XARC 2000

Monthly Newsletter of the
Xerox Amateur Radio Club

President	Ken Hall	KC2DTT
Vice-President	Lou Pepin	KG2NY
Secretary	Brian Donovan	K2AS
Treasurer	Fred Donahue	W3MUD
Repeater Trustee	John Wright	KE2MK
Station Trustee	Barry Rickett	N2EZS

XARC Repeater

KE2MK
145.29 MHz Output
144.69 MHz Input

XARC Web Page:
http://www.ggw.org/xarc/

January 2000

Next club meeting:

Thursday, January 20, bldg 337 6PM

Agenda: Amateur Radio History by John Woika W8JW.

RMSC Exhibit

N2JAC

The ham radio exhibit at the RMSC was very well received. Lots of families stopped by to see what weird gadgets we had on display. We showed them how sound waves can be seen and felt as well as heard, and this related well to the bat exhibit that's going on there. We showed them the code key and oscillator that the sixth graders built in our radio coach class. The kids enjoyed turning dials and connecting alligator clips and moving the generator to light lights, and making the oscillator's tone change by connecting wires to pencil markings that changed the resistance of the circuit. Several XARCers were there to man the station over the four days.

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Inside This Issue

Upcoming On Air Events

ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes, Jan. 22-24, 2000. More next month. See http://www.arrl.org/contests/announcements/01vhfss.html for more details.

Activity Reports

Unfortunately, only John, N2JAC sent me an activity report. I hope he and I weren't the only ones doing any ham radio last month.

Santa brought N2JAC a credit card size UHF HT that is really neat. I'm going to make a palm-packet setup and I'll put a picture on my web page with my other mini-packet creations.
http://www.qsl.net/n2jac

K2AS worked the 10 meter contest a little. Made several dozen contacts, quite a few DX.

N2JAC reports radio coaches wrapped up our current semester with a big final day with the Jefferson Middle School sixth graders. We had a snappy multimedia slideshow (XARC will get a taste of this soon), operated the antique spark transmitter from the museum, made some HF contacts, did some video conferencing to another classroom, and I'm sure I'm forgetting something. Several of us XARCers are regular radio coaches and we're looking forward to our next semester in a few weeks. If you haven't seen our web page, check it out and see what we teach the kids

each week. http://www.ggw.org/rara/radiocoach.htm

K2AS purchased the Radio Shack 10 meter radio HTX-10. See review in this issue.

K2AS worked a couple six meter openings in early January. Worked grids in upper midwest and maritimes of eastern Canada.

Support XARC - Time to Send in Dues

If you haven't sent in your XARC dues for the year 2000, now is a good time to do it. It will keep you on the mailing list, you'll continue getting these spiffy newsletters (though there is no guarantee), access to the club station, phone patch privileges on the repeater, etc. If you lost the aplication form, there is one at the end of this newsletter or on our web page.

2000 Testing Schedule

The exam schedule for 2000 is as follows:

March 8
June 14
September 6
December 6

This year the exam fee is $6.65
Be sure to have some form of picture ID and if possible, the correct fee. I
can't break too many $20 bills!

The March 8 session presents perhaps your last opportunity for an easy
upgrade before the new rules take effect on April 15. All sessions will be
in Bldg 337 and start promptly at 7 PM

73,
Lou Kohnen K2ANC
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Xerox 422-3899
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License Renewals

You can renew your license electronically for free via the FCC website within 90 days of your license expiration date. You need a modem and dial up session to do it. If you have questions or encounter any problems...contact WW2J

License Classes

Pesky code requirement been keeping you from upgrading? Look for licensing classes to begin in February. Contact Bob Karz with your preferences for theory elements you are interested in.

Calendar of Events

January Club Meeting

Place: XRA Bldg 337 Conference Room
Time: Thursday Jan. 20 at 6:00PM
Our regular monthly meeting. History of Radio by John Woika.

January VHF Sweepstakes

When: Jan. 23-24, 2000
Time: See
http://www.arrl.org/contests/announcements/01vhfss.html
The big one in the VHF world. Expect a club station effort. Stay tuned for details.

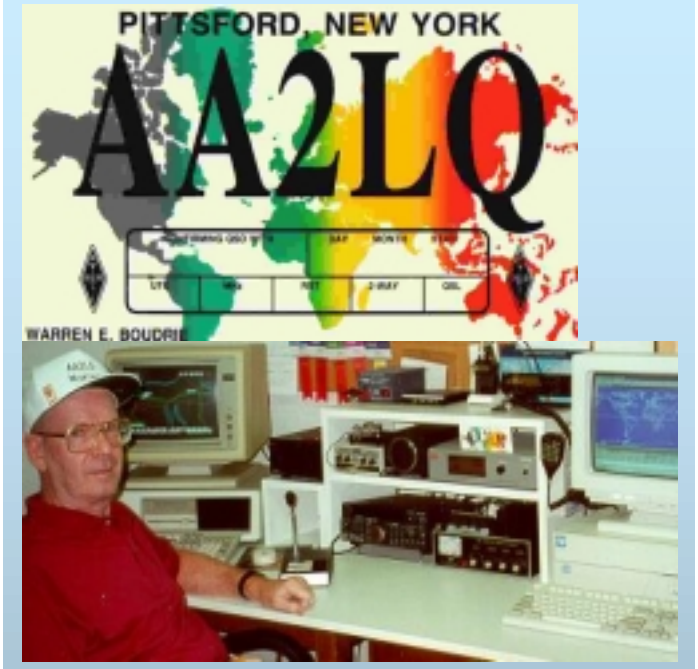
ARRL International DX Contest CW

When: Feb. 19-20, 2000

ARRL International DX Contest Phone

When: Mar. 4-5, 2000

Member Spotlight



This member spotlight focuses on Warren's station. Warren has been able to work over 130 countries, all with *indoor antennas*.

Warren retired from Xerox in 1987, and got his ham license in Jan. 1992, after attending classes at XARC.

First contact: 2M 1/21/92: - KB2HVL (XARC member - Jim Buch)

Station details:

HF:

- Kenwood TS450S-AT (100 watts) - No Amp
- MFJ 949D Antenna Tuner

VHF:

- Alinco DR-1200 2M
- Yaesu FT-2400H (mobile)

Packet:

- Kantronics KPC-3
- AEA PK900

Grounding: 8ft copper clad rod pounded into basement floor, Located 5 feet from equipment

Attic Antennas:

- 150 ft long wire

4 Band Trapped Vertical (10,15,20,40) - Diamond CP4-A

2M/440 Vertical - Diamond X200A

Awards: DXCC, WAS, Confirmed all continents but did not apply for award

Logging Program: LOG-EQF

QSO's:

- Countries worked - 137
- Countries confirmed - 122

QSO/QSL Techniques that work for me:

- Make sure antennas are tuned properly and system has a good ground.
- Check for activity at the best times of day for each band.
- If one band is quiet keep trying all the others.
- Don't worry about pileups - even the weakest can get through. Be persistent.
- Listen for how a DX station responds to calls. (Do they take only complete callsigns, respond to both strong and weak stations, take a list, wait until crowd dies down, etc).
- Usually, send only the last two letters of your call sign.
- Participate in contests. A good time to get new countries.
- Use a good logging program.
- Use QSL Bureau for easy to get countries and send $'s/IRC's for those hard to get. If you really want a confirmation, also include a nice note and perhaps a picture of your station. Tell the recipient that his country is a "new one" for you. I can't remember ever not getting a QSO card when I did that.
- If you have only been licensed for a short period of time, mention that on your QSL card. Hams tend to respond to "newbees" in the hobby.
- Use QSL managers - There is a lot of info on Internet now.

Memorable HF experiences:

Although most of my HF experience has been SSB, a couple of memorable happenings occurred shortly after I was first licensed. My first CW contact on 40M- HF was in April 92. I nervously contacted N3KMT in Lilly, PA and had a 20-minute QSO. I didn't keep notes about what we talked about but at about 5 WPM we probably didn't do much but exchange information about our stations. For the next couple of months, I only made a few CW contacts. Then, however, I had a very interesting CW QSO. I believe that the ham at the other end of the conversation sensed correctly that I was trying to upgrade my CW speed. After we exchanged callsigns and reports he began sending me what I thought was the history of his life. For 45 solid minutes, he continuously sent CW and I labored away copying as best I could. At the end of his transmission, I was sweating profusely and completely worn out. Although that experience did give me a bit more confidence in getting on the air with CW, I now do almost 100 percent SSB.

Review: Radio Shack HTX-10

By K2AS

I purchased the Radio Shack HTX-10 in early January. The Webster store had none in stock, but they ordered it direct from the warehouse to be shipped to my home without any shipping charges. It arrived in about 5 or 6 days.

My first task was to get it installed in my truck. I already have my Kenwood TM-733A mounted under the dash in about the only place where I can attach a bracket. I thought I would mount it on the floor on the transmission hump, but the supplied bracket would not get it high enough to be able to see the controls. I had to try and find another way to mount the radio.

I started to look at the ash tray. It was in a position just above my other radio. I pulled it out and looked at the opening. It appeared to be very close to the width of the HTX-10. So I removed the ashtray and then the slide assy. There was a fair amount of room left inside to handle the length of the radio. As I started to place the radio in the opening, I saw that it would be very close. I had to force it slightly, but the width of the opening was just right. The radio slid back, stopped at just the right angle. It was a tight fit, and it needed no other support. I started to run the power cable to the battery.

For an antenna, I decided to use my existing NMO mount on top of my truck, and swap antennas back and forth for the time being. I had ordered the Larsen 10 meter mobile antenna screwed it on.

It was about 6PM, and the band was still open. I heard quite a few signals from the west coast, but needed to adjust the antenna.

One thing I noticed after installing it, the knobs collect dirt. I got my hands dirty under the dashboard, and theknobs on the HTX-10 are quite rubbery, and dirt will stick to them. The knobs are knurled, and easy to grip, but the ones with pointers are hard to see. They are backlit, so at night you can at least see where the knobs are.

The main tuning knob is a rotary switch type. There are multiple clicks per revolution, each click changing the frequency by whichever tuning rate is active. The tuning rates are 1KHz, 10KHz, and 100KHz. It takes two button pushes to change the tuning rate.

I find that for SSB, I usually keep it set to 1KHz. You can tune from 28.300 to 28.600 fairly quickly, but usually I am searching for signals. A 1KHz tuning rate will not allow you to accurately tune in SSB signals, so a clarifier is provided. It is like an RIT, but it also changes the TX freq. It allows maybe +/- 1.5KHz, so you can get right on frequency. I have noticed that when tuning through the band at the 1 KHz rate, about 50% of the signals you can read w/o using the clarifier, but the others you will have to fine tune with the clarifier.

I haven't used the radio for FM yet, but I have listened a little. To use the radio with split freq. requires setting up one channel in memory for TX or RX, not as simple as automatic offsets on 2m radios, but it works. I have also seen a couple of reports that the radio can hang up in FM transmit. Don't know if mine has this problem, but a guy posted a fix on E-Ham.net.

The radio has an AF Gain, RF Gain, Mic Gain, Noise blanker. The microphone has up/down switches that moves the frequency by the selected tuning rate, but on SSB you will most likely need to use the clarifier.

The manual is pretty sparse. The adjustment for the mic gain tells you to turn it up all the way, and adjust it back if you get poor audio signal reports.

There is an internal speaker, and it can put out a lot of audio, but it sounded kind of rattlely. Since mine was inside my dash, I went out and bought a Radio Shack external speaker. There is an 1/8 speaker jack in the back.

I have heard some reports that on SSB, this radio was putting out much more than the specified 25 watts. I have noticed looking through the HRO catalog that they sell a 10 meter radio made by Magnum, that physically looks like the HTX-10. The Magnum was over $350 however, and did have some additional features.

All in all, not a bad radio for under $150. I have worked Swaziland while driving down Klem Rd. It certainly is no IC-706 or FT-100, but it is a cheap way to work mobile HF while 10 meters is still lively.