

XARC

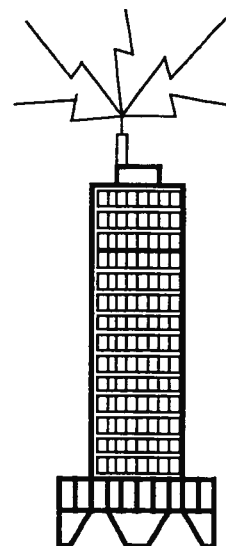
Monthly Newsletter

The Voice of the Xerox Amateur Radio Club

Mike Ishler	KE2LU	President
Dave Sweet	N2BHL	Vice President
Pete Fournia	WA2BPQ	Secretary
Rick LaDonna	N2IJI	Treasurer
John Wright	KE2MK	Trustee

Xerox
Amateur
Radio Club

KE2MK/R
224.26/444.825
145.29



October 9, 1992

Next Club Meeting
Oct. 15, 1730 hrs

Program for Next Meeting: **RADIO APPLICATION** **TO HANG GLIDING**

Many of us have seen hang gliding either in person or on TV. Its an exciting sport requiring skill and training. Pete Fournia, WA2BPQ, will give a brief introduction to his other hobby and tell us how radio communications helps make it organized, convenient, and above all, safe. Join us for what is sure to be a most interesting program.

Dues are Due

Attached at the end of the newsletter is a '92-'93 membership application form. Dues for this year are due now. Please pay them by November.

Upper New York Repeater Council Meeting Scheduled

The Upper New York Repeater Council (of which the XARC is a member) is having a meeting at 10 AM Saturday, October 17 at the Pier 57 Restaurant one mile north of Thruway exit 38 (Liverpool route 57). Talk in will be on 146.91 or 443.4. The agenda will be a discussion of "PL" with repeaters. See John Wright, KE2MK, or Bob Karz, K2OID, for details or to see a copy of the minutes from the council's April 11 meeting.

KARZ's Corner

The Repair Challenge

Excuse me for sounding a bit glum this month, but I own three pieces of ham gear (an Azden PCS-3000 2M Mobile rig, a Yaseu FT-33R 220 Mhz handi talkie, and a Kenwood TS-930 HF Tranceiver) and none of them work. The Azden "lost its mind" during the January VHF contest and randomly picks frequencies on which to operate. Apparently it also randomly decides whether to modulate

the signal with my sweet voice or an obnoxious hum. The Yaseu has a broken squelch. It seemed like a problem I could live with at first, but I'm getting a little tired of the constant background noise. Besides, the batteries go dead real fast. My beloved 930 has more serious problems. Its symptoms are a constant 750 Hz tone on receive in CW, no output on SSB unless the mike gain is up full, greatly diminished sensitivity on all receive modes, and muffled AM audio. However, it transmits fine on CW.

I'm depressed on several levels. First, I expected my tube stuff to break often. After all, those "boat anchors" got hot - real hot. I thought one of the benefits of solid state was that it would not get so hot and thus be more reliable. Apparently that's not the case.

Second, I'm unhappy because I really have no idea how to fix any of it, not that I haven't tried. In the "good old days" you could dig in with a soldering iron and VTVM if simply swapping tubes didn't work (which it often did). Now the solution is often switching Integrated Circuits (IC's), but for the most part, I don't have spares, and in any case several are soldered in. I wish I had a nickel for every IC I've hacked out of a circuit, sure - absolutely sure - that it had to be the problem only to find that it wasn't.

Third, I'm unhappy because I spent (wasted?) \$25 for a repair manual that nominally uses English words but actually is written in Greek. I've spend hours pouring over the block diagrams of the 930 - yes, the block diagrams, not even the schematics yet - trying to apply logic to isolate the problem. "Let's see, I'm reasonably smart (yeah sure). There must be some part of the circuit that effects both the receiver sensitivity and the SSB output". Yeah, right! Even if I thought I knew where the problem was,

I'd need \$100,000 worth of service gear to fix it.

Fourth, I'm unhappy with the prospect of spending nearly as much to fix the old gear (its really not that old) as it cost to buy it. This is especially true of the Azden which is about 12 years old. When I called the factory to discuss repairs, the guy on the phone tried to convince me to buy a new one. Given the \$50/hour service rate, if the repair takes more than 4 hours, the guy is right! I'm afraid I have 3 cases of "pay me now or pay me later".

Finally, I'm unhappy cause my index finger is very sore. "Why is it sore?", you ask. Because of all the hours I spent dialing Kenwood last week (which parenthetically is not an 800 number and which keeps "bankers hours", I answer.) In reflecting about why this number was busy, I came to realize that lots of others are (or have been) in my situation (maybe every you). Apparently misery loves company.

Guess that's the breaks.

73 and hope you've had a better month

Bob, K2OID

PS I finally got through to Kenwood, and after the mood music (for which I paid in AT&T charges), I got an operator who promised me a service technician would return my call - none did. A few days later I chain dialed again, and this time insisted on talking to a service person. The fellow on the other end claimed that I have several problems that all just happened to have occurred at once. Now, I still believe in the tooth fairy and maybe even Santa Claus, but I don't believe this Kenwood guy - not for a minute. Nevertheless, I'm sure I'll be shipping it off to them soon. It

will be my money, but at least it will be their problem.

Fun and Games When Replacing a Hard Drive

by Ed Kessler, W2EQW

I will start out by saying that I am a Senior Documentation Analyst (fancy name for a Technical Writer). I have been developing troubleshooting diagnostic procedures for our products for almost 18 years. I am sensitive to errors in documentation.

Recently I read something about hard drives. There are only two types of hard drives:

1. drives that have crashed
2. drives that will crash

In the middle of trying to find Carmen San Diego in Europe, my system locked up and the red access LED on the hard drive stayed lit. After about a 20 second delay, I got a message that my hard drive was not ready. Another time I got a message that the door for the C drive was not closed. Most computer literate people know that the hard drive is usually designated the C-drive and that it does not have a door. Thus the computer must not be computer literate.

Because this problem occurred several times after the computer had been on for about half an hour, I thought that it was a problem related to heat. I removed the cover to allow the innards of the computer to have plenty of fresh air, but this did not help.

The next thing I did was to ensure that none of the connectors to the hard drive were damaged and that the connectors

were correctly seated. I looked at the information about the HD/FD controller that came with the computer. I noticed that the drawing showed the ribbon cables going to the controller had the blue stripe marked on the wrong side of the cable. (Chalk up one error in the documentation.)

After trying several different programs for hard drive diagnostics and failing all of them, I configured my system so that it did not have a hard drive. What a pain using two floppy drives instead of using a hard drive.

A friend from work loaned me a different hard drive to try. He did not know whether the drive was formatted or not. It did not matter because I could not format the drive with my system. A little while later, he loaned me two drives that he knew were working. They would not work in my system. Back to the drawing board.

I decided that my hard drive was faulty and that it might have damaged my controller. The controller can handle two floppy drives and two hard drives. The floppy drives worked okay but not the hard drive.

I finally decided to purchase a new hard drive, but what kind? While shopping at Wegman's, Marcy (WA2URE) purchased a Computer Shopper magazine. How was I going to wade through about 950 pages of advertisements to determine which drive to purchase and where to purchase it. My drive was an ST-225 20 meg MFM type drive. There were very few of these types listed in the

magazine. I decide to upgrade to a larger drive.

○ Marcy told me about seeing a 120 meg IDE hard drive kit at some store. We went over there to find out more about the kit. The only information they had about the kit was a copy of the front of the box. No other information. One sales person, who was knowledgeable about computers, decided to open the kit to determine what was contained in it. Too bad the outside of the box did not list the contents of the kit. (Chalk another one up to the documentation.)

We bought the hard drive and took it home. I made the mistake of reading the instructions before doing anything. The jumper configuration on the printed circuit board did not match the information shown in the installation part of the manual. I moved one jumper so that it matched the drawing in the manual. I then installed the drive in my system.

When I tried to configure my system, I did not know how many cylinders or heads the drive had. Once again I referred to the manual. Unfortunately the manual showed two different configurations for a 120 meg drive. I chose the wrong drive configuration (another one for the documentation). I could not get the system to work. I got some sort of error message which indicated that track 1 was defective.

I called an 800 tech support phone number and mentioned the jumpers. I was told that the hard drive had the jumpers in the correct location. The manual had not been updated (another one for the documentation). I was also

told which configuration to use. After changing the jumper and choosing the right configuration, my hard drive finally started working.

So much for reading instructions before doing anything.

Equipment loans

As many of you know the XARC has recently increased its equipment inventory by leaps and bounds over what we had just a short time ago. I have been asked, as the chairman of the station committee, to publish a list of equipment which is available for short term loan to members of the club. When borrowing a piece of equipment, a note should be left in the club station with the item borrowed, the date borrowed, the anticipated return date, and the borrowers name and call.

The following is a list of equipment located at the station in building 337 which is available for lending per the above guidelines. All other items are not to be removed from the station for personal use.

Heathkit HW101 transceiver with speaker and power supply
KDK 2 Meter FM transceiver
12 volt power supply (blue box type)
Bird wattmeter, 3 - 30 Mhz, up to 100W
Kenwood VHF/UHF watt/SWR meter, 140 - 500 Mhz
Headphones
ARRL Handbook
ARRL Antenna book
US and Foreign area call books (1988 issue)
Software library disks, Amateur related, (5 1/4 and 3 1/2 DSDD disks)

All of the equipment located at the station is, of course, there for the use of all our members at any time. I would strongly encourage you to use the

station. The performance of the station is better than most would imagine.

○ Thanx Barry, N2EVS

Do you have QSL cards to send?

As a club we are entitled to combine ARRL members cards in one mailing. Just order your cards as always, include a current mailing label from QST and give them to one of the club officers.

Is your ARRL membership up for renewal?

If so remember to renew through the club. See Mike Ishler, who is acting treasurer while Rick LaDonna is recovering, for details.

Hamfests/Auctions

○ Upcoming hamfests for the Atlantic Division are listed on the following page. Thanks to Jim Buck, KB2HVL for the info. Note that the Syracuse Hamfest has been moved from Oct. 3 to Oct. 10. That's this weekend for those of you who get the Newsletter electronically (and read it promptly).

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