

# QRA NEWSLETTER

QUANNAPOWITT RADIO ASSOCIATION

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ON THE WEB AT: [WWW.W1EKT.ORG](http://WWW.W1EKT.ORG)

FEBRUARY 2014

VOLUME 53, ISSUE 6

QRA WAS FOUNDED ON NOVEMBER 18, 1948

IN WAKEFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

1948-2014, OUR 65<sup>th</sup> YEAR

## CLUB OFFICERS

President – Jeff Hollis, W1CKH  
Vice President – Tim McNulty, K1TIM  
Secretary – Bob Reiser, AA1M  
Treasurer – Jeff Hollis, W1CKH  
Club Webmaster – Brian Gudzevich, WO1VES  
Club Call Trustee – Dex Wheeler, W1TUM  
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## QRA JANUARY MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

In the absence of our club president and vice president, club secretary Bob Reiser called the monthly meeting to order at 7:07 pm. After all gave self introductions, our speaker of the evening, Paul Decker, KG7HF gave an outstanding talk about amateur radio Earth-Moon-Earth (Moonbounce) communications. There were many questions during the talk about the radios and antennas needed. Anyone interested in the subject may email Paul at [KG7HF@comcast.net](mailto:KG7HF@comcast.net). Coffee, donuts and juices were offered by our club kitchen aid Larry Keegan, WA1PII. When the meeting was called to order, there was no new or old business so the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.

**WE ARE ON THE WEB AT:**

**[WWW.W1EKT.ORG](http://WWW.W1EKT.ORG)**

## **HAM CRAM: GOOD FOR AMATEUR RADIO OR NO?**

I've been teaching one-day Tech classes, often referred to as "ham cram" classes for several years now. As a result, a couple hundred people now have amateur radio licenses. I'm proud of that, but sometimes a doubt or two creeps in. The doubts come from whether or not I'm teaching the students enough.

I also sometimes think about whether or not, my No-Nonsense study guides ([www.kb6nu.com/tech-manual](http://www.kb6nu.com/tech-manual)) should have more technical content. Recently on my blog ([www.kb6nu.com](http://www.kb6nu.com)), I've been posting sections of the next edition of my No-Nonsense, Technician Class License Study Guide. One comment reads,

"Oh my, now I see why my beloved USA is falling behind in math/technology/university on the world stage. Lack of rigor brings down real world knowledge and this sad trend plagues our country at every level. Your book helps students pass the exam but not learn proper physics." The commenter is right about my study guides not trying to teach students about math or physics. There are many other books out there that do that. I disagree, though, that my study guides and my one-day classes are part of a "sad trend."

For one thing, an amateur radio license is not a degree in electrical engineering. Not only that, the Technician Class license is the very first rung on the amateur radio ladder. So, the question is how much knowledge should we require of someone just starting out in our hobby/service?

Secondly, I always stress that an amateur radio license is really a license to learn, and getting a Tech license is only the first step in a lifelong learning journey. I've been a ham a long time, and I'm constantly learning new things. And, I'm learning them because I have an amateur radio license. Without the privileges that my license gives me, I wouldn't be able to do the things I'm doing to learn them.

I sometimes regret that I can't teach people more during my one-day classes, but when you get right down to it, there's only so much you can expect. I know that a lot of my students have gone on to get General Class and Extra Class licenses and have turned in to great amateur radio operators. Presumably, they've learned a lot in the process.

Having said all that, I'm curious as to what you think about this? Are ham cram classes good for amateur radio? If not, what else should we be doing to help people get involved and enjoy amateur radio? (by Dan KB6NU)

When he's not teaching class, Dan, KB6NU enjoys working CW on the HF bands and building kits. For more information about his operating activities and his "No-Nonsense" series of amateur radio license study guides, go to [KB6NU.Com](http://KB6NU.Com) or e-mail [cwgeek@kb6nu.com](mailto:cwgeek@kb6nu.com).

**KDA Custom Embroidery** is owned by QRA member Paul Anderson, KA1GIJ and his wife Kathleen. For 18 years, Paul and Kathleen have been providing customized embroidery and screen-printing from their shop on Pearl Street in Reading. Names, monograms, call signs, logos and designs (stock or customized) can be stitched on hats, shirts, sweatshirts, polo-shirts and more. Purchase garments from them or provide your own.

Visit: [www.kdaembroidery.com](http://www.kdaembroidery.com), email to [kdace@aol.com](mailto:kdace@aol.com) or call Kathleen at (781) 942-0421.

## **NAVAL HUMOR**

### **OLD SALT**

A crusty old battleship admiral died and found himself standing before Saint Peter at the pearly gates. Peter welcomed him warmly, "Come right in, Admiral! You've served your country well and you may enter Heaven!"

The admiral looked thru the gates and stepped up to Saint Peter, "Just one thing, sonny. I hope there's no Chiefs here. They are the rudest, most obnoxious variety of human ever, and if there are any of them here, I'm not going in; I'd rather go to the other place."

"Don't worry, admiral," said Saint Peter. "No Chief has ever made it into Heaven – you'll find none of 'em here."

So, the admiral goes on into Heaven. Moments later, he comes upon an amazing sight. It is a swaggering figure in khakis, garrison cap cocked slightly on his head, a mostly empty bottle of Jack Daniels in one hand, and a beautiful woman on either arm.

Incensed, the admiral rushes back to Saint Peter and gets in his face. "Hey! You said there were no Chiefs here! So what the hell is THAT?!?"

"Don't worry, admiral," says Saint Peter gently. "That's God. He just THINKS he's a Chief."

### **FOR SALE AT QRA FEBRUARY MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

QRA member Jim Fisk, W1HL will be auctioning off a Heathkit HW-8 QRP receiver and a HWA 7-1 power supply. The power supply works but no response from the rig. Jim says someone will enjoy trouble-shooting it.

### **A WISE OLD MASTER CHIEF ONCE SAID**

A young Ensign approaches the crusty old Master Chief and asked about the origin of the commissioned officer insignias.

"Well," replied the Master Chief, " the insignias for the Navy are steeped in history and tradition.

First, we give you a gold bar representing that you are very valuable but also malleable.

The silver bar also represents significant value, but is less malleable.

Now, when you make Lieutenant, your value doubles, hence the two silver bars.

As a Captain, you soar over the military masses, hence the eagle.

As an Admiral, you are, obviously, a star.

Does that answer your question?"

"Yes Master Chief" replied the young Ensign. "But what about Lieutenant Commander and Commander?"

"That, sir, goes waaaay back in history - back to the Garden of Eden. You see we've always covered our privates with leaves." (Thanks to Tim McNulty, K1TUM)

**FRAMINGHAM ARA FLEA MARKET NOTICE**

Hi Bob: Nice seeing you today at Best Buy. The Framingham ARA flea market will be held on Sunday, April 6 at the Keefe Technical School in Framingham (same place we have been using for years). Doors open at 9:00 AM to the public (buyers) and 7:30 AM for sellers.

Admission is \$5. If you need any more info, please let me know.

Tnx and 73, Gordy K1GB

*THE*

**Shameless  
Wolf**

**781-368-3413**

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Email: [brian@shamelesswolf.com](mailto:brian@shamelesswolf.com)

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QRA members get 25% off labor when you mention  
this ad, compliments of Brian, WO1VES

**DUES ARE DUE NOW**  
**STILL ONLY \$15.00**

Dues can be paid to the club treasurer ay the next meeting or sent to him at:  
QRA c/o Jeff Hollis, W1CKH, 46 Bond St., Reading, MA 01867-2432

**COME JOIN THE QRA 2-METER NET**

**ON TUESDAY EVENINGS ON**

**WA1RHN/R AT 7:30 PM ON  
147.075**

**NEXT QRA  
MEMBERSHIP MEETING  
WILL BE HELD ON  
THURSDAY  
FEBRUARY 20,  
2014**

AND WILL START AT

**7:00 PM**

OUR SPEAKERS FOR THIS MEETING  
WILL BE

**BLAIR SUTHERLAND AND JOHN RUGGERIO, N2YHK**

Blair is Communications Director, Massachusetts State Police and  
John is Electrical Engineer, Massachusetts State Police

They plan to give a talk on the public safety communications and  
technology used in response to the 2013 bombing at the  
Boston Marathon

LAW'S OF MURPHY (Anon.)

(The following definitions of the Law of Murphy recently came into my possession, but I can't remember -from where. My only clue is 'Tampa, Florida, USA'. I thought they may bring a smile or two, as they did to me. It's amazing how many have been true in the past! - G4BUE)

Anything that can go wrong will go wrong.

The chances of seeing someone who knows you dramatically increase by not wanting to be seen.

Every job will take twice as long as you expect and will be half as lucrative.

A penny saved is not worth very much.

Nothing is as easy as it looks.

Never argue with a fool, people might not know the difference.

In case of doubt, make it sound convincing.

If more than one person is responsible for a miscalculation, no one will be at fault.

A Smith & Wesson beats four aces.

In any hierarchy, each individual rises to his own level of incompetence, and then remains there.

Never play leapfrog with a unicorn!

Everyone has a scheme for getting rich that will not work.

Build a system that even a fool can use, and only a fool will use it.

Never eat yellow snow!

When in doubt, mumble. When in trouble, delegate.

The repairman will never have seen a model quite like yours before.

A tool dropped while repairing a car will roll underneath to the exact centre.

Self starters - will not.

When a broken appliance is demonstrated for the repairman, it will work perfectly.

You can't be too rich or too thin.

Nothing is impossible for the person who doesn't have to do it.

A f30,000 picture valve will protect a 10p fuse by blowing first.

There is no such thing as a free lunch.

You will always find something in the last place you look.

The other queue always moves faster.

No matter how long you shop for an item, after you've bought it, it will be on sale cheaper.

The chance of a piece of bread falling with the buttered side down is directly proportional to the cost of the carpet.

Beauty is only skin deep, ugly goes to the bone.

If everything seems to be going well, you obviously don't know what the hell is going on.

Celibacy is not hereditary.

If you're feeling good, don't worry, you'll get over it.

A bird in hand is safer than one overhead.

Leakproof seals - will.

Nature always sides with the hidden flaw.

Anything good in life is either illegal, immoral or fattening.

A pipe gives a wise man time to think and a fool something to stick in his mouth.

A short cut is the longest distance between two points.

All warranties expire upon payment of invoice.

Interchangeable parts - won't.

Never sleep with anyone who is crazier than yourself.

Friends come and go, but enemies accumulate.

If it jams - force it. If it breaks, it needed replacing anyway.

(Thanks to Jim Fisk, W1HL)

## RADIO AMATEURS RECEIVE ROSETTA SPACECRAFT SIGNALS FROM DEEP SPACE

James Miller, G3RUH, was among a handful of Amateur Radio operators to receive the X band signal January 21 from the European Space Agency's Rosetta spacecraft, some 500 million miles from Earth. Miller used the 20 meter dish at the Bochum Amateur Radio facility in Germany, run by AMSAT-DL and IUZ Bochum Observatory. In an AMSAT-BB post, Miller noted the frequency at the spacecraft was 8421.786900 MHz, and the signal was "about 14 dB" below that of the STEREO A/B spacecraft. Perhaps more astonishing, Bertrand Pinel, F5PL, was able to track Rosetta 65 kilometers from Toulouse using his "home-rigged" 3.5 meter dish and receiver. And Viljo Allik, ES5PC, a member of Estonian Student Satellite Program team reported his group was able to detect the satellite's signal using a slightly smaller dish.

"We have recently established our own small ground station for mostly educational purposes to get more interested students into space technology," Allik said in a reply to Pinel's European Space Agency blog post. The Estonians used a 3 meter dish. Allik said the signal-to-noise ratio was in the range of 3 to 5 dB in a 1 Hz bandwidth. "So it was really exciting to see the signal from such large distance with our very simple receiving station. The elevation of the Rosetta spacecraft at our location was only about 4° during the reception."

The equipment used was "a kind of amateur design," he said. "We detected signals from other spacecraft like Gaia and STEREO A/B too, but the signal from Rosetta is the most-distant signal we have detected so far."

Launched in 2004, Rosetta will both orbit and land on a comet, which it will reach this August, and send data back to Earth. The spacecraft consists of the Rosetta space probe and the Philae robotic lander.

(The ARRL Letter of February 6, 2014)

### QRA MEMBERSHIP MEETING

**The QRA holds its membership meetings at the Reading, MA Senior Citizen Center at 49 Pleasant Street in the old fire house. All are invited and holding an Amateur Radio license is not required. Meetings begin around 7:00 pm on the third Thursday of each month. We have very interesting speakers. Come join us and bring a friend with you.**

**WE ARE ON THE WEB AT: [WWW.W1EKT.ORG](http://WWW.W1EKT.ORG)**

## UNITED STATES REMOVES LARGEST NUKE ARSENAL

The United States recently dismantled the largest nuclear weapon in its arsenal, the last of some 340 Cold War-era 9-megaton B53 gravity bombs, as part of ongoing reduction efforts. Introduced in 1962, the B53 was a 10,000-pound, minivansized device. Technicians at the Pantex Plant near Amarillo, Texas-the nations lone nuclear weapons assembly and disassembly facility-separated the B53's 300 pounds of high explosive from the uranium core, which will be stored temporarily at the facility. According to the Federation of American Scientists ([www.fas.org](http://www.fas.org)), under the 2010 New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) the United States has only eliminated 10 active warheads while Russia has increased its stockpile by 29. (Military History, March, 2012)

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