



PCARA Update



Volume 5, Issue 11

Peekskill / Cortlandt Amateur Radio Association Inc.

November 2004

Make room for radio

After many months, I once again have something resembling a radio shack. I have graduated to a radio shack from a radio closet. The basement project is closer to an end than the beginning. Notice how I didn't say that it was finished. As with the many other things around a house, you're *never* finished! So don't be surprised to hear me on the air again!

The December Meeting / Annual PCARA Holiday Dinner will be held at *At the Reef* on Sunday, December 5, 2004 at 3:00 P.M. Arrangements were once again made courtesy of Ray, W2CH and Marylyn, known to us as W2CH-XYL (see picture right). The price is \$22.16 per person — drinks extra. **Pre-payment** is due by November 7, 2004. Coincidentally this is also the date of the November meeting. This would be a great reason to stop by to pay for the dinner and join us for the meeting!

Just a reminder that nominations for office (President, Vice President and Secretary/Treasurer) are due at the November 7th meeting. If you are interested, please think about placing your name on the ballot. This is an excellent time and opportunity to become involved. Elections will be held at the December Meeting / Annual PCARA Holiday Dinner. For those who wish to participate in the election but are unable to

attend the meeting / dinner, provisions can be made for you to cast your vote in absentia.

I hope to see each of you at the November meeting at Hudson Valley Hospital Center.

– 73 de Greg, KB2CQE



Marylyn and Ray, W2CH alongside the PCARA club table at the Bergen ARA Hamfest, October 9, 2004. Marylyn had just passed the Technician test at BARA's V.E. session and is proudly showing her CSCE. On October 14, the FCC granted Marylyn the Tech class call **KC2NKU**.



Greg, KB2CQE's new radio shack in the basement. This neat and tidy arrangement includes an Icom IC-706 MkIIIG transceiver and an MFJ-969 antenna tuner.

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PCARA Officers

President:

Greg Appleyard, KB2CQE kb2cq@arrl.net

Vice President:

Joe Calabrese, WA2MCR; wa2mcr@arrl.net

Secretary/Treasurer:

Mike Aiello, N2HTT; n2htt@arrl.net

Foxes fully found

PCARA's fourth foxhunt was a lot of fall fun. Three teams met at the Beach Shopping Center on Saturday afternoon, October 16 and waited for the foxes, Mike N2EAB and Bob N2CBH to begin transmitting. Since Bob and Mike were undiscovered in their previous



Competitors at the start of October's Foxhunt included (LtoR) Ray W2CH, Marylyn KC2NKU and Karl, N2KZ.

foxhole at Staples Shopping Center, they had the opportunity to confuse everyone a second time. As 3:00 p.m. arrived, Mike N2EAB made his first appearance on 146.565 MHz and everyone took a first bearing. The direction seemed to be approximately north, so after the first transmission was over, the hunters set out along Route 6 and Locust Avenue.

After that, things happened fairly quickly. While Bob and Mike took turns with transmissions, the hunters concentrated their efforts along Oregon Road. It soon became clear that the target was somewhere down Westbrook Drive. A likely spot seemed to be the



Karl, N2KZ discovers the foxes at the skate park in Westbrook Drive.

Town of Cortlandt's Muriel Morabito Community Center, which was quite busy with vehicles and youngsters at that time of day. There was no sign of the foxes in the Community Center car park, but the signal there was suspiciously strong... and a short walk up the steps to the nearby skate park revealed a silver Taurus with Bob and Mike visible inside.



First to find the fox at the record early time of 3:26 p.m. was the team of Marylyn, KC2NKU and Ray W2CH. Congratulations! Second on the scene, following the fox's 439.695 MHz harmonic was Malcolm, NM9J at 3:32 p.m., followed shortly afterward by Karl, N2KZ at 3:33 p.m.

Hunters and hunted then repaired to the Cortlandt Town Center for a meal and presentations at the new *Piazza Roma* Italian restaurant. *Piazza Roma* is located in what used to be the *Pasta Plus* restaurant,



Bob, N2CBH presents Ray and Marylyn with their first place certificate at the *Piazza Roma* restaurant.

where renovations have given it a lighter, open look. General opinion is that while the *Pasta Plus* was a popular spot, the new *Piazza Roma*, should also have a bright future.

Bob and Mike explained how they had chosen a location that was not too difficult and, unlike their previous efforts in June, how they had refrained from hiding themselves out of view whenever they saw hunters approaching. As a result, the event was over in record time and all competitors were pleased to have found the foxes. Marylyn KC2NKU and Ray W2CH took pride of place as first on the scene, and will be the target of PCARA's next direction finding event.

– NM9J

PCARA Holiday Dinner

PCARA's holiday dinner will take place on Sunday December 5 at 3:00 p.m. Location is *At The Reef* Restaurant, Rt. 9 at Annsville Circle, Cortlandt Manor.

Ray W2CH and Marylyn have arranged a greater choice on this year's menu, with five entrées available.



MENU

Tossed green salad

Choice of entrées:

Prime Ribs of Beef

Chicken Cordon Bleu

Boneless Breast of Chicken Marsala

Broiled Stuffed Filet of Sole

Broiled Filet of Salmon

All entrées include: Baked Potato, Vegetable, Coffee, Tea and Cake of the Day.

Final total is \$22.16 per person, not including drinks. If you would like to attend the PCARA Holiday Dinner, please sign up at the November meeting, when payment will be collected. If you cannot attend the November meeting, contact Ray, W2CH, e-mail: W2CH 'at' arrl.net.

Hudson Division Awards Dinner

The Long Island Mobile Amateur Radio Club will host the 2004 ARRL Hudson Division Awards Dinner on Saturday November 13 at Maine Maid Inn in Jericho, NY. ARRL President Jim Haynie will attend the 2004 Dinner. Tickets are \$38 each and attendance is limited. Make checks to LIMARC and mail to: Awards Dinner, LIMARC, Box 392, Levittown, NY 11756-0392. For details see the ARRL Hudson Division web site at <http://www.hudson.arrl.org/award04.htm>.

Seasonal cell-out

Hint: before reading this article, make sure you have a good stock of AA batteries on hand!

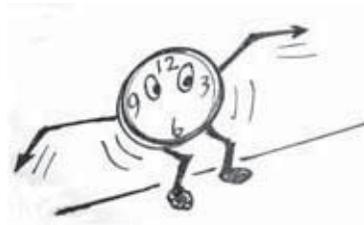
If you are reading this after making the clocks **fall backward** on Sunday morning, October 31st, then you've probably adjusted every last clock in the house. But don't forget that there are still a few more seasonal things to do.

Take a moment to walk through your home and check the smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Press the "test" button and make sure the alarm sounds... if in doubt, change the battery.

Next, take a look at other household devices that rely on primary batteries. Now is a good time to make sure the cell voltage is holding up and the contacts have not started corroding. There's usually no need to check clocks – they'll tell you when the batteries have run down by stopping. But you do need to worry about other battery powered devices around the home, especially those that you might not use very often... including flashlights, portable radios, cameras and remote controls.

After house and car, don't forget the amateur radio accessories. There are probably some tired, old batteries in your keyer, multimeter, scanner and calculator. And while you're checking, when was the last time your HT battery was recharged?

Before you put the alkaline cells away, take a last look around for any vintage digital electronics. With digitally-tuned radios, memory has to be retained with the power off. Modern equipment uses non-volatile memory or a long-life lithium cell, but older items from 15-20 years ago might use a pair of AA or AAA batteries to maintain the contents of memory. It could have been a long time since those cells were last changed and they might have corroded. Now is the time to pop off the covers and check.



Don't forget to check batteries in your test equipment. Picture shows a Radio Shack LCD RF frequency counter.

— NM9J

Tree City trouble

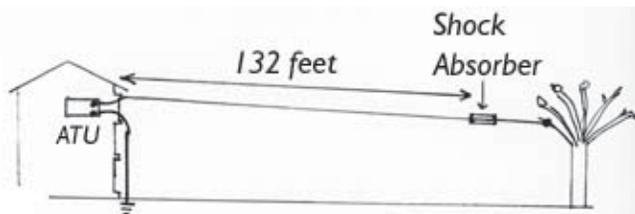


*I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.*
– Joyce Kilmer

One piece of advice I remember from my early days in amateur radio is that “Trees make fine antenna supports”. If you are lucky, the trees are already in the right position, they don’t cost much, and they do not need planning permission. But trees are not always cooperative — for instance, every time the wind blows, they wave their branches at you, as if to throw off all the wires and ropes you carefully hung on them.

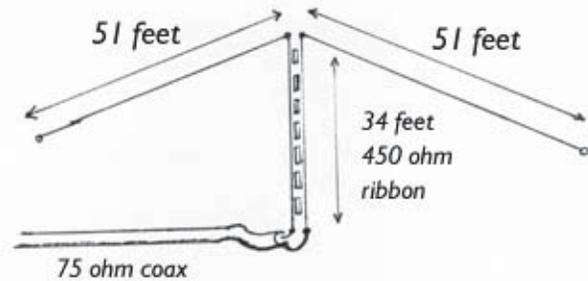
One of my favorite antennas in the U.K. was an end-fed 132 foot long-wire. The radio room was on the second floor, so it was easy enough to run one end of the wire antenna through the shack window and feed it against ground through an antenna tuning unit. This arrangement would operate on all bands from 160 meters upward – on 160 meters the wire was a quarter wavelength.

The long-wire ran across the back yard then down the hill to a solitary tree. I soon found that tying the wire to a tree branch was a mistake — the lightest breeze would move the tree and break the wire. The solution I came up with was to fabricate a shock absorber from several lengths of bright red silicone rubber tubing, placing the tubing between the far end of the wire and the rope to the tree. This arrangement lasted much longer, but I still had to repair the wire a couple of times after violent storms. Best DX with this antenna was Indonesia!



132 foot long wire suspended from a tree, protected by a rubber tubing “shock absorber”.

After my move from England to the U.S.A., the house in Naperville, Illinois had a large willow tree in the back yard. I wanted to use this as a support for HF and VHF antennas, so I pushed metal scaffold poles up alongside the tree trunk, tying them to the trunk with rope. The top of the mast carried a 2 meter vertical colinear and was also the center support point for my home-brew G5RV antenna. The G5RV was arranged inverted-V style with one end fastened to a chimney on the roof and the other end fastened to a second tree..



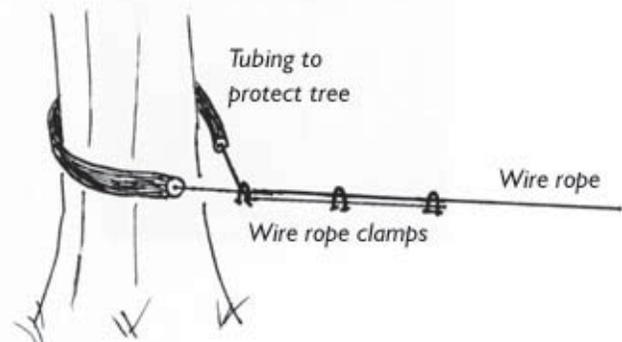
G5RV antenna suspended “inverted-V” style from a suitable tree. The 75 ohm feeder should be connected to an ATU.

That G5RV antenna performed quite well — one memorable QSO from 1989 was with 8P9EM (actually Chris G3VBL, on vacation in Barbados).

I did experience one problem with the tree-mounted G5RV – and that was damage to the coaxial cable by gnawing critters. The cause was squirrels, attracted to the brightly-colored vinyl tape that I had used to cover the connections between coaxial cable lengths and the parallel line feeder. Later on I suffered damage from two-legged critters – this time it was contractors sent out by the town to cut back trees and keep the power lines clear.

With my next move to the Town of Cortlandt, I found that the previous owner of the house had already made good use of trees in the yard – they were the end supports for three sets of guy wires. I decided to remove a large maple tree that overhung the house, blocking the view, so one of the guys had to be relocated.

Twelve years later, I found another problem with trees. That relocated guy wire seemed unusually tight. As I slackened off the nuts on the guy wire clamps, the wire rope relaxed with a distinct “twang”. The reason for the extra tension was that the guy wire had been looped around the trunk of a beech tree, which had been quietly growing since 1991. Don’t forget this fact of life if you have to tie rope or wire around any part of a tree! The tree is still growing, so always leave some slack for the future.



When looping rope or wire around a tree, always leave room for future growth.

Scary noises!

My latest tree adventure concerns strange noises in the middle of the night. After several years in the town, I thought I had grown used to the sounds of Cortlandt on a quiet evening. There is the rumble of trucks laboring up Route 202... there is the evocative sound of locomotive whistles as freight trains wind up the Hudson valley... and once a year there are late night explosions from the river festival fireworks.

A few weeks ago, I started to hear a new noise – it was a low moan that came and went on windy nights. The sound was difficult to locate, and my first thought was plumbing, but it was not coming from the basement. I traced the source up into the attic and wondered if it was coming from antenna mounts – but no, it appeared to originate away from the antenna, closer to where the overhead telephone cable was hooked to the eaves. And as I got nearer, the low moans were accompanied by a high-pitched squeaking noise.

By flashlight I inspected the antennas and the phone cable outside – nothing was visibly wrong. In daylight, I traced the phone wire, which runs from the roof through a Japanese Maple to a utility pole across the street. This time I could see that the phone wire was rubbing against a tree limb. Probing with my pole-cutter showed that the phone cable was under considerable strain and would squeak if I moved it against the limb. I cut off a few branches and pulled the limb under the wire – removing all tension from the phone wire and quieting everything down.

Trees may make fine antenna supports, but sometimes they seem about as friendly as Charlie Brown's kite-eating nemesis! Keep an eye on any tree-mounted antenna and be prepared for occasional repairs.

Incidentally, both Naperville and Cortlandt have been named "Tree City USA" by the National Arbor Day Foundation's program, see: <http://www.arborday.org/programs/TreeCityUSA.cfm>.)

— NM9J

Field Day results

Full results of Field Day 2004 appeared on the ARRL members only web pages in October. See <http://www.arrl.org/members-only/contests/results/2004/FD/>. There is a slight upward adjustment to the points reported in the July newsletter as follows:



Flashback to PCARA Field Day 2004 on Bear Mountain.

Peekskill/Cortlandt ARA, W2NYW

	2001	2002	2003	2004
QSOs:	450	718	733	968
Power		2 (<150W)		
Participants:	16	15	11	12
Total score:	1,540	2,096	2,328	2,996

Publication of the complete results allows a comparison of PCARA's score with the efforts of our friends and neighbors in the ENY section and the Hudson Division. Here are some of the statistics...

In Field Day 2004, PCARA was...

- **Second** out of 4 entries in Category 2A, ENY section.
- **Eighth** out of 27 entries in the whole ENY section.
- **Ninth** out of 17 in Category 2A, Hudson Division.
- **29th** out of 98 in the whole Hudson Division.
- **173rd** out of 455 in category 2A nationwide.
- **609th** out of 2248 entries total.

That final figure of 2248 entries was a record. A total of 2261 entries (including check logs) was received by ARRL for FD 2004, and this was a 6% increase in logs from last year.

Here's how PCARA fared compared with some of our neighbors in East New York:

#	Call	Points	Cat	QSOs	Club
1	W2MU	7338	2A	2307	Hudson Valley
2	N2SF	6954	4A	2210	WECA
5	N2YL	4094	3A	1107	Poughkeepsie
6	W2YRC	3884	3A	917	Yonkers ARC
8	W2NYW	2996	2A	968	PCARA
9	K2QS	2804	3A	1024	QSY Society
10	W2HO	2476	6A	570	Orange County
12	K2PUT	2166	2A	733	PEARL
21	W2IR	694	2A	172	Schenectady

— NM9J

Peekskill / Cortlandt Amateur Radio Association

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E-mail: NM9J @ arrl.net

Newsletter contributions are always very welcome!

PCARA Information

PCARA is a **Non-Profit Community Service Organization**. PCARA meetings take place the first Sunday* of each month at 3:00 p.m. in Dining Room B of the Hudson Valley Hospital Center, Route 202, Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567. Drive round behind the main hospital building and enter from the rear (look for the oxygen tanks). Talk-in is available on the 146.67 repeater. * *September meeting delayed one week.*

PCARA Repeaters

W2NYW: 146.67 MHz -0.6, PL 156.7Hz

KB2CQE: 449.925MHz -5.0, PL 179.9Hz
(IRLP node: **4214**)

N2CBH: 448.725MHz -5.0, PL 107.2Hz

PCARA Calendar

Sun Nov 7: November meeting, HVHC, 3:00 p.m.

Sun Dec 5: PCARA holiday meal, elections, 3:00 p.m. At *The Reef* restaurant.

Hamfests

Sun Nov 28: Jersey Shore ARS tailgate Hamfest, Bayville Fire House, 450 Route 9. Bayville NJ. 8:00 a.m.

VE Test Sessions

Nov 7: Yonkers ARC, Yonkers Police Dept., 1st Precinct, E Grassy Sprain Rd, 8:30 A.M. Contact: D. Calabrese, (914) 667-0587.

Nov 11: WECA, Fire Training Center, 2 Dana Rd., off Rt 9A, Valhalla NY 10595. 7:00 p.m. Preregister with Stanley Rothman, (914)949-6838.

Nov 15: Columbia Univ ARC, Watson Labs, 612 W 115th St. New York, NY, 6:30 p.m. Contact Alan Crosswell, 212 854-3754.

Nov 16: W5YI VEC Pel Hams, Pelham Doronco Town House, 20 5th Ave, Pelham NY 10801. 7:30 PM, contact Michael Cifeeri, (914)738-5775

Nov 19: Bergen ARA, Westwood Reg HS, 701 Ridgewood Rd, Washington Twnshp NJ. 7:00 P.M. Contact Donald Younger 201 265-6583.



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