

K9YA Telegraph

Robert F. Heytow Memorial Radio Club

Volume 2, Issue 1, January 2005



A Shack Full of Resolutions And Happy Birthday to Us!

Philip Cala-Lazar, K9PL

I don't think I've ever made a New Year's resolution. To me, that quaint notion was a discretionary part of the season like egg nog, noisemakers and peppermint candy canes—a matter of taste, take it or leave it.

This year, however, after reviewing 2004's Ham Radio experiences and the uninstalled antennas, radials, masts and rotator stacked, boxed and bagged along the walls of my shack and garage, I figure 2005 is a good year to kickstart with a few Amateur Radio resolutions.

I will make at least one QSO per day.

Not too tough, I'm pretty much on schedule, or better, with this one. Besides, it's fun.

I will elmer at least one person interested in earning an Amateur Radio license.

But not try to convince anyone to get a license who's not already got the bug to be a Ham. That's either a futile endeavor or too frequently results in a rarely/never used HT keeping closet shelf company with a rarely/never used SLR camera.

I will, at the very least, learn about another mode and perhaps even try it.

PSK-31 looks interesting, now to interface my Ham software unfriendly iMac to the appropriate application.

I will complete my languishing antenna projects.

Get that vertical vertical and that two-meter beam in the air, then again, many spiders will consequently lose their homes and livelihoods.

I will construct a minimalist QRP rig and get it on the air.

Rockmite anyone? I've worked one that was running 250 milliwatts, through a Hamstick antenna and mobile in Virginia—RST 579!

I will attempt to computerize my paper log.

Twenty-eight years of contacts, you've got to be kidding, maybe last year's for a start before I get terminally bored with the tedium.

I will order more QSLs before I run out.

What, and save myself the joy of hand-drawn index card QSLs?

I will make order of all the short runs of wire and cable in the shack closet.

"I will elmer at least one person."

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Amateur Radio Club of Trinity High School

Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

Katelyn Murray, KB3LRN



Katelyn Murray,
KB3LRN

It was that time of the year again—school. School had begun and so did my senior year! I was hoping the workload would lessen somewhat, being my senior year, but no, being the “try-hard” I am, I decided to take a few AP courses, honors courses and physics. I must be truthful and admit physics was not one of the classes I was anxious to begin, for I had heard some pretty intimidating things about the class from previous students.

Nevertheless, the time had come and I walked into my physics classroom on the first day of school. I only asked myself, “What ridiculous theory are we going to learn first?” However, when I walked into the classroom I was more surprised to see the phonetic alphabet on a poster as well as some frequencies and bandwidths. I saw some radios on the teacher’s desk and wires all over the place.

“Good afternoon everyone, my name is Mr. Barnes,” our teacher preached, “for this entire first quarter and somewhat into the second, we will be working with Amateur Radio to prepare all of you to take the Element 2 Technician class license exam in November.”

I must admit I was pretty confused and really did not know what to expect now. How did this have anything to do with physics? What is Amateur Radio? What license are we getting? All of these questions rattled my mind, however, eventually, all the answers became clear to me.

As the first couple of weeks passed, we had received our *Now You’re Talking* books and we were going to use them to learn all we needed to know to pass the Technician exam. Mr. Barnes presented Power Point slides for every chapter in the book and helped us understand the basic concepts throughout. After about every chapter, almost every week, we would have a test on the chapter(s) we covered. The

great thing about our book was that it provided all the possible questions to the Technician exam complete with the answers. Therefore, Mr. Barnes would use those questions from the book and just mix up the answers. Doesn’t sound hard, does it? Well, needless to say, there was still plenty of procrastination prior to studying those last few questions before the test. Weekly tests continued until we finished the book, which ended perfectly in time to take the Technician exam on November 9, 2004.

In order to prepare ourselves for the actual test, Mr. Barnes gave us homework every night to take an on-line practice exam at www.qrz.com. At first he didn’t care about our scores, however, as we finished learning the material, he encouraged us to at least pass the test. Needless to say, we were very well prepared for the test in November. We covered many slides, took a look at firsthand examples of how to make contacts and do many other activities using the radio and we took practice examinations. Eventually the day had come to put our knowledge of the hobby to the test, were we ready?

It was November 9, 2004. At 12:30 p.m. that day (7th period) 65 of us walked into our physics classroom, sat in our assigned seats, pulled out our needed identification for the VEs and waited patiently to begin. We were all anxious and excited to take the test, for all of our hard work was coming

together and we were all ready to take this test and become a Ham. Although passing the test and becoming a Technician was exciting, I still had to remember that this was a part of my physics curriculum. Therefore, if we didn’t pass, it

*“How did this
have anything to
do with physics?”*



Sean Barnes’ (N3JQ) Students at VE Test Session

K3PD photo



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was a 50% test grade and if we did pass, no matter what our score, we received 100%. Failure was not the end of the world, however, because Mr. Barnes would let us retake the test at a future date. Needless to say, this aspect was in the back of my mind as well and made me just a little nervous.

Well, we did it! We all took the test, and I must admit I felt pretty good coming out of that room. I knew many of the questions, if not all, and only hoped I had passed. Thus, all that was left for us to do was wait. Luckily, we took the test later in the school day, therefore, we only had to wait two periods to find out if we had passed or not. I waited patiently for that last bell to ring. Finally, it did, and our announcements followed, including the announcement about our exam. We did it! Everyone had passed the exam. Of the 65 students who took the test, not one failed. I was so happy for everyone, especially for our teacher. He worked so hard throughout the entire quarter to prepare us for this test and his enthusiasm for the hobby pushed us even harder to pass. Unfortunately, the FCC stopped issuing Amateur Radio licenses during the same week, so we had to patiently await the assignment of our callsigns for about one week.

The week had passed and we finally received our callsigns. We were all so excited to start talking to different people. Now, since we were newly licensed operators, none of us really had any radio equipment at home, therefore, we were able to use the fully equipped Ham shack in the back of our classroom. However, Mr. Barnes also required us to download Echolink on our home computers and suggested we begin making some contacts to experiment with the program. He mentioned that he would assign a project in the near future and he wanted to be sure all the problems were worked out.

Needless to say, I went straight home that day and downloaded Echolink. The next day I made at least four contacts using my new program. I was so excited and so were my siblings (all three of them). I must admit I was ready from the beginning to talk to someone from outside the United States, thus I began with Australia, Japan, Russia, New Zealand and a few others. Every single one of those people were very supportive and congratulatory towards my class and me for becoming new Hams. Their support only encouraged me to continue talking with others more and more.

Eventually, Mr. Barnes assigned our radio projects. The majority of the project is most likely to be done through Echolink, but there are a few requirements to make at least ten non-U.S., and at least two radio contacts. We are to ask a few questions of the individuals and then request a confirmation e-mail regarding the QSO. In the

end, a total of 30 contacts are needed. We are in the middle of completing this project now, however, we have also moved on in physics and began learning different theories and other aspects in another book. Yet, with the help of this project and a few extra credit incentives



(Left to Right)
Jacqueline Hilton,
KB3LQS; Kailey
Egbert, KB3LQK; Erna
Jablonski, KB3LQU;
and Laura Charchuck,
KB3LQC

*"We did it!
Everyone had
passed the exam."*

regarding the Amateur Radio hobby (receiving our higher licenses, attending radio meetings, making extra contacts, etc.), I hope to continue pursuing this hobby throughout the year and for at least another ten years.

I know at the beginning of the school year, I was expecting the worst for my physics class, especially when I learned we were going to become Hams. At that point, I really did not see how that

had anything to do with physics and how we would become operators. However, as the weeks progressed, we learned many new concepts and experienced firsthand what it would take to become a radio operator.

Now, with our callsigns, our current project and much enthusiasm from our teacher and so many others, the 65 (plus others in the school licensed last year) of us are able to experience something not many people truly understand. This hobby will open our eyes to this huge world around us and allow us to meet so many different people and cultures. I must admit, I do not regret one bit taking physics in my senior year. ■



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Andrew Kelly, K3ASK



Andrew Kelly, K3ASK

Hi, I'm Andrew Kelly, Ham Radio call K3ASK, and I live in Pasadena, Maryland. I'm 14-years-old and in the 9th grade. I hold an Amateur Extra Class license and was first licensed in May, 2002 when I passed my Technician exam and was granted the call KB3ICD. I then applied for, and received, my vanity call, K3ASK. Two months later I passed my 5-wpm code test. In

August, 2002, at a local Hamfest, I earned my General class license. While browsing at the Hamfest I decided to pick up the ARRL's Amateur Extra Class study manual. I began studying, and in July, 2003 passed my Extra and have been enjoying the HF bands since.

After I took my Amateur Extra test, I quickly got an interest in CW. So I picked up a set of Bencher paddles to use with my Kenwood 570D, and started studying again on my code. I used Morse Cat to help increase my speed. This year I have done a lot of CW

contests and have been having fun with the mode. I also operate SSB and PSK-31, but I think of CW as a fun challenge! I enjoy DXing in CW and the CW contests!

I have a few goals in Amateur Radio. The one that means the most to me is to bring kids into the service. I belong to an Amateur Radio club that was created to bring kids into the hobby -- the Anne Arundel Radio Club Jr, KI3DS.

Our club participates in the Boy Scouts' Jamboree on the Air. We introduce Ham radio to about 300-400 scouts, where the kids range from ages 8 to 15, each year. Each JOTA we add about 10 kids to the total attending and, on average, 2-3 earn their licenses. We do lots of contesting and public service events and attend the Dayton Hamvention's Youth Forum.

I designed a Web site promoting radio to kids. Please feel free to visit Ham Radio for Kids, <http://www.kidshamradio.com>.

"I think of CW as a fun challenge."

I'd like to thank you for reading this brief article on my Ham radio history and things I enjoy in the hobby.

73,
Andrew Kelly, K3ASK



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SWL to Ham

George H. Morto, KN2GSJ

In the Summer of 1949, I was listening to Ham operators on my father's old Mid-West console radio. Some time later, me and a friend bought Hallicrafters S-38s from Allied Radio in Chicago. We ordered SWL cards from W1FSV and purchased copies of the 1949 Callbook. We were in business.

The S-38 and a long wire out of my bedroom window did wonders for me. On a cold, snowy January night I would be listening to someone coming from Puerto Rico or Florida where the temperature was a balmy 75 or 80 degrees.

We confirmed all 48 States and the territories of Alaska and Hawaii, all in 1951.

I was an avid QSL collector. I would rush off the school bus, into my house, into the living room and check the mantel above the fireplace to see the cards that had arrived that day. Sometimes there were as many as five sitting there. On days when there were no cards, I would become irritable and my mother did not really appreciate that attitude, but she came up with her own answer. When more than one card arrived, she set some aside. Then, when there were no cards, she would put one out and I was happy as could be.

At the end of 1951, we were getting a 50 to 60 percent return on our cards. We decided that IF we knew Morse code, we could up our success rate a reasonable amount. We began studying the dits and dahs of CW.

There are many ways to learn CW. We chose to take five characters a day in random order, i.e., TYALP, CZLBF, etc. Between classes at school when we passed each other in the hallways we would yell out, "Give me an L," and the other would answer with a dit dah dit dit. The other would yell out, "Give me a Z," and so on. We kept this up until we could instantly recognize all 26 letters and the numbers. Then we began to tune the CW portions of the bands, and not before. I don't remember copying W1AW because we always liked "live" code.

It wasn't long and we were copying the call signs,

QTHs, names and RST reports in QSOs. We learned how to operate from LISTENING. You learned the right way to operate and you heard those NOT operating correctly. We knew all this before we ever tapped a key.

The cards came rolling in from the CW QSOs. CW operators answered almost every time and on each card was encouragement. "If you can copy me, you should get your ticket and get on the air with us."

My friend went to the federal building in New York City and took the FCC test for the Novice exam; he became KN2ARG. Then, in November of 1953, after we graduated from high school, he went in to take the General exam. It was a two hour trip from the east end of Long Island to New York City on the Long Island Railroad. He had me studying the Novice exam on that trip. He passed the General and became K2ARG and I passed the Novice and became KN2GSJ in January of 1954.

In March of 1954, I joined the Navy, was copying 15-wpm and could type 40-wpm. After boot camp, the Navy sent me off to radio school at Imperial Beach, California. They set me ahead five weeks and raised my code speed to 35-wpm.

I spent my whole 20-year career in naval communications of some sort, also worked with the American Forces Network on Taiwan, and worked at a local FM station on Long Island from 1987 to 2001.

Since 1949, my life has revolved around "radio" in one way or another. I still pound the brass every day and am a member of the FISTS CW Club, number 1538. CW is my major mode. ■



**George H. Morto,
KN2GSJ**

*"The cards
came rolling in
from the CW
QSOs."*



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Cartoon Caption Contest

Win a Signed Print with Your Caption!

Dick Sylvan, W9CBT

HAM QUIPS



"Your Caption Here"

So you think you're pretty funny, eh? You were the class clown in high school and now the office cutup? Here's your chance to step up to the plate and prove your nyuk, nyuk, nyukiness! Our illustrious cartoonist, Dick Sylvan, W9CBT, has a challenge for you—write a caption for his cartoon above. The funniest caption, as judged by our team of crack humorists, will win a full-color, autographed print of the cartoon with *your* caption! The winning entry as well as honorable mentions will be included in our February issue.

Send your entries to: contest@k9ya.org no later than January 15, 2005.

W9CBT's Cartoon Caption Contest will be overseen by the prestigious law firm of Dewey, Cheetum and Howe. All decisions final. Celebrity voices impersonated. ■



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There's got to be a use for that myriad zip cord and 18-inch lengths of ancient RG-58.

I will toss out all the unrecognizable odds and ends in that same shack closet.

Hey, someone paid a bundle for that stuff long ago.

Many of these resolutions will remain unresolved at year's end.

Does not require clarification.

Number 1, Volume 2

This issue marks the completion of the first year of publication of the *K9YA Telegraph* and launches our second year. Our success solely derives from you, our large, enthusiastic and devoted subscriber base worldwide, and to the writers whose contribution of personal stories—at once fascinating, humorous, enlightening and compelling—made the *Telegraph* staff's inaugural year one of consistent joy and fulfillment.

The *Telegraph's* articles have often looked back at Ham Radio as it was; some articles have spoken of today's operators, operations and gear; and a few have been forward looking, Amateur Radio as we shape it for the future.

The *K9YA Telegraph* exists only to serve discerning Amateur Radio operators and non-Amateurs with an interest in our service. Every Ham has his or her own story to tell, and each of these stories, though unique, describe the converging route we have all taken to reach the same goal—as full practitioners in the world's greatest existing radio service.

To all of you, our thanks, 73 and best wishes in the new year. ■

New Year New Look

In case you didn't notice, the *K9YA Telegraph* has a new look for the new year. In addition to design and color refinements, we've added hyperlinks. You no longer have to cut and paste URLs or e-mail addresses referenced in articles. In addition, we've added internal navigational hyperlinks to make your *K9YA Telegraph* experience more pleasurable. ■

ARCot - N3THS



The 86-Members of ARCot with their Teacher, Sean Barnes, N3JQ

In The News

Two staff members of the *K9YA Telegraph*, Mike Dinelli, N9BOR, and Philip Cala-Lazar, K9PL, were recently featured in a Pioneer Press newspaper article. The article, by city editor, Bob Seidenberg with photographs by staff photographer, Buzz Orr, discussed Amateur Radio with emphasis on the enduring popularity of Morse code by Ham Radio operators and the ability to get on the air at minimal expense. The article, which offered a very positive view of our service and a complimentary appraisal of the *K9YA Telegraph*, was featured in the "Images" section of the December 16 issue of many Pioneer Press newspapers; Pioneer Press publications serve the northeast Illinois region. ■

Straight Key Nite 2005

Look for K9YA and *K9YA Telegraph* staffers (K9PL, N9BOR and W9CBT) on *Straight Key Nite*. *SKN 2005* begins at 7:00 p.m. EST December 31 and runs for 24 hours through 7:00 p.m. EST January 1 (0000 - 2400 UTC January 1, 2005). Be sure to tell them that you read the *K9YA Telegraph*! ■



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