

E-VOX

The Official ***On-Line*** Newsletter of the



Lehigh Valley Amateur Radio Club - W3OI



Allentown, Pennsylvania - USA

Officers

President: Mark S. Miller - AK3M (AK3M@rcn.com **or** AK3M@arrl.net)

Vice President: Barry Mitchneck - KB3FMI (barrym@ptd.net)

Secretary: Rod Wolfe, Jr. - KB3HFZ (rjwolfe@rcn.com)

Treasurer: Paul Ryan - N0KIA (n0kia@arrl.net)

Board of Governors

Chris Kelly - N3RPV (ckelly@ckelly.tv)

Larry Miller - NR3R (milla@enter.net)

Carl Seier - AA3IX (aa3ix@ptd.net)

Bruce Bobo - KB3FIH (bbobojr@ptd.net)

Jim Kelly - (kellyj6@hotmail.com)

E-VOX Editor - Mark S. Miller (AK3M) (AK3M@rcn.com) **or** AK3M@arrl.net)

Webmaster- Paul Ryan N0KIA (n0kia@arrl.net)

Repeaters

146.340/146.940 (PL 71.9)

147.735/147.135 (PL 167.9)



RACES NET

Every Monday at 7:30 (Local Time)

All are welcome !



W3OI Home Page: <http://www.w3oi.org>



March, 2003 Contents



Meeting Information	page 3
L.C. RACES Net Information	page 3
This Month In Ham Radio	page 4
Minutes of the February, 2003 Meeting	page 5
Dipole Calculator	page 6
Odd Facts and Ham Radio Trivia	page 7
Old Rigs Web Site / ISS	page 8
LVARC Dues Are Due	page 9
Field Day Site Determined	page 10
Ham Radio Trivia Answer	page 11
US Call Area Map	page 12
GREAT Ham Radio Aids Web Site/Phonetics	page 13
Do You Know ALL The "Q" Signals?	page 14-15
Spring Fox Hunt / ARRL Survey	page 16
An Introduction To The Guest Speaker At LVARC.....	page 17
Build a "J" Pole	page 18
LVARC Web Site News	page 19
Get A PA Call License Plate	page 20
EPA Emergency Coordinators	page 21
EPA District 2 Map	page 22
EPA District 2 Emergency Coordinator List	page 23
Member's News / New members	page 24
Severe WX Drill Fox Hunt Seminar.....	page 25
RACES members Check River for Ice	page 26
In Memory	page 27
EPA Section manager Speaks at LVARC	page 28
Chris Celebrates Groundhog Day In Antarctica.....	page 29-30

H
a
p
p
y

S
t.

P
a
t
r
i
c
k
's

D
a
y



**The March Meeting will be held at
the Red Cross Building on
Tuesday March 4, 2002 at 7:30 pm.**



Crossband Operations and Crossband Repeaters The good, bad and ugly points to consider. Presenter: Paul Ryan (NOKIA).



LVARC / RACES NET

Don't forget to check into the Monday Night
LVARC/RACES Net on 146.94 (PL 71.9) with an
alternate frequency of 147.735/147.135 (PL 167.9)
The Net begins at 7:30 pm local time.

**Many club announcements
will be heard there !**

Monday Night RACES/ARES Check In Summary 2003

<u>Month</u>	<u>Number of Check-In's</u>	<u>Number of Mondays</u>
January	88	4





This Month In Ham Radio

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <h1>March</h1>						ARRL International Phone DX Contest 1
ARRL International Phone DX Contest Chris Home from S. Pole !!! 2	ARES RACES Net 7:30 3	LVARC Meeting Red Cross 7:30 4	5	6	7	SARL Filed Day Contest 8
SARL Filed Day Contest UBA CW Spring Contest 9	ARES RACES Net 7:30 10	11	12	13	14	YLISSB QSO Party SSB Russian DX Contest 15
YLISSB QSO Party SSB Russian DX Contest 16	ARES RACES Net 7:30  17	Full Moon  18	19	WX Drill 20	Oklahoma QSO Party 21	Oklahoma QSO Party 22
Oklahoma QSO Party 23	ARES RACES Net 7:30 24	25	26	27	28	29
30	ARES RACES Net 7:30 31	<h1>2003</h1> 				

Tuesday April 1, 2003 - LVARC meeting at the Red Cross Building at 7:30 (No fooling) .



Minutes of the February, 2003 Meeting

The February meeting of the LVARC was held at the Lehigh Valley Restaurant on Tuesday February 4 ,2002. The meeting was brought to order at 6:40 pm

1. The meeting was brought to order at 6:40 pm. There were 15 members present.
2. Paul (N0KIA) reported a balance in the treasury of \$1027.22 as of January 31, 2003.
3. Pail read the correspondence which included a notice of the RF Hill auction on March 26, 2003. It will be held in the Perkasio Fire Company.
4. Jeff (N3MFT) reminded all about the upcoming weather drill on March 20. If you can offer a few hours to help, contact Jeff.
5. Jeff (N3MFT) reported that the 135 machine needs a part for the receiver.
6. John Conklin (LC EMA) sent his TNX, via Jeff (N3MFT), for the operators who checked the Lehigh River for ice.
7. Eric Olena (ARRL Section Manager) donated a 2002/2003 Repeater Directory, It was won by Larry (NR3R) by drawing.
8. The Field Day site for 2003 will be at Camp Serranova. This was decided by a poll taken at the meeting.
9. The meeting closed at 7:55 pm.
10. Following the meeting and dinner, Eric Olena (WB3FPL) spoke about the ARRL Field organization.

\$\$\$ W3OI Finances \$\$\$
Balance as of 1/31/2003 - \$1,027.22

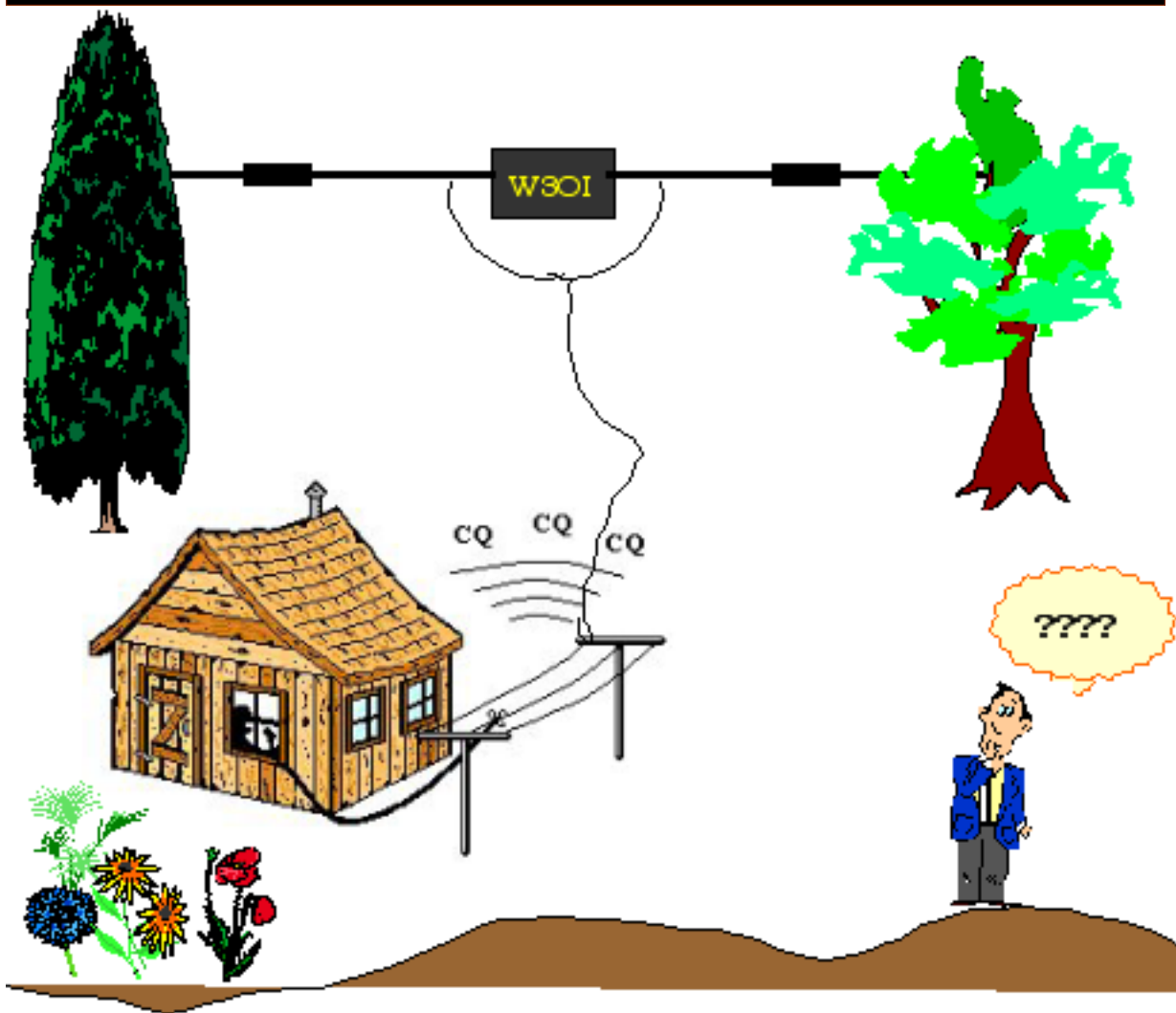




Need to Calculate the Length of a Dipole ?

Check out the “Dipole Calculator” at”

<http://www.kwarc.org/ant-calc.html>





Odd facts (de Bob (KE3AW))

Early politicians required feedback from the public to determine what was considered important to the people. Since there were no telephones, TV's or radios, the politicians sent their assistants to local taverns, pubs and bars who were told to "go sip some ale" and listen to people's conversations and political concerns. Many assistants were dispatched at different times. "You go sip here" and "You go sip there." The two words "go sip" were eventually combined when referring to the local opinion and **thus, we have the term "gossip."**



HAM RADIO TRIVIA

(from QRZ.com)

In what year was spark outlawed for US hams?

1919 1930
1927 1933

**Answer on
page 11**



Old Rigs Web Site

de Larry (NR3R)

Remember those great ham rigs of old?
If you want to relive the days of old ham radio, visit the following
web site. Here, you will find great pictures of your favorite radios!!

<http://www.rigpix.com/index.shtml>

Children Talk to the International Space Station

On December 29, 2002 the Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum held an event where students were able to ask Astronaut Ken Bowersox questions via ham radio as he orbited 230 miles above the Earth in the International Space Station (ISS).



You can see a movie of this event by going to:
<http://www.adlerplanetarium.org/education/events/iss/>



LVARC Dues Are Due !!

Wish I HAD
remembered to pay
my dues. I will do I
NOW !!!



Ha ha, I already
paid MY dues !!!

- (1) \$17.00 for active members (includes auto patch)
- (2) \$3.00 for family members
- (3) \$5.00 for non-hams.

Send your dues to:

**Paul Ryan (NOKIA)
5814 Lindbergh Street
Orefield, PA 18069-2250**

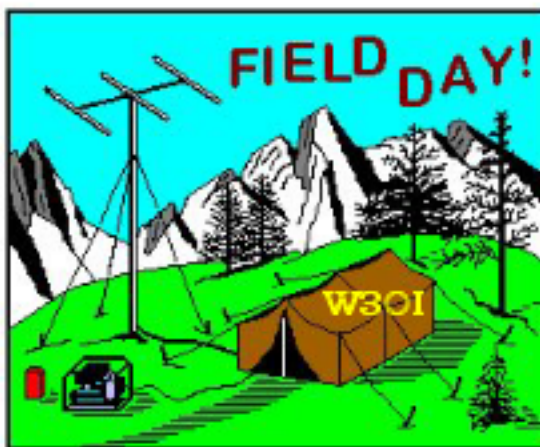
or pay Paul at the next meeting.

Make checks payable to: *The Lehigh Valley Amateur Radio Club*

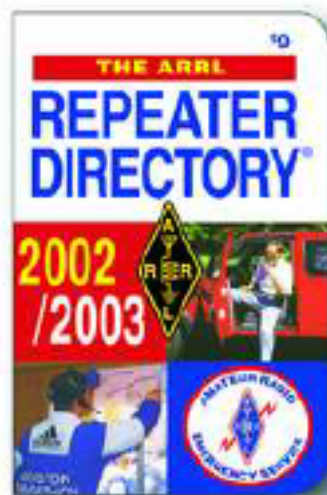


Field Day Site Decided by Poll

The site of the 2003 LVARC Field Day has been decided by a poll from the members at the February, 2003 meeting. Camp Serranova was selected by majority.



Eric Olena (WB3FPL) donated a *2002/2003 ARRL Repeater Directory* to the club at the dinner meeting. The directory was won by Larry (NR3R) by drawing.

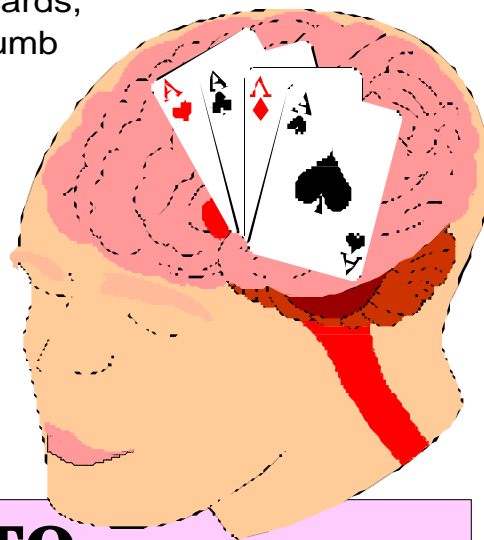




Odd Facts

de Bob (KE3AW)

Common entertainment included playing cards. However, there was a tax levied when purchasing playing cards but only applicable to the "ace of spades." To avoid paying the tax, people would purchase 51 cards instead. Yet, since most games require 52 cards, these people were thought to be stupid or dumb because they weren't **"playing with a full deck."**



ANSWER TO HAM RADIO TRIVIA

(from page 7)

In what year was spark outlawed for US hams?



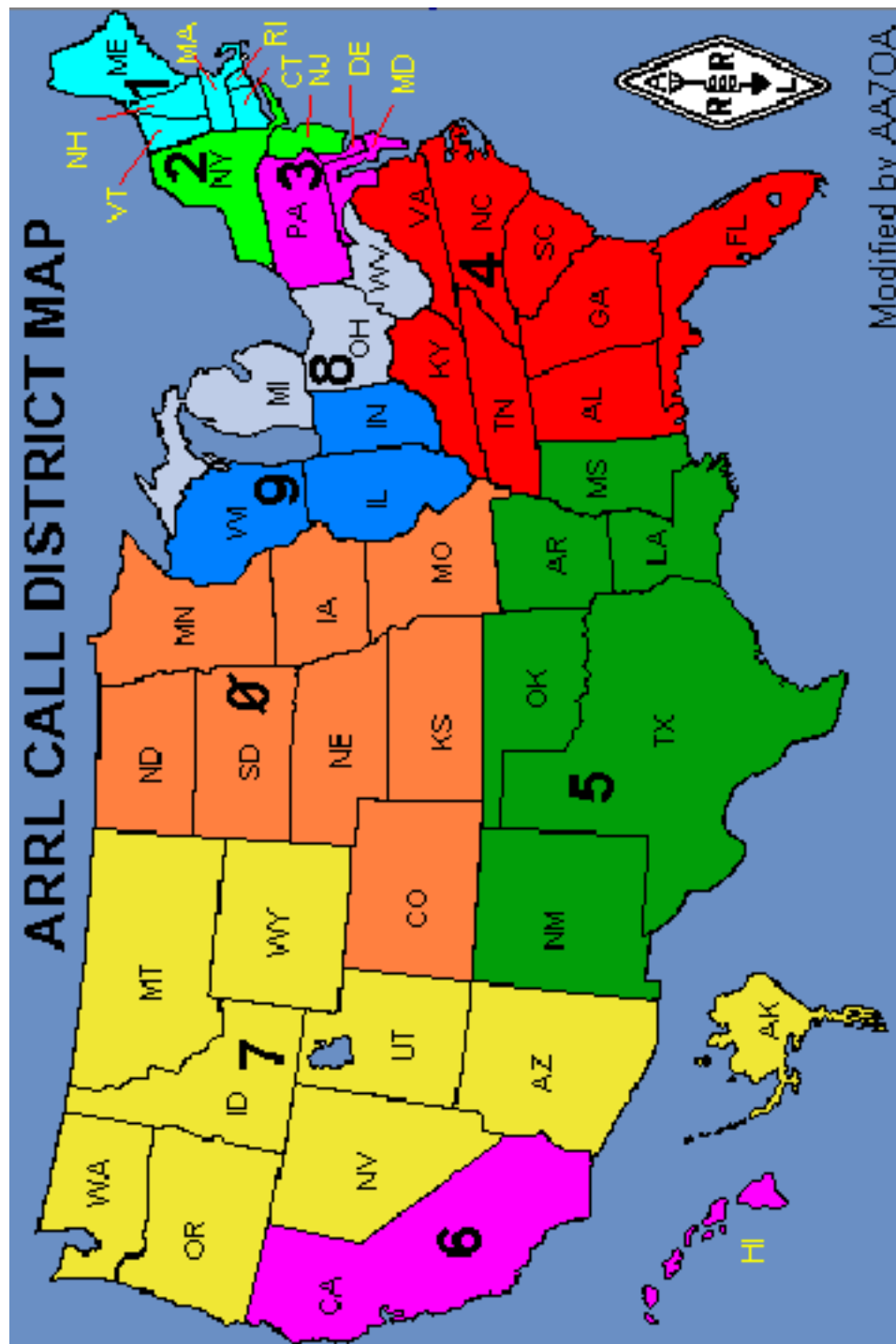
1919
1927

1930
1933





US Call District Map





Great Web Site for Both the Beginning and Veteran Ham

de Mark (AK3M)

Looking for maps, meaning of abbreviations, information on propagation, Part 97 Rules, QRP, contests and **MUCH** more? Visit:

AC6V's LINKS TO OPERATING AIDS at
<http://www.ac6v.com/opaid.htm>

The Phonetic Alphabet

(from AC6V's Website)

Are you using the correct phonetics?

Incorrect or "made-up" phonetics can be unfamiliar and confusing !

A - Alpha	B - Bravo	C - Charlie	D - Delta
E - Echo	F - Foxtrot	G - Golf	H - Hotel
I - India	J - Juliette	K - Kilo	L - Lima
M - Mike	N - November	O - Oscar	P - Papa
Q - Quebec	R - Romeo	S - Sierra	T - Tango
U - Uniform	V - Victor	W - Whiskey	X - X-ray
Y - Yankee	Z - Zulu		

**Phonetics and "Q" signals are used
primarily on HF bands and not necessary
on VHF or UHF unless spelling something
unique or spelling is requested by other station.**



Do You Know ALL the “Q” Signals ?

“Q” Sign

Meaning

- QRA** What is the name of your station? The name of my station is ____.
- QRB** How far are you from my station? I am ____ km from you station
- QRD** Where are you bound and where are you coming from? I am bound ____ from ____.
- QRG** Will you tell me my exact frequency? Your exact frequency is ____ kHz.
- QRH** Does my frequency vary? Your frequency varies.
- QRI** How is the tone of my transmission? The tone of your transmission is ____
(1-Good, 2-Variable, 3-Bad.)
- QRJ** Are you receiving me badly? I cannot receive you, your signal is too weak.
- QRL** What is the intelligibility of my signals? The intelligibility of your signals is ____
(1-Bad, 2-Poor, 3-Fair, 4-Good, 5-Excellent.)
- QRL** Are you busy? I am busy, please do not interfere
- QRM** Is my transmission being interfered with? Your transmission is being interfered with ____ (1-Nil, 2-Slightly, 3-Moderately, 4-Severely, 5-Extremely.)
- QRN** Are you troubled by static? I am troubled by static ____ (1-5 as under QRM.)
- QRO** Shall I increase power? Increase power.
- QRP** Shall I decrease power? Decrease power.
- QRQ** Shall I send faster? Send faster (____ WPM.)
- QRR** Are you ready for automatic operation? I am ready for automatic operation.
Send at ____ WPM.
- QRS** Shall I send more slowly? Send more slowly (____ WPM.)
- QRT** Shall I stop sending? Stop sending.
- QRU** Have you anything for me? I have nothing for you.
- QRV** Are you ready? I am ready.
- QRW** Shall I inform ____ that you are calling? Please inform ____ that I am calling.
- QRX** When will you call me again? I will call you again at ____ hours.
- QRY** What is my turn? Your turn is numbered ____.
- QRZ** Who is calling me? You are being called by ____.
- QSA** What is the strength of my signals? The strength of your signals is ____
(1-Scarcely perceptible, 2-Weak, 3-Fairly Good, 4-Good, 5-Very Good.)
- QSB** Are my signals fading? Your signals are fading.
- QSD** Is my keying defective? Your keying is defective.
- QSG** Shall I send ____ messages at a time? Send ____ messages at a time.
- QSJ** What is the charge to be collected per word to ____ including your international telegraph charge? The charge to be collected per word is ____ including my international telegraph charge.
- QSK** Can you hear me between you signals and if so can I break in on your transmission? I can hear you between my signals, break in on my transmission.
- QSL** Can you acknowledge receipt? I am acknowledging receipt.
- QSM** Shall I repeat the last message which I sent you? Repeat the last message.
- QSN** Did you hear me on ____ kHz? I did hear you on ____ kHz.
- QSO** Can you communicate with ____ direct or by relay? I can communicate with ____
direct (or by relay through ____.)
- QSP** Will you relay to ____? I will relay to ____.



- QSQ** Have you a doctor on board? (or is ___ on board?) I have a doctor on board (or ___ is on board.)
- QSU** Shall I send or reply on this frequency? Send a series of Vs on this frequency.
- QSV** Shall I send a series of Vs on this frequency? Send a series of Vs on this frequency.
- QSW** Will you send on this frequency? I am going to send on this frequency.
- QSY** Shall I change to another frequency? Change to another frequency.
- QSZ** Shall I send each word or group more than once? Send each word or group twice (or ___ times.)
- QTA** Shall I cancel message number ___? Cancel message number ___.
- QTB** Do you agree with my counting of words? I do not agree with your counting of words. I will repeat the first letter or digit of each word or group.
- QTC** How many messages have you to send? I have ___ messages for you.
- QTE** What is my true bearing from you? Your true bearing from me is ___ degrees.
- QTG** Will you send two dashes of 10 seconds each followed by your call sign? I am going to send two dashes of 10 seconds each followed by my call sign.
- QTH** What is your location? My location is ___.
- QTI** What is your true track? My true track is ___ degrees.
- Q TJ** What is your speed? My speed is ___ km/h.
- QTL** What is your true heading? My true heading is ___ degrees.
- QTN** At what time did you depart from ___? I departed from ___ at ___ hours.
- QTO** Have you left dock (or port)? I have left dock (or port).
- QTP** Are you going to enter dock (or port)? I am going to enter dock (or port.)
- QTP** Can you communicate with my station by means of the International Code of Signals? I am going to communicate with your station by means of the International Code of Signals.
- QTR** What is the correct time? The time is ___.
- QTS** Will you send your call sign for ___ minutes so that your frequency can be measured? I will send my call sign for ___ minutes so that my frequency may be measured.
- QTU** What are the hours during which your station is open? My station is open from ___ hours to ___ hours.
- QTV** Shall I stand guard for you on the frequency of ___ kHz? Stand guard for me on the frequency of ___ kHz.
- QTX** Will you keep your station open for further communication with me? I will keep my station open for further communication with you.
- QUA** Have you news of ___? I have news of ___.
- QUB** Can you give me information concerning visibility, height of clouds, direction and velocity of ground wind at ___? Here is the information you requested...
- QUC** What is the number of the last message you received from me? The number of the last message I received from you is ___.
- QUD** Have you received the urgency signal sent by ___? I have received the urgency signal sent by ___.
- QUF** Have you received the distress signal sent by ___? I have received the distress signal sent by ___.
- QUG** Will you be forced to land? I am forced to land immediately.
- QUH** Will you give me the present barometric pressure? The present barometric pressure is ___(units).



Spring is just around the corner and that can mean only one thing (well, actually, many things) but one thing related to ham radio and fun..... a **Fox Hunt !!!!!**

Why are they ALWAYS chasing *ME* ??



Charge those HT's, dust off last year's Fox Hunt antenna and fill that tank with gas. Oh yeah, one more thing. Someone make sure that Paul (NOKIA) will be in town this time and let's schedule a Spring Fox Hunt!!!

That's right, we will schedule another evening of driving aimlessly around the Lehigh Valley trying to find someone with a transmitter. Listen to the Monday Night Net and the E-VOX for a date and details!

ARRLWeb Survey Results (From the ARRL website)

How many QSOs do you estimate you had in 2002?

More than 10,000	1	1.1 % (11)
1000 - 9999	20	20.7 % (207)
100-999	48	47.9 % (479)
10-99	18	17.7 % (177)
1-9	6	6.0 % (60)
I did not operate in 2002	7	6.6 % (66)



I give up!!
I'm just gonna lie here until
Spring comes (or until
someone rubs my belly) !!!

CHRIS TO RETURN TO LEHIGH VALLEY THIS MONTH

The Lehigh Valley Amateur Radio Club's Chris Post (N3SIG) will return to the Lehigh Valley on Saturday March 2, 2003!

It will be good to have him back but the days of working him in Antarctica via HF will be over. Hope you worked him and received your QSL !!

It will be good to see him in person!



**Facts You Always Needed to Know ?????!?!??**

de Bob (KE3AW)

As incredible as it sounds, men and women took baths only twice a year! (May & October) Women always kept their hair covered while men shaved their heads (because of lice and bugs) and wore wigs. Wealthy men could afford good wigs. The wigs couldn't be washed so to clean them, they could carve out a loaf of bread, put the wig in the shell and bake it for 30 minutes. The heat would make the wig big and fluffy, hence the term "big wig." Today we often use the expression "Here comes the Big Wig" because someone appears to be or is powerful and wealthy.



Want to Build a VHF "J" Pole ??

de Frank (W3FTU)

Well you can !! Frank (W3FTU) invites you to look at:

<http://www.packetradio.com/jpol.htm>

This site not only shows you how, but also includes a handy [frequency calculator](#), which means you don't have to do the math to determine its length ! (You can also see plans in the Feb. Issue of QST - pages 38-40)



The LVARC Web Site ... Another FIRST !

Lehigh Valley Amateur Radio Club



- Planned Meeting [Dates](#) and [newsletters](#) for Year 2003.
- 2003 Dues are Due! Join/renew [ONLINE!](#) or download the mail-in [Membership Form](#).
- [Calendar](#) of events, includes other club's activities.
- Club [officers](#) and [membership](#) data - names and such.
- Here is the **Approved** [Constitution & Bylaws](#).
- Field Day 2002 [pictures](#) and W3OI members [pictures](#). Finally!!!
- Links to other [radio sites](#).
- Fill in the [comment](#) sheet.

Paul (NOKIA) continues to do an excellent job with the LVARC web site!! He has now arranged for members to pay or re-new their LVARC dues ON LINE !!!! This can be accomplished using Pay Pal or credit card. Paul is always "one step ahead!"
TNX to Paul, the club can boast another FIRST !!

Paul has also added a "COMMENTS" section to the web site. Please feel free to add comments regarding the web site or the LVARC. The messages go to Paul via e-mail.

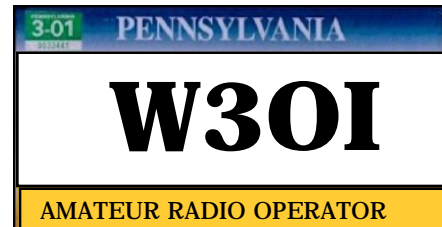
**Visit
<http://www.w3oi.org>**



Want an PA Amateur Radio License Plate With Your Call?

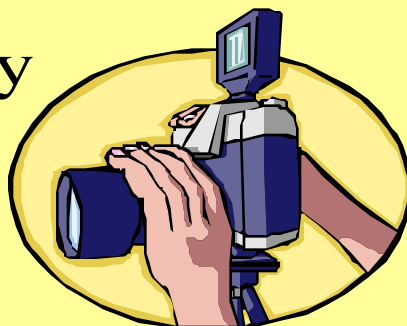
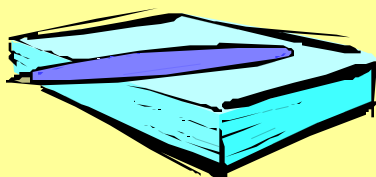
de Mark (AK3M)

Its easy. Go to <http://www.dmv.state.pa.us/> and select DOWNLOAD FORMS. Select **MV-904**. A form will download to your computer (in pdf) for you to print out and complete. The fee is \$20.00 and you will need to include a copy of your station license. If your registration is within 3 months of expiration, you must also pay for your registration renewal in addition to your \$20 application fee.





Member's Biography and Picture



If you have not yet added a "Bio" to accompany your picture on the "Members' Section" of the club's web site, you still have time. Send it to Paul (NOKIA) at NOKIA@arrrl.net in a text format.

If you want your picture added to the site, send one (jpg) to Paul (NOKIA) or contact Mark (AK3M).

Map of the ARRL Emergency Coordinators and District Emergency Coordinators

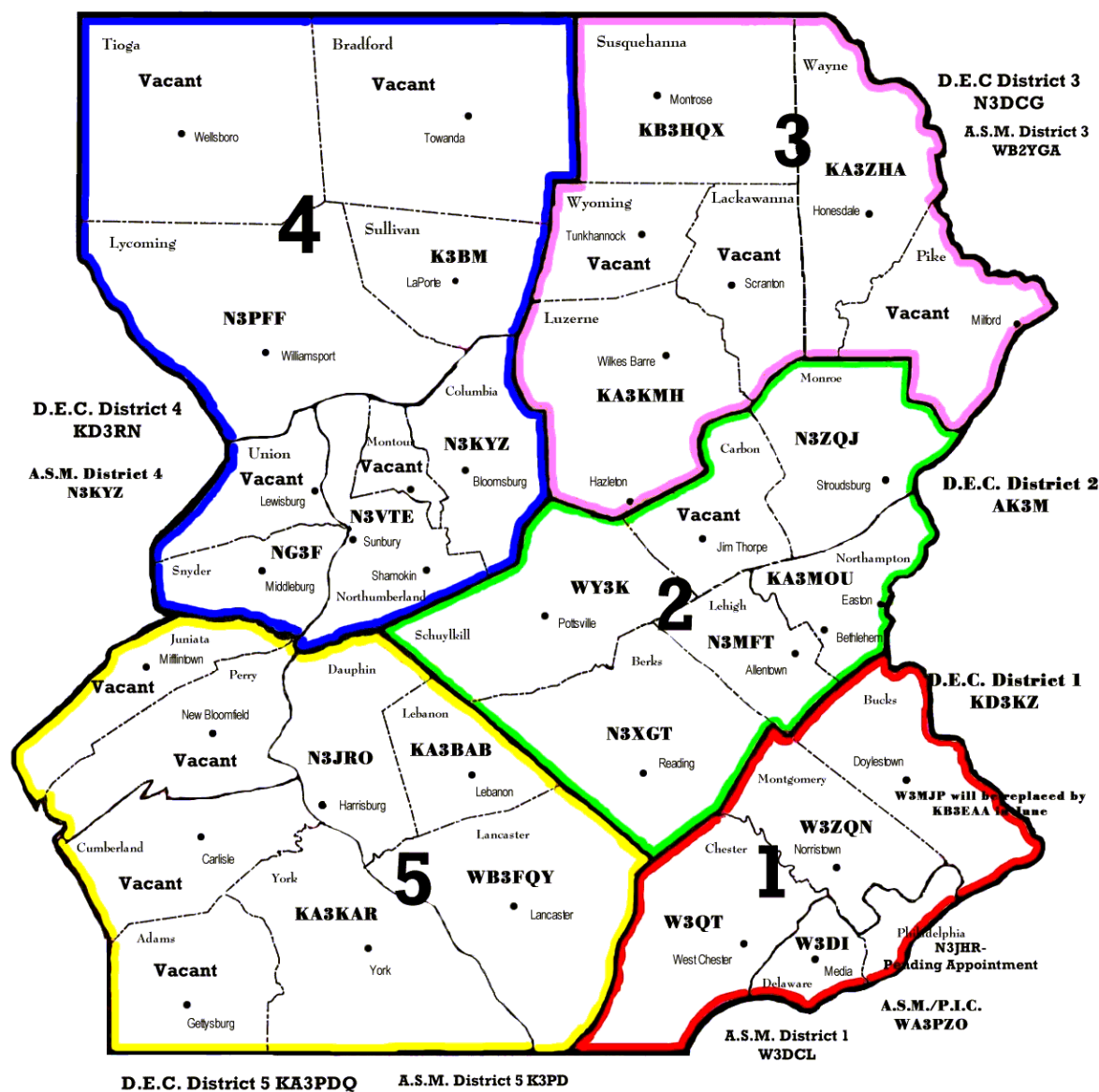
ARRL Eastern Pennsylvania Section Atlantic Division Map

TNX to Eric (W3FPL) for the terrific map of the County Emergency Coordinators (EC) and District Emergency Coordinators (DEC). This map is included on the following page (p 22) for your review. Please feel free to print and keep this map for future reference.



**A.R.R.L. Eastern Pennsylvania Section
Atlantic Division**

A.R.R.L. Emergency Coordinators & District Emergency Coordinators



A.R.R.L. E. Pa. Section Manager
Eric D. Olena, WB3FPL
wb3fpl@arrl.org

E. Pa. Section Emergency Coordinator
Michael O. Miguez N3IRN
n3irn@arrl.net



**Eastern Pennsylvania
Section Emergency Manager**
Eric Olena – WB3FPL
284 Blimline Rd
Mohnton PA 19540-7810
eolena@arri.org

**District Emergency Coordinator (DEC)
District 2**
Mark S. Miller – AK3M
5508 Hale Avenue
Bethlehem, PA 18017-9035
AK3M@rcn.com

**Emergency Coordinators (EC)
District 2**
Eastern Pennsylvania

N3ZQJ (Monroe)
JOHN LEWITZKY
615 MAIN ST
STROUDSBURG PA 18360
johnl@ptd.net

KA3MOU (Northampton)
RICHARD A DECH
120 MC ILHANEY AVE
BATH PA 18014-1612
ka3mou@enter.net

N3XGT (Berks)
PHILIP A WHEELER
5335 Allentown Pike
Temple PA 19560
n3xgt@comcast.net

**Eastern
Pennsylvania
Emergency
Coordinator
List**

DISTRICT 2



N3MFT (Lehigh County)
JEFFERY J KELLY
1632 N MAIN ST
ALLENTOWN PA 18104
kellyj6@hotmail.com

WY3K (Schuylkill)
WILLIAM E DALE, JR
RD 3 BOX 56
TAMAQUA PA 18252
wy3k@arri.net

Carbon County - Vacant

If you know of any candidates for the
Carbon County EC position,
please contact Mark (AK3M) or
Eric (WB3FPL)



Member's News



Congratulations to Dan Homan (KA3ZAT).
Dan has upgraded from Tech Plus to GENERAL !!
Enjoy those HF bands Dan!

also

Congratulations to Rod Wolfe, Jr. (KB3HFZ).
Rod has earned his Volunteer Examiner Accreditation!

also

Congratulations to Larry Miller (NR3R).
Larry has earned his Volunteer Examiner Accreditation!

also

Congratulations to Mark Miller (AK3M).
Mark has earned his Volunteer Examiner Accreditation!

Looks like the LVARC is getting closer to having a VE program!



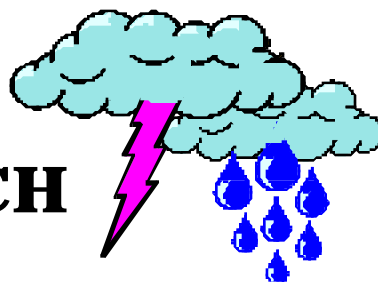
NEW MEMBERS

The Lehigh Valley Amateur Radio Club is pleased to welcome Charles Giannetta (WA3RSQ) as its newest member. Charlie has been a meteorologist for more than 35 years and currently teaches at the Northampton County Community College.

WELCOME TO THE LVARC CHARLIE !!



SEVERE WX Drill to BE HELD IN MARCH



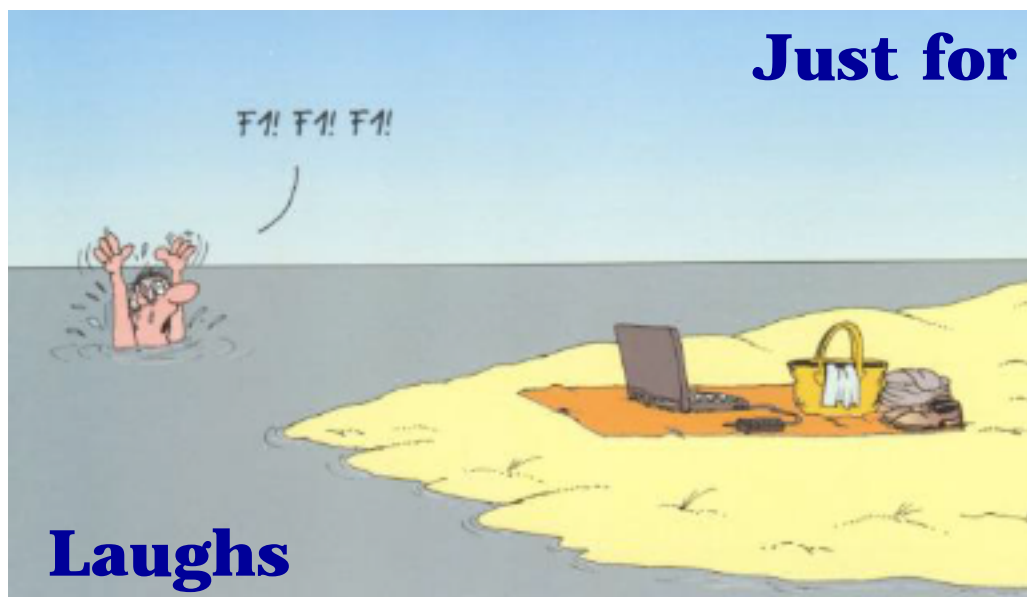
There will be a *Severe Weather Drill* on March 18, 19 and 20, 2003. The Lehigh County EMA is requesting communications support on March 20 from 9:00 am until about lunch time. If you can help for a few hours on the 20th, please contact Jeff (N3MFT).

Fox Hunt Seminar de Gene (W3WMA)

There will be a "Fox Hunt Seminar" in the Pottstown area sometime in March, 2003.



Information can be heard on the Pottstown net held every Wednesday evening at 7:30 pm (local time) on 147.210.





Lehigh County EMA Uses RACES Members to Monitor Ice On Lehigh River

On Wednesday January 30, and Thursday January 31, 2003, John Conklin, Director of LC EMA, asked LC RACES members to watch for ice floating on the Lehigh River. **Jeff (N3MFT)**, **Chris (N3RPV)** and **Rod (KB3HFZ)** checked the river to determine if there were any ice masses forming.



SIX MORE WEEKS OF WINTER ?!?!?!?!?!?!?

ITS OFFICIAL !!!

As of Sunday February 2, 2003, Punxsutawney Phil has doomed us to six more weeks of winter !!! That means you must wait a while longer to erect those antennas.



Americans Mourn Shuttle Columbia Crew

I
N

God Bless and Hold
Our Astronauts
February 01 2003



~David M. Brown~, ~Rick D. Husband~, ~Laurel Clark~,
~Kalpana Chawla~, ~Michael P. Anderson~,
~William C. McCool~, ~Ilan Ramon~

M
E
M
O
R
Y

http://our.homewithgod.com/heavensgates/2003/Columbia2_1_03.html

URL de Bob (KE3AW)





Eastern Pennsylvania Section Manager Speaks at LVARC

Eric Olena spoke at the February 4, 2003 meeting of the Lehigh Valley Amateur Radio Club. Eric holds the ARRL Field position as the Eastern PA Section Manager.



Eric Olena (WB3FPL)
(left and Greg Kovacs
(KB3CKD) (right)



Members enjoy dinner
at the Lehigh Valley Diner
on February 4, 2003.

Chris Celebrates Groundhog Day in Antarctica



In the February 4, 2003 issue of the Morning Call, Ron Devlin of the Morning Call, submitted a great article of Chris with his “Phil, the Penguin.” Above is the color version of the photo which accompanied the article. By the way, “Penguin Phil” saw his shadow.

Imagine 6 more months of winter at the South Pole !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



From The Morning Call
'Fowl' winter prediction warms hearts in Antarctica
Area residents enjoy themselves with Groundhog Day spoof.
By Ron Devlin
Of The Morning Call

February 4, 2003

The Inner Circle gathered for the solemn rite.

The prognosticator of prognosticators, the weather prophet without peer, was poised to make his annual prediction.

Chris Post held the furry creature high against the crisp, icy-blue sky. Yes, Phil the Penguin saw his shadow.

Once again, Antarctica would have six months - not weeks - of winter.

Call it cabin fever, or just plain clowning around.

Whatever, Post's Groundhog Day spoof brought the warmth of laughter to McMurdo Station, a frozen outpost 800 miles from the South Pole.

Groundhogs don't do well on the ice-laden tundra, Post, a Fountain Hill resident on duty as a firefighter in Antarctica, said in an e-mail. So he drafted an emperor penguin - stuffed variety - to play the role of that legendary Pennsylvania forecaster, Punxsutawney Phil.

At 7:30 a.m. Saturday, with the temperature dipping below the minus-30 mark, Post stood on a deck outside the National Science Foundation and held court the way folks did in Jefferson County.

There were, of course, some not-so-subtle differences.

Post's black top hat was an orange fur-lined hood. His perch overlooking a partly frozen Ross Sea was, for sure, a far cry from Gobbler's Knob. Oh, and there are no tree stumps - or trees, for that matter - in Antarctica.

Still, the spirit was the same, a little levity to break the monotony.

In Pennsylvania, the quirky tradition is a diversion from winter. In Antarctica, the southernmost sector of the Southern Hemisphere, it's the opposite.

Winter is on its way to the land of snow and ice. And the mere 30-below that Post endured will seem downright sweaty compared to the minus-100 degrees, not to mention the darkness, that accompany the depth of winter.

Phil's forecast was pretty much a downer. But Post and several other Pennsylvanians, including Rhonda Ward of Slatington, were uplifted at the sight of the Coast Guard cutter Polar Sea skimming across Ross Sea. "The summer season," lamented Post, "is slowly winding to a halt here."

Copyright © 2003, The Morning Call