

OLE VIRGINIA TIMES

May 2020

Next Meeting: May 19, 2020 online, details below.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER:

Greetings everyone,

Well aside from a small snap of cold weather; it seems Spring has been making an appearance; I know this because my allergies have already told me things are starting to bloom and throw pollen everywhere. I've been doing a little antenna work and a little prep for when some antenna materials finally show up; they've been caught up in shipping delays with other "non-essential" items. Hopefully, they'll show up before the leaves get too thick to get a line in; and that the return of spring will also bring a return to some of our other normal activities. Maybe Field Day will be the event that helps kick things off.



The OVH had its very first online meeting on April 21st; while I won't say it went entirely smoothly, we did get over the humps and were able to conduct business. The "first version" of any project will always have some problems and kinks and this one was no different. I want to thank everyone who attended and stuck through the initial hiccups. I'd also like to mention the modifications made to the regular meeting procedures are temporary and were done out of concern for Internet latency as well as many of us being "tied down" with headset cables, and unfamiliarity with the virtual environment. However, when we're once again not separated by screens and wires, I will conduct the meetings just like they have been for years.

A major issue has been resolved for the next meeting by massively upgrading the server. I had thought my old server would have had enough horsepower to get the job done, but I was wrong. Although the tests had been promising, they used less than half of the computer's reported horsepower and did not stress the system enough. As a result, with everyone on for the meeting, the system did not scale-out as expected. Further research revealed that the old system had been marketed as a multi-core processor, but with a non-standard definition of a

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Ole Virginia Hams Amateur Radio Club, Inc.

Post Office Box 1255
Manassas, Virginia 20108

OFFICERS

President:	Jay Moore	NQ4T	571-316-4738
Vice Pres:	Jeff Fuller	WB6UIE	791-5916
Secretary:	John Heartney	KG4NXT	257-3566
Treasurer:	Don Meyerhoff	WA2SWX	597-3211

DIRECTORS

Don (Butch) Blasdell	W4HJL	369-2877
Arthur Whittum	W1CRO	791-4330
Charlie Dale	WA4YGI	361-3091
Bob Zaepfel	K4HJF	282-2451

WEEKLY FM REPEATER NET COORDINATOR

Thurs - 8:00 PM Local Time	JOHN / KG4NXT	257-3566
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HAMFEST 2020 - Chairman

Don	WA2SWX	597-3211
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FIELD DAY 2020

Byron	AK4XR	222-2095
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CLUB ROSTER / DATABASE

Arthur	W1CRO	791-4330
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EDUCATION

Mark	WA4KFZ	818-8033
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CLUB EMERGENCY COORDINATOR

Open

ARES - EMERGENCY COORDINATOR

David Lane	KG4GIY	703-628-3868
	email: KG4GIY@ARRL.NET	

Prince William County ARES website <http://pwcares.org>

FINANCE

Arthur	W1CRO	791-4330
Mark	WA4KFZ	818-8033
Don	WA2SWX	597-3211

GENERATORS

Steve	N4OGR	361-0008
Al	KB4BHB	368-4794

HISTORIAN

Theresa	KG4TVM	257-3566
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WEB COMMITTEE — W4OVH.NET

Kevin	KX4KU	540-445-5183
Andy	KJ4MTP	786-4651
John	KG4NXT	257-3566
Ken	KN4DD	622-2638

EMAIL REFLECTOR — w4ovh@googlegroups.com

David Lane	KG4GIY	628-3868
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JOTA - 2020

John	KG4NXT	257-3566
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LEGAL

Bob	K4HJF	282-2451
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MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

Luther	WA3FMO	361-4885
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NEWSLETTER

Paul	W4ZB	754-0910
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NEWSLINE FOR THE WEEKLY NET

John.	KG4NXT	257-3566
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PROGRAMS

Jeff	WB6UIE	791-5916
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QUARTERMASTER

Steve	N4OGR	361-0008
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REPEATER CONTROLLERS

John	KG4NXT	257-3566
Ken	KE2N	753-8587
George	K4GVT	791-5956
Arthur	W1CRO	791-4330
Butch	W4HJL	369-2877
Steve	N4OGR	361-0008
David	KG4GIY	361-3042

W4OVH — TRUSTEE

Wayne	N7QLK	571-237-0520
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W4PVA — TRUSTEE

Arthur	W1CRO	791-4330
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SCHOLARSHIP

Sandy Knight	KM4JUS	901-4664
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SUNSHINE

Theresa	KG4TVM	257-3566
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TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Ken	KE2N	753-8587
Andy	KJ4MTP	786-4651
George	K4GVT	791-5956
Arthur	W1CRO	791-4330
Butch	W4HJL	369-2877
Bob	K4HJF	335-1939
David	KG4GIY	628-3868

TWITTER & FACEBOOK ACCOUNT MODERATOR

Jeff	KM4FTK	830-4155
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All telephone numbers listed above are for Area Code 703 unless otherwise noted. This is the official monthly publication of the Ole Virginia Hams Amateur Radio Club, Inc., a §501(c)(3) organization, dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of Amateur Radio. Copyright © 2020 by the Ole Virginia Hams which holds its regular monthly meeting is at 7:30 p.m. every third Tuesday at the Buckhall Volunteer Fire Department Station, 7190 Yates Ford Road, Manassas, Virginia. Members, prospective members and other interested persons are invited to attend without obligation. Local information can also be obtained through the OVH's FM repeaters on 146.970-, 224.660-, 442.200+ and 443.500+ MHz. Up to date information about OVH activities and its meetings is also available during the OVH's nets on its FM Repeater each Thursday night at 8:00 p.m. or through the OVH's web site at <http://w4ovh.net>. Articles in this newsletter may be reprinted if credit is given to the OVH ARC and other source(s) noted. Proposed materials for publication, classified ads, notes about specific errors, complaints or the like are solicited. Forward such items to the Newsletter Editor: PAUL@W4ZB.COM. Approx. Circ.: 170. Last Rev: 20200310

processor core. Hopefully, that's won't be a problem anymore: the new server has 12 processor cores and the benchmark numbers say that just one core of the new server will crunches more than the old server.

Based on the experience last month, I make offer some further observations to help make online meetings work better. The one thing a powerful server cannot solve is the Internet latency problem which exists because we're all on different connections, with varying connection speeds and delays. For example, if something someone says makes it to your device, it could be delayed by half a second for some, a second for others and almost no delay for others. This causes a major problem if multiple people are trying to speak: people will inadvertently talk over each other; This "latency chaos" occurs when multiple people want to speak or speak, but other cannot be sure who actually started first. Participants who are not using a headset can also aggravate this problem when some of delayed audio from a speaker (rather than a headset) get fed back into the microphone.

So, the first item is for everyone possible to please use a headset if at all possible. This will reduce or eliminate delayed audio getting fed back and around and "backfeeding" into the meeting. The second related item is to keep your audio muted unless you are speaking, this prevents delayed audio from making it back to the meeting. The server overload did play a part in mutes getting missed or being delayed, but keeping your audio input to the meeting muted at all times is good practice. With 30 or more participants, the collective sum of many different ambient background noises makes it difficult to understand anyone. Jitsi system does not have a VOX or PTT function so it simply forwards all of the unmuted audio from participants' microphones to everyone in the meeting. Please keep these points in mind for future meetings.

The third is to PLEASE show up early enough to configure your display name for the meeting. Jitsi does not know who you are, you have to tell it, and it would be helpful for us to know who is both in the meeting as well as who may be wanting to speak or advancing a motion. It is preferable to show you screen name as: FirstName / CallSign, the same way we identify ourselves at regular meetings. The document at <https://ovh.nq4t.com/ovhjitsi.pdf> shows how to do that. Like last time; I will be holding several sessions in the evenings in the days leading up to the meeting to provide practice and assistance. With the number of people at our first meeting, the use of text CHAT also wound up being the best way to keep track of the advances of motions and votes. It is a lot faster and uses less bandwidth than voice. I will announce the schedule for more training on the reflector and the Thursday net. You can also email me (nq4t@arrl.net) and I will be more than happy to accommodate your particular schedule.

The OVH's next regular meeting to be held online again will be on Tuesday, May 19, 2020 beginning at 7:30 pm. Go to <https://ovh.nq4t.com/meeting> to join in, and you can join in any time after about 7:00 pm. I hope to see everyone there!

73 Jay NQ4T

Sunshine Corner:

Happy birthday to our OVH club members celebrating another year in May: John / KM4VCJ, David / KG4GIY, Bill / WA4FIC, Jack / N4YIC, Carl / KK4ZYX, Craig / WA3UFY, Dick / KM4UXE, Susan / K3SSP, Terry / KC4DV, Don / WA2SWX and John / KG4NXT.

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The OVH's April online club meeting went very well - much better than some had expected. Special thanks to Jay / NQ4T to taking the initiative and doing most of work to set that up.

The May meeting will also be online - on May 19th at 7:30 pm. I hope everyone will be able to log and join in at <https://ovh.nq4t.com/meeting> to participate. Be sure to read Jay's comments and notes. If you are unsure about what you need to do to participate, check in on one of Jay's upcoming practice sessions.

Stay safe, if anybody needs help, please reach out, we need to stick together! Hope to see everyone in person soon.

Remember to check in at 8 pm on the OVH's Thursday night VHF/UHF repeater net - details are on the OVH's web site: W4OVH.NET That is a great way to stay in touch, especially now when many of us are at home all or much of the time! Continue to send news or other items to me, email at kg4tvm@hotmail.com or telephone: 703-257-3566.

73 Theresa KG4TVM

Minutes of the Ole Virginia Hams Amateur Radio Club Meeting held on April 22, 2020:

The meeting was held on April 22, 2020 beginning at 7:30 pm online over the Internet using the Jitsi platform hosted by Jay / NQ4T. Because this was the OVH's very first virtual meeting, Jay dispensed with the pledge and the members saying their names and callsigns.

The Jitsi system counted 29 attendees, but the number fluctuated up and down somewhat during the meeting. The OVH secretary was able to identify some but not all of the attendees as: Butch / W4HJL, Cat / KM4PBD, Gil / KM4OZH, Jay / NQ4T, John / KG4NXT, Theresa / KG4TVM, Byron / AK4XR, Dick / KM4UXE, Lori / KC0EWN, Ken / KM4DD, Ken / KE2N, Luther / WA3FMO, Wayne / N7QLK, Don / WA2SWX, Greg / KM4CCG, Mark / WA4KFZ, Kevin / KX4KU, Gene / KN4JMB. Apologies to those many others who attended but are not the in above list.

Jay / NQ4T ran the meeting. The minutes of the February meeting were approved.

Don / WA2SWX gave the treasurer's report and it was approved. Don mentioned that our \$700 deposit for 2020 hamfest has been returned by Manassas Park.

Luther / WA3FMO gave the membership report. We voted in Ron / K3FR and Dana / KM4TTP as new OVH members. Luther read in Chuck Spangler (No call yet). Luther has corresponded with Ron / WB3LCV but has not received a membership application yet.

Greg / KM4CCG gave the ARES report. All meeting are cancelled and they are working on having virtual meeting but this is not finalized.

Ken / KE2N gave the repeater report. The wires-X computer is on the blink and Ken will schedule a trip to fix it when that is appropriate. Ken also has a new trimmer capacitor to install on one of the repeater cavities. Otherwise, all is well with the repeaters.

Mark / WA4KFZ give the training report. There is no interest in training but some interest in VE sessions. Mark discussed efforts by ARRL and others to have virtual VE sessions.

Scholarship – no report.

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Don / WA2SWX gave the hamfest report. We will not partner in 2021 with Vienna.

Byron / AK4XR gave the field day report. Many suggestions on field day but no decision has been made yet.

Kevin / KX4KU gave the web committee report. There are not reported problem and all seems to be well.

JOTA - no report

Theresa / KG4TVM gave the Sunshine report. Birthdays were reported. Theresa also mentioned that Lisa Bryant's Father had passed. The Bryants were very active in the club at one time. The club will send a card and Theresa urged members to send additional cards to the Bryants.

Gene thanked the club for the club's card and charitable contribution related to his son's passing.

Cat / KM4PBD moved to adjourn the meeting and that motion passed.

Reminders about some upcoming events / calendar dates:

HAMFESTS:

June 13, 2020 (Saturday) - the OVH Manassas Hamfest - planned to be put on by the OVH, this year for the 46th time. THIS HAS BEEN CANCELLED FOR 2020 DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. For more info, see <http://manassashamfest.org> or <http://w4ovh.net/welcome-to-manassas-hamfest>.

HAM RADIO RELATED:

June 27-28, 2020 - ARRL / OVH Field Day event at the Nokesville Virginia Park. Save these dates! This is a major OVH event each year.

HAM RADIO OPERATING / CONTEST EVENTS:

May 16, 2020. Dayton Hamvention QSO Party - to be held due to the cancellation of the Dayton Hamvention. More details at <https://wwrof.org/hamvention-qso-party/>

The ARRL has a Contest web page at its web site, but a much more comprehensive, up-to-date, and long range planning contesting calendar with links to the rules for the various events is maintained at <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal> by WA7BNM. If you get the radio contesting bug or just want to find out what and how much is going on, that is a good place to look!

PUBLIC SERVICE / ARES EVENTS

Check the online Calendar on the OVH web site, W4OVH.NET for information about upcoming events.

Check the online Calendar by David / KG4GIY at <http://pwcares.org> for the latest PWC ARES updates. David maintains a comprehensive calendar for upcoming events at that web site. Complete direct contact information for David appears on page 2 of this Newsletter.

Some Possibly Useful Information - US Ham Radio Periodicals

The ARRL has again recently changed the way it is making its periodical publications available to all of its members. From the ARRL's beginning in 1914, QST was its flagship publication mailed to all ARRL members each month; QST started as a newsletter mostly focused in 1914 on who else was on the air, station construction and radio relay nets for message handling. By the 1920's QST was being published in a permanent magazine format for ARRL members with a

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VP's Corner

Jeff Fuller
WB6UIE

As we commemorate both Armed Forces Day and Memorial Day this month, lets take a moment to recognize some of the contributions made by our fellow hams in uniform. For this month's vicarious escape from cabin fever, we'll explore a fascinating but little covered corner of radio history - the role of Joan and Eleanor in WWII OSS secret agent communications.

OSS (Office of Strategic Services) entered service as America's national intelligence agency during the dark days of WWII on 13 June 1942. In addition to its traditional collection and analysis missions, OSS was responsible for covert action against Axis forces. That meant inserting agents behind the lines in Axis occupied territory to link up with partisan resistance groups. Reliable and secure communications with these groups was essential for receiving their reports, scheduling supply drops, and coordinating their tasking.

Deployed agents relied on HF manual Morse and manual encryption to communicate with their headquarters. This approach worked well but did have some disadvantages. Radio operators required a lot of training both in learning the code and the setup and operation of their radios. And transmission time had to be minimized to evade hostile direction finders, precluding interactive back and for conversations. Should a group lose its radio op, they would be out of comms until a new one could be inserted.

As D Day approached, OSS realized that its agents would need much more flexible and interactive comms to keep pace with a fast moving tactical situation. It had to be portable, secure, and require no special training to operate. Their search led the OSS Communications Group to a young engineer named Al Gross, who was working on a handheld radio he called a "Walkie Talkie". Gross was an inveterate experimenter who earned his ham license at the age of 16. His prototype looked promising enough for the two OSS team engineers to invite him to a meeting with the Director, Maj Gen Donovan. Donovan was so impressed with the demo that he offered Gross a direct commission as a Captain and the new design effort was underway.[1]



Al Gross with Joan

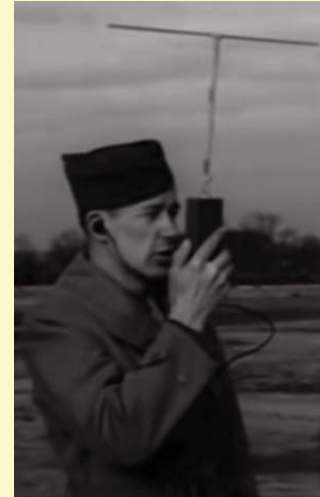


<http://hamgallery.com/Tribute/W8PAL/>



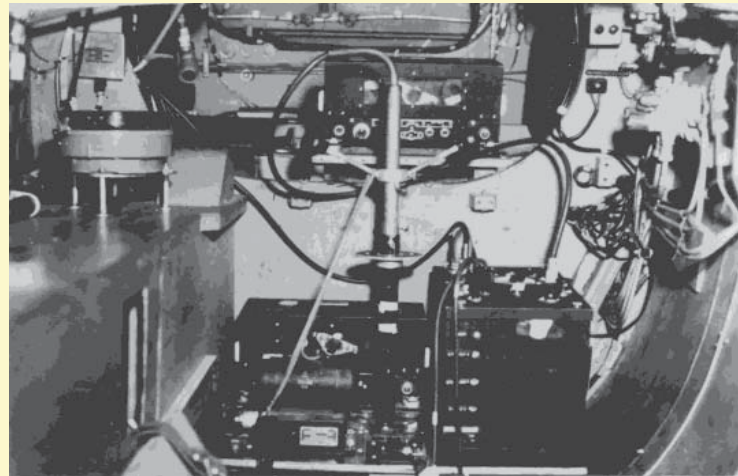
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The design team settled on a low power VHF FM voice link connecting the agent on the ground with an OSS agent in an aircraft orbiting high overhead. Its frequency (260 MHz) was chosen outside known Axis SIGINT coverage. OSS named the new system Joan-Eleanor, reportedly after the wife of one program engineer and an acquaintance of the other.



The handheld, known as Joan (right), was elegant in its simplicity. Its dual triode functioned as a regenerative detector while receiving and as an oscillator when transmitting. A detachable antenna with two foldout arms formed a dipole. Joan weighed a little over 3 pounds with batteries and required no special training to operate.[2]

Eleanor, the aircraft radio, employed a more conventional FM transceiver design with a superhet receiver. Power came from its own 24 volt battery pack and dynamotor. A wire recorder was added for recording agent transmissions. During testing the Joan-Eleanor system was effective at ranges up to 30 miles.[3]



<https://tenwatts.blogspot.com/2013/06/the-joan-eleanor-system.html>

Eleanor operator position inside a De Havilland Mosquito

A variety of aircraft were used to carry Eleanor. An OSS favorite was the De Havilland Mosquito, a British design made from wood during the wartime metal shortage. Its ceiling of over 30,000 feet kept it clear of anti aircraft fire and a max speed near 400 mph allowed it to outrun German fighters.



De Havilland Mosquito

Eleanor and its OSS operator were crammed into a rear compartment that was originally the Mosquito's recon camera space. Try to imagine what it must have been like inside an unheated and unpressurized wooden airplane at 30,000 feet ...

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After the war Al Gross went on to receive several lifetime achievement awards for his design work which forged the path to modern devices like cordless phones and pagers.

OSS morphed into today's CIA and continues to guard our nation's security. The Joan-Eleanor system was declassified in 1976.

Hams supporting the memorial CIA/OSS 24 hour run in Prince William Forest Park, remember Al Gross as you key your handheld. And, this Memorial Day lets all take a moment to remember those whose sacrifices remind us that freedom is not free.

Stay safe and well.



U.S. forces observe Memorial Day in Kuwait.

References and further reading

1. CIA Library

Gould, Jonathan: The OSS and the London "Free Germans"
Covert Communications

<https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol46no1/article03.html>

2. Military Radio (website)

The SSTR-6 and SSTC-502 - "Joan-Eleanor"

<http://militaryradio.com/spyradio/joaneleanor.html>

3. Youtube: OSS film Joan and Eleanor

(An OSS training film featuring a test flight in a B-17 and a chance to hear actual J-E audio.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ycCxRPWPidc>

4. ZDnet News Friday December 29 2000

Coursey, David: "Passing of a Wireless Pioneer"

<https://web.archive.org/web/20050405200448/http://www.retrocom.com/Al%20Gross.htm>

Cont'd from page 5 broad range of amateur radio content. That basic QST magazine format from the 1920's and 1930's continued until 1977, when QST as well as the other major US ham radio magazines of that era, CQ Magazine, 73 Magazine and Ham Radio Magazine, all went over to the larger size magazine format which is still in use today. CQ Magazine, of course, is still around and thriving.

73 Magazine was started in 1960 by Wayne Green, W2NSD/1, a vigorous promoter of ham radio, who was known and admired by many for his strong opinions and long editorial rants.

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The emphasis in 73 Magazine was on evolving technical and operating trends in ham radio, understandable technical content, build it yourself articles that were within the capability of the average ham. Green was an enthusiastic proponent of HF and VHF RTTY operation and the “new” VHF FM mode which appeared in the late 1960’s and quickly replaced VHF AM operations when VHF FM repeaters proliferated by the early 1970’s. In the mid-, late-1970’s, Green expanded his magazine publishing to cover microcomputers and personal computers. He published KiloBaud, one of the earliest microcomputer magazines, and was involved in the start up of the Byte Magazine. All 43 years of monthly issues of 73 Magazine issues are today freely available for download in online an archive. See, <https://archive.org/details/73-magazine>

Ham Radio Magazine started in the late 1960’s and continued publication monthly until 1990 when it was purchased by CQ Magazine following the untimely death of its editor (with no one like him to replace him). Ham Radio was known for its very high quality but still readable technical content. Much of its technical content relating to antennas, propagation, etc. is still pertinent today. CQ Magazine still sells packaged anthologies of Ham Radio articles.

In the mid-1970’s NCJ (National Contest Journal) started up to provide more for the niche of the radio contester scene. It started in a mailed-out newsletter format, but later evolved into a magazine for which a separate subscription was required through the ARRL. The NCJ also includes substantial technical content because the most successful contesters require top notch stations. The excellent Contest University programs of recent years have been started by devoted NCJers. In the early 1980’s the ARRL began publishing QEX, first in a newsletter format, but later in a magazine format. A separate subscription was required. The focus of QEX is for very advanced experimenters and technology relating to ham radio, articles that were too advanced for QST. The technical content and depth is excellent, but often the articles address very narrow hardware matters.

A few years ago, the ARRL began to offer digital versions of QST to its members through tablet apps and other download systems. Earlier this year, the ARRL started up On The Air magazine, an online magazine mostly oriented to those new to ham radio. The rationale for On The Air was that the content of QST magazine might be simply too intimidating or difficult for newcomer to the hobby. When it started up On The Air magazine the ARRL announced that it would begin offering On The Air, QST, NCJ and QEX to all of its members online without separate or additional subscriptions. For more information, see <http://www.arrl.org/arrl-magazines>

For many years, the ARRL sold microfilm and CDs with back issues of QST, but those are no longer available. When those were discontinued, the ARRL began to offer ARRL members a “free” online search facility which enabled you to search back though its old QST and QEX archive. See, <http://www.arrl.org/technical-information-service> If you find something of interest, you can then download it as a PDF file. This can be very useful facility for finding items in old QSTs and QEXx, but do not expect a modern “smart search” facility. I’m not completely sure, but I don’t think all of the searches are through the actual article title or text, but rather just through various keywords that a classifier prepared to associate with each article for indexing the article.

Some of the older hams in the OVH have large troves of these “old” U.S. ham radio magazines; just skimming through some of them reveals how much radio and communicaitons technology has evolved and improved over time and how operating techniques too have changed.