

The OVH ARC Newsletter
"OLE VIRGINIA HAMS" AMATEUR RADIO CLUB, INC.
Post Office Box 1255, Manassas, Va. 20108
Repeaters - W4OVH - 146.970- & 224.660- & 442.200+
OVH Nodes - Port 1: 145.030 Mhz; Port 3: 223.540 MHz;
Port 2: 440.925Mhz 9600 Baud backbone / N3OH (SYSOP--BILL)
<http://www.w4ovh.net>

OLE VIRGINIA TIMES

DECEMBER 2007

Next Meeting: December 17, 2007

PRESIDENT'S LETTER:

Greetings, and I hope this will not interrupt your Christmas shopping! ☺ I'll keep it short.

It will be a very busy year-end this year; we have the OVH Christmas party this weekend (Saturday, December 15th) and the next regular OVH meeting on December 17th (Monday) followed by all of the holidays.

Thanks to David/KG4GIY for designing the Directv (DTV) raffle tickets and Butch/W4HJL for arranging for the printing. The DTV raffle tickets are being printed and should be available by the next meeting on Monday, December 17th.

I have at last received a DVD of my (and Ev's) trip to Israel earlier this Fall which I'll bring to the next meeting to show if time allows.

All of us also need to be thinking about the up n coming OVH club officer nominations in January and the elections in February; in addition, more and new volunteers are always welcomed and needed to perform and assist with various club duties and activities. There are a few vacancies now - see the listing on the next page - and more volunteer assistants are always welcomed.

I look forward to seeing many of you (all are invited as are family) at the OVH Christmas party this year. The festivities will begin at 6:00 pm on Saturday, December 15th at 8314 Morningside Drive, Manassas, Virginia – my home QTH. You can get directions on Google, Yahoo, Mapquest or live.com (MSN) or call on the repeater for talk-in if you don't already know the way. If you and your family can make it, please bring your favorite dish. Hope you can join us!

Happy Chanukah and Merry Christmas to all. 73 for now!

George/K4GVT



Ole Virginia Hams Amateur Radio Club, Inc.

Post Office Box 1255
Manassas, Virginia 20108

OFFICERS

President:	George Tarnovsky	K4GVT	791-5956
Vice Pres:	Ruth Frock	KU4WH	331-1234
Secretary:	Wayne Phillips	N7QLK	393-8447
Treasurer:	Bill Ellis	WA4FIC	335-9935

DIRECTORS

Don (Butch) Blasdell	W4HJL	369-2877
Art Whittum	W1CRO	791-4330
Charlie Dale	WA4YGI	361-3091

WEEKLY NETS

Thursdays - 8:00 PM	JOHN H	257-3566
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HAMFEST 2007

Butch	W4HJL	369-2877
Charlie	WA4YGI	361-3091

FIELD DAY 2008

George T.	K4GVT	791-5956
Butch B.	W4HJL	369-2877

CLUB ROSTER

Blaine	KB4RKL	369-2877
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EDUCATION

Mark	WA4KFZ	818-8033
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CLUB EMERGENCY COORDINATOR

David Meola	KI4AZX	393-6681
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ARES AREA EMERGENCY COORDINATOR

David Lane	KG4GIY	361-3042
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F.A.R. REPS.

Ruth	KU4WH	331-1234
Mary Lu	KB4EFP	369-2877

FINANCE

Mary Lu	KB4EFP	369-2877
Bill	WA4FIC	335-9935
Ruth	KU4WH	331-1234

GENERATORS

Steve	N4OGR	361-0008
Keith	KM4AA	909-1512
Al	KB4BHB	368-4794

HISTORIAN

Theresa	KG4TVM	257-3566
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HOME PAGE

Bill	N3OH	590-9562
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JOTA

John H.	KG4NXT	257-3566
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LEGAL

Pete	KB4RME	369-2436
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MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

Joe Dobes	KI4OHR	369-2639
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NEWSLETTER

Paul	W4ZB	754-0910
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NEWSLINE

Karl	W4KRL	802-1527
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PACKET

Alan	KD4KBX	330-8844
Bill	N3OH	590-9562

PROGRAMS

TBA

PUBLICITY

Trisha Wells	KI4PCM	335-1096
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QUARTERMASTER

Steve	N4OGR	361-0008
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REPEATER CONTROLLERS

Art	W1CRO	791-4330
Butch	W4HJL	369-2877
Milt	N4SN	369-7265
Steve	N4OGR	361-0008
Alan	KD4KBX	330-8844

REPEATER TRUSTEE

Art	W1CRO	791-4330
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SCHOLARSHIP

Jim	W4JTP	392-0150
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SUNSHINE

Theresa	KG4TVM	257-3556
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TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Art	W1CRO	791-4330
Alan	KD4KBX	330-8844
Bill	N3OH	590.9562
Butch	W4HJL	369-2877
George	K4GVT	791-5956
Karl	W4KRL	802-1527
Bob	K4HJF	335-1939

All telephone numbers listed above are for Area Code 703 unless otherwise noted.

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The OVH ARC meets at 7:30 p.m. local time every third Monday of the month at the NOVEC Tech Center on Wellington Road in Gainesville, Virginia. Prospective members or other interested persons are invited to attend. Local information can always be obtained, at any time, through the OVH's FM repeaters on 146.97 & 224.660 Mhz. All are welcome. Up to date information about OVH activities and meetings is also available on the OVH web site at <http://www.w4ovh.net>.

Permission is hereby granted for the reprinting of articles and quotations in this letter provided full credit is given to the OVH ARC and the author or other source of the article. Contribution of printed articles by both members and non-members is encouraged. The deadline for submissions is the 5th of each month. Submissions should be forwarded to OVH TIMES Editor: PAUL@W4ZB.COM.

Letters to the Editor and Classified Ads are accepted and welcome. Approx. Circulation - 170.

Last Rev: 09/09/2007

Sunshine Corner:

Hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving, if you had a special event or traveled somewhere interesting, please let me know and I'll publish it in the January newsletter!!!

Happy Birthday wishes to this month to Alan/KD4KBX, Charles/WA1FFX, Bill/N3OH, George/N4XSL, Alman/KI4BXS, Trisha/KI4PCM and Mike/KI4SNE.

Silent Key – Mike Baptist/N3NVF passed away on November 19th in Winchester, Virginia. Although not an “official” member of OVH club, he showed up for many years at the June OVH Manassas Hamfest with a excellent crew from the Berryville area to assist us with parking at the Prince William County Fairgrounds. If you would like to sign the guestbook online, please go to <http://www.ompsfuneralhome.com>

OVH Christmas Party – Special thanks to George, K4GVT and his wife, Ev, for opening their home to us for the club's Christmas party this year. Full details about this are in the President's letter on page 1 of this Newsletter.

Congratulations to Brian/WC4J (and his unnamed helpers) for persisting to make 131 QSOs with stations in 25 different States - CW/SSB mixed - during the recent ARRL 10 Meter Contest! Who says the 10 meter band does not open up, at least sometimes, (even) at the bottom of the Sunspot Cycle.

The Sunshine Corner sends very happy holiday wishes to everyone and hopes of a terrific 2008!

Please send me your news via email kg4tvm@hotmail.com or telephone 703-257-3566.

See you next month!

73 Theresa/KG4TVM

Minutes of the Ole Virginia Hams Amateur Radio Club Meeting November 19, 2007:

George / K4GVT called the meeting to order at 19:30 Eastern Time.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, all present stated their names and call signs. There were 17 OVH members present.

BUSINESS MEETING

The Minutes of the October 2007 meeting were read and approved.

Treasurer's report: Balance is in good standing. Report approved. Discussion of relocation of the storage facility.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Training: Mark / WA4KFZ expects to finish Powerpoint slides this month for the General Class he is planning and will then look for a location to hold the class, expected to be in a classroom at Strayer University in Manassas. Brian / WC4J is planning to do a Tech Class in the spring.

Repeater: Art/W1CRO the Autopatch was having problems and he will be looking into it.

Scholarships: No report.

Membership report: Joe/KI4OHR read in Scott Minke, KB8NUM. Scott is a Tech who is interested in JOTA and ARES.

ARES: Brian/WC4J asked everyone to check their systems, especially battery and generator backup systems. Brian reported that Prince William County will have a station set up for field day.

Sunshine: Theresa/KG4TVM presented Steve N4OGR with a "Shreck" bowl, and also gave Al/KB4BHB a magazine advertising a crystal radio set for \$49.95 - which seems somewhat overpriced! Al reported that John/WA1STU has recovered and is now back to work. Update on Ken/WB4ZOH from Mark/WA4KFZ: Ken's surgery was successful and he has been moved to a nursing home setting for another week to continue his recovery and expects to return home.

OLD BUSINESS:

JOTA: Theresa / KG4TVM reported the JOTA event held on October 20th was a great success; appreciation to all who assisted. [See pictures, etc. below.]

George /K4GVT asked everyone to think about all the hams in the Manassas area that are not members of our club and what can we do to bring them in.

George spoke about the Directv (DTV) systems (with programming) that have been donated and the Club is holding for sale at raffles; the price of the tickets has been changed to \$5 per ticket; 500 raffle tickets have been ordered; each system has a retail value of about \$800.

NEW BUSINESS:

Steve/N4OGR — Steve asked if we want a Fleet Watch to do a program, after discussion it was decided to invite Fleet Watch to our February meeting.

Brian/WC4J: Skywarn recognition is December 1st to be held at the National Weather Service at Sterling, Virginia which will be hosting an "open house."

Hamfest: George / K4GVT has called some vendors from last year, Brian will call vendor R&L to see if they will plan to attend.

Mark/WA4KFZ announced that the Manassas Museum is hosting an exhibit of numerous photographs taken a professional photographer who was the father of Charlotte/KG4QXO. The exhibit there will continue until the end of January, 2008. Ken/WB4ZOH uses one of Charlotte's father's pictures taken in the Manassas National Battlefield Park on his QSL card.

50/50 for \$16: Winner was George / K4GVT who turned all of his winnings back to the Club.

Meeting adjourned at 20:33.

Reminders about some upcoming events / calendar dates:

OPERATING EVENTS

December 31, 2007 - Jan. 1, 2008 - ARRL Straight Key Night ("SKN") contest. This New Year's Eve event runs for 24 hours starting at 19:00 (7:00 pm) EST on December 31st. This is a great opportunity to try out CW using a straight key - for the first time if you've never tried it before. Most operators send slowly for newcomers. Full details and rules at <http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2008/skn.html>

Jan. 6, 2008 - Sunday - 1:00 pm - 7:00 pm EST - Kid's Day Contest / Event. This is an international event in which you may operate as much or as little as you wish. Use it to introduce a youngster to ham radio. Details at <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/ead/kd-rules.html>

OPERATING EVENTS - continued

January 26th - January 27th. CQ Worldwide 160 Meter CW Contest. This starts on Friday evening local time (EST) and continues through Sunday, and is the most popular 160 Meter and active contest, with lots of opportunities for working 160 Meter DX. Details and more information at <http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com/> Remember that DX possibilities and opportunities on the 160 Meter band are greatest the low point of the 11 year Sunspot Cycle - which is right where we are right now. 160 Meter DX conditions will not be as good as they are this winter for another 11 years!

OVH FUND RAISING RAFFLE OF KENWOOD TS-430S - NEXT TWO OVH MEETINGS

Dec. 17, 2007 and Jan. 15, 2008. The OVH will be continuing to raffle off a Kenwood TS-430S during its next two regular Monday night monthly meetings to support the OVH general fund; tickets will be sold at the upcoming meetings on Nov. 19th and Dec. 17th and on Jan. 15th, 2008. The winning ticket will be drawn at the Jan. 15th meeting and the ticket holder must be present at the meeting to win! Further details and information at w4ovh.net.

TECHNICAL CHALLENGE EVENT

December 24th at 08:00 - 08:30 UTC (3:00 am - 3:30 am EST). The very old Swedish VLF station SAQ at Grimeton, Sweden will be transmit a very slow speed CW message two times on 17.2 KHz using its original (1916) High Power Alternator VLF Transmitter and its original VLF antenna configuration. This is being run by Swedish hams with the cooperation of the Swedish Navy. QSLs for reception reports will be issued through the Swedish (SSA) QSL bureau. SAQ's high power 17.2 KHz signal should be "solid copy" in this area.

OTHER EVENTS / LICENSING CLASSES / DEADLINES

Dec. 15, 2007 beginning at 6:00 pm EST. OVH Club Christmas Party at QTH of George/K4GVT, full details on the first page of this Newsletter. Try to make it!

Jan. / Feb. 2008 - Tech Class - Licensing Course, including the FCC Test on the last day. This is to be given in Alexandria, Virginia on four Saturdays: Jan. 19, Jan. 26, Feb. 2 and Feb. 9th. Advance registration required. Full details at <http://w3bsa.org/Course07.htm>

March and April, 2008 Deadlines - FAR Scholarship Applications. FAR (the Foundation for Amateur Radio) administers a large number of ham radio related scholarships for college / university courses. Different scholarships have different eligibility requirements; many are open to hams in this area; some are worth thousands of dollars. College is (very) expensive these days and these should not be overlooked as potential source of funds. Details at <http://amateur-radio-far.org>



From last month's OVH Newsletter

What's not right about the purported "Sputnik I Era" image to the left in a ARD Television Special about receiving Sputnik I in October, 1957?

Art/W1CRO had the right answer. The Heath Apache (TX-1) over the individual's right shoulder was not available in 1957. That kit was first offered by Heathkit in 1959/1960 for about \$225.

How To Copy SAQ's 17.2 KHz Test Or Regular CW If You Don't Know CW

The old Swedish VLF station SAQ at Grimeton, Sweden will be transmitting a very slow speed CW (Morse Code) message two times on 17.2 KHz using its original (1916) High Power Alternator VLF Transmitter and its original VLF antenna configuration as a special event operation on December 24th at 08:00 and 08:15 UTC. SAQ's high power 17.2 KHz signal should be "solid copy" in this area, and QSLs for reception reports will be issued by SAQ through the Swedish (SSA) QSL bureau. The SAQ station was originally set up used for transatlantic communications, and later used by the Swedish Navy for reliable communications with submerged submarines.

Will it be possible to decode SAQ's Morse Code message if you haven't (yet?) learned how to copy CW onto paper by hand? It should be - assuming you have a VLF receiver or VLF converter and enough antenna wire so that you can pick up SAQ's actual 17.2 KHz signal! How? Simply record the audio from SAQ's very slow speed CW transmission. Then replay the audio, listening carefully and write down the sequence of "dots" and "dashes" ("dit's" and "dah's"). Then look up the dit and dah sequences in a Morse Code table. If some of those sequences decode to nonsense, listen to the audio again to make sure you transcribed the dit / dah and space sequences properly, and use the Morse Code table again. This approach is viable because SAQ's CW transmission will be at a very slow speed.

What about copying regular CW signals? This above approach also can also be used with CW signals sent at conventional speeds (5 to 30 wpm) but is very tedious at higher speeds. But very good software exists which can decode well sent CW audio at conventional speeds. Pick up a copy of the "CW Get" shareware from <http://dxsoft.com/micwget.htm> and try it out! The CW audio signal source for "CW Get" can come directly from a radio receiver or from a previously recorded signal. "CW Get" works best with well formed CW, i.e., consistently timed, machine-sent like CW, but is one of the best programs available for tracking CW signals with timing variations typical of hand sent CW. For testing, use W1AW's perfectly timed CW code practice signals which are sent daily. Look at <http://arrl.org/w1aw.html> for details of the times and frequencies. W1AW's code practice sessions are very easy to find and receive in this area on 1.8175 MHz, 3.5815 MHz and 7.0475 MHz. "CW Get" is also very useful for self-training or self-improvement with copying Morse Code: listen to the CW as it is sent and attempt to decode it in you head using your own brain while getting instant feedback by simultaneously observing CW Get's decoding on screen. Try it!

What is the origin of the term LID which refers to a "poor operator"?

The term LID (or, in lowercase, lid) has been around in ham radio in worldwide usage for many years. The 1926 ARRL Handbook glossary of Morse code terms and abbreviations, for example, states that LID means a poor operator such as one who sends poorly formed CW, one who transmits without listening first on the frequency, one who is discourteous, etc., but no source of the term is given. In current usage, the term is also applies to "poor operators" using voice and digital modes. But where did this term come from? Its ham radio usage does not appear in the comprehensive 20+ volume Oxford English Dictionary available online at <http://www.pwcgov.org/library/electronicresources> under Dictionaries to anyone with a Prince William County, Virginia library card or in any ARRL publication. Is it an acronym? If so, what are the words? Send your answer via email to your editor, indicating your source (if you have one).

More about Digital Codes for (future) weak signal digital modes

The November 2007 IEEE Proceedings is a Special Issue (Part 2) on Technical Advances in Deep Space Communications and Tracking. Pages 2142 - 2156 of that issue presents a tutorial article, with a comprehensive bibliography, on The Development of Turbo and LDPC Codes for Deep-Space Applications. Although turbo code / interleaver techniques have not yet found their way into any "off the shelf" ham radio systems or equipment, such techniques are coming because they permit error free (i.e. error corrected) digital signalling at very close to the Shannon channel capacity. Read and learn about it before it arrives!

A few images of the JOTA (Jamboree On The Air) event on Oct. 20, 2007



Some of the OVH members who participated, L to R, Top to Bottom: John/KG4NXT (seated) and Al/KB4BHB (with cap) with scouts and scout leaders; Dwight/AI4II and Ruth/KU4WH at one of the operating positions; Wayne/AG4ZZ demonstrating transceiver operation to scouts; and John/KG4NXT explaining a VHF antenna to scouts. .

Worth Keeping in Mind, Still 100% Applicable - The Amateur's Code

The Radio Amateur is

CONSIDERATE...never knowingly operates in such a way as to lessen the pleasure of others.

LOYAL...offers loyalty, encouragement and support to other amateurs, local clubs, and the American Radio Relay League, through which Amateur Radio in the United States is represented nationally and internationally.

PROGRESSIVE...with knowledge abreast of science, a well-built and efficient station and operation above reproach.

FRIENDLY...slow and patient operating when requested; friendly advice and counsel to the beginner; kindly assistance, cooperation and consideration for the interests of others. These are the hallmarks of the amateur spirit.

BALANCED...radio is an avocation, never interfering with duties owed to family, job, school or community.

PATRIOTIC...station and skill always ready for service to country and community.

----- originally written by Paul M. Segal, W9EEA †, ARRL General Counsel, in 1928.

Some Highly Useful Technical Reference Resources - Now Online And Free

Three of the five main purposes listed in the FCC's rules to justify the Amateur Radio Service relate directly to technical aspects of the hobby: 47 CFR Part 97.1: (b) Continuation and extension of the amateur's proven ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art; (c) Encouragement and improvement of the amateur service through rules which provide for advancing skills in both the communication and technical phases of the art; and (d) Expansion of the existing reservoir within the amateur radio service of trained operators, technicians, and electronics experts. Although interest or developed competence in technical matters is not a requirement for participation in the hobby, except as needed minimally to pass the licensing examinations, most participants are attracted to the hobby at least in part by its "technical nature" and many find those aspects to be of great and continuing interest. This short note is intended to bring to the attention of those with technical interests some extraordinary technical references resources for "new ideas" which have only very recently become available online without charge.

Google.com has recently brought up <http://google.com/patents> as a "beta" level system; although freely available to anyone, this extraordinary system, even in "beta," so far has received almost no publicity. What has Google done? Google has scanned the entire paper database of more than 7 million issued U.S. [utility] Patents back to the very beginning (i.e., very early 1800's), and converted all text in the scanned documents using OCR (optical character reader) techniques into searchable text. Commercial systems offering similar capabilities have been available since the 1980's, but only at very high cost which has made such systems impractical and unavailable to "amateurs" or "commercial users" who either could not afford or justify the cost. This Google "beta" has another aspect which greatly enhances its utility and provides instant gratification: once one locates a patent with content of potential interest for further study, it is possible immediately to download the complete patent document in a single PDF file. Is this really new and better? Absolutely, yes! The Google "beta" far surpasses the no-charge online offerings of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office [<http://uspto.gov>] in most areas; more specifically, surpassed are the USPTO's offering of free text searchable issued U.S. Patents back to 1976 only, the USPTO's ability to serve up single page TIFF image files, page by page, for all issued patents but only if the patent number is already known, and the \$3.00 per patent document charge for paper and assembled PDF patent copies.

The major feature on which the Google "beta" lags the USPTO at this point is its lack of integration and [easy] searchability of the very powerful official U.S. and international patent classification schemes. Although the USPTO classification systems permit identification and listing of all issued patents in particular classifications [i.e., classes and subclasses] of particular technical subject areas, that system has a very steep learning curve, and is difficult [and slow] to use because the USPTO only serves up TIFF images, page by page, for pre-1976 patents. Expect Google to greatly improve on this shortly and also to add free text searchable non-U.S. [international] patent databases.

The Google "beta" system is an extraordinary resource because technical materials for "inventions" in all fields which previously filled very large rooms (and many tens of thousands of reels of microfilm) and needed to be searched manually can now be searched over the Internet using free text search, with drawings and images immediately available. But aren't there a lot of "junk" inventions and "junk" patents out there? Yes, and it is up to the user to learn how to read the lingo / jargon of patents and sift through the "junk;" practice is required but is not too hard in technical areas in which the user already has familiarity. "Mechanical" inventions often can be understood just from a quick study of the patent drawings (without need for careful review of the text); electrical / communications and chemically related patents are usually more abstract and require more study.

A few "study" examples for those still reading and interested! Learn about mechanical devices for anchoring guy cables to the ground by searching "earth anchor"; for more abstract communications inventions such as the Clover digital patents assigned to Hal Communications by inventor, Raymond C. Petit † (W7GHH), search "Hal Communications"; are Turbo codes / interleavers going to be important in the digital future - find out if the industry is putting its money there by searching "turbo codes" interleavers, etc. Have fun and enjoy!