



THE HARC SPARK

The Official Newsletter of the
Holmesburg Amateur Radio Club
501(C)(3) Charitable Organization
WM3PEN 146.685 MHz Repeater
K3RJC 444.9 MHz Repeater
K3FI – Club Calls – WM3PEN
Web Site <http://www.WM3PEN.org>
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Editor: K3UJ

January
2025

Prez Sez!

I'm looking forward to some interesting meeting topics this year. As you know, our January meeting had KC3PGT(Philadelphia County Emergency Coordinator) and W2AFE(Eastern PA EC) giving a very informative talk on the ins and outs of local and statewide EMCOMM. Those who want to get involved can find some relevant documents in the Files section of our io group.

A few months ago, WA3PZO and I got to know Dan KB6NU when he visited this area to instruct ham radio at a tech conference. Dan has agreed to speak remotely at our February meeting to tell us about his experiences teaching a license course, and will no doubt give us some good hints for doing the same. One resident at our meeting site has expressed interest in attending to learn more about ham radio. If we make him and other residents welcome, maybe we can put these hints to work!

We're excited to have our ARRL Atlantic Division Director, Bob K3RF, speaking at our March meeting. A lot has been going down at ARRL, some controversial, so bring your questions and input.

Some of us attended the 75th anniversary banquet of our sister club, the Phil-Mont Mobile Radio Club. I remember them from when I was a young ham, driving around with big antennas on their cars in order to operate on 10 meters. This was before repeaters were used, so VHF/UHF didn't work well back then. HARC has an anniversary coming up as well...2027 will be our 50th! We must think of special events to celebrate!

Speaking of history: Thanks to WA3PZO and recent meeting speaker K6KJN, many of our club newsletters and documents are getting archived at the Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/>. For more details, see PZO's 21 Dec 2024 post on our io group.

Onward and upward, or, as radio personality and humorist Jean Shepherd K2ORS would say, "excelsior!"

Saul W3WHK

Holiday Dinner

It was a good turnout for the holiday dinner on a rainy December 18th at Joseph's Pizza. Good food and lively conversation. We had the back room to ourselves. Clockwise from left: Jim WA3ERQ, Carl N3ZZK, Bob WA3PZO, Rich K3UJ, Saul W3WHK, Frannie XYL WB2BXO (partially hidden), Frank WB2BXO, Stephen WA3ZGT, Diana. XYL KB3UWJ, E.J. KB3UWJ.



Longest Operating Satellite Celebrates 50th Anniversary

Launched on November 15, 1974, a microsat named OSCAR-7 continues to operate fifty years later, serving radio amateurs around the world. It is recognized as the oldest operating satellite, even preceding the launch of NASA's famed Voyager 1 and Voyager 2 satellites launched in 1977.

OSCAR satellites (meaning Orbital Satellites Carrying Amateur Radio) are built by members of the Radio Amateur Satellite Corporation (AMSAT). Many members have been employees at Goddard Space Flight Center and similar companies or organizations that are central to U.S. space programs. They pioneered the concept of using secondary payloads in place of ballast to manage the center-of-gravity requirements for a launch. Although OSCAR-7 was largely built on the basement workbenches of AMSAT volunteer engineers. It still had to pass the rigorous tests required of any space bound vehicles – perhaps even more so. The owner of the primary payload, NOAA-4/ITOS-G, had to be assured that the adjacent payload, built by a bunch of “hobbyists,” would not jeopardize the mission.

Largely designed and built with relatively new CMOS technology, NASA engineers predicted that OSCAR-7 would last perhaps one to three years. Given the fact that the components were not radiation hardened, even that was felt to be generously optimistic.

Yet, OSCAR-7 lived long enough to make several important contributions. It is believed to host the first ground-to-satellite-to-satellite-to-ground communications. Following the nearly identical orbit of its predecessor, OSCAR-6, the two satellites occasionally lapped each other and provided ground stations the opportunity to pass messages between the two satellites before returning to earth.

More significantly, OSCAR-7 was used to investigate the possibility of locating downed aircraft and disabled sea vessels by using Doppler analysis of signals from emergency location transmitters (ELT's). Scientists from the Russian COSPAR/U.S. SARSAT teams simulated ELT's on amateur radio stations and demonstrated how receiving and relaying ELT transmissions and analyzing Doppler shift as OSCAR-7 passed overhead could accurately locate the emergency beacons. As a result of this test using an amateur radio satellite, the COSPAR/SARSAT program is credited with saving over 57,000 lives in over 17,000 mishaps.

Eventually, OSCAR-7 came to lead a double life. After its batteries shorted and failed, its first life ended in 1981 after 6.5 years of faithful operation. Due to the design of the power system, the shorted batteries cut off the available power from the solar cells.

Remarkably, 21 years later in June, 2002, an amateur radio operator heard OSCAR-7's telemetry beacon. This reception was confirmed by radio operators around the world. It can only be guessed that a battery reverted to an open state and power from the solar cells was restored.

OSCAR-7 is now affectionately referred to as the “Sleeping Beauty” of satellites and continues to provide ground-breaking scientific contributions. Using years of analysis of orbital data, OSCAR-7 engineers were able to confirm the existence of orbital perturbances, or disturbances that were previously predicted by NASA scientists.

How much longer will OSCAR-7 function? Its telemetry beacon has become somewhat erratic in the past few months and its radio transponders now change modes unpredictably. Regardless of its remaining life, OSCAR-7 has found its place in the record books for the foreseeable future.

Persons interested in a detailed account of OSCAR-7's development and history can visit <https://www.amsat.org/amsat-ao-7-a-fifty-year-anniversary/>.

as reported by Frank Karnauskas, N1UW in 11/15 QRZ.COM

WA3PZO makes donation to Olympic Museum

Miracle on Ice...Eric Heiden winning 5 Gold medals in Speed Skating are just two of the highlights of the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, NY. Helping to get the games started by guiding the Olympic Flame from Langley Air Force Base to Lake Placid were 52 runners, 7 public relations specialists, 7 drivers, 2 mechanics, 2 torch technicians, 2 runner coordinators, 2 food and lodging coordinators, the technical director and his assistant, and to keep it all together 21 ham radio operators. For 10 days amateur radio was the primary communications tool that guided the Olympic Flame along a 1000 mile route as the runners participated in ceremonies along the route. The route took the runners through many historical towns including Williamsburg, VA, Washington, D.C., Baltimore, MD, Philadelphia, PA, Trenton, NJ, New York City, Albany, and

Lake Placid. In addition many local ham radio operators chimed in to help as the Olympic Torch Relay Team passed through their town. The ham radio operators were responsible for safety and logistical communications. At times the Relay Team was separated by several miles as an advance team participated in local events and the runners headed north one stride at a time.

The radios barely got a rest as they started daily preparations before the sun came up and didn't finish the day until after midnight. At times the logistical communications were nicknamed "Rollerball." Rollerball was a movie where the rules were constantly changing. The 21 amateurs adjusted to the rule changes to make sure the proper information got to the proper people. As the run progressed everyone began to appreciate the work and skill of the ham radio operators. In fact the director of communications for the Olympics said the Torch Relay was by far the most complicated communications event of the entire Olympics. The ham radio operators were presented with an Olympic Appreciation Medal for their service. The Medal is similar to the Bronze Medal won by the athletes. The hams certainly proved that amateur radio is a contact sport.

2025 marks the 45th anniversary of the 1980 Winter Olympics. The Olympic Torch Relay began on January 31. Bob Josuweit, WA3PZO, a member of the Torch Relay Team entered into discussions with the Lake Placid Olympic Museum. Bob has donated about 100 newspaper and magazine articles about the Torch Run to the Museum. The articles include stories about the run, runners, and amateur radio involvement with the Torch Run. In addition about 350 35mm slides have been donated which help to tell the Torch Run story and amateur radio involvement. The collection enhances the Museum's record of the Torch Run.

SFTW
Stamps For The Wounded
Recent Press Release

**Holmesburg Amateur Radio Club's Service Project
Recognized Around the World**

Since 2014 the Holmesburg Amateur Radio Club has participated in the Stamps for the Wounded program.

Stamps for the Wounded (SFTW) is a service organization dedicated to providing comfort and stimulating activity to U.S. veterans through stamp collecting. SFTW sends stamps, covers, supplies and literature to enable veterans to begin, or continue to collect stamps. Stamp collecting is an activity that provides comfort, meaningful activity and social connections ... it is not physically challenging and very stimulating.

SFTW has been helping veterans since 1942 and welcomes any U.S. veteran who would like to begin, or continue collecting stamps, to join our program to receive stamps and philatelic materials.

The Club originally got involved with the SFTW program when they received about 1000 QSL card requests following members participation in the annual 13 Colonies Special Event held each July. HARC's Club call, WM3PEN, is a bonus station during that event. The question came up as to what, if anything, could be done with all of the cancelled stamps on the envelopes. Upon learning of the program club members began inserting a brief note about the program with the QSL card request. Soon envelopes, both large and small, started to arrive from around the U.S. We even got packages from England and Germany. Stamps came from individuals, sports clubs, businesses, etc. Many asked how could their school or business get involved. Bob Josuweit, WA3PZO, trustee of the WM3PEN callsign, says this has provided a way to introduce people to ham radio. Rich Shivers, K3UJ, who coordinates the shipping of the stamps to SFTW says that the Club has shipped about 74 pounds of stamps so far. That's a lot of stamps when you consider stamps are shipped with about a ¼ inch border.

Rob Jenson, president of Stamps for the Wounded recently thanked HARC for "coordinating outreach among your members, and other amateur radio operators around the world. We have received donations from others who have seen info with your QSL cards and on your web site."

Following a recent HARC shipment to SFTW, Jenson said "We gratefully acknowledge receipt of your box of US and foreign used stamps, and some US mint postage stamps. On behalf of our veterans, and our all volunteer staff, we thank you all for promoting us, and encouraging your members and other radio operators to send us stamps from QSL cards, which we forward to the veterans."

He continued, "We have plenty of material to share, so if any of your members, or radio contacts are veterans or active-duty military who collect stamps or covers, or who are interested in adding stamp collecting to their hobbies, please point them to our web site at <https://stampsforthewounded.org/for-veterans> and we will get them set up."

Some of the items the SFTW program can use include: Undamaged, used stamps from the USA or a foreign country except for common stamps that have "Non Profit" or "Bulk Rate" printed on them or stamps with the US Flag as their entire design. Other types of stamps and envelopes that are acceptable can be found on the stampsforthewounded.org website.

We are still collecting and sending packages of stamps in support of this very worthwhile program. Save what you can, especially those foreign QSL mailings, cut off the corner of the envelope, leaving at least a 1/4" around, and bring them to the meeting or mail to:

Rich Shivers
9029 Eastview Rd.
Philadelphia, PA 19152

WM3PEN QSL stats

The WM3PEN call is out there. A lot from the 13 Colony event, but club members have used the call in various contests over the years and we have racked up some impressive numbers and operation awards.

Electronic Confirmations continue to come in for WM3PEN

EQSL shows 38193 total

LOTW shows 58397 total

DXCC - 141 entities confirmed

WAS - Have worked all 50 states on SSB, CW, Digital
For 5 Band WAS WM3PEN needs Hawaii and Alaska on 80 meters and Vermont on 10 meters.

WPX - 1779 different prefixes

WAZ - 33 of 40 CQ Zones

Meetings

Club meetings are held the third Wednesday of the month 7:30 PM at the Philadelphia Protestant Home, 6401 Martins Mill Road, Philadelphia, PA 19111. We meet in the Learning Center, second floor of main building.

Feb 19, 2025

Dan - KB6NU
teaching prospective hams
In person and Zoom

Mar 19, 2025

Bob - K3RF
Atlantic Division Director with updates on the ARRL.
In person and Zoom

Stay Connected!

The HARC Club net meets every Thursday night at 8 PM on the Club repeater. Check in and see what's going on. Net control, Austin - KA3TTT.

Please note the day change. As club meetings are now on Wednesday, the net has been moved to Thursday's. Same time.

Committee Position

Are you interested in becoming more involved with the club, HARC is looking for an Audio Visual Chairmen. Their responsibilities would be; setting up the projector and computer equipment at meeting, monitoring the zoom presentation and audio feed. Breakdown after the meeting. Storage of the equipment between the meetings. All equipment will be supplied by the club. We will also provide instructions on how to do this.

If you are interested please contact Bob - WA3PZO or Saul - W3WHK

PHILA ARES INFORMATION

All amateurs interested in participating in ARES should check into the Phila ARES Net, Sunday's at 9:00 PM, local time, hosted on the Phil-Mont Repeater System; 147.030 MHz (+offset 91.5 PL)
;444.80 MHz (+offset 186.2 PL) When control operators are available, Echolink node 29742, WU3I-L, is on the repeater.
Backup link is KB3IV-L.

All amateurs are welcomed and encouraged to check in for more information. There is always a different topic of interest to the amateur community discussed with an informal round table of comments and suggestions.

HARC member, Cliff - KC3PGT, is the Philadelphia Emergency Coordinator, Section 1, EPA Region.

We look forward to hearing everyone on Sunday nights @ 9:00 pm. See web site for more information.
- Visit the Philadelphia ARES web site
<http://www.phlares.org/>

