamVention tickets and pumping two tanks at one time from your RV. Once parked you cannot remove your RV from the grounds until the conclusion of HamVention on Sunday afternoon. No guarantee will be made as to 30-amp or 50-amp electric so be sure to have adapters.

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ARRL President Emeritus Jim Haynie, W5JBP, SK

ARRL President Emeritus Jim Haynie, W5JBP, of Dallas, Texas, died on November 1. He was 73. His death followed a period of ill health. Haynie was elected as the 13th President of ARRL on January 21, 2000, succeeding Rod Stafford, W6ROD (ex-KB6ZV).

“Jim was a remarkable individual who made a huge personal commitment to Amateur Radio and the ARRL,” said ARRL President Rick Roderick, K5UR. “He had a great sense of humor that was often quite helpful as we addressed some serious matters when Jim was President. His vision guided us to try new things that are still helping Amateur Radio and the League to this day.”

A radio amateur for more than 40 years, Haynie was twice re-elected by the ARRL Board to the ARRL’s top volunteer office, serving until January 2006, when Joel Harrison, W5ZN, succeeded him. Prior to assuming the ARRL presidency, Haynie was ARRL West Gulf Division Director during two different periods — from 1987 until 1990 and from 1997 until 2000, and an ARRL Vice President from 1990 until 1992.

In 2007, after he had left the presidency, Dayton Hamvention® named Haynie as its Amateur of the Year. Hamvention said Haynie’s League leadership “helped define Amateur Radio’s role in emergency communication.”

Among other highlights of Haynie’s tenure as the League’s president was the signing of a *Statement of Affiliation* between the Department of Homeland Security in 2003, which made ARRL a Citizen Corps affiliate.

The following year, he headed an ARRL delegation to the White House to discuss concerns about broadband over power line technology, meeting with an official of the Office of Science and Technology Policy.

In 2013, the ARRL West Gulf Division honored Haynie with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Hurricane Watch Net Honors Bermuda Radio Amateur

The Hurricane Watch Net ([HWN](#)) has recognized one of its long-time members, Antony “Tony” Siese, VP9HK. HWN Manager Bobby Graves, KB5HAV, announced on October 20 that the net would confer upon Siese the title of “Honorary Member,” in recognition of his 31 years of service. Graves said Siese is the first non-manager to be named an Honorary Member.

VP9HK joined the HWN in 1985, although, he said, he took a “sabbatical” last year. In 2003, his reports during Hurricane Fabian gave forecasters at the National Hurricane Center valuable ground-truth information and insight as to what the storm was doing in Bermuda, Graves said, earning Siese the Message in a Bottle Award from W4EHW (now WX4NHC) for the 2003 Hurricane Season.

“It is very rare for any individual to be so dedicated to an organization, especially as a volunteer,” Graves said. “Tony, on behalf of the Hurricane Watch Net, thank you for all you have done and continue to do.” Siese was first licensed in the UK as G4CIL in the 1970s. He’s lived in Bermuda for more than 52 years. — *Thanks to the Hurricane Watch Net*

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630 Meter Special Event Set for Mid-November

Participants in the [ARRL WD2XSH 630-meter experiment](#), Canadian radio amateurs, and members of the Maritime Radio Historical Society ([MRHS](#)) will participate in a special event on Sunday, November 13 (UTC) on 630 meters (the evening of Saturday, November 12, in US time zones). The event will commemorate the Berlin Treaty of 1906 that made 500 kHz the International Distress Frequency. US Part 5 Experimental licensees will operate in the 472-479 kHz band, using CW for two-way contacts and beacons with commemorative messages. There may also be some operation on 500 kHz.

“Canadian amateurs will also engage in QSOs in the 472-479 kHz band,” said ARRL 630-Meter Experiment Coordinator Fritz Raab, W1FR. “They will also participate in cross-band QSOs with amateurs operating on 160, 80, and 40 meters.”

Canadian radio amateurs gained 630-meter privileges in 2014. A proceeding that would grant similar privileges to US hams is still awaiting FCC approval.

The Maritime Radio Historical Society will activate the KSM/KPH transmitter in Bolinas, California, for a mini “Night of Nights,” with special messages and bulletins.

ARISS Packet System on Board the ISS Switched to UHF

Due to the recent failure of the Ericsson VHF radio in the ISS *Columbus* module, the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station ([ARISS](#)) APRS packet system that normally operates 145.825 MHz has not been available. Crew member Shane Kimbrough, KE5HOD, has activated an ARISS UHF radio that had been in storage on the ISS, and it is now operational on 437.550 MHz.

The packet system uses the same protocol as the VHF system. Operators using the system should adjust for increased Doppler shift at UHF.

The ARISS team is currently working on Kenwood TM-D710GA models to replace all Amateur Radio transceivers on board the ISS. The target date for delivery is late 2017. — *Thanks to ARISS*

The K7RA Solar Update

At 2347 UTC on November 3, Australia’s Space Weather Services issued a geomagnetic disturbance warning: “Expect Unsettled to Active conditions with periods of Minor Storm levels in the Australian region for the next UT day, 4 November, if a small coronal hole in the Southern hemisphere becomes geoeffective.”

But as of November 3, the prediction from NOAA/USAF for planetary A index for November 4 and 5 is only 10 and 8. Over the past reporting week (October 27 through November 2) we saw two days with no sunspots, October 28 and November 2. Prior to the past week, in recent memory only October 1 had no sunspots either. Average daily sunspot number for the week was 9.1, down from 18.7 over the previous seven days.

Average daily solar flux rose, but only slightly from 76.9 to 77.5. Geomagnetic indicators were slightly lower, with average daily planetary A index declining from 20.3 to 18.1, and mid-latitude A index from 16.7 to 13.4.

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Naval Academy Students Planning CubeSat with HF Uplink

Students at the US Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, are planning an Amateur Radio CubeSat — dubbed [HFSAT](#) — that would carry an HF transponder as a primary payload as well as 2-meter APRS as a secondary mission when power is available. The 1.5 U CubeSat will have a linear uplink at 21.4 MHz and a downlink at 29.42 MHz.

“*HFSAT* is a small 1.5U CubeSat that will demonstrate the viability of HF satellite communications as a back-up communication system using existing ubiquitous HF radios that are often a part of the every amateur station,” said USNA Instructor Bob Bruninga, WB4APR, who developed APRS. Bruninga said *HFSAT* would be similar to the 1990s-era RS-12/13 Russian Amateur Radio satellite.

“*HFSAT* will continue the long tradition of small amateur satellites designed by students and hams at the US Naval Academy,” Bruninga told ARRL. The uplink will be at 21.4 MHz and downlink at 29.42 MHz, similar to [earlier] Mode K HF satellites. No launch has yet been identified.” Bruninga said *HFSAT* would be gravity gradient-stabilized by its full-sized, 10-meter, thin-wire, half-wave HF dipole.

Other unique features of *HFSAT* include its APRS telemetry command-and-control capability. “For VHF the students have modified a popular Byonics.com MTT4B all-in-one APRS Tiny-Track4 module for telemetry, command, and control to fit on a single 3.4-inch square card inside the CubeSat, that they will use for this and for future CubeSats,” Bruninga said. The students are working with Bill Ress, N6GHZ, on the HF transponder card, which will provide a bandwidth of 30 kHz with an inverting transponder to minimize Doppler. Todd Bruner, WB1HAI, will be the *HFSAT* control operator.

Bruninga said the HF transponder is a follow-on from the USNA’s existing *PSAT* 10-meter PSK31 transponder, still operational. *HFSAT*’s telemetry downlink will be captured via stations in the worldwide ground-station network. The packet link is a secondary mission compared to the HF transponder on this spacecraft.

Once *HFSAT* is in space, Bruninga recommended using a vertical HF antenna, because it would match well with the antenna patterns and geometry of Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites. “When low on the horizon, both the satellite and the user antennas are in their main lobes, providing maximum gain at the distant horizons,” Bruninga said. “At the higher elevations, the satellite is 6 dB to 10 dB closer, significantly making up for the reduced antenna pattern geometry.”

He said hams would be able to use “simple, manual” pass-prediction tools, much as they used the old Oscar Locator in the early years of Amateur Radio satellites.

KC0W Regroups in Wake of Pacific Island Theft

Tom Callas, KC0W, who was forced to abruptly cancel the rest of his “Cows Over the World” Pacific DXpeditions after his belongings were stolen in Kiribati, has been regrouping.

“I will be in the Philippines from October 26-November 25, and the call sign will be [417COW](#),” Callas said on his QRZ.com profile. “This unique prefix has never been issued before, so it should generate some good interest.” Callas said he’s canceled his planned TG/KC0W DXpedition to Guatemala in favor of pending DXpeditions to Equatorial Guinea and Annobon, following his Philippines activity.

He reports “fantastic progress” in acquiring the 3C and 3C0 licenses. Equatorial Guinea is number 43 on the [ClubLog DXCC Most Wanted List](#). Annobon is number 35. He hopes to be on the air from Equatorial Guinea and Annobon for 50 or 60 days and said to stay tuned for more information.

Rule Making Petition to FCC Calls for Vanity Call Sign Rule Changes

The FCC is inviting comments on a *Petition for Rule Making* ([RM-11775](#)) from a Nevada radio amateur that seeks changes to the rules governing the Amateur Radio Vanity Call Sign Program. Christopher LaRue, W4ADL, of North Las Vegas, is proposing that any licensee obtaining a vanity call sign be required to keep it for the full license term. LaRue contends in his petition that excessive and frequent vanity call sign filings are hampering the ability of other qualified licensees to obtain vanity call signs in one of the more desirable 1 × 2 or 2 × 1 formats. LaRue said that since the FCC dropped the fee to file for a vanity call sign, some applicants are taking advantage by regularly obtaining new call signs, thereby keeping them out of circulation.

“Some are changing call signs almost monthly, just to keep the newer code-free Extra class operators from obtaining a shorter call sign,” he said in his petition. “I even saw an older operator that said he does it all the time and has not even owned a radio in over 6 years. When I looked him up, he has had 16 different [call signs] in 18 months.”

LaRue said his proposed minor rule change would require any licensee applying for and obtaining an Amateur Radio vanity call sign “be required to keep it for the duration of the license, which is currently 10 years.”

He said this would “alleviate a lot of the stress on the ULS system and manpower requirements” at the FCC. “It will also keep inactive amateurs from changing call signs regularly, thereby tying up call signs for 2 years after dismissal of said call.”

Interested parties may comment using the FCC Electronic Comment Filing System ([ECFS](#)). Comments are due within 30 days of the October 26 posting date.

Former Assistant USAF Secretary Owen Wormser, K3CB, SK

Well-known VHF/UHF enthusiast and former owner of C3i Antennas Owen Wormser, K3CB (ex-K6LEW), of Royal Oak, Maryland, died on October 16, after being diagnosed with brain cancer a few months ago. He was 78. Wormser was an ARRL Life Member, a regular League patron, and on the 2015 list of ARRL Leadership donors. A former Assistant Secretary of the US Air Force, he was a 26-year USAF veteran, retiring with the rank of colonel. He also served previously as president of the [National Frequency Coordinators' Council](#). His SUV, which sprouted a surfeit of antennas, was easy to spot at Dayton Hamvention and elsewhere over the years.

Licensed in 1950, Wormser was a life member of the Central States VHF Society and a member of the Potomac Valley Radio Club (PVRC), and the Delmarva VHF and Microwave Society, and he had participated since the 1990s in K8GP Grid Pirates Contest Group operations. Wormser once headed C3i Antennas, a maker of VHF/UHF beams until ceasing production in 2006. His C3i consulting firm handled marketing and business development for clients working in the federal government sector, primarily intelligence.

While his day-to-day interest was on the VHF and higher bands, including EME on 70 centimeters, he was primarily a CW operator who also indulged in HF DXing. He especially enjoyed 30 meters.

Wormser was an honors political science graduate of the University of Maryland (1974), which he attended while on active duty with the US Air Force. He also held a bachelor of laws (LLB) degree from LaSalle as well as a diploma in global strategies from the National War College. — Thanks to [The Daily DX](#) for some information

Two Arrested in Georgia for Planning to Attack HAARP Facility in Alaska

Authorities in Georgia recently arrested two men who said they were planning to attack the High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program (HAARP) facility near Gakona, Alaska. Michael Vickers, a detective with the Coffee County Sheriff's Office, [told Alaska Dispatch News](#) that the pair explained to authorities "that God told them to go and blow this machine up that kept souls, so souls could be released."

"Yes, that news caused a bit of a stir," said Chris Fallen, KL3WX, a faculty member at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks (UAF), which now operates the HAARP facility. "I can also confirm that no souls are stored at HAARP."

Long of interest to the Amateur Radio community as well as a target of various mind and weather-control conspiracies, HAARP is now operated as an ionospheric research facility by the UAF, which took it over last year from the US Air Force.

Police also seized a "massive" arsenal of weapons the individuals had apparently planned to use in attacking the remote facility. According to a WALB [TV news account](#), investigators discovered the plot after they began looking into possible drug sales by one of the men. A local gun shop also alerted authorities that the same individual was attempting to buy a large number of weapons. The two men, who face domestic terrorism charges, also were charged with selling drugs, and they could face other charges.

UAF spokesperson Marmian Grimes told *Alaska Dispatch News* that HAARP has been the target of previous threats, and she thanked the Georgia authorities for heading off this one. At an August open house at HAARP, Sue Mitchell of UAF's Geophysical Institute said they hoped, among other things, "to show people that [HAARP] is not capable of mind control and not capable of weather control and all the other things it's been accused of."

Opened in 1960, HAARP is capable of generating extremely high-power signals in the HF range, aimed at the ionosphere. It has run listening tests in the past for the Amateur Radio community. — *Thanks to [Alaska Dispatch News](#) and other media*

Maybe a Solar Minimum Can Be Too Deep for 160 Meters

Propagation observer Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA, recently offered some "[deep thoughts](#)" on the [Top Band Reflector](#). As he explained, while less geomagnetic field activity heading into winter bodes favorable 160-meter propagation, more galactic cosmic rays entering our atmosphere could become a factor.

"The Sun's magnetic field is weakening, probably to the lowest levels in our lifetimes," Luetzelschwab said in an October 27 post. "With a weak solar magnetic field, more galactic cosmic rays will be able to get into Earth's atmosphere. We are now seeing unprecedented high neutron counts (neutrons are one of the byproducts of cosmic rays). Since galactic cosmic rays are mostly *very energetic* protons, they can get down to low atmospheric altitudes, causing collisional ionization in the D region and lower E region."

He said a cursory estimate using cosmic ray ionization rates confirms greater ionization in the lower atmosphere, and 160 meters is not too tolerant of more absorption.

"Many of us think that 'solar min is solar min is solar min,'" Luetzelschwab said, "but maybe a solar minimum can be too deep for 160 meters." He said a good question to ask in the early 2020s may be "How was 160 meters?" Only time will tell, he suggested. — *Thanks to the ARRL Contest Update*

National Geographic Channel Ham Radio Guide Supports Before MARS Prequel

The National Geographic has produced [A Guide to Ham Radio](#) to support its recently released digital short, [Before MARS](#) — a prequel to its upcoming *MARS* series. The 33-minute prequel, which has a heavy Amateur Radio theme, provides the back story of two principal characters in the upcoming *MARS* global event series.

In the prequel, twin teenaged sisters Hana and Joon Seung are the new kids in town, after their single mother relocates. In due course, they come across old ham radio transceivers — one in an attic, the other in a thrift shop — and use them to communicate with each other and with an older, local ham.

Tuning about, Hana — whose character gets most of the attention — hears an astronaut on the International Space Station (ISS) on her radio and eventually makes contact, as Amateur Radio on the International Space Station ([ARIS](#)) program participants do. In a touch of realism, the female astronaut uses the NA1SS call sign.

The sisters' exposure to ham radio helps to inspire them to pursue careers in space exploration, become astronauts, and take part in a 2033 mission to Mars. *MARS* will combine documentary sequences about real-life efforts to travel to and colonize Mars.

RSGB Criticizes TV Broadcast Portraying Radio Amateur as “Nightmare Neighbor”

The Radio Society of Great Britain (RSGB) has [weighed in](#) following the airing of a Channel 5 TV *Nightmare Neighbour Next Door* [episode](#) [the program may have been removed from the website — *Ed.*] that featured an Amateur Radio operator. In the program, neighbors of 75-year-old Armando Martins, M0PAM, of Kent, made unsubstantiated claims that RF radiating from his 30-foot vertical antenna was detrimental to their health.

“Unfortunately, the RSGB was not invited to be part of Channel 5’s *Nightmare Neighbour Next Door* programme or to verify any facts,” the RSGB said. “We have, of course, contacted Channel 5 about our concerns and have highlighted the positive aspects of Amateur Radio. We have also offered our expertise and input for future programmes where Amateur Radio is mentioned.”

Channel 5 broadcast the offending episode on October 27, and it drew criticism from radio amateurs across the UK, some of whom may have used a program complaint service form provided by telecommunications regulator Ofcom. Critics complained that the program was replete with false claims and note that Ofcom has never found any problems with Martins’ station.

Martins, a veteran radio amateur, was put off the air in 2010 by the Canterbury City Council after moving into a council house — a form of public housing — and was not allowed to install his antenna in the back garden, although that was more of a zoning issue. He subsequently moved to Kent, where the health claims began. A radio amateur for more than 60 years, Martins was first licensed as CR6IL in Portuguese West Africa (Angola).

“Our volunteers spend a lot of time helping radio amateurs with planning applications,” the RSGB said. “It is by putting forward facts during those processes that we can help to dispel myths about Amateur Radio and any impact on the public or environment.”

The RSGB said it would let its members know if it receives a response from Channel 5.

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Check out the Club Website: WWW.W9VT.ORG

Welcome New Amateur Radio Licensees in Lebanon

The Ministry of Communications in Beirut, Lebanon, conducted the first Amateur Radio licensing exams in 13 years on October 16 at the offices of OGERO, a telecoms provider. Some 50 applicants sat for the exams; it's not yet known how many passed. Ghassan Afif Chammas, AC2RA, who posted the news to [QRZ.com](#), credited OGERO Director General Abdul M. Youssef; engineer Toni Aoun; Hani Raad, OD5TE/AA3EI; Michel Homsj, OD5TX, and Elie el Kadi, OD5KU, for facilitating the test session.

"The ham community should expect a boost in ham activities from OD5 very soon," AC2RA said.

OD5TE once was very active in the Washington, DC area as N3IWM, and he served as the District's Emergency Coordinator. -- *Thanks to Ken Claerbout, K4ZW*

Austrian Moonbounce Enthusiast Demonstrates Success with Small-Scale Setup

Hannes Fasching, OE5JFL, of Braunau am Inn, Austria, has demonstrated that you don't need a huge antenna system to operate EME (moonbounce) successfully. Fasching fired up for the October 22-23 weekend of the [ARRL EME Contest](#), using a small horn antenna on 1.2 GHz.

"Because of other commitments I had only a few hours to be QRV in the first part of the ARRL EME Contest," he said in a Moon-Net post on October 26. "As tests with my recently built 23-centimeter horn antenna were promising, I decided to give it a try to work some stations." Fasching placed the horn on his balcony with an 80 W solid-state amplifier.

Operating *WSJT*, he logged contacts with Switzerland, Russia, Germany, and the Czech Republic. He also heard stations in the Netherlands, Finland, Denmark, and Italy on digital modes and in the UK, Czech Republic, Denmark, and Italy on CW.

Fasching, who also has a 7.3-meter homemade dish, has [uploaded](#) recordings of some EME signals to his website, along with the results of tests with his small system.

Suspicious Bangladesh Border Ham Band Signals Now of Interest to Indian Intelligence

What have been called "highly suspicious" VHF transmissions along the Bengal-Bangladesh border now are being considered signals of interest to India's Intelligence Bureau. According to media accounts, after several days of monitoring, Ambarish Nag "Raju" Biswas, VU2JFA, and his team have determined that the transmissions, taking place on Amateur Radio frequencies, are coming from the area of Basirhat in West Bengal. The voice communications have been heard at night.

Federal Ministry of Communication officials in India had asked Biswas, the secretary of the [West Bengal Amateur Radio Club](#), and his fellow hams to keep an ear on the strange VHF signals.

An earlier [article](#) in the *Hindustan Times* reported that the signals were being heard in the dead of night, with participants said to be in motion and speaking in some sort of code in Bengali and Urdu with a Bangladeshi accent. They also used numerical codes, according to the report.

Indian Intelligence Bureau officials did not rule out the possibility that terror organizations were behind the signals. "The border of India-Bangladesh near West Bengal is porous," a senior Intelligence Bureau official said in a report that appeared in *The Indian Express*. "Smugglers and extremists try to exploit it fully."

New Russian Arctic OTH Radars Set for 2017 Startup

According to media accounts, more long-range, new over-the-horizon (OTH) radars that can identify aerial and sea targets hundreds of miles away are scheduled to begin operation next year in the Russian Arctic. It's doubtful, however, that the news heralds the return of interference on the level of that generated by the so-called "Russian Woodpecker" OTH radar, which plagued Amateur Radio HF bands in the 1970s and 1980s.

Over the past couple of years, OTH radars, *sans* woodpecker, have become increasingly commonplace intruders on Amateur Radio bands, according to the International Amateur Radio Union Region 1 ([IARU R1](#)) Monitoring System ([IARUMS](#)), which has noted OTH radars in Russia, China, Cyprus, Iran, and Turkey. The frequency-hopping nature of the technology accounts for the annoying interference that covers wide swaths of spectrum. The Russian systems-intelligence "Konteyner RLS" OTH radar, transmitting from in the Nizhny Novgorod region, is frequently spotted on 20 meters. While no woodpecker, it transmits a broad, frequency-modulated CW signal at 50 sweeps per second with a bandwidth of 80 kHz or greater, accompanied by signal splatter, IARUMS Coordinator Wolfgang Hadel, DK2OM, reported recently.

Sputnik, a Russian government-controlled radio service, [cited](#) a *Rossiiskaya Gazeta* newspaper report that six OTH radar installations will operate in the region. Deputy Defense Minister Dmitry Buklgakov, who visited the construction site, said a runway capable of handling all types of combat aircraft was simultaneously being reconstructed nearby, the report continued. Other reports have indicated that similar systems will be deployed in the Far East in 2018. Russia has sold its OTH radar technology to China.

OTH radars employ widely separated (250 kilometers) transmitting and receiving sites and can "see" beyond the horizon, the typical limit for ordinary radar. The transmitting array is 440 meters wide, and it incorporates 36 elements of varying configuration. The three-section receiving array is 1300 meters wide and 35 meters tall. —
Thanks for news tip to Frank Smith, WS1MH

"Spark" Behind Queen Mary W6RO Amateur Station Nate Brightman, K6OSC, SK

Nate Brightman, K6OSC, called the "spark" behind [W6RO](#), the Amateur Radio station aboard the *Queen Mary* in Long Beach, California, died on October 29. He was 99. An ARRL member, Brightman, who lived in Long Beach, had served as the W6RO Wireless Room Manager for 34 years, plus another 10 years arranging for the GB5QM "Last Voyage" Amateur Radio operation and establishing W6RO, which is licensed to the Associated Radio Amateurs of Long Beach.

In 2013, Brightman reluctantly resigned as W6RO Wireless Room Manager, citing recent illness and his advanced age as reasons for his decision. In his farewell statement, Brightman said ham radio operations now aboard some 90 museum ships such as the *Queen Mary* have introduced Amateur Radio to millions of people. "This means of introducing Amateur Radio to the public is the biggest publicity stunt ever for Amateur Radio, and we should be proud that it all started with W6RO!" he said.

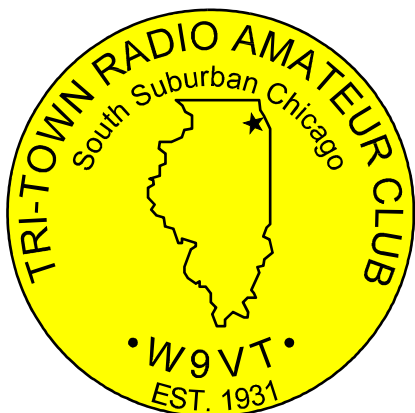
In the process of spearheading Amateur Radio aboard the *Queen Mary*, Brightman balanced the tasks of recruiting hundreds of operators, garnering equipment donations from leading manufacturers, and maintaining excellent relations with "The Queen's" management. He earned an ARRL Special Service Award for his efforts in 2004.

Brightman narrated the video [The Story of the Queen Mary and W6RO](#). The former passenger liner now is on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2009, the ARRL Board of Directors bestowed the 2009 Philip J. McGan Memorial Silver Antenna Award on Brightman for excellence in public relations. In 2011, he was elected to the CQ Amateur Radio Hall of Fame.

Tri-Town Radio Amateur Club Inc.

PO Box 1296
Homewood, IL 60430-0296

First Class Mail



Tri-Town Radio Amateur Club Membership Application

Name _____ Call _____

Address _____ License Class _____ ARRL Member Y / N

City, State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Email Address: _____

_____ Regular Membership \$ 25.00

_____ SWL Membership \$ 25.00

_____ Extra Family Membership \$ 6.00

\$ _____ Total Paid by Club Member

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

Dues are Due!

Club dues expire the first of the year so 2017 dues are now due. Your dues pay for the continued expenses for insurance, repeater operation. Your continued support of the raffles and the refreshment jar also helps. Dues can be paid at any meeting or sent to the clubs mailing address. Please include a membership form so we can keep the Club's roster up to date.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/tritownrac>

Check out the Club Website: WWW.W9VT.ORG