

W7TCK News

Capital City Amateur Radio Club

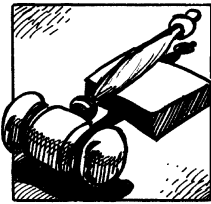
Helena, MT

John McDougall K7JM – Editor

November 2005

From The Pres...

It's hard for me to believe it is November already. I've had a busy year both with work and to a lesser extent with amateur radio and other projects I've been working on so time has flown for me this year. It seems like just a couple of months ago that I was writing a January newsletter column.



One of the many things I've done this year was erect the Trylon tower I wrote about during the first half of the year. It looks like we're going to be putting up two more towers at work this month – a 50 ft Rohn 45G tower to replace a too-small 30ft Rohn 25G tower which is currently on the Hustad center, and also a 40ft Rohn 25G tower on the top of a rocky hill out near Canyon Ferry Lake. I think the latter one will be interesting to some of you since it's basically going to be mounted on the peak of a hill and will be anchored with guys cemented in drilled holes. We're also feeding this site power with a significant (1200ft) cable run which will

.(Cont. P.2 PRES)

NOVEMBER MEETING

Monday

November 7

Salvation Army Church

1905 Henderson

7:00 pm.



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Board of Directors

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- Newsletter Editor: John McDougall K7JM
- Training: John Geach, KS7R
- Technical: Don Heide, W7MRI
- Volunteer Exam Team Leader: John Geach, KS7R

THANK YOU!

The following have graciously donated funds to the Capital City Amateur Radio Club. We thank you for thinking of us. Our hats are off to you!

\$50 donation from the Great Divide Cycling Team

The Wal-Mart Foundation for \$250 in July, and Ken Clark made a \$100 donation.

Thanks again! We appreciate your support!

(Cont from P.1 PRES)

require some power conditioning due to cable losses. In short, this isn't a normal tower site. I'll let you know next month how it goes (or possibly as an article submitted as a normal member to the January newsletter).

Moving on to the content of the next meeting... The November meeting is traditionally when the nominating committee provides a report on the slate of officer nominees to be voted on during the December meeting. This will be the main activity during the November meeting. I will also still have some test equipment and the remaining DF kits with me to troubleshoot any DF kit problems or to provide kits for those who haven't had an opportunity to purchase them.

One final thing I want to mention. I've handed the reigns for the w7tck.org website over to Tod, N7JQW. He's made some visual improvements and added a forum area and a mailing list. If you're interested in seeing what he's changing, visit www.w7tck.org in your web browser. I'm sure he'd welcome participation and also suggestions and/or content for the web site.

I think that's all for this month.

73's

Forrest
AC7DE

ARES Notes...

One thing that struck me while reviewing reports from the area affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita was the reliance by hams on HF for relatively short range communications. Many of the towers supporting VHF-UHF repeater antennas were damaged and out of commission. HF radio was the viable alternative, using NVIS antennas at base stations and HF mobile rigs in the field. We should be preparing ourselves for the possibility of having to operate without VHF and/or UHF. There are



components of both 80 and 40 meter NVIS antennas in the MCU, which take but a few minutes to assemble.

Doug K7YD, Montana Section Manager, and Jim N7VR, Montana Section Emergency Coordinator, have asked that at least one local ham radio station be operating on 3.880 MHz whenever there is an ARES emergency operation underway. Statewide assistance would then be available, as well as keeping state level officers informed of what is happening. It would be a good practice to have a couple of our local ARES hams routinely monitor that frequency from their home station when we are activated by the county or Red Cross. Any volunteers?

de Bob K7HLN

From The Editor

With record number of severe hurricanes this year and an unprecedented number of other natural disasters along with unstable political grounds around the world, there has never been a time that Ham Radio has been more important. We MUST be ready! We can begin by preparing us for Montana Winter time. Last Winter was a sober reminder of how un-ready I really was to protect and provide for my family in an emergency situation. This year I am a bit readier. Though, I still have some room for improvement, I am gaining ground. I believe that is the key phrase here. "Gaining ground." I was overwhelmed by what I should do to really prepare my family for a disaster, but though it was by somewhat accident, I just began to do it. Start out with something basic and build upon it. Start with something easy like a go bag for yourself, then add more necessities as they arise. Then make them for your family. Do you have provisions for emergency power and heat? I thought I did last winter until my power went out in the middle of a snow storm and I had no way to connect up my nice generator to my furnace. That got the ball



rolling. Start out easy and build upon it. In a year or two you will be set for most anything that may come your way.

On another topic, I was able to attend the Bozeman Hamfest in October. I found a great deal on an MFJ antenna analyzer. It will come in handy when I start to erect my antennas after my shack construction is complete. Speaking of which, I have been working on for nearly a year. It still has many hours of work before I can call it a Ham Shack. Guess what I will be working on during these cold winter months to come?

Until then, look for me on 2M, APRS, or HF mobile. I hope to see you at the meeting on Monday.

73 and God bless you all,

John K7JM - Editor



For Sale

I have decided to sell my Yaesu FT-817 QRP rig. A description of it is on the web site (www.w7tck.org) for those who have not seen it. Lots of extras go with it. Best price and first chance to the club, then I will list it on ebay.

Tod Glenn n7jqw@cordite.com



WWW.W7TCK.ORG

Tod Glenn N7JQW has been working on our website updating and adding improvements. Visit it and let Tod know what you think. Also, check out the Bulletin Board and register to receive CCARC pertinent E-mail. He is asking for input and suggestions. Thanks Tod for taking the time to do this for the club.



A Successful Antenna Party

by Dave – WA7YFF

I can't believe it! After seven years of wishing, thinking, hoping, planning, and spending money, I finally have an HF tri-bander (10-15-20) on a 30' tower, thanks to John Coppic, Bob Solomon K7HLN, Rich Weddle N7GC, Ci Jones WU7R, and Todd Glenn N7JQW. Thank you guys for taking time away from your family to spend some time with mine. Things took quite a bit longer than I had thought they would. This beam is 26' long and it's reflector is 24' long. It is about 40 years old and isn't light. Despite the bad shoulders, backs and knees, we managed to get it 30' feet in the air. (We need to recruit some hams from a high school football team.)

First I had to install a hole in the wrong place in my back yard. Then I had to move the hole to the right place. After removing all the dirt from the hole, I filled it up again, this time with cement. Then I asked my friend, Jeff Hill, owner of "Rags to



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Helena Montana USA



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Riches Custom Welding”, to help setup the 20’ quad-pod, free standing tower. Three rotator plans and two commercial rotators later, we had it up. That whole processes only took one year. Then I had to repair the 40 year old HF beam; replace a missing element piece, rebuild a few coils, and replace the rusting hardware. Since I have never done any of this before, I decided to take my time and go very slowly. I had lots of help with advice from numerous club members, including Don W7MRI and Vaughn NX1V, and Rich N7GC, just to name a few.

I am afraid my planned lunch turned into an early dinner and was meager. I forgot to put out the potatoe salad and jello desert and never made it to the hot apple cider and cocoa. Drive by my place on Lake Helena Drive, just north of East Gate 2. Look on the west side, you can’t miss it. I’m afraid the neighbors won’t, either. Stop by for a chat, I’ve got some extra cider, cocoa and potatoe salad. (The jello desert didn’t last.)

I have since talked on 20m with my dad, WA9YFF, in Racine WI, Ernest K4ZQ in Lexington, NC, and Jack K6DUJ and his son, David KE7DSS, in San Diago CA. They all reported me as 59+!

Next, a 6m something, a 2m 14 element beam, and 40/80 and 12/17/30 dipoles. Thanks again to every one help, and especially to those who came over to point, plan, and grunt. See you on the air!

73, Dave WA7YFF



Section Manager News

An effort is being assembled to reconstruct the WIMU Hamfest. We've been approached to contribute time and monetary support to the cause, looking at next Aug 4th, in Jackson, WY at the Virginian. We'd like to have a Montana Ham represent us to the Hamfest organization and aid in gathering funds to assist in creating the new WIMU. For those who havent heard, WIMU represents Wyoming, Idaho, Montana and Utah, hence the acronym. We used to gather at Mac's Inn at the Henry's Lake area in Idaho and a we always had a good time. The scenery was beautiful and of course, good friendship. Over the years, we ended up in West Yellowstone and were eventually asked to move out of there due to a competing Rod Rally that took over the town on the same weekend. The last WIMU was held in Park City, UT. Prices were extremely high and it was a long trip for MT amateurs. As time went on, the Hamfest organization collapsed and WIMU went SK. So, with the help of the Jackson Hole Ham Club, we may see another WIMU. They have asked for our help also, and would like to have someone from MT in the loop. If you are interested in participating, please contact Charles, K7ZOO, in Jackson Hole. Winter's almost here. How's your backup power? Have you tested your batteries, cleaned all the connections? Run that Generator? Time's a wasting!

73 all Doug, K7YD

The Magic of Radio

by Ci Jones

Magic can be defined as “any mysterious, seemingly inexplicable, or extraordinary power or influence.” Early on, radio waves were thought to be the way by which we could communicate with the dead, or perhaps even with God. Indeed, this magic/mystery aspect of radio was fully expressed in the first message sent by Samuel F. B. Morse in 1844, “What hath God wrought,” sent at a speed of four words per minute from Washington to Baltimore.

Today, in the early twenty-first century, we have demystified almost everything so that we rarely experience anything remotely related to magic. I believe it is this experience of magic that draws many of us to the fascinating hobby of amateur radio. Certainly the hobby is a scientific endeavor. By this, I mean that all radio circuits can be fully and finitely expressed in mathematics (if you doubt this, I will lend you a copy of *The electronics of Radio* by David B. Rutledge). But this is not the aspect of radio that attracts many of us.

Last Sunday, the weather was a beautiful Fall day in Montana, the opening of hunting season. My wife was sitting out on our front porch reading while I was in my radio shack trying to participate in Fall QRP ARCI Contest. Let me digress for a moment.

Please note that I am a beginner at contesting. The way a beginner participates is to listen to a station for long enough that I can copy the call sign and the exchange (usually signal report, state and club number). Hearing this five or six times enables me to write down this information, well as my exchange. The QSO is then merely a matter of cranking up the speed of the keyer and making the contact. This works most of the time unless the other station misses something and sends a splattering of dits and dahs followed by a question mark. I am then left to guess what part of my exchange was missed and send that again. People on the other end are usually kind and patient with me in this process.

I wanted to spend time with Ashby so I took my handy QRP transceiver (an Elecraft KX-1) out to the porch, together with two pieces of wire 24 and 15 feet long. I threw the longer wire up into a tree successfully. I say “successfully” because Ashby has watched me make many unsuccessful attempts at doing this in the past—she is always entertained by my attempts at throwing thinking I am reaching a new level of senility.

This radio is a magical device I built from a kit. It is about the size of two packs of cigarettes, but it has a set of paddles connected to it, an internal tuner, internal batteries, and operates on three bands (20, 30 and 40 meters) putting out about two watts. The KX-1 has all of the amenities of a fully operating CW ham station, including a light for use in logging contacts at night. All the operator needs to do is get the antenna in the air and connect it with the counterpoise wire to the radio.

While out on the porch with Ashby, I was able to have two QSOs, one in Ohio and the other in Illinois, with reports of 559 and 599 respectively. An experienced operator would have accomplished a lot more than I did. But for me, it was pure magic that I was able to communicate with these two people so far away on a Sunday afternoon from my front porch.

By the middle of next year, the FCC will probably do away with the Morse Code requirement for being licensed as a ham radio enthusiast. But Morse Code will not die because of the FCC’s decision. People like me will continue learning the code as long as we can communicate using very simple, low-power but effective radios that can be built at home—something that cannot be done by voice and phone.

Just think, two watts, a simple little radio, on a porch in Helena, Montana, using a piece of wire for an antenna, all the way to Ohio and Illinois. Isn’t that a miracle? Isn’t that intriguing? Isn’t that a challenge to be able to do? You bet it is. And I’d bet you know plenty of folks who, like yourself, would love to have that experience—the magic of radio!

The W7TCK Newsletter is published by the Capital City Amateur Radio Club.

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Editor's E-Mail: jdmcdougall@juno.com

CCARC Regular meetings are at 7:00 pm on the first non-holiday Monday of each month at the Salvation Army Church 1905 Henderson.

VE exams are offered monthly, just prior to the regular CCARC meeting, but on an appointment only basis. If no appointments are made, VE exams will not be scheduled for that month. Those wishing to take an exam should contact John Geach, KS7R, 442-7107 at least two days prior to the CCARC meeting to schedule an exam.

W7MRI Repeater: 147.82 (-offset)
Net every Tuesday at 7:30 pm local time on the 147.82 (-offset) repeater.

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All expressions of opinions and all statements of supposed facts are published on the authority of the author and are not to be regarded as expressing the view of CCARC.

Biscuits and Gravy

Come to Hardee's on Saturday. Every Saturday morning between 9:30 and 11:00, as many as twenty hams show up for "EYEBALL" QSOs.

COME JOIN THE FUN!

NOVEMBER MEETING

During this month's Capital City Amateur Radio Club's meeting, we will be having nominations of officers for the year 2006. Several key positions are open this year. Please, attend this all important meeting.

Dues

An early reminder that dues are due by January 2006 for the next year. Dues help support the many events we participate in throughout the year along with maintaining and purchasing equipment as needed. Your \$25 goes a long way with CCARC. Please, consider renewing early to avoid losing out on club privileges and missing issues of CCARC News.

First Class Mail