Congratulations To Joe, Our New Ham of the Year

Since Joe, KC8TAC, was unable to attend our annual Christmas Party and banquet, he was presented with the award plaque at the December meeting. Joe was recently elected to the office of Vice President, and has been very helpful to the club during the past year at Field Day, the event at Mile Branch Grange and also at the Carnation Days event in Silver Park.

It is unfortunate that Joe couldn't attend the Christmas Party at Mike's Roadhouse Charly because everyone there seemed to have a good time. Accordionist Joe Warther and friend provided us with music during the evening. The food was very good, at least mine was, and there was plenty of it. After dinner, there were prize drawings and just about everyone won a prize, thanks in part to our President, who donated his back to the club to be drawn again. Thanks to everyone who came and helped make the evening a success. All those who couldn't attend this years party were missed

Ye Olde Meeting Announcement

The next meeting of the Alliance ARC will be on Wednesday, January 7th, in the cafeteria of the Alliance Community Hospital. Our meetings begin at 7:30 PM, and are an excellent opportunity for eyeball QSO's. Directions can be found on the K8LTG Repeater (145.370)
See you there!

Editorial

January 2004. The years fly by faster and faster. The months fly by faster and faster. It's time to do another edition of the Zero Beat and here I am still trying to get my new computer loaded with all the programs I need to do the newsletter. Some thing still aren't working right.

I started buying pieces and parts a while back and just before Christmas, I got the final pieces necessary to put it all together. All in all, it went very well. No problems with the hardware. A few software problems, but mostly just time consuming chores getting it all to work.

It's definitely fast. As a former Zero Beat editor, KC3CL, once told me, "This new computer is so fast it anticipates my mistakes and makes them for me." Well, It hasn't actually done that, yet, but it is fast. My old computer is almost 7 years old and the requirements of newer software and operating systems have made its once fast and powerful processor seem slow. What was once an unbelievably huge amount of memory is now inadequate.

I have also installed a Linux operating system and for the first time, I have a fully functional Unix environment which can do everything that Windows does and a bit more. I've been trying to get that to work for almost 10 years. I've had several systems that functioned but I could never get device drivers for things like scanners and CD ROM drives, etc., to work right. But this time everything works. Even web browser and E-mail. I may even try to do the Newsletter with it in the future.

Meetings

The Alliance Amateur Radio Club meets on the First Wednesday of every month, in the cafeteria of the Alliance Community Hospital. Talk-in is on 145.37 ®. Meetings begin at 7:30 PM. Visitors are always welcome.

Nets

Thursday is our "net night," with the following nets on tap:

Ten meters
 CW @ 8PM on 28.400 MHz
SSB @ 8:30PM on 28.400 MHz

2 meters
9 PM on 145.37 MHz

Internet

If you'd like to check us out on the web, our E-mail address is:
w8lky@qsl.net
Our club home page is:
Http://www.qsl.net/w8lky

Newsletter Information
The Zero Beat is a publication of the Alliance Amateur Radio Club, P.O. Box 3344, Alliance, OH 44601

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You can submit material to the Zero Beat either electronically, to ke8ve@raex.com, in person, or via snail mail. I can read most word processor formats, but prefer your files to be in straight text, or Microsoft Word format.

December Minutes

ALLIANCE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

December 3, 2003

The regular meeting of the Alliance Amateur Radio Club was held at the Alliance Community Hospital on December 3, 2003, at 7:30 P. M., with Robert Steele K8RLS, president, presiding. Secretary David Glass W8UKQ kept the minutes. There were 20 members present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was given, and introductions were made.

The minutes of the regular meeting for November were published in the newsletter. The total of the treasury balance was reported for the month. The report was approved upon motion by Don K8OMO, seconded by George K3GP.

Mary Ann KB8IVS reported the treasury balances. The report was approved upon motion by Joe KC8TAC, seconded by David N8NLZ.

Old Business: The Christmas Party will be on December 6, arrive 6 PM, dinner at 7 PM.

The Tusco Hamfest will be January 25. The Skywarn program will be March 24 at Stark State. The Salvation Army needs help for ringing bells.

An advertisement offers patches at 50 for $1.06 each. No response.

Thank you to Gladys KB8GIA for bringing cookies for the meeting.

Suggestions for future programs will be welcomed. Doug Bowling will be contacted about a program for March.

Sam KC8ETZ presented the Ham of the Year Award to Joe KC8TAC. Joe will be unable to attend the Christmas dinner.

A motion was made by George K3GP, seconded by Jerry KG8RN to send $25 to qsl.net for the use of our web page.

The Bob Wright tower has been taken down. David N8NLZ reported that the Fort Wayne Hamfest was very nice. George K3GP asked to have the Skywarn sample patch. Jim K8LTG reported that the repeater is off because of interference.

Happy Birthday to Sam KC8ETZ!!

The 50-50 drawing was won by Mary Ann.

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 P. M. upon motion by David N8NLZ, seconded by Larry KE8VE.

Respectfully submitted, Dave Glass W8UKQ, Secretary

ROHN Industries Sold

According to an E-mail sent to me by the Ham formerly known as KC3CL (Dave, K3SK), ROHN Industries has filed for Bankruptcy and been sold to a Canadian firm called **Radian Communication Services Corporation.**

ROHN had been in business building tower and other equipment for antenna structures since 1948. Hopefully Radian will continue to supply equipment to the Amateur Community.

THE WAYBACK MACHINE -- ISSUE #1

by Bill Continelli, W2XOY
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I start this column in an attempt to research three major questions that have been asked: "When did ham radio start?"; "Who was the first ham?"; and "Where did the word 'ham' come from?". To answer these questions, let's set "The Wayback Machine" to Warp Factor 9, and head back 100 years.

Practical "wireless" had its start in 1896, when Marconi first sent a signal over a distance of two miles. By 1899, he succeeded in sending a wireless message across the English Channel, a distance of 32 miles. The year 1899 also marks the first construction project, which appeared in "American Electrician" magazine. In December, 1901, Marconi was able to bridge the Atlantic, a feat which caught the world's attention and fueled the imagination of thousands of potential amateurs, who took their first steps into wireless.

In the early days, everything was "spark". What exactly was spark? Well, sit down some summer night, listen to your AM or SW radio, and count the static crashes. Now turn on the vacuum cleaner, or an electric shaver, and listen to your radio again. Hear that noise? In short, spark wireless was merely a form of "controlled static". A high voltage inside a spark coil would jump across a gap, which was coupled to an antenna. The spark was keyed on and off to transmit the code. The signal generated was extremely broad. A "state of the art" 1906 park transmitter operating on 400 meters

(750 kHz) would actually generate a signal from about 250 meters (1200 kHz) to 550 meters (545 kHz). Receivers were no better. Before 1912, all systems were basically unamplified detectors. Tuners were primitive or nonexistent. As might be expected, by today's standards, the early wireless stations were terribly inefficient. Transmitting ranges varied from as little as 600 feet with a 1/2 inch coil to perhaps 100 miles from a kilowatt station and a 15 inch spark coil. Ships at sea with 5 KW transmitters might get as much as 500 miles maximum range.

It was into this world that the early amateurs ventured. Actually, if we were to concentrate on the years prior to 1908, it would be more appropriate to say "experimenters" rather than "amateurs". For in the first decade of wireless, there was little or no interest in personal communications with other stations; rather, the concentration was on technical development, either in the interest of pure science, or (more often than not) with an eye towards cashing in on this new medium. Experimenters were unorganized and, with the exception of those immediate stations with whom they ran tests, had no knowledge or interest in other pioneer stations. Any true "amateurs" prior to 1908 have been lost in pre-historic obscurity.

By 1908, however, the face of wireless began to change. Technical developments had reached their first plateau, and a number of major competitors had formed the first "wireless rust"--United Wireless.

With a temporary truce in effect, equipment was now more readily available to the public. Along with this, new magazines, such as "Modern Electrics," were formed with wireless communication as the primary thrust. The circulation of "Modern Electrics" jumped from 2,000 to over 30,000 in just two years. The year 1908 also saw the first "handbook", "Wireless Telegraph Construction for Amateurs." It is difficult to know exactly how many amateur stations were on the air in this completely unregulated, laissez-faire era, but reliable estimates put the number of "major" stations (i.e. those capable of communicating over 10 miles) at 600, while "minor" stations with a one or two mile range probably numbered 3000 or more. Thus, if a year had to be arbitrarily chosen as the start of amateur radio, it would probably be 1908.

As for the "first" amateur, that's a harder one. Without licensing, regulations, or a written record, there will never be a definitive answer to this question. However, "The Wayback Machine" has come up with the name W.E.D. Stokes, Jr. He was a founding member and the first President of the first amateur radio club--the Junior Wireless Club, Limited, of New York City. This organization was formed on January 2, 1909. Other founding members who might lay claim to the title "first amateur" were George Eltz, Frank King, and Fred Seymour. Later the same year, the Wireless Association of America, and the Radio Club of Salt Lake City were created.

By 1910, wireless clubs were

January 2004

Birthday Greetings to: K8RLS, W8ZZS.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
December 03 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31		**February 04** S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29		**1** **AARC NETS 8:00, 8:30, 9:00** AGB NYSB Contest AGCW Happy New Year Contest QCWA Net 7:30 SARTG New Year RTTY Contest	**2** K8RLS	**3** ARRL RTTY Round-up EUCW 160m Contest Kid's Day Contest
4	**5** COLUM. COUNTY TRAINING NET 8:00PM	**6** STARK COUNTY ARES NET 7PM 147.120 NORTHERN COLUMBIANA ARES NET 9PM 147.255	**7** AARC Meeting 7:30 CARROLL COUNTY NET 9:00PM 147.075	**8** **AARC NETS 8:00, 8:30, 9:00** QCWA Net 7:30	**9** MASSILLON NET 8:00PM 147.18	**10** **CUYAHOGA FALLS ARC VE, STOW, OH** East Asia 160/80 DX Contest Hunting Lions in the Air Midwinter Contest, CW North American QSO Party, CW UK DX Contest, SSB
11 **CUYAHOGA ARS VE, INDEPENDENCE, OH** DARC 10-Meter Contest Midwinter Contest, Phone NRAU-Baltic Contest, CW NRAU-Baltic Contest, SSB	**12** COLUM. COUNTY TRAINING NET 8:00PM	**13** STARK COUNTY ARES NET 7PM 147.120 NORTHERN COLUMBIANA ARES NET 9PM 147.255	**14** CARROLL COUNTY NET 9:00PM 147.075	**15** **AARC NETS 8:00, 8:30, 9:00** **MAHONING VALLEY ARA VE, YOUNGSTOWN, OH** QCWA Net 7:30	**16** MASSILLON NET 8:00PM 147.18	**17** 070 Club PSKFest ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes Hungarian DX Contest LZ Open Contest, CW MI QRP January CW Contest North American QSO Party, SSB
18	**19** COLUM. COUNTY TRAINING NET 8:00PM	**20** STARK COUNTY ARES NET 7PM 147.120 NORTHERN COLUMBIANA ARES NET 9PM 147.255 W8ZZS	**21** CARROLL COUNTY NET 9:00PM 147.075	**22** **AARC NETS 8:00, 8:30, 9:00** QCWA Net 7:30	**23** MASSILLON NET 8:00PM 147.18	**24** BARTG RTTY Sprint CQ 160-Meter Contest, CW REF Contest, CW
25 **TUSCO ARC HAMFEST AND VE, NEW PHILA, OH**	**26** COLUM. COUNTY TRAINING NET 8:00PM	**27** STARK COUNTY ARES NET 7PM 147.120 NORTHERN COLUMBIANA ARES NET 9PM 147.255	**28** CARROLL COUNTY NET 9:00PM 147.075	**29** **AARC NETS 8:00, 8:30, 9:00** QCWA Net 7:30	**30** MASSILLON NET 8:00PM 147.18	**31** UBA DX Contest, SSB

If it weren't for the last minute, nothing would get done.

(Continued from page 4)

springing up all over the country, and the first callbook -- "The Wireless Blue Book" --was published. Since there were no regulations in this period, the callsigns listed in the "Blue Book" were self assigned--which brings us to our third question--where did the word "ham" come from? Legend has it there was a phenomenal station on the air with a 5 KW transmitter, which could be heard at all hours of the day and night at distances of over 500 miles. The station operator used his initials for his call-sign - H.A.M. I don't know if this is the real story, but I've always liked this explanation best.

Amateur radio continued to grow. By 1911, "Modern Electrics" had a circulation of 52,000, and there were 10,000 amateurs in the country. With thousands of stations on

the air, both amateur and commercial, interference was becoming a serious problem, especially in marine communication. Ships, because of their restricted antenna length, were limited to frequencies between 450 and 600 meters (666 to 500 kHz). As we have seen, one spark station could take up this entire spectrum. Thus, it was imperative that all stations cooperate and stand by when the others were transmitting. Sadly, this often was not the case. In addition to interference between amateurs and commercial stations, there was more interference and sometimes deliberate jamming between commercial stations of different companies. Prodded by the Navy (which was using inefficient and outdated equipment and thus suffering from excessive interference), Congress was starting to take a serious look at wireless regulation.

However, before they could take up proposed legislation, an incident happened that would quickly and dramatically alter the structure of the wireless spectrum.

On April 15, 1912, the R.M.S. Titanic struck an iceberg in the North Atlantic and sank. Thanks to wireless, and the first S.O.S. in history, 713 lives were saved. However, it has been argued that the number of survivors could have been doubled or even tripled, if there were stronger wireless regulations in effect. We are going to leave "The Wayback Machine" hovering over the year 1912, keeping a sharp eye on the Titanic, and on a 22 year old experimenter in Yonkers, NY, who would soon make some major contributions to radio.

So, until then, keep that spark gap adjusted and those raspy CQs coming. We'll catch you next time on board "The Wayback Machine."