



The Hellgate Static

December 2020



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

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Upcoming Events

December 5 Skywarn Recognition Day
~~December 14 Christmas Dinner (Canceled)~~

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)

December Zoom Meeting

Due to the current Corona virus crisis, the HARC November meeting is scheduled to be conducted remotely via zoom teleconferencing software on December 14th.

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, December 14th, contact Mike Leary at mleary2001@yahoo.com and request an invitation.

Stay healthy and we hope to see you there.

Congratulations David K7MTD

HARC's HF Committee congratulates Dave Herzberg, K7MTD, for having achieved his 10 WPM certificate from the ARRL. Dave is a graduate of this year's HARC CW course. He has been active on the CW bands for the past several months. We expect that it won't be long before he has a 20 WPM certificate on his wall. The HF Committee will sponsor another CW course beginning in February if there is sufficient indication of interest. If you would like to take the course, please contact one of H Committee members by email or phone.

2020 HARC Christmas Dinner Canceled

The HARC Christmas dinner, has been canceled due to concerns over the recent spike in Covid19 illness. We hope everyone stays well, and will look forward to the return of our annual Christmas Dinner next year. **We will have a Zoom meeting on December 14th.**

US Coast Guard Proposes to Discontinue HF Voice Watchkeeping

Posted date: November 25, 2020

The US Coast Guard has invited comments by January 21, 2021, on a proposal to discontinue HF voice watchkeeping. The proposal appeared on November 20 in the Federal Register. The USCG proposes to cease monitoring 4125, 6215, 8291, and 12,290 kHz, in the contiguous US and Hawaii, due to a lack of activity.

“We believe this change would have a low impact on the maritime public, as commercial satellite radios and Digital Selective Calling (DSC) marine-SSB HF radios have become more prevalent onboard vessels,” the Coast Guard said. “However, we would like your comments on how you would be affected if we terminated monitoring HF voice-only distress frequencies within the contiguous US and Hawaii, particularly if you use HF, but do not currently have a commercial satellite radio or an HF DSC-capable radio aboard your vessel.”

The Coast Guard said it would continue to monitor HF DSC distress alerting for all existing regions and voice distress and hailing from Kodiak, Alaska, and Guam. The Amateur Radio Maritime Mobile Service Net ([MMSN](#)) on 14.300 MHz remains available to less-equipped mariners who need assistance in emergencies.

The Maritime Mobile Service Network

The Maritime Mobile Service Network (MMSN) was launched on January 3, 1968, by Winston Robertson (the Chaplain) KB5YX, formerly WB4AKB, Steve Rock N4SR, formerly WA4YVQ, Don Van Horn K1FZY, formerly WA4TPW, Mel White WA4IQS, D. Freeman K1YLI, J.G. Kincade WA4YVX, Art Werner K3QYQ, H. Bretches K4DBR, L.B. Lapman W4SAW, and G.W. Powell WA4RRO. Back in those days, US naval vessels were not allowed to have a MARS station onboard. To get around this, this group of shore-side hams dedicated themselves to running phone patches for the naval vessels in the ham bands, primarily 20-meters.

The original operating frequency chosen was 14.320 MHz but the net had to move to 14.317 MHz a few weeks later to avoid excessive interference. In 1969, when the net moved to 14.313 MHz, it also established 14.300 MHz as an alternate working frequency and for years operated on either frequency depending on

nearly interference, but, since before 2000, the net has been operating exclusively on 14.300 MHz.

The original purpose of the MMSN was to "Serve Those Who Serve" in the United States military during the Vietnam crisis. Since that time, the network has grown considerably in hours of operation and services provided and consists of a dedicated group of Radio Amateurs who unselfishly volunteer their time, equipment, and efforts to serve and assist those in need of communications from foreign countries and the high seas. Our primary purpose now is that of handling legal third party traffic from maritime mobiles, both pleasure, and commercial and overseas-deployed military personnel. We also help missionaries in foreign countries, and volunteer net control stations from throughout North America and the Caribbean maintain the network. Furthermore, these stations are assisted by relay stations to ensure total coverage of the Atlantic Ocean, Mediterranean & Caribbean Seas, and the eastern Pacific Ocean. The network, in particular, has been formally recognized for its work with emergency traffic by the Dept. of Homeland Security, the United States Coast Guard, and the National Weather Service, to mention a few.

The network acts as a weather beacon for ships during periods of severe weather and regularly repeats high seas and tropical weather warnings and bulletins from the National Weather Service and the National Hurricane Center.

The Maritime Mobile Service Net is operational every day from 12:00pm until 9:00pm Eastern Standard Time, and from 12:00pm until 10:00pm Eastern Daylight Time, on the 20-meter *Global Emergency Center Of Activity frequency of 14.300 MHz as outlined by the International Radio Union.

All amateur radio operators are invited to participate simply by checking in. If you have a phone patch at your station, please tell the net control station and he/she will certainly try to put you to work!

* At the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) Region 1 meeting in 2005, it was decided that certain frequencies on certain amateur bands would be designated as "Global Emergency Center Of Activity" (GECO) frequencies. The purpose of establishing the GECO frequencies was to designate a place for passing emergency traffic on amateur frequencies, should the need arise. Over the next few years, Regions 2 and 3 followed suit in making the following frequencies world-wide GECO frequencies. Those frequencies are: 21.360 MHz, 18.160 MHz, 14.300 MHz, 7.240 MHz, 7.060 MHz, 3.985 MHz, and 3.750 MHz. These and other frequencies, with their band plans, can also be viewed at www.iaru-r2.org/band-plan.

A Thousand Marbles

by Jeff Davis, K9EV (previously N9AVG)

The older I get, the more I enjoy Saturday mornings. Perhaps it's the quiet solitude that comes with being the first to rise, or maybe it's the unbounded joy of not having to be at work. Either way, the first few hours of a Saturday morning are most enjoyable.

A few weeks ago, I was shuffling toward the basement shack with a steaming cup of coffee in one hand and the morning paper in the other. What began as a typical Saturday morning, turned into one of those lessons that life seems to hand you from time to time. Let me tell you about it.

Walking into the shack, I flipped the switch on the Astron power supply. That fired up the dual-band mobile that is usually set on the local repeater frequency and it also brought my HF rig to life.

In a few seconds, I was tuned to 7.040 MHz, the QRP calling frequency. Early morning on 40 meters can be interesting and like fishing, you just never know what you might snag.

I turned the gain control up until the volume was comfortable, then I leaned back and scanned the local paper. Another shooting, another bombing, some terrorist group threatening retaliation, and the government debating a tax increase. Well, at least it's reassuring to see that the world hasn't changed since the evening news report the night before.

In the background, I heard a station calling "CQ FISTS." Before I have time to call him a VE3 with a booming signal calls him and so begins another QSO on 40 meters. Before long, that QSO has ended and another was underway.

After a quick coffee refill, I went back to the shack, put the headphones on, and begin tuning around. There was a strong signal on 7.035 MHz calling CQ. I returned his call and made contact with a fellow in Kennebunk, Maine. We exchanged signal reports and proceeded to tell each other about our rigs, antennas, and the weather. A few minutes more and my new friend told me he must QRT because he is meeting several of the local hams for breakfast. We signed off, with "Best 73" to each other.

Then I turned the dial up into the phone portion of the band in order to listen to a Saturday morning swap net. Along the way, I came across an older sounding chap, with a tremendous signal and a golden voice. You know the kind, he sounded like he should be in the broadcasting business. He was telling whoever he was talking with something about "a thousand marbles." I was intrigued and stopped to listen to what he had to say.

"Well Tom, it sure sounds like you're busy with your job. I'm sure they pay you well but it's a shame you have to be away from home and your family so much. Hard to believe a young fellow should have to work sixty or seventy hours a week to make ends meet. Too bad you missed your daughter's dance recital."

He continued, "let me tell you something Tom, something that has helped me keep a good perspective on my own priorities."

And that's when he began to explain his theory of a "thousand marbles."

"You see, I sat down one day and did a little arithmetic. The average person lives about seventy-five years. I know, some live more and some live less, but on average, folks live about seventy-five years."

"Now then, I multiplied 75 times 52 and I came up with 3900 which is the number of Saturdays that the average person has in their entire lifetime. Now stick with me Tom, I'm getting to the important part."

By this point, I was completely hooked on this QSO. Forget the swap net, I wasn't moving from this frequency until I heard what the old man had to say.

"It took me until I was fifty-five years old to think about all this in any detail", he went on, "and by that time I had lived through over twenty-eight hundred Saturdays. I got to thinking that if I lived to be seventy-five, I only had about a thousand of them left to enjoy."

"So I went to a toy store and bought every single marble they had. I ended up having to visit three toy stores to round-up 1000 marbles. I took them home and put them inside of a large, clear plastic container right here in the shack next to my gear. Every Saturday since then, I have taken one marble out and thrown it away."

"I found that by watching the marbles diminish, I focused more on the really important things in life. There is nothing like watching your time here on this earth run out to help get your priorities straight."

"Now let me tell you one last thing before I sign-off with you and take my lovely wife out for breakfast. This morning, I took the very last marble out of the container. I figure if I make it until next Saturday then I have been given a little extra time. And the one thing we can all use is a little more time."

"It was nice to meet you Tom, I hope you spend more time with your family, and I hope to meet you again here on the band. 73 Old Man, this is K9NZQ, clear and going QRT, good morning!"

You could have heard a pin drop on the band when this fellow signed off. I guess he gave us all a lot to think about. I had planned to work on the antenna that morning, and then I was going to meet up with a few hams to work on the next club newsletter.

Instead, I went upstairs and woke my wife up with a kiss. "C'mon honey, I'm taking you and the kids to breakfast."

"What brought this on?" she asked with a smile.

"Oh, nothing special, it's just been a long time since we spent a Saturday together with the kids. Hey, can we stop at a toy store while we're out? I need to buy some marbles."

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Minutes – November 2020 Zoom Meeting

Attendance: Mike K7MSO, Vick K7VK, Kevin W1KGK , Tom K0SN, Terry KF7BQ, Tom K7QA, Paul N7PAS, Joe AG7FH, Eric NZ7S, Dick W7XT, Jerry AF7AO, Jackie KC7RBC

Presentation: Kevin, W1KGK, on ARES in Western Montana District

Kevin will add ARES members to state ARES email list.

Approval of last meeting's minutes. Passed

Approval of Treasurer's report. Passed

- Club liability ins (still gathering info)
- Anticipated expenses (Code practice keyers)
- Still selling equip
- \$35 reimbursed to W7XT

Repeater Committee: Report Nothing to report

HF Committee:

- Generator repair cost
- Starting CW class in January, still need to buy practice keyers

Officer / Committee Nominations

President – Mike K7MSO

Vice- President Eric NZ7S

Treasurer – Dick W7XT

Secretary – Donna KC5WRA

Previous Events:

- 3rd Fox Hunt

- JOTA

Cancelled Events

- Christmas Dinner 14 Dec Cancelled

Upcoming Events:

- Skywarn 5 Dec ???

VHF Net Control operators:

- 11 Nov Mike K7MSO

- 18 Nov Paul N7PAS

- 25 Nov Terry KF7BQ

- 02 Dec Donna KC5WRA / Mike

- 09 Dec Eric NZ7S

***** Next Club meeting: 14 December**

Classified Amateur Radio Equipment For Sale

For sale:

Collins R-388/URR receiver .54 to 30mhz. Good condition and working order.

Price \$450.00.

Argus Barker, W8QMD

406-777-5931