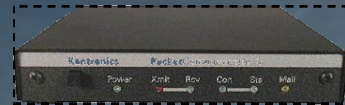


# KEYCLICKS



## When the lights go down

### Shortwave Listening



I'm on a packet  
... radio

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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The 'big event' is over... how did we do ?



WE ARE PROUD TO BE AN ARRL AFFILIATED CLUB

# Message from the President

Hi guy and gals,

I'm happy to report that we've had a great start to the New Year with our Hobby/Club. I'm really looking forward to the rest of the year, so lets keep the good times coming.

I want to send out a great big Thank You to everyone who helped make the VHF contest such a great time. There were 28 different club members who participated in the event in some way, from checking in, to cleaning up: that's over a third of the membership.

I also want to say Thank You to a couple of members who have stood out a little bit this month. First, the membership chairman Don, KC2IUO, for all the work he's done on collecting dues for the coming year. I also want to send out a Thank You to Chuck Lawson, KC2BLH, for the stove, it sure came in handy for the VHF contest breakfast. No one enjoys one of Luke's N2GDU breakfasts more than I do. Never had one? Make a plan to be at the next overnight event, and you'll find out for yourself what a great breakfast Luke can conjure up. It's all that boy scout training Luke had as a kid, that or those secret hobo spices he uses.



**Joe Gearhart,  
WV2NY**

I also want to say Thank You to everyone who has been helping to keep the clubhouse floor mopped up, seems like every time I walk down the hallway someone has the mop in their hands.

I guess that's it for this month, we've gotten this New Year's Baby off to a good start, as we're all it's parents, let's raise this year's baby to be our best one yet. With a little luck maybe we can even send it off to college next year, HI HI.

Until next month, this is Joe, WV2NY, saying 73 and I'll catch you on the repeater.

VE Test Sessions are held on the last Tuesday of odd numbered months, at the LARC club house.

Contact John Maxwell, W2JM, at [w2jm@arrl.net](mailto:w2jm@arrl.net) to register or with questions.

Please indicate "VE Test" in the message subject. Administrative cost is \$15 .



LARC Monday Night Information Net

7:30 PM on the Linked Repeater System

## **W2SO Repeater System**

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**LARC maintains a system of radio repeaters for usage by the Amateur Radio community. Information on present link status and frequencies is available here.**

**Private Line: 107.2Hz**

**IRLP Node: #4908**

**2m and 70 cm repeaters are linked.**

**220mhz and 50mhz are standalone.**

**ATTENTION: Due to ongoing system maintenance, please disable CTCSS tone and operate in tone-encode only at this time.**

**2 meters: 147.255+**

**70cm: 443.850+**

**1.2 meters: 224.640-**

**6 meters: 52.15 input**

**53.17 output**

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## **Listen Online**

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Online listening isn't just for the local scanner enthusiasts any longer! We have now brought the W2SO radio repeater system to the world wide web - LIVE ! At home, or away, access to live audio from all of our repeaters is available streaming, at [radioreference.com](http://radioreference.com) . Presently, the 2 meter / .7 meter linked repeaters, as well as the 1.2 and 6 meter standalone units are heard, courtesy of a rotating scanner and Joe, WV2NY. If you want to listen to the net, or just keep an ear open, visit the club webpage, <http://larc.hamgate.net/> for a link to the streaming audio feed, found under the Club News.

There are many applications available for mobile devices to listen to RadioReference feeds, so you can even now listen on the go!

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**Clubhouse open Thursdays @ 6:30 PM**  
**General Membership Meetings @ OEM**

# January QSM

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## The Meeting

January's issue covered the January General Membership Meeting, of which the topic at hand was the Radiosport and Contesting. Make sure you take a look at last month's issue if you've missed out.

Steve, KC2QZF provided us with an enthusiastic sampling of the world of Radiosport in preparation for the club's participation in the January VHF Contest. That knowledge was put to the test by more than two-dozen club members as they pitched in to participate on the weekend of January 22nd.

## The Mail

The LARC Reflector mailing list is used frequently to provide last minute updates on club events and meetings, as well as to share discoveries and information with club membership. While the roster was recently updated, you should check your mail to be see if you've received any messages about the following, which was heard about this month:

- Information about the "Squalo" square-halo phased VHF array used for the QSO demonstration at the January meeting
- Updates from Joe on "This Ole Ham Shack", including this month's video on accessing the IRLP system from our linked repeaters
- Some news on the "Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Enhancement Act of 2011"
- A link to RPC Electronic's very tiny APRS tracking unit
- Updates on the contest and club meeting

If these items don't sound familiar, you may be missing out! If you are not receiving club e-mail, contact us as soon as possible to have your address updated.



## VHF Contest

As you hopefully recall from the January newsletter, the ARRL-sponsored January VHF Sweepstakes took place over the weekend of January 22nd-23rd. Did we win? Well, its not \*exactly\* that kind of contest. An exercise in patience, dedication, and a payoff from efforts allowed a team of operators to score over 4000 points this weekend by having fun.

Local contacts to club members and fellow operators, as well as some moderate distance contacts made over the bands, despite difficult conditions, led to what was absolutely an enjoyable exercise, and served to hopefully whet the appetite of others for Field Day, the June VHF contest, and other numerous events yet to come.



# January QSM

## A look back on some memorable moments



Phil steps in to pick up the slack



Above, Jay sits at his workstation ready to hop back on to 2m SSB to fish for more contacts.



Luke prepares his famous breakfast

Gary relentlessly digs out 2m contacts

Below, Steve employs the latest in 6m station lounging technology to make this one cool contest.

Joe operates his 70cm SSB station



Seen above are some images taken by Joe, WV2NY, of the January VHF contest and participants at the club house. If you didn't make it, take a look for a sneak preview of the fun to be had for contests to come.

More images are available under the W2SO club FLICKr tag—see this issue for more information.

# LARC Updates

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## March Meeting



Jim, AC2EA, will be presenting the details of his Radio DXpedition at the March General Membership meeting. The talk will center around planning, field expediency and overall results.

While the meeting isn't quite 'DX', **the location has changed.** Make your plans to attend, and, remember, the General Membership Meetings are now held at the Lancaster OEM Building, 321 Columbia Ave, in Depew.

## Packet Radio

This month a demonstration of Packet Radio was given at the clubhouse, and some lucky few were able to get a good look at some of the basics of AX.25 VHF Packet Radio, the Winlink2000 Airmail program, and what it can do for us, and for emergency communications. A plethora of information ranging from verbose protocol breakdown all the way to high-level block diagrams is available online, and as such, if you are interested, please take a look or stop by the club to find out more.



While packet radio has been around for sometime, it is not ubiquitous and not everyone is equipped and ready to operate should the need arise. In general "Packet Radio" is system of data communications over a given "channel" of spread of spectrum, often using a keying mode known as "Frequency Shift Keying" to represent different data bytes with tones. If you've ever heard an APRS beacon, or if you remember the noise a telephone modem made as you dialed-up to the internet in years past, that is the general idea. In fact, APRS is packet radio.

There are a number of protocols for various communication modes available, the most popular packet protocol for VHF is, by far, AX.25 . This collection of standards and schemas forms the basis for communications used for general packet communications, APRS, digipeating, Winlink, and more. Initially, the processing required to both compile and control communications was too much for a personal computer to do while tasked with other duties, and thus came about the TNC, or Terminal Node Controller. This standalone device was able to accept text or data input from the workstation or terminal, like a modem, and would modulate and demodulate as necessary, as well as it would often perform other functions, like manage connections, manage channel access, and serve as a mail drop for messaging. Eventually programs came along which simplified the process (APRS beaconing and monitoring, Winlink mail), and today, as we are all well

(Continued on the following page)

# LARC Updates

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*(Continued from page 6)*

aware, the TNC has fallen by the wayside for many functions, replaced by "sound card modes", as it is now possible to handle the packet transactions within the computer itself.

However, there are still usages for packet radio, even if you can no longer fire up the rig and hit the BBS the next town over, or have a quick data QSO. Today, as we are well aware, there is a push to focus on the development and preparedness in respect to emergency communications. The demonstration focused on the Winlink2000 Airmail product, something that boat owners may be familiar with as "HF Mail". This product allows for the exchange of messages and files over AX.25 packet, as well as disbursement of these messages out to the internet as E-Mail. If internet access is not available, or if a node is isolated, this can allow mail traffic to progress through a system of relay stations. In a local situation, the program provides for a convenient front-end to disburse text based information, such as supply lists, statements and reports, and files like form documents, in a hands-off fashion that ensures a complete copy. This can have obvious advantages for remote sites such as hospitals, supply centers, and more, to aid in overall support with information transfer aside from voice communications, with a packet radio station.

With the advent of sound card modes, terminal node controllers are widely available, and you certainly do not need the latest and greatest for AX.25 packet. Many modern devices can be configured to stand-alone 'digipeat' or beacon, as we are familiar with for APRS, but, an inexpensive TNC coupled with the laptop that may already be in your kit for APRS can well provide a compliment that just may come in handy, be it for saying hello while you are out at camp, or for arranging the delivery of life-saving supplies in a disaster. See <http://www.winlink.org/> for more information on the Winlink2000 system, contact the W2SO radio club for more information on Packet Radio, or stop on down to see the system in action.

## **We're on Facebook**

Are you? Search for "W2SO" and click the 'Like' button to show your virtual support, and to socialize electronically with other club members and fans.



## **New Hams Wanted**

LARC Club Member John Maxwell, W2JM, is looking for potential new hams to size up an upcoming Technician Level course, date to be determined.

# LARC Updates

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## Lockport Hamfest

Several members of the W2SO club met up early Saturday, January 29th, to attend the Lockport ARA 50th Winter Hamfest at the South Transit Fire Hall, in the town of Lockport. After warming up at breakfast, club members queued up amidst a sizeable crowd to peruse the indoor flea market. Others met up to put face to voice over a cup of hot coffee. We look forward to seeing everyone again at the Greater Buffalo Hamfest, this March in West Seneca.

## SWL?

What's this? A three letter acronym that doesn't start with Q? Yes, indeed! It even has something to do with radio. SWL, or "Short Wave Listening" is another facet of radio operations that is often overlooked by recent newcomers and, unfortunately, throughout much of the United States.



Shortwave is the range of frequencies between 1701 and 29999Khz, which, as HF operating hams know, is a range of frequencies subject to propagation, meaning that given the right conditions, you can hear well around the world. Shortwave radio is frequently used for government, and international broadcasting services, which can be news, representative radio, or propaganda. But aside from this, one can hear religious broadcasters, utility stations, pirate radio operators, and spy numbers stations.

While ham radio and shortwave operators don't often intersect, many of us may have heard the various broadcasts and information available. Occasionally things get a bit more interesting, such as the encounter between a few hams on a hunt to find the infamous "Yosemite Sam" station ( more at [http://www.southgatearc.org/news/mar2005/ham\\_spy.htm](http://www.southgatearc.org/news/mar2005/ham_spy.htm) ). Shortwave as an information medium is still popular in places other than in the United States to reach a broad audience where infrastructure isn't available, or where otherwise one would not be able to, such as broadcasting propaganda into the Middle East, or from places like North Korea.

Many 'wide-coverage' Ham transceivers can listen to shortwave broadcasts, which are generally AM and SSB, and as such you may have plenty to listen to, even when the bands aren't open, from stations running more than 20KW of power. Other receivers are available, such as by manufacturers such as Grundig, and these appli-

*(Continued on page 9)*

# LARC Updates

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*(Continued from page 8)*

ances are frequently found at hamfests and estate sales, as well as they are readily available online. As shortwave radio isn't generally used as a source of news information in the United States, purchasing a SW listening radio here is subject to supply, and as well, one must consider the type of radio. Many are compact and designed for travel operations. If you are traveling overseas, or, perhaps on a DXpedition (you can get QSL cards from SW broadcasters, too!), you can tote these radios with you. But, recalling that many broadcasters are not directing their signals towards you, portability may not be paramount, where fine-tuning and an external antenna connector would be.

Given that in recent months several major shortwave broadcasters have significantly scaled-back or eliminated their broadcasts, the airwaves have cleared somewhat from what may have been the last time you listened. Do you have a shortwave receiver? Have any memories of any unique broadcasts? Pirate radio stories? We'd love to hear from you and invite your input. If you've anything to add please submit it to Key Clicks editor KC2YQF, via email to [kc2yqf@partycat.us](mailto:kc2yqf@partycat.us). Look for more short-wave in coming issues.



## **GB Hamfest**

It has almost been six months and that means it will be time again for the Greater Buffalo Hamfest ! Run by the Lancaster Amateur Radio Club , this Spring's event will be held on Saturday, March 12th, 2011. Tables are \$7, so it may just be time to clean out your shack and make room for something nice, or just a bit more pocket change. A VE Test Session will be held for anyone who's been brushing up and ready to move up in license class, or for aspiring new hams who wish to enter the hobby.

Take a look at the Hamfest website, <http://gbhamfest.hamgate.net/>, for upcoming announcements, directions, and other information. These events are always a great time to see and meet operators from near and afar, who you have heard on the radio, so mark your calendars, and be sure to stop on down and say hello.

## **Correct me if I'm wrong...**

Corrections, omissions, and updates should be sent to [KC2YQF@partycat.us](mailto:KC2YQF@partycat.us)

# LARC Updates

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## FLICKR

A picture might be worth a thousand words, as the old saying goes, but, sometimes it is just faster to take a look for yourself. Photos from the past, present, as well as (will be) the future, are being posted online to the FLICKR photo service. Anyone who has digital photographs of club members, club events, or HAM related which may be of interest to the club is encouraged to host their own photos online by opening a FLICKR account and 'tagging' their photos with W2SO so they can be easily found.

Perhaps photography is a second hobby? Maybe you're just a regular ol' shutterbug, or you took a picture on your cell phone. Either way, join the fun and share your moments with the rest. To see what is out there, point your web browser to <http://www.flickr.com/> , and enter "W2SO" into the search box.

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Pictured here is Ian, KC2YXU, using a mobile antenna mounted on a projection screen. QTH? A deck overlooking Eagle Lake, in the Adirondacks, in late August.





## FEBRUARY 2011

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 General Membership Meeting	2	3	4	5
6	7 Monday Night Net @ 7:30 PM	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24 Board Meeting	25	26
27	28					

# Club Directory

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## Club Information

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### Club Address

Lancaster Amateur Radio Club  
Lancaster Town Center  
525 Pavement Road  
Lancaster NY 14086

### Internet Presence

<http://larc.hamgate.net/>  
E-Mail:  
[larc@larclist.hamgate.net](mailto:larc@larclist.hamgate.net)

### Club Dues

Regular Membership -  
\$30 Yearly (Jan—Dec)  
*Includes all family members*

## Executive and Board Members

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### Executive Officers

#### President

Joe Gearhart—WV2NY  
(2011-2012)

#### Vice President

Steve Piotrowski—KC2QZF  
(2010-2011)

#### Secretary

Luke Calianno—N2GDU  
(2011-2012)

#### Treasurer

Chuck Curtin—W2EM  
(2011-2012)

### Board of Directors

Kevin Retzer—K9KVN  
(2010-2011)

Chuck Lawson—KC2BLH  
(2010-2011)

Karl Hutchinson—W2KTH  
(2011-2012)

Bob Delameter—AA2ZW  
(2011-2012)

### Chairs

#### Newsletter Editor

Adam Pawlowski—KC2YQF

#### Monday Night Net

Kevin Retzer—K9KVN

#### Public Relations Officer

Bill Freeman—N4NJJ

#### Membership Chairman

Don Czapla—KC2IUO

## LARC Committees

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### Budget

Luke Calianno—N2GDU

### Repeater

Steve Piotrowski—KC2QZF  
Wally Carriero—N2LYJ  
Ron Gilson—WA2WWK  
Gerald Godrey—N2QLS  
Scott Thrun—KB2TRQ

### Internet

Luke Calianno—N2GDU

### Turn Key

Jim Glor—N8GXR

### Trustee

Joseph Gearhart—WV2NY

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*Of interest to the amateur community* **QST**

### Solar Sail a Success

The NanoSail-D is the first-ever 100 square-foot solar sail deployed in low earth orbit. It was tracked with the aid of the amateur radio community, listening for the satellite's beacon on a UHF downlink frequency. See more about this project at <http://www.nanosail.org/>



### ARRL Western NY Section

News Updates

On **July 16th**, 2011, the Utica Amateur Radio Club, K2IQ, will be hosting RADIO-COMM 2011, their annual hamfest, at the Herkimer County Fairgrounds. More information is available at their website: <http://www.uticaarc.org/>

### WNYSORC Meeting

The Western New York - Southern Ontario Repeater Council will hold next meeting on Sunday, April 3rd, 2011. Visit <http://www.wnysorc.org/> for more information.

A number of Canadian repeater stations were purged from coordination during the October meeting. Visit the WNYSORC website for a listing of stations to update your records.

### Skywarn Training

The Lockport Amateur Radio Association is sponsoring Skywarn Training at the Niagara County Public Safety Training Facility, on February 27th, at 7:30 PM.

Visit <http://lara.hamgate.net/> for more information on LARA and this event.

### BARRA Auction

**February 21st** is the annual BARRA Auction and Swapfest. See <http://barra.hamgate.net> for more information about this event and the Buffalo Amateur Radio Repeater Association.

### Your newsletter. Your news.

If there is one thing Ham operators know how to do, that's listen. Be it straining our ears for a DX contact, or just taking in the latest dish from the morning coffee rag chew, getting the message is not a problem.

Hand in hand is the Ham's desire to be heard. Well, one band that's always open: your club's news.

Send your submissions to the newsletter editor for inclusion:  
[KC2YQF@partycat.us](mailto:KC2YQF@partycat.us)