The Hellgate Static

May 2020

Hellgate Amateur Radio Club
P.O. Box 3811, Missoula, MT 59806-3811

Inside this issue:

- Glacier-Waterton Hamfest
- A Note From Gary Bruce K7OIJ
- Vick, K7VK's 2020 7QP Report
- Andy Commons SOTA Activation of Council Grove State Park
- Remote Testing A VE's Experience
- FCC Confirms Remote Testing
- Missoula Marathon Cancelled
- April HARC Meeting Minutes
- Classified For Sale / Wanted

Upcoming Events

~~May 23 Grizzly Triathlon Swim-Bike-Run~~ (cancelled)
June 27-28 ARRL Field Day
~~June 28 Missoula Marathon~~ (cancelled)
July 4 W7PX Special Event Station
October 3 Riverbank Run (rescheduled)
October 16-18 Boy Scout Jamboree on the Air
October TBA Western Montana Dirt Derby
December 5 Skywarn Recognition Day
December 14 Christmas Dinner

Officers:

President: Mike Leary, K7MSO
Vice-President: Eric Sedgwick, NZ7S
Treasurer: Dick Walton W7XT
Secretary: Donna Pecastaing, KC5WRA

Standing Committees:

Emergency Coordinator: Jerry Ehli, N7GE
QSLs, Awards: Bob Henderson, N7MSU
Webmaster: Mike Leary, K7MSO
Radio License Exams Contact VE:
Paul Shuey, N7PAS
Static Editor: Terry Cook, KF7BQ
Bluetooth_one@hotmail.com

Repeater Advisory Committee:

Eric Sedgwick NZ7S (Chair)
Tom Mc Ginley, K7QA
Tom Hellem, K0SN (Re-elected)
Paul Shuey, N7PAS (Re-elected)

May Zoom Meeting

Due to the current Corona virus crisis, the HARC May meeting is scheduled to be conducted remotely via zoom teleconferencing software.

If you haven't downloaded zoom on your phone or computer, you may want to do so,in advance, it will make your connection to the meeting a little faster.

Watch for an invitation to the meeting in your Email, it will contain the meeting ID, a password and a link to the meeting. Be sure your microphone is enabled.

If you have not received an invitation by Monday morning, May 11th, contact Mike Leary at mleary2001@yahoo.com and request an invitation.

Stay health and we hope to see you there.

A Note From Gary Bruce K7OIJ

Mike received a note from Gary Bruce, K7OIJ that he asked to pass on to Garys' HARC friends.

A quick update on our situation. My health is still limiting our activities, especially travel. The recent diagnosis of Parkinson's Disease has helped to shed light on my situation. While not a diagnosis I would have hoped for, it does give us an understanding of the past, present and future. There is a certain comfort in knowing it has a real cause and is no longer some mysterious ailment.

My condition has limited my ability to generate income so our funds available for optional activities is limited. The curtailment of two of our trust funds has also necessitated limiting our expenditures.

We are still very much dedicated to HARC and have a great love for all the members. But for the time being, we are forced to remain inactive.

Please say hi to all who remember us.

73,

Gary, K7OIJ

Gary, please know that you are in our thoughts, and if there is anything we can help with, don't hesitate to let us know. An article about Gary's experience as a VE with online testing appears in this STATIC issue.

Vick, K7VK's follow-up on 2020 7th Area QSO Party

Just a follow up on the 7QP operation and county lines. For info for folks that may want to operate on a country line.

The Lincoln/Sanders County line is a fine site for an ‘Expedition’ type setup. The flat open area is at least 100’x200’, off the highway #56, 100’+ screened by trees and adjacent to the paved road to Ross Creek Cedars and Bad Medicine Campground on Bull Lake There are no facilities, but good mountain views.

There are trees on three sides of the site to attach dipoles or other wire antennas. Just watch out for any fresh toilet paper. Other people are ‘trashy’.

7QP/m was fun and a great sight-seeing trip. Good recollections of N7MSU’s scenic setup on Brown’s Lake. The Clark Fork river is really high. I got 50+ contacts from the county line and 25+ contacts from Mineral County. It’s not like operating SOTA where you get a pile up of 20-40 stations and then you can hike back down the mountain, but still an amazing lot of stations on the bands. I’ll stick to SOTA with my QRP and when I do 7QP again it’ll be with more ‘horsepower’ and antennas, hee hee.

Now I’m struggling to get an appropriate log into 7QP land. I think that I’ll just send a ‘look-a-like’ Cabrillo file. LoTW worked well and I have some confirmations already.

Thanks Tom/Mike for the ‘heads up’ on the event.
73
Vick k7vk

Andy Commons, KF7CBY POTA Council Grove Park Activation

Here's a photo of my activation of Council Grove State Park from Saturday.

I was able to find a open spot on the SSB 20 meter band for which I have privileges, but then after calling CQ for 5 minutes with not response just went back to responding to others. I was easily heard by those whom I could hear.

I only got about 23 contacts logged, but still had fun.

Remote Online Testing – A VE's Experience

On Tuesday, May 5th, I participated as a VE in an online testing session. It was a fun experience and I learned a lot.

The following information is quite detailed and therefore lengthy. The Reader's Digest version is:

"Online testing for HAM licenses is a reality today and available to anyone."

If you want to know the gory details, read on.

We officiated over 7 exams over a 3 hour period, with 1 examinee taking both the Tech and General Class tests. We had only one failure in our group.

The procedure was straight forward. Norm and Naomi (GLAARG officials) were the moderators over all of the testing. There were 20 people who had signed up to take the test during this session.

Zoom was used as the virtual meeting platform. Examinees check-in to the main Zoom session where they are pre-screened to be sure all is in order for them to take the exam. Things checked are their ID (is it a suitable form and readable through the camera), their 605's are checked for completeness, their payment status is verified and the greeter checks that the examinee has read the instructions for taking the test.

Prior to the beginning of the session, all VEs have checked on and Private rooms are created through Zoom with 3 VEs in each room. After an examinee is pre-screened, he is put into a "holding state" until a private room opens up.

Zoom allows the session manager to view the participants currently in a private room. When the manager observes that a room is occupied only by the VEs, they pass one of the examinees to that room.

When an examinee is passed to a room, the video and sound for all of the VEs is turned on.

Once in the private room, one VE, who has been designated the Managing VE for that room, greets the examinee and introduces the other Ves. Since the examinee has already been through pres-screening, the VE team can be assured that the examinee's 605 is in order and that their payment has been made. The examinee is then ask to show their ID and all of the attending VEs must be able to read and approve it. The examinee is then ask to show the team a 360 view of his testing space, including the floor, ceiling and surface where his computer is resting. The VEs look for anything that might be used as a method of "cheating". The room must be empty of other people, with all doors closed. I was surprised by the number of people who used a bathroom as the testing venue. Any monitors, other than the monitor used for testing, must be turned off. Cell phones are turned off and must be out of reach of the examinee.

We had one instance during our sessions where the exam area was a dining area with adjacent areas which could not be closed off. Out of sight to we VEs, but in an adjacent area, the examinee's wife was working in an office area. Myself and one other VE were not comfortable with that arrangement so we ask the examinee to select another area for the testing. A bathroom was chosen and the examinee moved into that room.

I would note here that each VE has total veto power over any phase of the testing.

The examinee is again given a VERY brief description of the testing procedure. They are then ask to share their screen with the VE team. The managing VE then asks for control of the examinee's computer. He closes all applications that may be open, and opens a browser (Chrome is preferred), enters the test site URL and signs in with a login and password shared only with the VEs in that room. Once signed in, he enters the examinee's test ID. The examinee's personal information (name, address, etc.) is shown as entered on the 605 and the examinee is ask to verify and approve the information. While this is taking place, all VEs, except for the Managing VE, turn off their video and sound so as to not distract the examinee. After the examinee approves the personal information, the Managing VE starts the test and likewise turns off his video and audio.

During the test, all the VEs can see the examinee's screen and his/her face as well as hear sounds in the room. We had one examinee who could be heard reading the questions out loud in a barely audible voice. We watch for anything that would indicate the examinee is looking at anything other than the exam screen. I was surprised how easy it was to determine patterns in eye and mouse movements. We had no incidence of an examinee appearing to look away.

The examinee is free to scroll through the questions in any manner. He may go through and answer the "easy" questions then return for the harder ones, he may review and change answers all he wants. When he is finished, he indicates that to the team and the the Managing VE muteness his sound and video and verifies that the examinee is through. He then clicks on the "Grade Test" button, enters the login information for that exam room and the test is graded. Within a few seconds the examinee knows if they have passed. While the test is being graded the other VEs unmute their Zoom sessions. If the examinee has passed, congratulations are issued and the examinee is given a brief explanation of how to check the FCC database for their call sign (if they are a new HAM) and (again for Techs only) are warned against operating before their call sign is issued.

They then leave the room and the next examinee is ushered in.

A few notes regarding the entire process. As with live sessions the Managing and attending VEs have a wide latitude in decisions regarding the testing environment. One area that is currently different from live testing is that of retakes upon failure. With a live session, the VE team could choose to allow a retake upon the payment of the addition fee. That is not the case with online sessions through GLAARG. Retakes are not allowed.

However, multiple exams (Tech, followed by General, etc.) are up to the VE team.

At the current time, all exam sessions are organized through the GLAARG headquarters. When the next version of the testing software is released, that may change to allow designated VEs (custodial VEs such as myself) to organize sessions in a manner such as now the case with live sessions.

GLAARG is currently holding 4, 3 hour sessions per week with 20 examinees allowed in each session. Signups for a session are first come/first served. GLAARG is a front-runner in the online testing arena and was the first VEC to offer "open to the public" sessions. Prior to that, all VECs were offering sessions only by invitation.

GLAARG's fees for exam session still remain at $5.00. To the best of my knowledge, all other VEC are charging $15.00.

I will continue to issue progress reports regarding my experiences and progression in online testing. I am hopeful that in the not too distant future I will be able to organize and administer such sessions in a manner similar to that of live sessions.

73 to all,

Gary

K7OIJ

FCC Confirms That Amateur Radio License Examinations May Be Held Remotely

April 30, 2020

The Amateur Radio Service provides opportunities for self-training, intercommunication, and technical investigations for qualified persons of any age who are interested in radio technique solely with a personal aim and without pecuniary interest. To operate an Amateur Radio Service station, an operator must have an FCC license. The Commission issues three classes of operator licenses, each authorizing a different level of privilege. The class for which each licensee is qualified is determined during an examination by the level of skill and knowledge in operating a station that the licensee demonstrates to volunteer examiners, who conduct this testing on behalf of FCC-certified volunteer examiner coordinators.

Many potential amateur radio test takers and volunteer examiners have contacted the Chairman and the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau to request that the Commission allow remote testing in light of current public health guidelines regarding social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. We make clear here that nothing in the FCC's rules prohibits remote testing, and prior FCC approval is not required to conduct remote tests. The Commission provides flexibility to volunteer examiners and coordinators who wish to develop remote testing methods or to increase remote testing programs already in place.

We recognize that some volunteer examiner coordinators may not have the immediate capacity for widespread remote testing. We expect those volunteer examiner coordinators with limited remote testing capacity to work closely with those requesting such testing to prioritize any available remote testing slots.

Missoula Marathon Twenty Twenty 2020 Race Cancellation

May 7, 2020

We thank you for your patience over the last 6 weeks as we have completed our due diligence to determine how the Coronavirus pandemic would affect the race status.

Unfortunately, we are sad to announce that we will be cancelling the Missoula Marathon weekend of events for 2020. This was a very challenging and difficult decision for the Run Wild Missoula Board of Directors and the Missoula Marathon race committee.

- We take great pride in putting on our race and love being a part of the energy and excitement of race weekend.
- We recognize the pride that our community takes in supporting the race and showing off Missoula to thousands of people from across the U.S. and from around the world.
- We know that marathon weekend has a significant economic impact for our local hotels, restaurants, retailers, breweries and other small businesses.
- Race weekend also provides the opportunity to showcase our amazing sponsors.
- And, finally, proceeds from the race allow us to make donations to local organizations who are doing great things in our community.

But we also recognize that we have a larger commitment to the Missoula community. In the current pandemic scenario, we are obligated to consider the health and safety of participants, volunteers, vendors, and community members.

Through stay at home orders and social distancing directives issued by the Governor's office and local health departments, Montana has done an admirable job in managing the spread of the virus within our state. But, in discussions with our medical director and local health officials, there is serious concern about a potential spike in virus cases in Missoula in the days and weeks following the marathon should the race be held as scheduled.

Those same thoughts and concerns have also been expressed by others in the community, including our volunteers and race committee members. And, as we have now topped 1 million cases in the U.S., it is also reflective of the number of events in Montana and around the country that have been cancelled in May, June, July – and beyond.

Further, there is no timeline, in Montana or elsewhere, suggesting when large group events involving thousands of people such as races and concerts will be allowed to resume.

So, in consideration of the public health of the Missoula community and our participants, we realize that the only responsible action is to cancel the race for 2020.

For currently registered participants, the race cancellation options and details can be found on our website at www.missoulamarathon.org. And, beginning Monday, May 25th, we will accept new registrations from runners and walkers who want to take part in our Virtual Races.

Like you, this is not the outcome we envisioned for the 14th Annual Missoula Marathon. But, we will be back in June, 2021 for Number 15. Until then – Stay Active, Stay Healthy, Stay Safe, and Stay Strong.

Tony Banovich, Race Director

Tentative April Zoom Meeting Minutes

Members Present:
Jerry N7GE, Mike K7MSO, Larry K7GIS, Jackie KC7RBC, Eric NZ7S, Dick W7XT, Paul N7PAS, Tom K0SN, Tom K7QA, Dan KI7HLW, Pat Barkey N9RV, Terry KF7BQ

Approve last meetings minutes
1st Paul 2nd Jerry
Passed

Treasurers report
1st Larry K7GIS 2nd Tom K0SN
passed

Repeater Committee
Nothing to report

HF Committee
Steve KK7UV is providing his rare skills to refurbish a highly valued Collins 75A4 receiver from the 30's donated by Barry Smith W7ALW.

15 Apr Terry KF7BQ
22 Apr Paul N7PAS
29 Apr Mike K7MSO
06 May Donna K7MSO

Next Meeting: Zoom Monday May 11th,

--- Classified For Sale / Wanted ---

FOR SALE:

Astron RS-35M linear power supply $125

Yaesu FT-890AT transceiver, with matching PS $500

CW filter--recent alignment.

Pyramid PS-26KX adjustable voltage power supply $50

Icom PS-125 power supply- companion to several

Icom transceivers $125

TenTec 238 antenna tuner—highly efficient $250

MFJ CW paddle—similar to Bencher $50

Vibroplex single lever CW paddle $100

Contact: Dick Walton, W7XT, mtcwop[atsign]gmail[dot]com

FOR SALE:

Vertical antennas:

Comet GP-3. (2 M) $75

Comet GP-15. (2 M, 70 cm, 6 M). $125

Cushcraft Ringo Ranger (2 M). $40

Beams:

Cushcraft A270105, 5 element, (2 M, 70 cm). $100 *

HyGain VB-214, 14 element, (2 M). $125 *

* With Ham Rotor, CDE Control box, 8 conductor wire, add $150

Tuners:

MFJ-949E, High frequency 160-10M, 300 watt. $100

Icom- AH-4, automatic tuner High frequency. $170 *

* Icom AH-4 includes 150 feet # 12 copper wire.

Radios:

Kenwood TS-570S, with CW filter, $300

Classic Station rig:

Drake 'C' line TWINS, L-4B 2,000 Watt AMPLIFIER, MN 2000 **

** R4C has all 15 crystal slots filled for wide frequency coverage.

** R4C has all 3 CW filters, (1500, 500, 250 cycles).

** R4C has operational Noise Blanker.

** T4Xc has full power out 175-225 watts 10m-160m.

** T4Xc comes with 4 or 6 spare Final tubes.

** AC-4/MS-4 Power supply with Speaker included w/Twins.

** Shure 44 mic goes with the Twins.

** Power supply for L-4B included with Amplifier.

** Have spare tubes (circuits) for the Twins

Prefer to sell Drake Station as one unit for $1,500.

Will sell Twins for $800.

Will sell L4B (with Pwr Spply) for $650.

Will sell MN2000 tuner for $200.

Extra Drake gear:

MN-4 Tuner, 300 watt. (3 output SO-239). $150.

WV-4 VHF wattmeter. $75.

AC-4/MS-4 Power Supply. $150.

Misc.:

Extra HealthKit Cantenna HN-31 (1 Kw dummy load) w/oil. $60.

Shure 44 mic (Swan logo). Drake plug. Very good. $40.

All the gear is clean and works very well. Good audio, great reception.

Contact: KB7QQ, Jerry

406-240-6804

sawtoothmt[atsign]gmail[dot]com