THE REPEATER @PAWA_W1KVI @PAWAME WWW.QSL.NET/PAWA MARCH 1, 2017

The Repeater

Portland Amateur Wireless Association Newsletter

Portland Amateur Wireless Association Repeaters

Falmouth: 146.730MHz (-600KHz) (T 100.0Hz)

Scarborough: 444.100MHz (+5MHz) (T 82.5Hz)

Portland Amateur Wireless Association Board of Directors			
President	Bryce Rumery	K1GAX	K1GAX@juno.com
Vice President	John Bogner	W1JLB	JBogner1@maine.rr.com
Secretary	Tim Mitchell	KB1YBS	mitchell@smoms.com
Treasurer	Jack Ney	KC1UX	KC1UX@maine.rr.com
Chief Operator	Ross Drivas	KB1OND	rmdkb1ond@yahoo.com
Member at Large	Steve Mitchell	KB1YBT	SJMitchell@maine.rr.com
Member at Large	Jason Cote	W1WDW	W1WDW@jcwebdesign.com

Club Birthdays

KC1UX, Jack Ney - 4th
K1JLB, John Bogner - 10th
W1JKL, Chuck Talbot - 12th
KX1E, Bob Coakley - 16th
KB1IAY, Richard Coffin - 22nd

On The Web

Please visit us on the web! We have pages on Twitter, Facebook and the world wide web. Check out our addresses at the top of the newsletter's first page, follow us on Twitter, and like our page on Facebook to stay up to date on club activities

Submissions?
We'd love include your article or announcement!

2017 Field Day
A new venue!
Turkey Hill Farm

Upcoming Events
Check out our upcoming events calendar!

President's Message

With all this warm weather of late everyone is thinking of Spring. We still have March to get through which might bring more cold and snow. Spring isn't all that far away though. With Spring we enter our busy season. The PAWA hamfest comes up on Saturday, April 15th. Then we get to the public service events. On Saturday April 22nd we have the MS Walk starting and ending at the Portland Expo. It will be followed closely by the March of Dimes Walk for Babies starting and ending at the USM Sullivan Gym. We have a short break and have the L. L. Bean 10K run on July 4th in Freeport. Ending our public service season is the Beach to Beacon 10K run on Saturday August 5th in Cape Elizabeth. Shoehorned into the fray is Field Day which takes place on Saturday June 24th and ending Sunday June 25th at Turkey Hill Farm in Cape Elizabeth.

We need volunteers for all these events. Most all of these events use the PAWA repeater or a simplex frequency and a portable transceiver. The Beach to Beacon requires a dual band portable.

When the call goes out, please volunteer! Not only do the events serve a worthy cause but, also put amateur radio in a good light with the public.

73 Bryce, K1GAX

Treasurer's Report

January 2017	
Beginning Balance	$1829.71
Income	$25.00
Expenses	$0.00
Ending Balance	$1854.71

Thanks,

73, Jack KC1UX

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **Next meeting:**
  Wednesday, March 1st 2017 - 7pm
  Stuart Morrill American Legion Post #35

- **March ARRL Contests:**
  4th-5th International DX - Phone

Secretary's Report

February 2017 Board Meeting

The Board of Director's meeting was called to order at 6:18 PM by President Bryce Rumery, K1GAX.

It was reported that the repeater continues to operate perfectly. Updates for the status of the repeater were forwarded to the New England Spectrum Management Council. There have been no problems with bogus users on the repeater for the last month.

Jack, KC1UX reported that donations for repair of the PAWA's tower trailer have been coming in.

Having no further business, the Board Meeting was adjourned at 6:43 PM.

General Membership Meeting

The meeting was called to order by President Bryce Rumery, K1GAX at 7:03 PM

Introductions of the membership and guests was accomplished.

Bryce, K1GAX gave a report of the board meeting.

It was moved and seconded by the membership to accept the Secretary's Report, Treasurer's Report and the Chief Operators Report as published in the newsletter.

The question was brought up as to where the PAWA would hold Field Day in 2017. After a spirited discussion between Fort Williams Park and Turkey Hill Farm. Several votes were taken and it was decided to hold the PAWA's Field Day at Turkey Hill Farm.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Jason, W1WDW gave us a tour of his newly acquired communications vehicle.

Submitted by K1GAX

Chief Operator's Report

Flash drives, Computer Operating Systems, and Amateur Radio

Most of us are familiar with USB flash drives-

Like most things electronic, the price has come down over the years, to the point that 2 Gigabyte (GB) storage units that used to sell for upwards of $20 are available at the register checkout lines for 2-3 dollars.

(Many people believe flash drives/thumb drives are a great place to store electronic copies of deeds, leases, mortgages and the like – i.e. important, hard to replace documents. The caveat to this approach is that the loss of such a small device could potentially put those documents in anyone's hands. If you contemplate using these for that purpose, look into some of the various encryption methods that can be used to protect your information. And then physically secure the device (lock it up) in addition to any encryption.)

It turns out they can be a great tool to the amateur also. How so? Well it turns out there is another piece to the puzzle – the Linux operating system.

Anyone owning or using a computer has a least a basic understanding of a PC's operating system. It's the program that performs the "housekeeping" functions of the machine. It recognizes devices (printers, keyboards etc.) and gets everything to work together.

Probably the vast majority of us use either an Apple or Microsoft based operating system. Linux is a third operating system, a little less known to most of us. Developed by Linus Torvalds, it was his answer to the high cost of the various operating systems out there. Linus wrote the code for Linux and gave it to the world community and invited developers to improve on it - provided they make their software changes and updates available to everyone for free.

Linux probably won't supplant your current operating system. It is more technically oriented and a little less user friendly, especially if you decide to use the old style "command line" mode. For those of us that are accustomed to windows or apple platforms there is a graphical user interface (GUI) which gives you the look and feel similar to a Windows or Apple desktop.

What is so special about Linux is that aside from it being free, the code (operating system) is compressed and very efficiently developed, and it can placed on either a CD or a USB flash drive, and run "live" from there. It doesn't have to use the hard drive or the Microsoft or Apple operating system on your machine. In this "live" configuration it loads the whole operating system off of the CD or USB and it runs strictly out of the RAM memory on your machine.

It also runs well on older "slower" machines. For the pre Windows 7 machines, there is the 32 bit version, for PC's that run Windows 7, and newer, operating systems there is a 64 bit version of Linux, although the earlier 32 bit version will work on the newer machines as well.

(For those who want something more permanent, it can be installed on a hard drive – either by itself as the primary operating system, or in a dual boot mode where the user gets to choose which system he wants to run when the machine powers up.)

Linux has branched out comes in different "flavors" - versions each with their own advantages. Knoppix, Mint, Ubuntu and Debian Linux are a few of the versions out there that come to mind. Each of these versions is supported by a legion of dedicated developers who are constantly improving the software. Most, if not all, come with a word, database and spreadsheet program built into the operating system.

So where is the tie in to Ham radio? Well it turns out many of the popular Ham radio programs (PSK mail, FLdigi, FLmsg, NBEMS, WSPR etc.) have Linux versions. One approach worth contemplating would be to have a handful of these Linux operating systems loaded out on flash drives, with the software commonly used by ARES groups, ready to go. When the group deploys, everyone would have a common group of programs that they could use, without worrying about whether there was a problem with different version types, operating systems and older versus newer machines.

While there may be some issues with this approach, it may have enough flexibility to warrant a look at whether you might someday want to include a Linux "live" USB drive with your radio gear….

73

Ross KB1OND

Beware Of The Wall Wart

Bryce Rumery - K1GAX

Messing with the "wall wart" on a battery charger can sometimes lead to disaster.

There was a posting on the Baofeng reflector from a user that posted a series of photos of a battery pack that caught fire while charging. Defective charger you might guess. Not completely. Now, for the rest of the story.

Seems that the user had a problem with the "wall wart" that powered his charger (10 VDC @ 500 mA). It had failed and he replaced it with another "wall wart" he had available. The one he replaced it with was a 12 VDC @ 1 A (2 volts higher in voltage and twice the current output). It seemed to him to work, but after a short period of time the battery under charge "popped" and burst into flame. The increased voltage and current was too much for the battery to handle and one cell overheated while charging.

Lithium-Ion battery (Li-ion) packs need to be handled with care. They are not as forgiving as NiCad or NiMH batteries. They must be charged per manufacturer's instructions! Just because another "wall wart" has a connector fits is no reason to assume that it will work to power the drop in charger. Always use the correct voltage and current "wall wart" to power a charger!

Another tip is to never leave a battery charging while you are not at home. Maybe it wouldn't be a problem, but better safe than sorry!

73, Bryce, K1GAX

We Need Your Support!

Jason Cote - W1WDW

Back in May and June a small group of PAWA members including George NX1C, Ross KB1OND, Jack KC1UX, Mike N1GRO, Steve KB1YBT, Ariel KC1CCB and myself went out to the farm and got the trailer ready for field day. We noted some problems with the trailer that should really be corrected, including the condition on the hoist cables, trailer lights, wiring, tires and some other things. I compiled a list of needed items and the approximate costs associated with the work. We have not yet identified the costs specific to the tires and suspension as they are very old parts and replacements are not readily available. I would like to ask members of the club to see what they can contribute to offset the costs of supplies in a "trailer maintenance fund". The PAWA antenna trailer is a valuable club asset and we as a group are lucky to have it. It is in the club's best interest to continue to maintain the trailer especially as it is stored outdoor in the elements. Can you help us? Do you have ideas to contribute? Let us know! Thank you very much for your support.

Why are there so many Techs?

Dan Romanchik - KB6NU

Recently, one of my readers asked, "Why do most people have a Technician license and not a General or Extra? Is it simply not interesting enough to get more privileges?"

This is a very interesting question, one that I've written about before. I think there are several issues at play here. In no particular order:

* It's pretty easy to get a Tech license, so a lot of people get them just for the challenge, but really never intend to use the license.

* Some people get a Tech license, but then find out that amateur radio isn't what they thought it was going to be.

* Some people get a Tech license, then can't find an Elmer to help them. They lose interest and give up on ham radio.

* Some people get a Tech license, buy an HT, and think that's all there is to amateur radio. They quickly lose interest in amateur radio, because talking on the repeaters just isn't all that interesting.

* Some people get licenses to participate in local emergency communications or CERT organizations. There's no need for them to get anything more than a Tech license.

* Since it's so easy to get a Tech license, even those that aren't technically inclined get them. Getting a General Class license requires a fair amount of study, and because they don't see the benefits of putting in that kind of work, they just don't bother.

I posted this question to my blog and got several interesting replies. Perhaps the most cogent was by Kenneth, W6KWF. He wrote: "The only thing General/Extra gets you is HF, which is becoming an increasingly small fraction of the possibilities of

the amateur hobby. Amateurs could easily spend their whole lives moving from FM repeaters to microwave to VHF packet to EME to CERT/event support, etc, etc, without having any interest to explore what few facets of the hobby need HF privileges."

I think this is a great point. When incentive licensing was put into place in the late 1960s, HF was where the action was. Nowadays, more of the "cool stuff" is happening on VHF, UHF and microwaves. Getting additional HF privileges is not really a big deal anymore for many hams.

Yet another new license class?

Right on the heels of this discussion, the ARRL posted a news item, "ARRL Seeks Opinions Concerning Possible New Entry Level License" (http://www.arrl.org/news/arrl-seeks-opinions-concerning-possible-new-entry-level-license). According to this report, the ARRL Board of Directors set up an An Entry Level License Committee in September 2016.

The committee is gathering member input via an online member survey (http://www.arrl.org/license-1) and will make recommendations to the Board for possible rules changes to submit to the FCC. They note, "The result could mean changes to the Technician license, but it could also be an additional, but simpler, license with privileges that would give a newcomer a taste of most facets of ham radio from HF to VHF and UHF. The survey will be online until April 7, 2017.

According to the survey page, the committee is trying to address several issues, including:

* The declining population of new hams under the age of 30.

* A decline in the number of new licensees who actually get on the air.

* Amateur Radio's lack of appeal for those under the age of 30, compared to other technical hobbies.

* The increasing challenge of engaging and retaining Technician licensees.

* A reluctance in much of the amateur community to embrace newer technologies of interest to the younger segment of the population.

Personally, I don't think that coming up with a new entry-level license class with privileges that are even more limited than the Technician Class is a bad idea, but whether or not it's successful will depend completely on the implementation. Unless the new class of license is accompanied by some kind of program that will help these new licensees really become engaged with amateur radio, then we're just creating another class of inactive licensees. I don't know exactly what this program would consist of, but without it, this effort is doomed to failure.

And, who's going to develop and run this program? The only organization that has the horsepower to make this work is the ARRL. They are going to have to step up big time. Most clubs don't have the people or resources to do it properly. If you have any thoughts on this, I urge you to contact your ARRL division director (http://www.arrl.org/divisions).

When he's not pondering questions about the amateur radio licensing structure, Dan blogs about amateur radio at KB6NU.Com, writes the "No Nonsense" amateur radio study guides, and teaches ham classes. You can contact him by e-mailing cwgeek@kb6nu.com.