



WASHRAG™



VOLUME 15 ISSUE 03

MARCH 2013

WASHFest 2013

It's really something how the **WASHFest** comes and goes so quickly with seemingly little effort, well at least on my part. The reason that is I am sure is because the effort Carol and Rich Danko put into dealing with vendors and the various prizes. Thanks and praise deservedly go to them. Thanks also to the great weather we had quite a good turn out of hams at around 360 paid admittance. If that is not the best turnout we have ever had it has to be second or third best. Finally thanks to everyone who came out to help set up the hall and to work the hamfest. It would make for a very hectic day if you all did not do your part during the weekend. Carol and I heard many good comments about this year's **WASHFest** from vendors and rank and file hams alike. Most of our vendors have already said that next year's **WASHFest** is already on their calendar to attend. All in all the **WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH HILLS** collectively can hold its head high as we once again represented ourselves very well.

There is a cooperative effort among many of the WPA Section clubs that sponsor hamfests to share email lists of vendors and hams that attend their hamfests. The purpose is to take advantage of the internet to contact hams and vendors to promote hamfests rather than the traditional method of hard copy mailings. This year for instance **WASH** spent almost \$500 to have promotional mailings produced and mailed using a commercial service and the U.S. Postal Service. We could save this entire amount by using email instead the how we have done it up until now. I already have received Uniontown ARC's and WACOM's list with the promise of sharing our list.

Unfortunately I have no email addresses in our current

Continued
on page 5

Carol's Comments

Another successful **WASHfest** is under our belt. There were quite a few members who helped make it possible. Thank you to all those who contributed their time and effort.

And of course without my right arm (guess who) I would not have been able to do my job.

All the tables were sold, attendance was great and the food was delicious. We received a lot of compliments from venders and attendees. They all said "see you next year!"

All the reports will be discussed at the meeting on Thursday, March 14th, 2013.

The next club function will be ARRL Field Day June 23rd and 24th. This is a group activity to sharpen our skills and to prepare for emergency disasters should they occur. We all need to work together and participate in this activity to communicate with other hams all over the world.

It is also a time when we can get together as a group and enjoy each others company, with good friends and good food. This will also be a success only if members participate and operate. I am sure



Next Monthly Meeting: March 14th, 2013

The next meeting of the **WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH HILLS, INC.** will be on **Thursday, March 14th 2013**, at the **Crossroads Ministries Church**, 88 Walter Long Road of f Route 88, Finleyville PA, starting at 7:00 PM.

WASHFest 2013 wrap-up, Dayton Hamvention, and Field Day initial plans, will be amongst the topics. And the CW training & related construction projects will continue!! Don't forget it's also our annual post-**WASHFest** Pizza Night!!

"Seen" at the WASH February Meeting



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WASH 2013 OFFICERS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

President	Carol Danko KB3GMN
VP / Secretary	Ben Williams KB3ERQ
VP / Treasurer	Mark Stabryla N3RDV

AND WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT:

N3SH Trustee	Larry Comden K3VX
WA3SH Trustee	Rich Danko N3SBF
NP2SH Trustee	Paul Jordan NP2JF
N3SH / WA3SH / NP2SH QSL Manager	Ron Notarius W3WN
NP2SH 2009 QSL Manager	Carl Schroeder K9CS
VE Team Liaison	Ron Notarius W3WN
Webmaster	Randy George N3ZK
Asst. Webmaster	Sean Sleeman N3NWR
Quartermaster	Harold Rosenberger K3HCR
WASH FM Net Manager	Glen Roberts KE7FD
WASHFest 2013 Committee	Kevin Smith N3HKQ, Chairman
	Carol Danko KB3GMN, Co-Chair
Activities & Operating Events	Bob Timmins AB3ED
Ways & Means	Carol Danko KB3GMN
WASH 2M Contest Chair	Ron Notarius W3WN
Field Day 2013 Coordinators	Larry Comden K3VX
	Rick Bell KB3IAC

CLUB-AFFILIATED REPEATERS, BEACONS, & DIGIPEATERS:

Mt. Lebanon	N3SH / R	146.955 MHz (-)	PL 131.8
Mt. Lebanon	W3SRL / R	442.550 MHz (+)	PL 131.8
Canonsburg	N3FB / R	443.650 MHz (+)	PL 131.8
St. Johns, VI	NP2SH / B	28.276 MHz	Propagation Beacon
Canonsburg	N3SH	144.390 MHz	APRS Digipeater

N3SH / WA3SH WASHNet, the weekly on-air net of WASH, meets every **Thursday** Night, 9:00 PM ET, on the 146.955 & 443.650 repeaters. All radio amateurs, WASH members or not, are welcome to join in!

THE LEGAL STUFF

"The WASHRag™" (formerly **"The Mariner™"**) is the Official Newsletter of the **WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH HILLS, INC. (WASH)**

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The **WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH HILLS, INC.** was founded on August 23rd, 1993, as the original **SOUTH HILLS AMATEUR RADIO CLUB**, and operated under that name through 1998. WASH was also known briefly in late 1998 as the **N3SH AMATEUR RADIO CLUB**. It is not in any way affiliated with the "South Hills Amateur Radio Club, Inc." and is not responsible for that group, it's members, or it's actions in any way, shape, or form.

As always, special thanks to the owners of both the N3SH-W3SRL Repeater System and the N3FB/R Repeater System for permitting the **WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH HILLS, INC.** and it's members to use their repeaters for club purposes.

WASH Amateur Radio Club News Briefs

Next WASH VE Test TBD

The WASH VE Team held a short exam session on Sunday, February 24th, during **WASHFest 2013**, Castle Shannon VFD Memorial Hall, 3600 Library Road, Castle Shannon, PA. Four candidates took their examinations, 1 for a new license, three upgrades.

We had two successful candidates. Congratulations to Sean Sleeman N3NWR and Ben Williams KB3ERQ on their upgrades to General Class!

Our thanks to all of the Volunteer Examiners who donated their time in the middle of the hamfest to conduct the exams: Sue KB3JHQ, Jim WB4GCS, Rick KB3IAC, Bob WC3O, Dave N3IDH and Bill W3WH. Thanks also to Glen KE7FD for additional assistance. And most importantly, a very special thanks to the dozen or so additional VE's who, when hearing the "test starts in 10 minutes" announcement, freely volunteered to come and assist if needed.

Future test dates and locations for the remainder of 2013 will be announced soon, once schedules and locations are confirmed.

— 73, Ron Notarius W3WN
WASH ARRL VEC Liason

Carol's Comments continued from page 1

our Field Day committee, Rick KB3IAC & Larry K3VX will be looking for your cooperation.

To all those who are going to Dayton have a great time. Just remember this club does good things when we work together.

See you at the PIZZA PARTY at this Thursday's meeting.

— 73, Carol Danko KB3GMN
President, Wireless Association of South Hills
N3SH / WA3SH / NP2SH

WASHNet Moves

Following a poll of the members and other input, the weekly on-air club net has been **moved to Thursday nights at 9 PM**.

It will NOT normally meet on those nights of a regular Club meeting.

It will still be on the 146.955 & 443.650 repeaters.

Bear with Net Manager Glen KE7FD as we get the NCS schedules and such in place!

WASHNet 2013 NCS Schedule

02/07/2013	Bob AB3ED	03/07/2013	Dave N3DFK
02/14/2013	(meeting week)	03/14/2013	(meeting night)
02/21/2013	Sean N3NWR	03/21/2013	Kevin N3HKQ
02/28/2013	Dave N3IDH	03/28/2013	Harold K3HCR

Saturday, February 23rd laws a cool, crisp morning. The start of a perfect weekend for a hamfest! But first things first. Before a hamfest comes hall setup, and before hall setup comes... the monthly gathering of **the WASH Breakfast Gang** at **The Beach House** in Finleyville. Present were W9UK, W3VFA, W3RJM, KB3DCO, WB4GCS, K3HCR, K3STG & Barb, N3BPB, N3HKQ and W3WN. Morning topics covered the ongoing CQ 160 Meter SSB contest, working HK on 160 CW, moving to Pleasant Hills, Subaru's blowing up, paying for airline window aisle seats, driving instead of flying, cars on fire due to low fuel oil pressure, GROL licenses, JAG NCIS & Homeland Security, Medicare and Medical EOB's, calling the IRS, flat taxes, "this is not your grandmother's AM radio station!", local radio on satellite TV, "the F4 — proof that given enough thrust, anything can fly!", medical care in YV... and that was just a small sampling.

Our next gathering will be fitting snugly right between Good Friday and the Home Opener! So we hope you're ready to Play Ball, and will join us for a hot cup of coffee and a bite at **The Beach House**, Library Road, Finleyville, just south of Trax Farm, on March 30th.

See you there!

On the mend: Richie N3SBF is home recuperating after spending a few days in the hospital. (He says he was ill, but we wonder if he just wanted to check out the nurses!) Glad to know he's doing much better, and here's hoping that he makes a full recovery.

If you joined up or renewed at WASHFest, please make sure you're on the current list on Page 4. Things get a little hectic sometimes during a busy event, so let's make sure nothing slipped through the cracks!

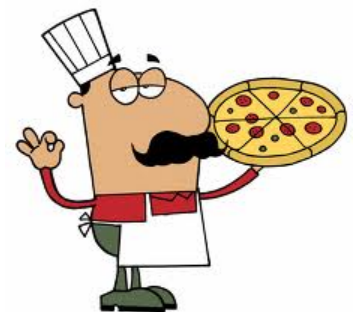
Incidentally, this will be the last month that the 2012 members will be listed. So now is the time to renew!

We hear from Paul NØVLR that he has **adapted the WASH 2 Meter Simplex Contest** to the Willamette Valley in OR. "The results were very good. I kept it simple — ZIP codes for multipliers, and FM only, as this was our first year. We also instituted the electronic log system (ie send me your spreadsheet) and that worked wonderfully as well." If you're interested, you can download the results in PDF format from www.bcares.org. Paul also has submitted a write-up to the ARRL, so this may even make QST or another League publication or web site!

So, **speaking of WASHFest**, if you were there, you already know this. From Ye Editor's perspective, the morning started out busy, the hall became crowded very quickly starting at 8, and things didn't really let up until almost noon time. A quick spot-check with vendors showed most of them very happy about the turn out! And — most plan to be back next year. Art NQ3A, our WPA DXCC card checker had plenty of business (and even got off a few friendly wise cracks at Ye Editor's expense, but that's OK... we're used to it, being married). The kitchen was quite busy most of the morning. All in all... we done good.

Turn out was on par with last year, give or take a few... unlike many other events that have seen significant drop-offs. While we still didn't quite make our peak attendance from many years ago, we definitely had one of our top turn-outs in many years.

Needless to say, while there are (as always) a few things to talk over, and a few (as always) rough edges that need some work... we done good. So don't forget that **the March meeting** will also be **Pizza Night**, in celebration of another successful hamfest! And please don't forget to let Carol know if you are coming, and what you'd like on it. (For those with dietary concerns, please let her know that as well so that alternatives can be arranged as necessary)



As part of the increase in postal rates last January, the US Postal Service has introduced a new Global Forever First-Class Mail International Stamp.

The new stamp costs \$1.10 for a 1 ounce letter overseas, or a 2 ounce letter to Canada.

The stamp is currently available at all USPS Post offices.

Join WASH or Renew your Membership for 2013 Today! Membership Application on Page 15!

Minutes, February 15th Meeting

Ben Williams KB3ERQ, VP/Secretary, **WASH**

Carol KB3GMN called the meeting to order at 19:14 hours. There were 15 members and guests in attendance.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all, followed by introductions.

A moment of silence was observed for recent silent keys and other deserving persons.

A motion was made by Bill W3WH to waive reading of the December minutes as published in the newsletter. Seconded by Ron W3WN and carried unanimously.

Committee reports:

Treasurer (N3RDV): A balance on the bank account was read & accepted.

Secretary (KE7FD): No report.

VE Team (W3WN): KI4DHB has resigned as the VE Team Liason for **WASH**. Ron W3WN has volunteered to take the position for the time being. There will be a small, closed test session at **WASHFest** due to limited space & amount of test materials initially sent from the ARRL VE office; we will not be able to accept walk-ins this time. (Editor's note: We were able to accommodate one walk-in, no other inquiries were made at **WASHFest**)

Repeaters (N3FB): "a work in progress" No other information to report at this time.

Net Report (KE7FD): There was no NCS available last night, as it was expected to be a meeting night. Following discussion & a vote on the reflector, the net has moved from Sunday to Thursday nights, start time to remain 9 PM.

Contests (K3VX): ARRL DX CW is this weekend, ARRL DX SSB in 2 weeks. Ron W3WN invited all interested to operate M/S from his station.

WASHFest 2013 (KB3GMN): As of meeting time, exactly 4 tables remain unsold, and are expected to go quickly. Wrist bands for vendors, workers, and attendees are in stock. Volunteers are needed to set up the hall on Saturday and especially to man the door & the club table on Sunday. Main prizes, door prizes, and black box prizes are all done. Items still needed included the club sign (K3HCR), spinners, and coffee pots.

Field Day 2013 (KB3IAC):

- Carol announced that "Rick asked members to fill out survey to about what they want from Field Day." We still need members to fill out the survey.
- Rick continued that we are going to base field day on those who responded to the survey. He handed out an operating schedule in order to operate a full 24 hours. We need members to "commit" to an operating time slot. This will be published this on the website and in the newsletter. "We are trying to scale down field day to the number of people who participate."

Public Service (N3IDH): No report

Ways and Means: 50/50 tonight.

Newsletter (W3WN): Published. Positive reaction to the new look. Sometime after **WASHFest** there will be a mini-contest to Name the Squirrel.

President's Report (KB3GMN): Carol formally presented Ben KB3ERQ with the Kilowatt Award as announced at the holiday party (applause).

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Good of the order: Ron W3WN mentioned that Greg NB3C is now seeking funds to cover the rooms at the University of Dayton for the 2013 Hamvention excursion.

Motion to Adjourn by Bill W3WH, second by Larry K3VX and carried.

Meeting adjourned at 20:06 hours.



WASH Spotlight: 1st



Photo courtesy of and ©Copyright 2013 Kevin Smith N3HKQ

WASH President Carol Danko KB3GMN presenting the **WASHFest 2013** First Prize to Gary Van Balen KB3GUZ. Gary came back to pick up his prize; our other main prize winners were sent their prizes later.

Who? Prize list located on Page 7, in the midst of our hamfest photo galleries on Pages 6—8.

Every month we're going to feature a **WASH** club member, something about them, something they're involved in or a club-related activity that we're involved in, in the **WASH Spotlight**. Submissions for the Spotlight should be sent to Ron W3WN at [newsletter at n3sh dot org](mailto:newsletter@n3sh.org)

Monthly WASH Breakfast

Please join us for the next **WASH** Breakfast! We usually get together on the LAST Saturday of every month for a chance to informally sit down, shoot the breeze, compare notes, drink lots of coffee, and just have a good time!



Join us this month at **The Beach House**, on Route 88 in Finleyville, just south of Trax Farms and adjacent to Mineral Beach. Start time is about 8 AM until ????. Monitor 146.955 & 443.650 for talk-in or any last minute changes.

All are welcome, **WASH** members or not, amateurs or not!

Wireless Association of South Hills Membership

2013	N7TDX	KE7FD	WASH FL	WASH OH	Silent
AE3DL	W3RWS	KJ3D	KA3UPY/M	N8DPW	Keys
K3GW	W3VFA	N3AWF	W4ZE	WASH SC	
K3HCR	W3WH	N3CZZ	WASH GA	N3RNX	K3EED
K3VX	W3WN	N3DFK	K3OL	WASH TN	K3LIE
K3WJL	WA3BOJ	N3FB	KB3IJX	KE3XB	KA3NMG
KA3TWI	WB4GCS	N3FPF	WASH ID	N3YPB	KB3ENX
KB3DCO	Timothy	N3HKQ	N3ZNI	WASH TX	KB3FNM
KB3GMN	Costello	N3KFD	WASH NE	K3LGM	KB3FQT
KB3GMP	Darryn	N3RDV	N0PEU	Jane Wagner	N3FZ
KB3GUZ	Sleeman	N3RHT	WASH OR	WASH VI	N3KEH
KB3JHR		N3TIR	N0VLR	NP2JF	N3OBD
KB3IAC	AB3ED	N3UE	N0WPV		N3SKR
KB3IVX	AB3EN	N3YJJ	KB3NVL		N3SRC
KB3MHM	AB3KA	N3ZK	KB3NVM		N3ZEL
KB3TOA	AC4KU	N3ZNI			N3XFE
KB3YCX	K3SGT	W3LE			W3ZLK
KC4WTT	K0LIN	WA4ONC			WA3JPP
N2QIV	KB3ERQ	W03Z			
N3BPB	KB3GMU				
N3IDH	KB3SPD				
N3NWR	KB3SPE				
N3OVO	KB3SRC				
N3SBF	KB3WRO				

Through March 10th, 2013
List compiled by
Mark Stabryla N3RDV,
Vice President/Treasurer

2013 WASH Upcoming Events Calendar

Meeting Topics & Other Significant Club Events — Subject to Change

March 2 nd & 3 rd	ARRL DX Contest SSB	http://www.arrl.org
March 14 th	WASH Meeting	@ Crossroad Ministries Church
March 16 th	Breezeshooter's Groundwave SSB	http://www.breezeshooters.net/html/
March 30 th & 31 st	CQ WPX Contest SSB	http://www.cqwpw.com
April 11 th	WASH Meeting	@ Crossroad Ministries Church
April 28 th	2 Rivers ARC Hamfest	http://www.trarc.net/trarc-hamfest
May 9 th	WASH Meeting	@ Crossroad Ministries Church
May 17 th — 19 th	Dayton Hamvention	http://www.hamvention.org/
May 25 th & 26 th	CQ WPX Contest CW	http://www.cqwpw.com
June 2 nd	Breezeshooter's Hamfest	http://www.breezeshooters.org/
June 8 th — 9 th	ARRL June VHF Contest	http://www.arrl.org
June 13 th	WASH Meeting	@ Crossroad Ministries Church
June 22 nd & 23 rd	ARRL Field Day	http://www.arrl.org
July 11 th	WASH Meeting	@ Crossroad Ministries Church
July 13 th & 14 th	IARU World Championship	http://www.iaru.org
August 8 th	WASH Meeting	@ Crossroad Ministries Church
September 12 th	WASH Meeting	@ Crossroad Ministries Church
October 10 th	WASH Meeting	@ Crossroad Ministries Church
November 14 th	WASH Meeting	@ Crossroad Ministries Church
December 12 th	WASH Meeting	@ Crossroad Ministries Church

WASHFest 2013 Wrap-Up Continued from Page 1

list. We will need to put together an email list from the prize and admission tickets we sold as well as by any other means we can. I may need to ask that we spend some time after a club meeting to go through these tickets and create an email list from them. If anyone knows of other sources of email addresses for hams please let Carol or me know.

Congratulations again to WASH for another great **WASHFest**. Let's enjoy the fruits of our collective labor and also use our resources to become a club that can better serve our community.

— 73, Kevin Smith N3HKQ, Chairman, WASHFest 2013



WASHFest 2013

Photos courtesy of and © Copyright 2013 Ron Notarius W3WN



WASHFest 2013

Photos courtesy of and © Copyright 2013 Ron Notarius W3WN

Prize Winners

1st Prize
2nd Prize
3rd Prize
4th Prize

Gary Van Balen KB3GUZ
John Nemmer KB3GXP
Lou Hahn KB3EQJ
Rob Walker KBØPRZ

Black Box # 1
Black Box # 2
50/50

Chuck N3UUZ
Eric K3SGT
Merle K3HIR

Door Prizes: (calls shown when indicated on prize ticket)

Dave Tennant
Ron Kubiak
Rick Bell KB3IAC
Chris Grimm KB3GGW
Dan Dinkeldein
John Brush WB3CAS
Jim Heiles KB3IYS
Steve Denbow KD8BIW
Firk Finch W3RKT
Woody Eiker KB3QHC
Brian Cooney K5BPC

Congratulations to one and all!



Black Box #1
Chuck N3UUZ



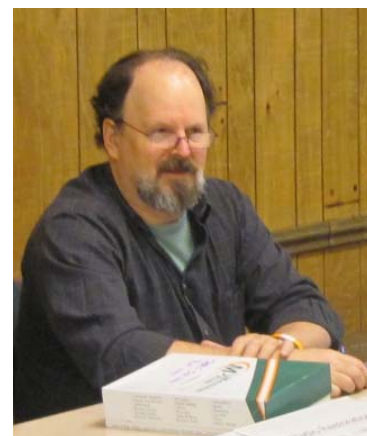
Black Box #2
Eric K3SGT

Main Prize Table
(Door Prizes Underneath)



WASHFest 2013

Photos courtesy of and © Copyright 2013 Ron Notarius W3WN



Top 5 Station Accessories Every Ham Needs

Don Keith N4KC courtesy of www.eham.net

Okay, so you have studied the manuals, answered hundreds of exam-pool questions on-line, and happily passed your licensing exam. Congratulations! You've finally gotten to the point where you can say your mouthful of a call sign without stumbling. And you have purchased your primary station transceiver, something for VHF/UHF in the car, and have a decent antenna or two. You may even be on the air already, making contacts and flinging RF all over the globe.

Now is the time to start thinking about what else you need in your shack to enhance your enjoyment and the fulfillment offered by our amazing hobby. I have some suggestions for you, based on my own opinion and experience. Others may have different ideas and I assure you they will not hesitate to express them in this worthy venue.

First thing, I am NOT going to include on this list some items others may consider to be essential. I believe each of the following are "nice things to have" but not absolutely required to have yourself some fun and fully enjoy being a ham. The other accessories I will then list in rank order are those I think should come first.

That "nice to have but not essential" list includes:

- A linear amplifier. Yes, they are wonderful to have when the going gets rough, but a good transceiver (which, when I say "good," means a decent receiver with some modicum of filtering and noise suppression) and an efficient antenna system will open up the world for you with 100 watts. Save your pennies and get you an amp someday. I operated without one for the first 47 years of my ham radio tenure and have had a blast. Now, I'm often glad I have the extra 9db of signal, but I still would not rate the amp as an essential accessory.
- A tall tower and multi-element HF beam. Again, nice to have, but not an option for many. A well-designed vertical or wire antenna system will still allow you to work the world. I did it with a G5RV and a multi-band trap vertical. And I've done it with tri-band beams and my current hexbeam. Beams are better but not essential.
- An "antenna tuner." I can make a good argument for this being a required accessory. If you have read previous articles by N4KC then you know I am an advocate of having at least one of your antennas being a long piece of wire (dipole or loop) fed with open wire feedline so you can use it on multiple bands. If you have gone that route then yes, you must have a "tuner." The auto-tuner available in most radios these days may or may not be robust enough to cover all the bands and their segments on which you wish to dance. However, for the purpose of this article, and because not every ham will require one, we will keep the antenna matching device in the "nice to have" category. But keep in my mind it can also be a must-have gadget, depending on your antenna situation.

Now, what do I think you DO need? What do I believe should be your top five accessory purchases as you delve into the hobby? Here goes, in what I believe is the order of importance:

1. **A good watt meter.** And by "good," I mean it should be reasonably accurate (lab grade not required) and ideally have the ability to see both forward and reflected power. A cross-needle display is really nice so you can see forward and reflected power at the same time and get a decent idea of your antenna SWR.

Those who have seen my previous articles here on eHam and in my book RIDING THE SHORTWAVES: EXPLORING THE MAGIC OF AMATEUR RADIO know that I believe SWR is a highly over-rated commodity. Still, it is good to have an instant visual check on the integrity of your antenna system. If the SWR is suddenly 10:1, you know something is haywire with either your antenna matching device, feed line, or antenna.

And as long as we are talking ideal, I would also get a watt meter that has a peak-reading function. I am sure you remember from your studies that many watt meters do not react in such a way as to allow you to see what actual peak power is for such modes as SSB. If you glance at that swinging meter movement over there, it may appear that you are only putting out 60 or 70 watts even though you are sure you set the transceiver's output power at 100 big ones. A peak-reading meter will show you more accurately what you are actually doing.

Nowadays, there are several manufacturers that make good peak-reading watt meters with either dual displays or a single cross-needle meter face. Be sure it will handle the power you intend to shoot through it and that it will work on the frequency range for which you will need it. I have seen—and purchased—several such meters, good for HF frequencies, for less than \$100 new. Add capability up to UHF and they get pricier, or you may want to just get a separate VHF/UHF meter. Be wary of used meters at flea markets as they may have been scorched beyond repair, but you can also get a good bargain there, too.

2. **A dummy load.** Yes, a dummy load. Stop airwave pollution while you fiddle with that new radio or tuner. Avoid entertaining the rest of us and the shortwave-listening world while you adjust your transmit audio processing for hours on end with that oft-heard yodel, "H – e – l – l – o – o – o, radio – o – o!"

Again, be sure the dummy load you buy can handle the amount of power you intend to send coursing through its oily innards. Read the manual to be sure you know what the tolerable on-and-off cycle should be so you don't fry its resistors or send its oil bubbling over like a witch's cauldron.

3. **A volt/ohm meter.** Look, I know not everyone gets into ham radio to learn all there is to know about electronics. There is nothing wrong with that, and many other aspects of the hobby besides the technical part attract folks to its ranks. However, a decent volt/ohm meter can serve a number of purposes in your shack.

I confess I usually go for the cheapest model Radio Shack has on its shelves (using those nice Shack gift cards my kids give me for Father's Day) or something I pick up at hamfests. As with the watt meter, you are not looking for something NASA might use. If you do yearn to learn more and construction and kit-building are in your wheelhouse, invest in something heftier and more fully featured. However, ninety percent of my VOM usage is checking continuity on coaxial cables and jumpers or making sure my 13.8 volt power supply—the one without benefit of a voltmeter on its plain-Jane face—is somewhere in the general vicinity of 13.8 volts. That and checking the veracity of refugees from that pile of discarded AA batteries. For this reason, I usually prefer an analog meter as opposed to a digital readout. Take your pick. Or have one of each.

4. **An antenna switch.** Even if you are new to the hobby and only have one antenna out back or stretched across the attic, trust me, you will soon have more. I suspect mine are mating back there and having babies. I put up a G5RV and a 2-meter/70 CM j-pole, and before I knew it, wires crossed my backyard with such regularity that birds can no longer safely fly through the maze.

My rig has two antenna outputs. I have five HF antennas. Simple solution: a 4-position coax switch (my big horizontal loop goes to a second output on my auto-tuner). Read the reviews here on eHam on the various switches available. Most are perfectly okay for amateur use. Expect to pay up to \$100 for a solid, manually-switched device and well above that if you opt for something you remote outside and switch electronically. Either way, you prevent carpal tunnel from constantly screwing connectors on and off. Using such a switch also neatens up the shack considerably.

5. **A computer.** I almost left this one off since it is so obvious anymore. But I still talk with hams who have the computer upstairs and the rig downstairs. When I became active again in 2005, I had my shack in my son's old room and my office/computer in the old family room next door, both in the basement part of the house. I somehow did not realize how firmly the 'puter had become entrenched in the day-to-day operation of a ham shack.

It did not take me long to move the shack into the office with the transceiver right next to the desktop computer. And I also keep my laptop on the desk, too, so I can interface easily with the radio for firmware updates, memory programming, and the like. I use it to program my two HTs and the mobile HF/VHF/UHF radio, too. The main computer is hooked up to the main rig through a SignalLink USB external sound card for digital modes. And I usually keep DX Summit and QRZ.com open in the browser on one or the other

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The Calm Before the Solar Storm?

NASA Warns: "Something Unexpected is Happening to the Sun"

Mark Prigg courtesy of [Mail Online](#)

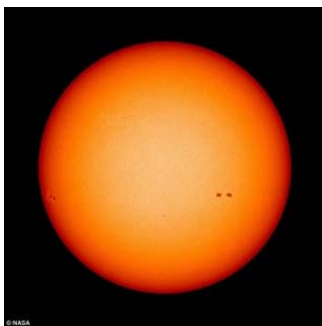
'Something unexpected' is happening on the Sun, NASA has warned.

This year was supposed to be the year of 'solar maximum,' the peak of the 11-year sunspot cycle.

But as this image reveals, solar activity is relatively low.

'Sunspot numbers are well below their values from 2011, and strong solar flares have been infrequent,' the space agency says.

The image above shows the Earth-facing surface of the Sun on February 28, 2013, as observed by the Helioseismic and Magnetic Imager (HMI) on NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory.



It observed just a few small sunspots on an otherwise clean face, which is usually riddled with many spots during peak solar activity.

Experts have been baffled by the apparent lack of activity - with many wondering if NASA simply got it wrong.

However, Solar physicist Dean Pesnell of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center believes he has a different explanation.

'This is solar maximum,' he says.

'But it looks different from what we expected because it is double-peaked.'

'The last two solar maxima, around 1989 and 2001, had not one but two peaks.'

Solar activity went up, dipped, then rose again, performing a mini-cycle that lasted about two years, he said.

The same thing could be happening now, as sunspot counts jumped in 2011 and dipped in 2012, he believes.

Pesnell expects them to rebound in 2013: 'I am comfortable in saying that another peak will happen in 2013 and possibly last into 2014.'

He spotted a similarity between Solar Cycle 24 and Solar Cycle 14, which had a double-peak during the first decade of the 20th century.

If the two cycles are twins, 'it would mean one peak in late 2013 and another in 2015'.



Researchers have recently captured massive sunspots on the solar surface - and believed we should have seen more

DX News Briefs



The Wake Atoll Commemoration DXpedition will be QRV early in October 2013 (actual operating dates TBA). The will be operating as **K9W**. The DXpedition is being dedicated to the memory of the 'Forgotten 98' civilian contractors who lost their lives on Wake (OC-053) on 7 October 1943. QSL via OQRS or AA4NN. More information at <http://www.wake2013.org/> -- Wake Island 2013 Team

A team of operators is currently QRV as **H44G** through 25 March. (The Temotu operation as **H40T** is on hold due to flight cancellations). QSL via DL7DF. [More information at http://www.dl7df.com/index.html](http://www.dl7df.com/index.html) — DL7DF

GM3WOJ & GM4YXI will be QRV as **VK9CZ** from Cocos-Keeling OC-003 30 March - 13 April. Activity will be SSB & CW, some RTTY. More information at <http://www.vk9cz.com/>. QSL via N3SL — DX World

AB7FS has moved to Rarotonga OC-013 and is QRV as **E51AND**. He is planning on "having a good gain antenna system" and plans future activity this summer from Palmerston OC-124 and/or Pukapuka OC-098. QSL direct via his Cook Islands address — E51AND

A group of 8 operators are currently QRV as **9M4SLL** Spratly Island. They plan to be QRV with 5 stations, 160 - 10, CW SSB & RTTY. They report "We are aware that there is a Great Wall of jamming and pirate activity, and suggest people check Clublog to determine that they made a QSO with 9M4SLL rather than a pirate. QSL via MØURX — 9M6DXX

R6AF will be operating from Busuanga Island OC-090 as **DU1/R6AF** 27 April - 3 May — R6AF

The planned **T2GM** Tuvalu operation has been... rearranged. 3 of the 4 ops had their initial flight from Glasgow cancelled, and as a result their various connecting flights were no longer available. However, GM3POI was able to make it to Tuvalu, and the others are trying to get there from Fiji. More information at <http://t2gm.org> — MMØNDX

DK5ON will be QRV from both sides of Saint Martin/Sint Maarten as **FS/DK5ON** and **DJ7/DK5ON**, through 29 March, 80 - 6, SSB PSK & RTTY. QSL via DK5ON — DK5ON

VU2PAI and W4VKU will be QRV as **8Q7KP** from South Male Atoll 23 - 30 April — DX World

AG1LE will be QRV as **E51DXX** from Rarotonga OC-013 1 - 13 April, on all HF bands. QSL via AG1LE — AG1LE

ON7WP will be active as **C5WP** from The Gambia 20 — 27 March. He plans further activity in August. QSL via ON7WP — AA9HX

G1EUZ will be QRV from Ascension Island as **ZD8RAF** 18 — 22 March, with an IC-7000 and a vertical dipole. QSL via G1EUZ — G3EUZ

QSL Routes

1A0C via IZ7KHR — LU2EMH	HK1NA via K6IPM — HK1R
2O12L via GW1FKY — JA1HGY	HK1R via K6IPM — HK1R
3C0C via EA5BYP — TA3J	J79WE via DL8WEM — J79WE
3D2OP via PT2OP — LU2DKN	NH0Z via JJ2VLY — JQ2GYU
3D2RO via N7OU — 3D2RO	OJ0R via G3TXF — JA1HGY
3D2RX via W7YAQ — 3D2RX	R11ANU via ZS1OIN — DX World
3W1M via OM3JW — KG4W	S79NEN via DO5NEN — KG4W
5T0SP via SP6FXV — LU2DKN	T30PY via PY2PT — LU2EMH
5W1SA via JA1DXA — 5W1SA	T32WW via UA6HZ — W4DN
6V7S via RK4FF — 6V7S	TF4M via G3SWH — G3SWH
7W50I via 7X2ARA — KG4W	V26E via AB2E — V26E
9A6MM via G43SWH — G3SWH	V63XG via JA1XGI — JA1HGY
9Q6CC via CX2CC — AA5AM	V84SMD via IK2VUC — W2IRT
C21BN via JH1NBN — JQ2GYU	VK8CW via G3SWH — G3SWH
C6AVA via N6AWD — C6AVA	VK9L/W7PBL via JH3PBL — PY5EW
CV5A via CX2ABC — DX World	XX9THX via EA7FTR — LU2DKN
FM5BH via W3HNN — FM5BH	Z81Z via K4ZW — KG4W
H40FN via HA8DD — KG4W	ZL9HR via EB7DX — KG4W

Thanks to the NJDXA DX News & DX Chat Reflectors, the DX-QSL Reflector, 425 DX News, OPDX News, DX World.Net, ICPO Bulletin, & ARRL DX Bulletin for our DX News information. Thanks also to Bill Moore NC1L / ARRL DXCC Desk, & Bernie McClenny W3UR / The Daily DX for confirmations & additional information.



WASH Classifieds

Information shown here is as supplied to the **WASHRag**. Condition as stated, and all sales should be considered "as-is" unless otherwise noted. All subject to prior sale or withdrawal from sale at the owner's discretion. All responsibility for this information lies with the source and not the **WASHRag** or the **WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH HILLS, INC.**

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Antenna Zoning or PRB-1 Issues?

Contact: **Michael S. Lazaroff K3AIR, Esquire**

Murrin, Taylor, Flach, Gallagher & May
110 East Diamond Street, Butler PA 16001
Phone: 724-282-3141 mlazaroff@murrinlaw.com

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Woodworking [http://
www.randygeorgewoodworking.com/](http://www.randygeorgewoodworking.com/)

See his eBay store for special deals at [http://
stores.shop.ebay.com/Randy-George-Custom-
Signs_W0QQ_armrsZ1](http://stores.shop.ebay.com/Randy-George-Custom-Signs_W0QQ_armrsZ1)



Hammond Manufacturing of
Cheektowaga, New York, has
announced that it will take over the
Peter W. Dahl line of transformers
from **Harbach Electronics**.

Upon his retirement in 2007, Peter
Dahl, KØBIT (SK), sold his company to Harbach Electronics,
but last month, that company **announced** that it would no
longer support Dahl products and was in negotiations with
other manufacturers to take over the Dahl product line of
transformers and magnetics.

According to both Harbach Electronics and Hammond
Manufacturing, finalization of the acquisition and transfer of
assets will take place over the next few weeks, with the
transfer to be completed by March 31, 2013.

Microsoft is blocking e-mail to the more than 20,000 ARRL
members who use the **arrrl.net** e-mail forwarding service to
forward e-mail to Microsoft domains (**hotmail.com**, **msn.com**,
live.com & **outlook.com**). The blockage is also affecting those
who use an **arrrl.org** alias e-mail address to have e-mail
delivered to an address with a Microsoft domain.

According to ARRL IT Manager Michael Keane K1MK, the ARRL
IT staff is working to have these blocks lifted and e-mail delivery
restored to normal operation as quickly as possible.

FCC News

ARRL Web Extra courtesy of the American Radio Relay League

On February 25th, the FCC issued a *Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture* (**NAL**) in the amount of \$10,000 to Jared A. Bruegman, ex-KCØIQN, of Bolivar, Missouri. The FCC said that Bruegman "apparently and willfully violated Section 301 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended by operating an unlicensed radio transmitter on the frequency 14.312 MHz in Bolivar, Missouri." Bruegman -- who does not currently hold an Amateur Radio license -- was operating in the phone portion of the 20 meter band that is assigned to the Amateur Radio Service on a primary basis; his Amateur Radio license expired in 2010. As a former Technician class licensee, he did not have privileges to operate in that portion of the 20 meter band when he held an Amateur Radio license.



In December 2012, the FCC's office in Kansas City received a complaint from an Amateur Radio operator, reporting interference on 14.312 MHz. Upon investigation, agents from that office heard a male voice transmitting on the frequency 14.312 MHz. Using direction finding equipment, the agents located the source of the radio frequency transmissions to a transmitting antenna mounted on a pole next to Bruegman's residence. The agents determined that the signals on 14.312 MHz exceeded the limits for operation under Part 15 of the Commission's rules and therefore a license was required to transmit. The agents further discovered that Bruegman did not hold a license to operate a radio transmitter on 14.312 MHz at or near that location.

The agents determined that the source of the transmissions was coming from an unlicensed radio transmitter from a bedroom in Bruegman's residence. "Mr Bruegman was the only person present in the bedroom and the only male in the residence during the inspection," the *NAL* stated. "Mr Bruegman admitted to the agents that he owned the radio transmitter. The agents observed that the transmitter was turned on and tuned to 14.311 MHz. Mr Bruegman told the agents that he had no current Commission licenses, but that he previously held an Amateur Radio license, call sign KCØIQN. Mr Bruegman told the agents he would remove the microphone from his transmitter and only use it as a receiver."

Section 503(b) of the Communications Act provides that "any person who willfully or repeatedly fails to comply substantially with the terms and conditions of any license, or willfully or repeatedly fails to comply with any of the provisions of the Act or of any rule, regulation, or order issued by the Commission there under, shall be liable for a forfeiture penalty." In addition, Bruegman was found to be in violation of Section 301 of the Communications Act, stating that "no person shall use or operate any apparatus for the transmission of energy or communications or signals by radio within the United States, except under and in accordance with the Act and with a license granted under the provisions of the Act."

Bruegman has until March 27, 2013 to pay the forfeiture in full, or file a written statement seeking its reduction or cancellation.

On March 1, the FCC issued a *Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture* (**NAL**) in the amount of \$25,000 to Terry L. VanVolkenburg, KC5RF, of Cocoa, Florida. The FCC alleged that VanVolkenburg "apparently willfully and repeatedly violated Sections 301 and 333 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended..., by operating a radio transmitter without a license on...465.300 MHz and for interfering with licensed communications." VanVolkenburg holds an Advanced class license.

In September 2012, FCC agents in the Tampa Office received a complaint of radio interference from the Brevard County Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff's Department -- licensee of call sign WQCW384 -- utilizes a wireless radio communications system in the county jail in Sharps, Florida. According to the complaint, the Sheriff's Department experienced intermittent interference to its radio communications in the jail on the frequency 465.300 MHz on at least 14 days during September and October 2012. According to the *NAL*, audio recordings taken by the Sheriff's Department suggest "that a male individual interfered with the prison's communications by transmitting vulgar language, sound effects, previously recorded prison communications and threats to prison officials over the prison's communications system."

On October 28, the agents used direction finding techniques and traced the source of the interfering radio frequency transmissions on 465.300 MHz to a residence in Cocoa, Florida. The frequency 465.300 MHz is allocated to public safety stations; as an Advanced class licensee, VanVolkenburg does not hold privileges to operate in this portion of the spectrum. In addition, the FCC's records showed that no authorization was issued to anyone to operate a private land mobile station at this location.

"Approximately two hours after locating the source of the transmissions, agents from the Tampa Office inspected the

**Continued
on page 12**

Has Roadway found the tower yet?

FCC News

Continued from Page 11

radio stations in Mr VanVolkenburg's residence," the FCC noted. "The agents recognized Mr VanVolkenburg's voice as the one interfering with the prison's communications system. Mr VanVolkenburg initially showed the agents an Amateur Radio [that was] incapable of transmitting on 465.300 MHz, but eventually produced an Alinco DJ-C5 portable radio transceiver that could operate on 465.300 MHz."

According to the NAL, VanVolkenburg "did not specifically admit that he had interfered with the prison's communications system, but when asked about the transmissions on 465.300 MHz and the interference to the prison's communications systems, he stated that he chose 465.300 MHz because the prison's transmissions on that frequency were strong; that he was only using 300 mW and did not think that he 'could talk over anyone and therefore wasn't interfering with anyone'; and that the interference would not happen again."

Although VanVolkenburg holds an Amateur Radio license, it does not authorize him to operate on public safety frequencies. "Part 15 of the Commission's rules sets out the conditions and technical requirements under which certain radio transmission devices may be used without a license," the FCC explained in the NAL. "In relevant part, [Section 15.209](#) of the rules provides that non-licensed transmissions in the 216-960 MHz band is permitted only if the field strength of the transmission does not exceed 200 $\mu\text{V}/\text{m}$ at 3 meters. The agents observed the transmissions on 465.300 MHz at a distance of approximately 2 miles from VanVolkenburg's residence. Given the distance from the source, the agents determined that the transmissions' field strength exceeded allowable Part 15 levels."

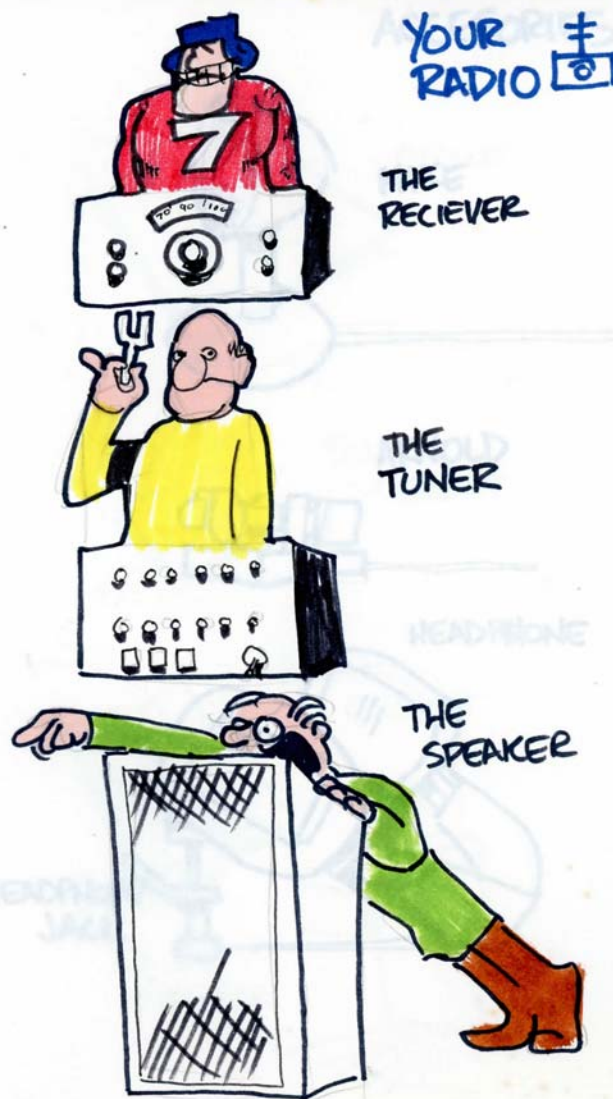
Section 503(b) of the Communications Act provides that "any person who willfully or repeatedly fails to comply substantially with the terms and conditions of any license, or willfully or repeatedly fails to comply with any of the provisions of the Act or of any rule, regulation, or order issued by the Commission thereunder, shall be liable for a forfeiture penalty." In addition, VanVolkenburg was found to be in violation of Sections 301 and 333 of the Communications Act, stating that "no person shall use or operate any apparatus for the transmission of energy or communications or signals by radio within the United States, except under and in accordance with the Act and with a license granted under the provisions of the Act." Section 333 states that "[n]o person shall willfully or maliciously interfere with or cause interference to any radio communications of any station licensed or authorized by or under this Act or operated by the United States Government."

"The totality of the evidence convinces us that it was Mr VanVolkenburg who was operating the unlicensed transmitter from his residence that was causing interference to the prison communications systems over at least a two-month period," the FCC stated in the NAL. "Because Mr VanVolkenburg consciously operated the station and did so on more than one day, the apparent violations of the Communications Act were both willful and repeated."

VanVolkenburg has until March 30th, 2013 to pay the forfeiture in full, or file a written statement seeking its reduction or cancellation.

Below: One of several old cartoons by Mark Comden that Larry Comden K3VX recently came across, several of which we'll be sharing over the next few issues.

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Top 5 Station Accessories Every Ham Needs

Continued from Page 9

machine for quick reference. I love looking up the guy with whom I am ragchewing to see what he has on his QRZ page, enabling me to launch into conversation about some of the relevant things I might find there.

Of course, other logical uses of the computer in the shack include rig control and logging. I came from an era in which we had to keep a paper log. You cannot imagine the hassle when a QSL card floated in from the bureau and I had to try to find the logbook in which that particular QSO was logged. Or when I figured I had worked up to another DXCC plateau and tried to track down the various countries to include by riffling through multiple spiral-bound logbooks.

I am still a casual user of computer rig control. Old-timer that I am, I still kind of enjoy twisting knobs. But it is there when I want to use it. And many now prefer it. Note that a whiz-bang game-worthy computer is not necessary for most amateur radio use. An Internet connection—and a reasonably fast one—is almost a necessity, though.

I suppose if you wanted to pick nits, you could say logging, digital mode, and rig-control software, and the digital interface between computer and rig are additional "accessories," and I have actually named nine here. Maybe so, but I think you get the point.

And as previously noted, I bet many of you can think of numerous ideas you might suggest in addition to or instead of the ones I have ranked above. If so, I hope you will list them here with justification for why they are recommended.

After all, the best "accessories" of all are probably an Elmer's heart and an open mind.

(N4KC maintains two web sites" his personal/professional site at www.donkeith.com and his site dedicated to amateur radio at www.n4kc.com. He also blogs on the subject of rapid technological change and its effect on media, society and amateur radio. That blog is at <http://n4kc.blogspot.com>)



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<input type="checkbox"/> (F1) Full Membership:	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$10.00	\$5.00
<input type="checkbox"/> (F2) Full Membership < 18 or > 65 yrs of age:	\$10.00	\$7.50	\$5.00	\$2.50
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Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

N3RDV has requested that 2013 membership requests and renewals include an application so that his information is up to date

Please make your check or money order payable to the club treasurer, Mark Stabryla.
The Wireless Association of South Hills, Inc. reserves the right to accept or reject new memberships or renewals.
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WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH HILLS, INC.
c/o Mark Stabryla N3RDV, VP/Treasurer
1120 McKnight Drive
Bethel Park, PA 15102-2456



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Directions to Crossroads Ministries Church



Take Library Road / State Route 88 to Walter Long Road (just past Mineral Beach & The Beach House), North of Finleyville. Turn onto Walter Long Road, follow it back to the church (which should be visible from the road).

The WASHRag

Wireless Association of South Hills, Inc.

Ron Notarius W3WN, Editor

3395 Rosewood Drive

Castle Shannon, PA 15234-2546



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Hmmm... Extra Cheese?
Pepperoni? So many choices,
so many choices!

