



Cherry Juice

Newsletter of the Cherryland Amateur Radio Club

VOLUME ISSUE

48 2

February, 2021

CQ from the Seventh Continent



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By Thomas Brooke Bennett, KE8EPQ

We were way out there, I knew that. I knew it would take patience. Again I called out "CQ, CQ, CQ. This is KC4USV, KC4USV, McMurdo Station, Antarctica...Over."

The hiss and crackle of the Antarctic radio world. The flutter and hum of the aurora. The mechanical click of the myriad man-made devices on the island emitting their addition to the

chorus of radio static. Call again. Call again. I spent a couple hours calling and listening. Nothing. The next day was no better. Still hopeful though. We were a long way from any other Ham Radio Operator.

Day three, I once again called for a while. Almost mechanical in my tone. Over and over. I thought at first that I was imagining it after

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Affiliated Club #1082



Thom, KE8EPQ

A Station in Christchurch, New Zealand. He was loud and clear with his Kiwi accent but he could not quite make me out. He said "No mate, can't quite read you. I'll turn my antenna to the north..." No! The south! I'm behind you! But that is not the direction he would ever expect to hear a signal from. KC4USV had been silent for over two years. There was no reason for a station to expect a signal from the direction of Antarctica. In the least, I now knew that we were operational. We were sending and receiving. A good start.

I went to McMurdo Station as a

cook. I was contracted to cook for the US Science Foundation. I loved my work. Antarctica is a magic place where every day brings amazing views. The Royal Society Mountains are lit in pastel colors as the sun spirals up through the summer. The hills are dark volcanic stone. The views off into the great frozen land stretch into forever. I loved the place.

I have been a ham for ten years as KD8EPQ. I have my general class license. I operated out of northern Michigan for several years mostly with CW. My work as a Chef put radio on the shelf for the last few years until an odd moment in McMurdo when I met Jim.

I was in building 155 on McMurdo Station. I worked and lived in that same building. I was walking down one of the main hallways, 'highway 1' as they called it, when I walked past a couple guys looking at a large aerial photo on the wall.

"The antenna faces this way but I want to turn it this way..." says a man in cold weather gear and a greying beard.

I walked with my friend halfway down the hall before I realized what I had heard. I turned on my heel and walked back.

"What sort of antenna are you referring to?" I ask.

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"Amateur radio antenna..." he responds.

That was the first meeting with Jim. I am very remiss for not knowing his radio call or last name. I have found it not possible to figure that out from 13,000 miles away. He is the man behind bringing KC4USV back to life in McMurdo Station, Antarctica. His efforts saved the little shack from a certain destruction. It was a great chance meeting.

Jim had me fill out the official forms to promise to be a good and honorable ham operator. He then gave me a tour of the radio station.

It is a good hike up to the shack. The wind was bitter and the sun glared in a way that only Antarctica can produce. The shack was a military type cube painted red and white checked. There was a Yagi antenna on about twenty feet of tower. Inside the shack were chairs and a table with three radios and a generous amount of clutter. Between Jim and myself, it was soon less cluttered. Less dusty.

As I said, KC4USV had been off the air for a couple years. Antennas on the ground. Volcanic dust covering everything on Ross Island and made no exceptions of the tiny red and white cube on the hill.

I had to renew my license as it had expired by a couple months prior to arriving in Antarctica. It took some time and jumping



Operating position at KC4USV

through a few hoops before I found myself myself alone in the shack calling CQ CQ CQ on that January midnight under a low Antarctic sun.

There is a continued interest from the Management of the US Antarctic Program in ham radio and the operation of that little shack but in the last few years there was a shortage of operators. There was a visiting USAF General at McMurdo. Jim took General Rice up there to look at the shack while he was on station. That is an interesting side note...

Rewind back to 1974. A young girl of 14 is learning to use her father's ham radio station. She just got her license to operate on 'high frequency'. She tuned and listened and the radio hissed and crackled in her headset. Slowly turning the dial and seeking out her first radio reply to her call.

Faintly a reply comes through the static. Guess who? Your right! The first call that young Nancy made with her new ham radio license was from McMurdo Station, Antarctica!

At that time, ham radio was the only means of communication at McMurdo and it was no mean feat to contact North America. Conditions had to be just right. They were just right on that day.

Who is this Nancy? She is Lt. General Rice's future bride. Jim took the General up to the radio shack to take pictures for his wife. She wanted pictures of the first contact she made. She is still a ham operator WA4KRX 43 years later! That story was relayed to me from Jim.

Meanwhile back on The Ice in 2017. I was walking down the stairs from the galley and there was a USAF Officer in front of me. Three stars on his collar.

"General Rice?" I ask. He turned around and we had a conversation about ham radio and he gave me permission to write the story.



The Royal Society Mountains

He was with another three star. Six stars standing around me, the one time Army E3, and we are talking like we were old fishin' buddies about ham radio!

Both were gentlemen and very nice. An honor to meet them!

Back at the hissing and crackle of my midnight session in the shack. Nothing. I tried CW. Nothing. Up and down 20 meters. Nothing. Not discouraged. We were three-thousand miles from anything. I knew it would take time. Again only Antarctic static. Another night of silence.

The following evening I hiked up the rough volcanic, Mars looking path to the shack. Up and down the dial I hunt for a signal. Nothing. Try CW, nothing.

Then it is there, clear as day! A Net from Melbourne Australia! I wait quietly for a chance to call in. I find an opening and am given a good signal report and

I tell them I will be just up the dial if anyone would like to talk. I had a second contact with Wellington, New Zealand. KC4USV was alive and well!

I had spent four and a half months on The Ice. It was a great adventure and I felt very honored to be able to operate and be a part of the restoration of KC4USV.

I am currently living in Traverse City, Michigan and am cooking on Great Lakes Freighters. We will see if I can make a few contacts from the out on the water.

Until then, 73!

Thomas Brooke Bennett,
KE8EPQ



Talk of a new net 'round town

Substantive discussion vs social

Through out the survey and in discussion with MESH net participants, the subject of Subject was heard loudly.

Participants expressed the desire for technical topics, suggested subjects, trivia questions and other substantive discussion such as FCC & ARRL, to be allowed.

Comments were equally strong about keeping politics and religion out of the topic list.

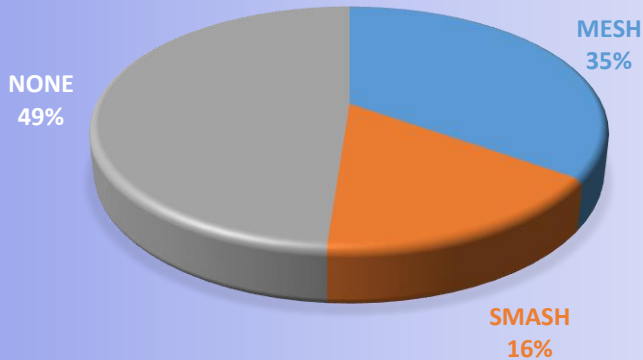
One ham summed up the discussion with; "we just don't need another social net."

The topic for the first round-table net on February 4, will be to develop a list of subjects you would like, and what to name the new net.

Thursday Roundtable Net

Thursdays, 7:00 PM
146.86 MHz
W8TCM Repeater
PL Tone 114.8
Echolink Node: 824031
W8TCM-R

DO YOU CURRENTLY PARTICIPATE IN A CARC ON-AIR NET?



Beginning Thursday, February 4, there will be a new round-table net on-the-air from Traverse City.

The key differences between this net and others, is that we will discuss topics of interest each net and you have the choice of going one round, or staying in for two rounds of transmissions.

Last fall, Toby, KC8VSU, asked that we send a survey to our membership asking if you all would participate in another net, and if so, what format would you like.

A survey of seven questions was sent to 203 email subscribers. There were 43 responses, a 21% response rate.

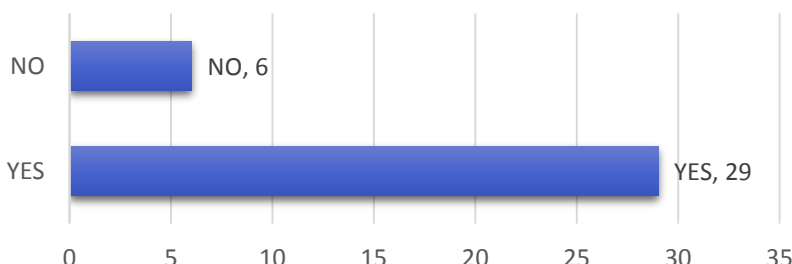
Multiple rounds were favored by most respondents.

The survey showed strong support for multiple rounds. In fact, 87% of responses were positive.

Verbal comments collected during Nov 2, 2020, 8:20 – 8:50 MESH net were mixed on one vs two round format, however, there was support for the idea that people can check-in for one round, and leave when the first round is complete. Others who wish to continue the discussion can go a second or more rounds.

This flexible format was preferred by most on the MESH Net.

Would you participate in a roundtable style net?



Club Member Meeting

All Members are invited to participate

The January, 2021 Club Member Meeting was held again on Zoom Tuesday the 26th.

Thirteen members joined the call to conduct club business and elect officers and board members for 2021.

The slate of officers had been prepared during the January 5th Board Meeting. Officers were nominated to remain in their current positions. Board member Scott Pyles, WX1J had been elected in the Fall to fill a vacancy of a term that ended in December. Scott was nominated for election to a three year term beginning with the January vote. Jim Marco, WB2LHP, left the board position with one year remaining in his term. The Club leadership invited Drake Hablich, KE8PXB, to fill out Jim's remaining term and to bring fresh perspective to club discussions.

The slate of officers was voted and unanimously elected to office.

The 2021 officers are:

President	Ernie	K8RCT
Vice President	Glen	K8SGZ
Treasurer	Ward	N8WK
Recording Secretary	Hope	AA8SN
Comm. Secretary	Joe	KC8RLU
Cherry Juice Editor	Joe	N8CN
Board Member	Mark	KC8ZAP
Board Member	Drake	KE8PXB
Board Member	Scott	WX1J

Joining us as guest speaker this month

Jim Wilson, K5ND, to talk about his latest book, ***"Capturing the Magic of 6 Meters."*** Jim, is a well known and prolific author for 73 magazine. He has an impressive background publishing for the **Boy Scouts of America** and **Heathkit and other organizations**. Jim's presentation for CARC was very thorough covering key topics from his latest book titled the same name of this presentation. (see page 7)

The cornerstone of Jim's talk was why is six meters the magical band? The answer is propagation. "When it's open it's magical. When it's closed, it's closed."



Jim Wilson, K5ND with InnovAntennas 3-element LFA yagi for 6 m

Jim walked us through rigs and rig requirements. Then through a series of 5 antenna examples of what works and why. He discussed successful operating styles, techniques and shared experiences from his contacts on six meters.

Naturally, there are different band sections dedicated to operating modes from CW/SSB to digital and FM. While contacts can be made on any mode during openings, on F2 Layer, Sporadic E propagation and Trans Equatorial Propagation. But digital modes, such as FT8, FT4, and MSK144 take advantage of propagation phenomenon such as, Meteor Scatter, and Aurora to provide interesting and sometimes surprising contacts.

Continued on page 7

Jim's talk concluded with discussions of award chasing and contesting possibilities.

All in all, the presentation was professional, fun and informative. You can read about these topics on Six Meters, by downloading Jim's book from his web-site.

Capture the MAGIC of Six Meters



The book "**Capture the MAGIC of Six Meters**" can be downloaded for free at:

<https://www.k5nd.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Six-Meters-eBook-V4.pdf>

We thank Jerry, W8RQM for discovering and recruiting Jim to address the club members.

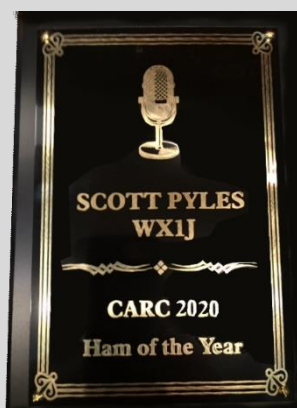
Jim's full range of books, articles and podcasts can be found at <http://K5ND.net>.

You will really enjoy Jim's material. He has a great way of explaining and illustrating information you can use.

Annual Ham-of-the-Year award announced

The Cherryland Amateur Radio Club is pleased to announce the **2020 Ham of the Year award**.

The 2020 winner of this prestigious award goes to Scott Pyles, WX1J. The nominating committee for this award is the winners of the last three years recipients. They were unanimous in choosing Scott as the 2020 Ham of the Year.



We have all become very familiar with Scott over the past year. He is the force behind our recruiting and training new hams, He has conducted many in-person and Zoom training sessions.

In addition, Scott has been publishing the excellent Cherry Juice newsletter. It is a professionally constructed and attractive club newsletter.

Scott has become the face of the Cherryland ARC and helped the club to grow during this past year's lock-down of in-person meetings.

Congratulations Scott, you certainly deserve the award.

Ernie, K8RCT

President, CARC

Scott, WX1J's Response

Thank you Ernie, the Committee and fellow members. The honor really goes to Joe, N8CN, who gently nudged me out of my shell to help him with some of the emails and then the newsletter.

Now, from that vantage point, I am really only trying to do what I can to help Joe and to create opportunities for others to step into new ways that they can participate in growing and building our ham club community.

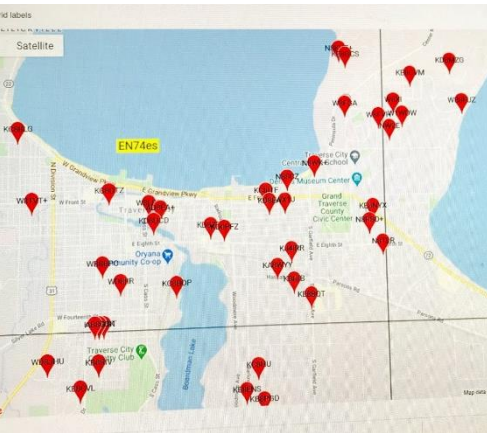
I believe a vibrant club should be visible, engaged and reaching out to include prospective hams,



inactive hams and hams who have a wealth of experience and knowledge to give back to the hobby by stepping into these new opportunities as well as serving the emergency preparedness community with action and proactive service. I thank the committee and I look forward to working with all of you in 2021.

News you can use

Ham Radio License Map Books you can read



I mentioned this in an earlier issue, but it's so fascinating, I think it deserves a re-run.

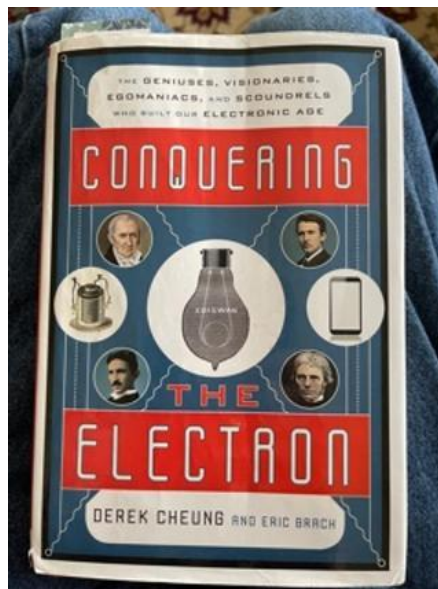
Want to know where other hams live? How many there are around you? Go to Amateur Radio License Map. Each red-dot is a licensed amateur radio operator- click the dot, you see the call, name & address. - de **Jerry, W8RQM**

<https://haminfo.tetranz.com/map/>



Thanks to **Jerry, W8RQM**

In a recent edition of the **Soldersmoke** blog Bill Meara recommended this book and so I ordered it from Amazon. It is an excellent tome on the history of our wonderful electronics hobby from the beginning with lodestone and magnetism, batteries, telephone, crystals, tubes, transistors, etc., to the current state of affairs. Oddly enough, this is the first time that I've read a book that was first written in Chinese and won a major book prize in China and Taiwan back in 2012.



This edition in English is just one of the better books that I have read but with my old eyes I found the type face quite small. But I endured. Ha ha. Get it from Amazon in the used book section and enjoy. - de **Dave, K8WP**

QRP & Portable

I am still interested in QRP portable and ran across an old article by **Ed Breneiser, WA3WSJ**. His site is still up, and he still contributes occasionally between QRP portable trips along the eastern seaboard.



Visit Ed's site at:
<http://wa3wsj.homestead.com/>

Check out the other neat things on his web site. If it's QRP and portable, he has probably done it.

Here is one of his old antenna ideas for portable use, easy to build and throw up in the air.

[Black Widow Vertical Antenna](#)

http://wa3wsj.homestead.com/BW_Morphs_UP-Outter2017.pdf

Lightweight, Portable, and lots of fun - de **Dave, K8WP**

Why I love HF digital contesting

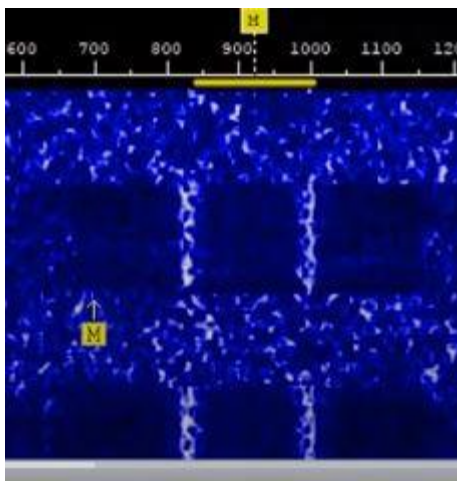
By Ernie Abel, K8RCT

I was introduced to HF digital contesting by my friend and mentor **George Benson, N8RU**. Since my first introduction I have been hooked on digital contesting. So, what is so intriguing about digital contesting anyway?

As we get older (some of us a lot older) our hearing seems to degrade. Sometimes when I'm in QSO with a ham from another country. I have difficulty understanding words. I feel a bit foolish when he asks me about the weather and I tell him about my rig. This isn't a problem with the digital modes that I operate, CW and RTTY.

Since these are digital modes you don't have to worry about accents! The characters are crisp and clear, even better yet your computer can understand the words for you. They show up as nice print on your computer screen. There is one problem with CW, the computer can only decode computer generated characters. We might be able to decipher the hand generated CW but the computer needs very precisely generated characters. Gosh, we can do something the computer can't.

I digress; I want to focus on RTTY contesting. As you may know the RTTY signal is made up of two different tones.



RTTY Waterfall signature

These are 2125 Hz and 2295 HZ. On your band scope or pan-adaptor you would see twin peaks. Most modern transceivers have a feature called – duh- twin peak filters. They are very good at rejecting any signal not in the bandpass of the filters. This means that on a very busy band you will only hear the signal you want. No ears needed but I have found that I can tune in the signal by ear just about as well as the radio.

The real magic in RTTY contesting is your computer! Not only can it decode the signal you are listening to and display the message, it will log the information for you! No more paper logs and check-s

In a contest the computer will keep track of all contacts and calculate your score in real time. heets.

The contest may give more points to stations in other countries or other states. The computer (yes, you need a logging program) does all the calculations and will generate a report that you can send to the contest sponsors.



Ernie, K8RCT contest central

With my modest station (called a little pistol station), which consists of a 50' tower, hex-beam, IC7300 and an amplifier I have won top score in the Region 8, High power, unassisted category. You can make hundreds and hundreds of contacts in a single weekend. Now that is FUN!

So what equipment would you need to start working RTTY?

Well obviously you need an HF radio. Older radios will work but the more modern rigs with a band-scope are best.

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With a band-scope you can tune in the signals by sight. With older rigs you tune in the signal by listening for the tones. I started RTTY contesting using a FT2000 without a band-scope, so I know it can be done.

The next important piece of equipment will be your computer and logging software. The computer can be pretty modest – mine is an old Dell desktop. The key is having logging software that will do all the work for you. Most logging software these days have RTTY modules that will decode the tones for you. You do not need an amplifier as every contest has a low power category where you compete with other low power testers.

There is much, much more about RTTY contesting than covered in this brief article. The best source for information is AA5AU's website. He is the master of RTTY

73, and hope to work you in the contest

Ernie, K8RCT



Hex-Beam Antenna and other wires in the air at K8RCT



FEBRUARY 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
SMASH Net 3.953 MHz 9:00 AM	TBARG & MESH Net 146.86 MHz 8:00 PM	Board Meeting 7:00 PM		Round Table Net 146.86 MHz 7:00 PM		VE LICENSE EXAM 1:00 PM New Approaches Center TCMI
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
SMASH Net 3.953 MHz 9:00 AM	TBARG & MESH Net 146.86 MHz 8:00 PM	Project Night- Don Saunders W4BWS "Basic Wire Antennas"		Round Table Net 146.86 MHz 7:00 PM		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
SMASH Net 3.953 MHz 9:00 AM	TBARG & MESH Net 146.86 MHz 8:00 PM	Project Night - Pete, K8QKP QRP Kit Built		Round Table Net 146.86 MHz 7:00 PM		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
SMASH Net 3.953 MHz 9:00 AM	TBARG & MESH Net 146.86 MHz 8:00 PM	Club Meeting Night		Round Table Net 146.86 MHz 7:00 PM		NEW HAM Workshop 1:00 - 3:00 PM
28						
SMASH Net 3.953 MHz 9:00 AM						



Coming Highlights

February

Board Meeting	FEB	2
1st Roundtable Net	FEB	4
VE EXAM - 1:00 PM	FEB	6
Project Night	FEB	9
Project Night	FEB	16
Club Meeting	FEB	23
New Ham Workshop	FEB	27

March

Board Meeting	MAR	2
Project Nights	MAR	9
Project Nights	MAR	16
Radio Workshop	MAR	17
Club Meeting	MAR	23
\ Live EME Demo		
Project Nights	MAR	30

April

Board Meeting	APR	6
Project Nights	APR	13, 20
Radio Workshop	APR	21
Club Meeting	APR	27
\ Spectrum Time Machine		

Volunteer Examiner Ham Radio License Testing February 6, Saturday 1:00 PM – at New Approaches Ctr.

An important note for any applicant for a first license.

All new applicants in 2021 must register in the FCC CORES system (<https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/user>) and obtain an FRN number before the test session.

This must be done prior to the date of the test as there is a delay in the initial registering/setting up of a password and signing up for the FRN number.

In the past an applicant could simply give their social security number at the test session and the FCC would then issue them their FRN number for future use. This will no longer be the case.

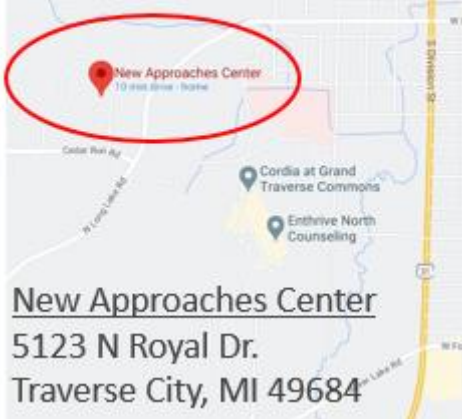
Feel free to contact me with any questions and/or signing up for a test session.

Hope Francisco AA8SN
231-218-0622 (cell)
aa8sn@arrl.net

The February Exam is open to all prospective and licensed amateurs wishing to take a test. Walk-ins are welcome, but as space is limited, it's a good idea to call to let Hope know you wish to test.

Please bring with you Three (3) pieces of ID. (driver's license and any other cards with your name on them). The Test fee is \$15.00.

LOCATION: All License Class Exams



CHERRYLAND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

President	Ernie, K8RCT		
Vice President	Glen, K8SGZ		
Treasurer	Ward, N8WK		
Recording Secretary	Hope, AA8SN	Board Member	Mark, KC8ZAP
Communicating Secretary	Joe, KC8RLU	Board Member	Drake, KE8PXB
Cherry Juice Editor	Joe, N8CN	Board Member	Scott, WX1J