

**DELAWARE LEHIGH AMATEUR RADIO CLUB Inc.**



# ***W3OK***

# ***CORRAL***

***MAY 2009***

**Club Meeting May 7<sup>th</sup> At The 911Center**

**UP COMING EVENTS**

**May 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> 2009 Dayton Hamvention**

## **MEETING PROGRAM**

**"Fox Hunting Made Easy"**

**by AI / W3CE**

**A practical workshop starting with an ARRL Fox Hunt video production, this program will demonstrate how to inexpensively build and use various directional antennas necessary for signal location. The methods learned here can prepare you for assisting in Search and Rescue Operations, as well as tracking sources of harmful interference. Apply your new skills in the upcoming Club Fox Hunt!**



## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S SHACK

Where have the sunspots gone? It has been almost two years since the next sunspot cycle was supposed to start. Last year it was announced the it had started with a few high latitude reverse polarity spots. I check the internet almost every day looking for some activity, hoping for 20 Meters to be open round the clock, and have 10 and 15 as reliable DX bands. You can check the solar activity by going to this web page; <http://sohowww.nascom.nasa.gov/> .

Some have suggested that we might be in another Maunder Minimum! The Maunder Minimum occurred in the early 1700s with only about 50 sunspots appearing within a 30-year period. Check Wikipedia for "Maunder Minimum". During that time winters were colder and many crops failed in northern latitudes. I for one hope we are just in an extended low period, and will get that 10 meter DX any moment.

73

AL Wiemann / W3CE



## MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 2nd MEETING

**Called to Order:** by President Al / W3CE at 8:30PM

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Lead by W3CE

**Approval of March Minutes:** – No Changes, 1st – Bob / NE2C, 2nd – Ed / AA3OU, Passed

**Treasurer's Report:** – No Changes, 1st – Ken / N3IYX, 2nd – Bob / NE2C, Passed

### REPORTS:

**Repeater:** Nothing

**Web Page:** Will be providing e-mail forwarding similar to the ARRL's set up

Registration on the web page must be with your call sign; no anonymous user names and you must be a member of the DLARC

**VE Session:** Next one is May 8<sup>th</sup> at the 911 Center

**License Classes:** have 7 participants

**LV MS Walk:** (combined Allentown and Easton) – April 26<sup>th</sup>, Contact W3OPA, N3SQD or KB3RTB

**Field Day:** June 27-28 – Contact Tom / KB3IUE. Chairman

**MS-150 Bike Tour:** July 18 & 19 Contact Bryan / AA3WM

**Membership** – 192 members New Members voted in; Laurie / KB3SIC , Jeff / KB3ELT, Dave / K3GMT, John / WF3K, Jonathan / N3INJ and James / KB3SKU. 1st – Pete / KB3JWQ, 2nd – Jay / N3OW, Passed

**2 Meter Sprint:** Ray / W3TDF report results and awarded the certificates, 1st – Pete / NL7XM, 2nd – Ed / AA3OU, 3rd – Bill / NC3P

**Meeting Adjourned:** 8:50 by Al / W3CE

After a brief break Dave / KA3IWC presented a program of rotary dipoles. Followed by presentations from Charlie / W3OPA, Ray / W3TDF, Pete / NL7XM and Bob / KE3AW on various informative subjects.

Respectively Submitted; **Charlie / W3OPA**, Secretary

## NOTICE

**All members will need to produce their 2009 DLARC Membership Cards to access the July 9th Program with Riley Hollingsworth without having to pay admission. Because seating is strictly limited, there will be no exceptions. So, find yours now because only a certain number of Guest tickets to meet capacity will be made available.**

**This notice is being given with plenty of time to locate yours to present it in order to gain free entry. Guests and anyone without a current Membership Card will pay a nominal fee so the DLARC may recover some of the costs of arranging this Special Presentation.**

## VE TEST SESSION

There will be a test session this month on May 8<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM at the Northampton County 911 center. Pretest registration is required. Contact George / N3SQD at [george@bioserv.com](mailto:george@bioserv.com) or Al / W3CE at [w3ce@arrl.net](mailto:w3ce@arrl.net).



**MARCH 2009**  
**D.L.A.R.C. EXPENDURE REPORT**

**Expenditures:**

Telephone	17.68
WX3MAS QSL Certificates 100x	31.80
Lehigh University Auditorium (July 9)	<u>150.00</u>

**Total Expenditures:** **(199.48)**

Respectfully Submitted,  
**Pete Varounis / NL7XM**  
Treasurer / D.L.A.R.C.

**MAY 2008 QUICK CHECK CALENDAR**

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b> 10 Meter Net 28.430 1600 Local	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> D-Star Net 147.165 1900 Local	<b>6</b> DLARC RACES/ARES Net ( <b>KR3U</b> )	<b>7</b> DLARC Meeting	<b>8</b> <b>V.E. SESSION</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b> 10 Meter Net – 28.430 1600 Local	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> D-Star Net 147.165 1900 Local	<b>13</b> DLARC RACES/ARES Net ( <b>KB3RTB</b> )	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Dayton Hamvention	<b>16</b> Dayton Hamvention
<b>17</b> Dayton Hamvention	<b>18</b> Newsletter Articles due	<b>19</b> D-Star Net 147.165 1900 Local	<b>20</b> DLARC RACES/ARES Net ( <b>KB3CTX</b> )	<b>21</b> Executive Committee Meeting	<b>22</b> Newsletter goes to Webmaster	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> 10 Meter Net- 28.430 1600 Local	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> D-Star Net 147.165 1900 Local	<b>27</b> DLARC RACES/ARES Net ( <b>W3CE</b> )	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> 10 Meter Net- 28.430 1600 Local						

***William N. Goodman, CPA***

**Certified Public Accountant  
Licensed Insurance Agent  
Mortgage Loan Officer**

**K3ANS**

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**Leisure Travel Consultant  
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[ademave@epix.net](mailto:ademave@epix.net)  
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[ademave.worldventures.com](http://ademave.worldventures.com)

**YOUR AD COULD BE HERE!** Your business card here for a ridiculously small monthly fee. A space this size is available for a listing, like the ones above. For more information Contact Pete / NL7XM at [nl7xm@arrl.com](mailto:nl7xm@arrl.com)

## FIELD DAY

It is now the time to start the planning for the 2009 Field Day. Field Day is the one big emergency drill of the year. Where clubs across the country and in Canada practice a complete emergency operation, in which the site is set up and operated as if it were a true emergency incident. It will be held **June 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>** at the Plainfield Township Farmers Park. This is the same location we have used in the past. This one of several events that the DLARC participates in every year. Tom / KB3IUE is chairman, so when he asks for help, don't be afraid to join in. The help he will be looking for is to set up Saturday afternoon and tear down Sunday after noon. Plus operators and loggers during the 2 day period. Keep your calendar open for these days. Come out and see your club in operation. Keep your calendar open for these days. Come out and see your club in operation and visit with old friends and make new ones.

## MAY CONTESTING AT THE OK CORRAL



May 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> ---Radio Club of America QSO Party -- SSB  
May 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> --- CQ-M International DX Contest ---SSB / CW  
May 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> --- CQ WPX Contest --- CW  
May 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> --- MI QRP Memorial Day CW Sprint  
May 31<sup>st</sup> --- QRP ARCI HootOwl Sprint --- CW



## ABOUT OUR SEPTEMBER MEETING PROGRAM: CAROLE / WB2MGP

### Radio Club of America Begins School Outreach Program

The Radio Club of America (RCA) has begun a new multifaceted outreach program to reach youngsters and late teens to interest them in technology careers and in some cases also in amateur radio.

Retired New York City educator Carole Perry, WB2MGP, is in charge of the program and tells us a bit of what's being planned. Perry: "A dear friend of mine who is a fellow RCA member named Richard Sommers, on the West coast is going to mostly in the inner-city schools of Los Angeles searching for at risk students who have some technical inclination but cannot afford after high school to pursue a trade or a vocation in anything technical as far as schooling goes. We are proposing giving these students —once they are identified— scholarship money which they will receive once they are enrolled or engaged in a technical or vocational trade school."

As to recruiting new hams, that will first be explored in the Northeast. There, WB2MGP will fall back on something she knows quite well. Teaching ham radio and putting ham gear in the classroom: Perry: "The other move is to encourage amateur radio in as many schools as I can get it into in my immediate area in the New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Connecticut area by going in and actually showing the track record of the successfully run ham radio programs that I already have lined up and in place. Also, by offering them equipment that is going to be donated by fellow RCA members." Perry says that this equipment will be checked out and put into first rate shape before it's delivered to the schools to create ham radio stations where now there are none. The program will also train the classroom educators on how to use ham radio as a classroom teaching tool.

You can hear more about this very interesting project being headed up by Carole Perry, WB2MGP, on this week's Rain Report. You can find it on-line at [www.therainreport.com](http://www.therainreport.com) or by phone at area code 773-358-7845.

Delaware - Lehigh  
Amateur Radio Club

Two Meter Sprint  
**CONTEST**

**Peter N. Varounis - NL7XM**  
Chairman

March 28, 2009  
10 A.M. - 11 A.M.  
Local (EDT)

## 2009 DLARC 2 METER SPRINT

The 2009 Sprint had more participants than last year. And not all of last years participants were present, but an additional number joined in for the first time. Ray / W3TDF made his comments as chairman of the sprint and awarded certificates to the top three scores. There was a three way tie for the top spot, which was 18 contacts. The final places were decided by the time of the 18<sup>th</sup> contact. Pete / NL7XM was the first to reach 18 so thus was declared the winner. Followed by Ed / AA3OU and finally Bill / NC3P. Ray thanked all the participants and remarked on the growth of the sprint and how he hope such grown would continue on into the future.

## **NORTHAMPTON COUNTY EOC**

As you have noticed over the last year or so our meeting space has been reduced and in some cases unavailable. In 2007 Northampton County decided to combine the 911 Center and the Emergency Management Agency into one unit, the Northampton County Emergency Management Services. The EMS is under the direction of Bob Mateff. And Bob moved the EMA office from the Greystone Building to the 911 Center and began to develop the Northampton County Emergency Operations Center. This means that now Northampton County has a state of the art EOC.

On March 19<sup>th</sup> the new EOC was fully manned and in full operation for it's first drill. PEMA representatives were present to present the drill and evaluate the results. The drill was a winter blizzard with 24 inches of snow on the ground at the onset of the drill. Incidents occurred through out the county, a collapsed roof, multiple motor vehicle accidents, a down airplane and stranded motorists on the various highways in the county. This incidents were directed to the various municipalities and handled by their respective agencies. The DLARC supplied RACES communications, which was of a supplementary nature and traffic handling. Assisting were Bob / KE3AW, Ben / KB3CTX, Ken / N3IYX, Jeff / N3MFT and Howard / KB3RTB. PEMA found the results of the drill satisfactory, but pointed out the areas where improvement was needed. Plans are already in motion to make these improvement. This new EOC and its operation's system in one of the first in the state to be functioning under the new PEMA directives.

de **Don / KC3II** N.C. Radio Officer

## **THIS EMERGENCY WAS NO DRILL**

On March 21<sup>st</sup> a truck carrying Hydrogen Fluoride over turned while avoiding a deer on Route 33 in Plainfield Township near Wind Gap. People within one mile radius of the site were evacuated to the Pen Argyl High School. Members of the DLARC RACES response team went to the High School and to the Northampton County EOC to handle communications and traffic. Members present were Ben / KB3CTX and Bryan / AA3WM at the EOC and Ken / N3IYX, Howard / KB3RTB, xyl Tracy and Daughter Carissa and Glenn / N3ULW at Pen Argyl High School. The truck was uprighted by 1600L and the people allowed to return to their homes shortly there after.

de **Don / KC3II** N.C. Radio officer

## **EPA RESPONSE**

March 21 2009

Just a quick "Thank You" for your efforts today with the Tanker accident on Route 33. I spoke to Don early in the activation and was monitoring on 146.700 the whole time. I know this was a first for many of you, but want to say the conversations I heard back and forth between the shelter were very precise and to the point. You should be proud of this, as too many times I hear similar situations and the exchanges are often vague and require repeating and clarifications. This was also an excellent opportunity to demonstrate to the new EMS director that ARES and DLARC is available to assist in such short notice, as I know this had been a concern of his. Great Job !!!! I posted a quick summary on the ARRL site at <http://www.arrl.org/sections/?sect=EPA>

Thanks again

**Bob Wiseman / WB3W**

EPA Section Emergency Coordinator

## **POSTAL INCREASE**

The post office will get an extra 2 cents when you mail a letter starting in May. The U.S. Postal Service announced that the price of a first class stamp will rise to 44 cents on May 11<sup>th</sup>. That will give us plenty of time to stock up on Forever Stamps, which will continue to sell at the current 42 cent rate until the increase occurs. They will remain valid in the future regardless of rate hikes. Buffeted by the rising costs and decline of mail volume, the Postal Service lost \$2.6 billion last year and, unless the economy turns around, is headed toward much larger losses this year.

## **NEW RFI COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN**

The Executive Committee is proud to announced that Ben / KB3CTX has assumed the position of Chairman of the RFI Committee. Ben brings a professional background and experience to this committee which will give credence to the handling of any inference situations that the membership should encounter. He will be replacing Al / W3CE who has filled this position for the past several years.

## FUTURE MEETING PROGRAMS

June 4<sup>th</sup>: "**RocketMan.**" An introduction to the fascinating and exciting world of Amateur Rocketry. Dan Michael is our Guest Speaker and will show us what it takes to successfully build and launch ENORMOUS experimental rockets. Including discussion and video of recent projects. <http://www.vimeo.com/959637>. Brad / W3JXQ will show us how to employ ham radio tracking devices to recover them after each flight. Kids Welcome!

July 9<sup>th</sup> "**Riley Hollingsworth - LIVE!**" An exclusive engagement by special invitation, an evening with K4ZDH live and in person. A rare local appearance by former Special Counsel for the Spectrum Enforcement Division of the FCC's Enforcement Bureau. DLARC's 2009 Keynote Speaker, Mr. Hollingsworth will engage us with the compelling challenges he confronted during his famous tenure of enforcing PART 95, followed by a Q&A session. This event will be held at a location to be announced, as many hundreds from NY and NJ who can't travel to Dayton are expected to attend. Seating is limited, so advance ticketing will be required. Information will be made available here well in advance. All are welcome.

August 6<sup>th</sup> "**Traffic & Weather Data Retrieval.**" Special guest appearance by WFMZ-TV 69 News Traffic Center IT Manager, JC Kelleher will explain how tons of streaming data are collected and sorted to bring you the latest information you need in order to know how to dress and which roads to avoid. If you are curious about how remote meteorological devices and strategically placed traffic cameras scattered around the Lehigh Valley deliver raw live reports and images to the Newsroom and then on to your television, you will find this Program to be very interesting and satisfying!

September 3<sup>rd</sup> "**Recruiting Kids for Amateur Radio.**" World Radio Magazine columnist, Dayton Hamvention Youth Forum Leader, and New York City Public School Teacher, Carole Perry / WB2MGP was the first in the United States to teach an exclusive Ham Radio curriculum for 30 years as a way to introduce science, math and geography to her Middle School students. Recently elected a Board Fellow of RCA, Carole single-handedly licensed hundreds of kids by administering exams at the end of each term. Come and meet a legend in person. Carole's successful methods to attract "tweens" into our amazing vocation are time proven. Kids of all ages are absolutely encouraged to attend this exclusive DLARC engagement.

October 1<sup>st</sup> "**E-M-E / Moonbounce Communications.**" Dr. Roger Rehr / W3SZ will describe his long, well documented and successful experience with this amazing mode. Wonder what it takes to bounce a signal off the "Big Cheesey", Mother of all satellites? How much power, and how big an array do you need? How do you aim that thing? Can you actually work DXCC off the moon? What frequencies can you use? Does the moon have to be full? What if it's cloudy? You mean, I can do this with a Technician Class License? ...You got questions? ...Boy, do we got answers! Come early for a seat or you'll be standing up for this one.

November 5<sup>th</sup> : "**Portable Ops From the Road.**" What special considerations must one confront when Operating Portable while traveling across North America in a travel trailer with the XYL, 3 dogs, a Yaesu 897D and a Black Widow antenna system? Join us as we ride with W3SQ / Mel & Co., through MI, MN, ND, SD, WY and the Grand Canyon; Alberta and many southern Civil War Battlefields. Lighthearted discussion, liberally sprinkled with lots of photographs will include setting up in campgrounds near lakes, deserts and mountains. Listen as oblivious campers trample the radials and bears trespass through the campsite! Just wait till you hear how kids try to take the antennas to use as fishing poles!

December 3<sup>rd</sup>: "**Annual Christmas Party!**" Throw caution to the wind and hide the bathroom scale until after St. Valentine's Day. There's no better DLARC Program than this one, where socializing with good friends while sharing great food and talk IS the presentation. Bring a dish or dessert, paper goods or soft drinks. Make handy a few copies of your recipe to share with your new admirers.

## APRIL MEETING PROGRAM

This month's meeting program was a two part program. The first part was Dave / KA3IWC explaining how he built a "Rotatable Dipole". He began with an article on building a basic antenna, and how he went on to improve on that antenna to get what he wanted for his station. After building his basic antenna and having it perform to his satisfaction, he went on to expand it into a dual band and then in to a tri-band antenna. Dave explained how he tested and adjusted this antenna to the point that he could run higher power to it without any problems. Ed / K3IFE assisted with the necessary machining expertise. The second part of the program was Bob / KE3AW, Bob / NE2C, Charlie / W3OPA, Ray / W3TDF, and Pete / NL7XM presenting a short series of programs on various little known elements of the hobby. So little known, that they were a hit of the program. APRIL FOOL to all those present.

## MONTHLY BRAIN TEASER

"A special prize awaits the first Club Member to submit the correct answer to this month's Brainteaser to the Treasurer via E-mail. He must be present at the next Meeting to receive it, or it goes unrewarded. Officers, Board members, and Brain Teaser Authors are not eligible to win."

de **NL7XM**

The April BrainTeaser winning entry came in on 3/21/2009 @ 10:01:48 PM By **Bob / KE3AW**

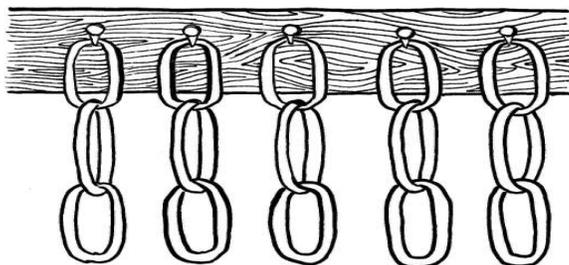
You need to remove only one marble... from the box labeled BW.

Since the BW box is labeled wrong, the contents are either BB or WW. So if the marble you pull is Black, then that BW box is really BB. (It can't be WW if you pull a Black one out!)

Further, the box labeled WW we know is wrong, so it actually contains either BW or BB, but we already know which is BB (the first one), so by deduction the WW box must be BW.

This leaves the WW box which we know is not WW, because it is labeled incorrectly, nor is it BW as determined from the second step above, so must be BB.

## MAY BRAIN TEASER



It costs five cents to break a link, and ten cents to weld it again. What is the least it would cost to join the five segments shown here, into a single length of chain?

## NEW MEMBERS

We are proud to announce the addition of the following, to the DLARC at the April Meeting. Jeff / KB3ELT, David / K3GMT, Jonathan / N3INJ, John / WF3K, Laurie / KB3SIK and James / KB3SKU. Come greet the newest members and welcome them to our club.

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## HELP THE ENVIRONMENT

Donate your old, empty printer ink cartridges to the Club for recycling. Any brand, model, size or shape; color or black. Please bring them to the meeting in a leak proof ziplock type baggie and give them to the Treasurer. This simple act can help your Club by reducing recurring expenses, and make you feel a lot better about our environment.

## STONEHENGE RELOADED

For hundreds, maybe thousands of years, people have been trying to figure out how primitive people could build huge structures such as Stonehenge and the pyramids out of stone blocks weighing thousands of pounds. Scientists have been stumped. Then along comes a normal guy - a retired construction worker - and he says well, I would do it like this. And he does. This guy uses the simplest tools known to man and shows how simple and easy it would have been to create Stonehenge. This is a really great video clip. Amazing how this guy could figure out something that has confounded scholars for centuries. And not only figures it out, but demonstrates it! This guy could build a replica of Stonehenge single-handedly, while a committee of 20 or 30 Civil Engineering professors from leading universities would be debating how it might be done. You have got to see this...go to this link [http://j-walkblog.com/index.php?/weblog/posts/moving\\_big\\_rocks](http://j-walkblog.com/index.php?/weblog/posts/moving_big_rocks)

## HAMS' SHOW VALUE IN FLOOD

The ham radios sitting in the city of Fargo's public safety building were quiet Wednesday afternoon. For Jason Beck, Mark Johnson, Don Galitz and Val Tareski, the silence was a good sign. "For as much as we like to keep busy with our radios, this is OK," Galitz said. "That means the flood isn't nearly as dangerous as what it was." Galitz was referring to the floodwaters of the Red River. After a record crest of 40.82 feet March 28, it receded to under 35.5 feet by Friday afternoon.

But since March 21, when members of the Red River Radio Amateurs club set up their ham radios at 11 locations in the Fargo-Moorhead area, these amateur radio operators have been instrumental in relaying vital information during the flood fight. The term "amateur" is not a reflection on the skills of the estimated 6 million people worldwide who take on ham radio as a hobby. Instead, it indicates that amateur radio communications are not allowed to be made for commercial or money-making purposes.

That was the case during the recent flooding when 29 local ham radio operators and the 30 who came from South Dakota, Iowa and Minnesota volunteered their time. "You get pumped up," said the 74-year-old Galitz, who worked 146 hours in the past 10 days. "At my age, I never thought I would be able to do that." According to Red River Radio Amateurs President Mark Johnson, the biggest role for these "hams" was coordinating messages between the Red Cross and the Salvation Army. In the past nine days, they logged 1,120 hours of transmission and delivered 721 messages in the past five days. "There was a lot of activity and meaningful messages on both sides of the river," said the 37-year-old Johnson, a computer administrator at Union Storage in Fargo. When a bus load of volunteers were being deployed from Moorhead's Nemzek Hall for a sandbag operation, the Red Cross and Salvation Army knew when and where to provide water and food. When Red Cross officials had trouble getting a cell phone connection inside an evacuation center at the high school in Casselton, N.D., they relied on ham radio operators. The operators were also able to alert the nurses station at Fargo's Innovis Health about incoming Coast Guard helicopters hauling in evacuees.

There were six ham operators directly involved with the evacuation of Fargo's MeritCare Hospital. "You can inform 20 people at once," said Tareski, a 67-year-old who also worked the 1997 Red River Valley flood as a ham operator. "With a cell phone, you would have to make 20 calls. You can get the information out much faster." Sherri Thomsen, executive director of the area American Red Cross, said the additional layer of communication is invaluable. Adam Moore, captain of the local Salvation Army, said the local ham radio group is so reliable, he doesn't have to call in the Salvation Army's national radio team known as SATERN (Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network). "They are invaluable to us," Moore said. "And in the event we lost all communications, we would rely solely on our amateur radio operators." Beck, a 22-year-old North Dakota State University student from Andover, Minn., acted as a rover by monitoring flooded streets in Moorhead and the need for food and water at sandbagging sites.

Two out-of-town ham operators slept in their cars for two nights, unable to find a place to stay. Brian Ward, a 36-year-old from Sioux Falls, S.D., has been stationed at the Red Cross evacuation center at West Fargo's Veterans Memorial Arena for the past week. "This reminds me of the military," said Ward, who was an electronics technician for the Navy. "Once that message comes in, you relay it to the entire ship. I don't think a lot of people realize just how many people these ham radio operators have affected. It's just nice knowing I've been able to use my hobby and give it back to the community."

## DLARC FORUM

Subscribing to the DLARCforum will insure your accessibility to the DLARC's latest news and information pertaining to the club and its activities. This is also a way to address any questions to the membership in general, on any amateur radio and/or DLARC subject. Additional forum information is available in the January 2009 issue of the OK Corral. Go to <http://mailman.qth.net/mailman/listinfo/dlarcforum> to sign up for the DLARCforum.

## WHERE ARE THE SUNSPOTS?

Adapted from a NASA News Release by Tony Phillips, PhD NASA Heliophysics News Team

The sunspot cycle is behaving a little like the stock market. Just when you think it has hit bottom, it goes even lower. 2008 was a bear. There were no sunspots observed on 266 of the year's 366 days (73 percent). To find a year with more blank suns, you have to go all the way back to 1913, which had 311 spotless days. Prompted by these numbers, some observers suggested that the solar cycle had hit bottom in 2008.

Maybe not. Sunspot counts for 2009 have dropped even lower. As of March 31st, there were no sunspots on 78 of the year's 90 days (87 percent). It adds up to one inescapable conclusion: "We're experiencing a very deep solar minimum," says solar physicist Dean Pesnell of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Md. "This is the quietest sun we've seen in almost a century," agrees forecaster David Hathaway of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala.

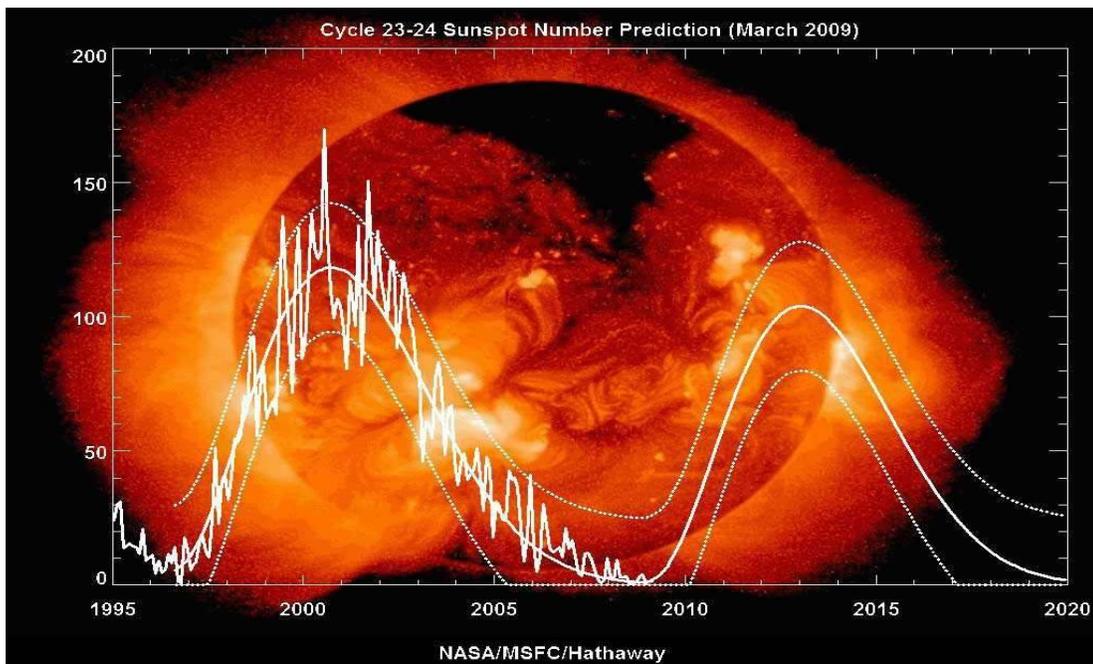
Quiet suns come along every 11 years or so. It's a natural part of the sunspot cycle, discovered by German astronomer Heinrich Schwabe in the mid-1800s. Sunspots are planet-sized islands of magnetism on the surface of the sun, and they are sources of solar flares, coronal mass ejections, and intense UV radiation. Plotting sunspot counts, Schwabe saw that peaks of solar activity were always followed by valleys of relative calm—a

clockwork pattern that has held true for more than 200 years.

The current solar minimum is part of that pattern. In fact, it's right on time. But is it supposed to be this quiet? Measurements by the Ulysses spacecraft reveal a 20 percent drop in solar wind pressure since the mid-1990s—the lowest point since such measurements began in the 1960s.

Weaker solar wind means fewer geomagnetic storms and auroras on Earth.

Careful measurements by several NASA spacecraft have also shown that the sun's brightness has dimmed by 0.02 percent at visible wavelengths and a whopping 6 percent at extreme UV wavelengths since the solar minimum of 1996.

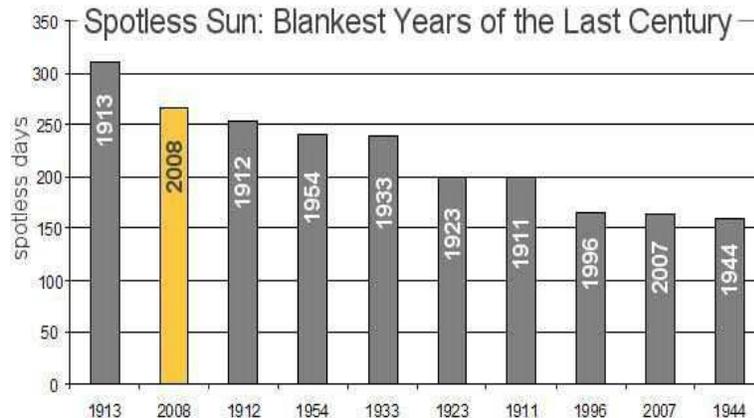


The sunspot cycle from 1995 to the present. The jagged curve traces actual sunspot counts. Smooth curves are fits to the data and one forecaster's predictions of future activity. Credit: David Hathaway, NASA/MSFC.

Finally, radio telescopes are recording the dimmest "radio sun" since 1955. After World War II, astronomers began keeping records of the sun's brightness at radio wavelengths, particularly 10.7 cm. Some researchers believe that the lessening of radio emissions during this solar minimum is an indication of weakness in the sun's global magnetic field. No one is certain, however, because the source of these long-monitored radio emissions is not fully understood.

All these lows have sparked a debate about whether the ongoing minimum is extreme or just an overdue market correction following a string of unusually intense solar maxima. "Since the Space Age began in the 1950s, solar activity has been generally high," notes Hathaway. "Five of the ten most intense solar cycles on record have occurred in the last 50 years. We're just not used to this kind of deep calm." Deep calm was fairly common a hundred years ago. The solar minima of 1901 and 1913, for instance, were even longer than what we're experiencing now. To match those minima in depth and longevity, the current minimum will have to last at least another year.

The "blankest years" of the past century. Vertical bars in this histogram represent the number of days in each year that the sun was blank--i.e., had no sunspots. Credit: Tony Phillips



Modern technology cannot, however, predict what comes next. Competing models by dozens of solar physicists disagree, sometimes sharply, on when this solar minimum will end and how big the next solar maximum will be. The great uncertainty stems from one simple fact: No one fully understands the underlying physics of the sunspot cycle. Pesnell believes sunspot counts should pick up again soon, "possibly by the end of the year," to be followed by a solar maximum of below-average intensity in 2012 or 2013. But like other forecasters, he knows he could be wrong. Bull or bear? Stay tuned for updates.

### YOU MIGHT BE ADDICTED TO HAM RADIO IF:

1. You have Ham radio magazines in the bathroom.
2. Fermentation never enters your mind when "homebrew" is mentioned.
3. Instead of just saying no, you have said "negative".
4. You have used a person's name to indicate acknowledgement.
5. You become impatient waiting for the latest AES catalog to arrive.
6. You have found yourself whistling "CQ" using Morse code.
7. You always schedule the third weekend in May for vacation.
8. You walk carefully in your back yard to avoid being close-lined.
9. You have deep anxiety or panic attacks during high winds or heavy ice.
10. You and the FedEx/UPS men are on a first name basis.
11. You really start to miss people that you've never seen.
12. Your exercise machine is a Morse code keyer.
13. You walk through the plumbing section at the hardware store and see antenna parts.
14. Your neighbors thought you were nuts when you ripped up your lawn to bury chicken wire.

### WEDNESDAY NIGHT NETS

Additional Net Controls are needed for the Wednesday Night ARES, RACES & DLARC net. If we have enough interested operators, it will only be necessary for each operator to have only one net session in each three month period. Actually 13 weeks in a period, so 13 net controls would be ideal, and maybe some extras to fill in if needed. This would give us a pool of experienced controls, for any emergency which would arise. Interested operators should contact Don / KC3II at [kc3ii@arrl.net](mailto:kc3ii@arrl.net). The NIMS IS-700 and ICS-100 courses are not required to be a net control, but should the need arise and we do supply controls and operators for real emergencies, then the courses requirement will be in effect and EMA issued IDs will be needed to be on the scene of an emergency.

## FYI

The winner of the April Door Prize was Gary / N2AUO

The EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA District 2 ARES Net meets every Wednesday at 1930 hours local time. (Just after the DLARC Net ) In 147.255 (pl 162.2). And linked to 449.375 on Blue Mountain, 443.350 in Allentown and 147.180 in Berks County.

The OK Corral is an organizational publication for the purpose of informing members of the D.L.A.R.C. of educational and training opportunities, club events, relevant news articles and a monthly calendar of daily activities, meetings and dates. Every member of the D.L.A.R.C. Is welcome to contribute articles of interest to this newsletter. Opinions, items of interest, and even suggestions towards the improvement of newsletter and/or the DLARC itself would also be accepted, a sort of "Letters to the Editor" section.

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CAN BE FOUND ON THE WEBSITE / MEMBERSHIP LISTING

### CLUB MEETINGS

All regular meetings of the D.L.A.R.C. Are held on the first Thursday of each month at  
7:30 PM at the Northampton County 911 Center.  
TALK IN ON 146.700 (PL 151.4 )

### THE W3OK TRUSTEE DON REAMER / KA3JWE

The W3OK Corral is published monthly and is the Official Publication of the  
**DELAWARE LEHIGH AMATEUR RADIO CLUB INC.**

### ARES, RACES AND DLARC NET

All Radio Amateurs are welcome to participate in the ARES, RACES and DLARC net. This net meets  
Wednesday at 1900 hours local time, on the W3OK Repeater 51.76, 146.70 and 444.90 ( pl 151.4).  
With an alternate frequency of 145.11 ( pl 151.4 )

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