

UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA
AMATEUR RADIO CLUB



Minutes of the Amateur Radio Club

University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104

<http://www.seas.upenn.edu/alumni/amateurradioclub/home.html>

Monthly Meeting: Monday, February 26, 2007 at the Moore School of Electrical Engineering, Room 317

Attendees:

Rob Brown – VE3SHZ, Jan Carman* – K5MA, Perry Klein* – W3PK, Russ Miller – WA3FRP, Fred Serota* – K3BHX, Terry Smith* – K7YNO, Jim Talens – N3JT*, Donald Ying – KB3NFJ

* Attended meeting via conference telephone call.

President's Welcome, Remarks, and Update

President Russ Miller called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM and welcomed everyone, including those on the conference call (indicated by asterisk following name in attendance list). He indicated that Donald Ying had to leave the meeting early, so it was decided to immediately begin the Field Day discussion.

ARRL Field Day, June 23-24, 2007 – Discussion

An initial request was made for a University on-campus facility for FD operation. This request was denied because most University facilities are not operational on weekends during the summer months. As of now, there are no on-campus facilities available for our use, although the Law School courtyard was mentioned

as a possible venue. Concern was expressed regarding possible RFI issues (interference to our HF receivers) at University facilities.

Alternatives to an on-campus FD location were discussed, but no concrete possibilities were put forth. Alternative ideas discussed included contacting the Holmesburg ARC for a joint FD effort, or possibly Drexel. It was noted that there remain HF yagi antennas on the roof of one of the buildings on the Drexel campus, but no contact has yet to be made with the station staff.

President's Welcome, Remarks, and Update - Continued

Russ made mention of the "Philly Honors Hello Campaign" short article in the March 2007 issue of QST Magazine on page 13, which was arranged by club member Fred Serota, K3BHX. Fred submitted the ARRL information to the Philadelphia Electric Company (PECO), which displayed the information on the rooftop sign on the PECO Market Street headquarters building. This was an excellent PR event for amateur radio.

Russ also mentioned that as of last week there is no longer a Morse code (CW) requirement for FCC amateur licenses. This means that anyone can upgrade from Technician to higher license grades without having to take a code test. This should help to build interest in amateur radio and attract more members to our club.

Russ indicated that club member Dennis Silage, K3DS, found a 35mm slide of the W3ABT roof-top (Moore School building) antenna installation dating back to 1972. This slide has been uploaded to the History section of the Club's Web page. Thanks Dennis!

Our club faculty advisor, Dr. Sarkar is on sabbatical in France. We have not yet received her feedback on the Club Strategic Plan. Russ will wait for another two weeks before seeing if the head of the Electrical Engineering Department can be of help.

Approval of January 2007 Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the January club meeting minutes was made by Fred, K3BHX and seconded by Jim, N3JT. The minutes were approved with no comments.

ARRL Field Day, June 23-24, 2007 - Discussion Continued

Fred Serota, K3BHX, joined the group at 1:22 PM by telephone and presented his input to the Field Day discussion.

Fred had discussions with Dr. Walker regarding the use of University facilities for club Field Day operations. She suggested we apply on-line to use the space between the Library and College Hall. Another option is the stone area between College Hall and Houston Hall. The FD site needs to be outdoors, not inside of any building. Both Fred and Donald will continue these discussions to secure an outdoor site for FD operations (Donald had to leave the meeting at 1:20 PM). A suggestion was made to appeal to Penn President Gutmann for other options. Another suggestion was made to consider a joint Penn/Drexel Field Day activity, possibly at Hill Field.

A suggestion was made that club member Tom Archer, N3MZV, might be of help in securing a site for on-campus Field Day operations. He is involved with the facility department at the University Hospital; business phone 215-349-8165.

W3ABT Strategic Plan

Reference was made to the Station Location Committee, which was created at the Club Meeting on November 27, 2006 and includes Tom Archer, Rob Brown, Mike Feeley, Cameron Finucane and Donald Ying.

Comments –

Fred: Follow up with Holmesburg ARC relative to their antenna on the hospital roof.

Rob: No contact with other members of the station location committee

Russ: Would like to see a relationship similar to what Holmesburg ARC has on one of the University high-rise buildings (three buildings, each 24 stories tall) – ref Holmesburg ARC web site, 2-meter repeater, (<http://harcnet.org/repeater.htm>)

Miscellaneous comments from various members:

Design and install a remotely accessible HF station on one of the University high-rise buildings (vicinity of 39th & Spruce Streets) that would initially run the HF digital modes (PSK and RTTY). The ideal location for the equipment would be in an equipment rack located in an elevator room on the roof of one of the buildings.

A financial plan will need to be developed and funding sources identified. A budget must be established for purchase of equipment and installation services where needed. Access will be needed for AC power and building Internet services for remote control.

Rob Brown, VE3SHZ has agreed to take the lead on developing the project plan and making contact with appropriate University personnel. The remotely controlled HF station will include a 50-watt output HF transmitter and a vertical (multi-band) HF rooftop antenna located at least ten feet away from large structures. Space would be necessary for a radial wire field on the roof. Space

will be necessary for a small equipment cabinet in an elevator shaft building with coaxial transmission line running from the equipment rack through a wall fitting and across the roof to the base of the vertical antenna. The equipment rack will contain the transmitter and computer-based control system. The equipment room will need some kind of cooling system during summer months. A telephone-line connection will be desirable for remote control backup. Rob's contact information is – RobBrown@mail.med.upenn.edu with his alternate address VE3SHZ@rac.ca.

A general discussion of control issues followed, which included control operator responsibilities, failure modes, and how to make sure the transmitter is disabled if control is lost. Priorities for usage of the remote controlled transmitter would be students and staff first and alumni second. Procedures and rules of use will be established. Note was made that the Student Activity Council (SAC) will only fund a club if it is totally student managed. Terry indicated that something meaningful could be built and installed for less than \$2000 if the University would be willing to fund Internet access. This comment raised the question whether or not the Holmesburg club pays any fees to the University for access to rooftop equipment and antenna space. A comment was made that perhaps HRO (Ham Radio Outlet) might offer a discount to the University. Russ noted that QST ran articles on remote control of amateur stations in the November 2001 and 2002 issues. Terry also made a general synopsis of remote control software and also mentioned that Skype is an option for simplex audio transmission (Skype is an Internet based two-way voice system – much like a telephone).

A question was raised about the ARRL DXCC program – are DXCC totals compiled for a specific callsign or for a specific operator. I think I know the answer, but I will confirm it with Dan Henderson at ARRL HQ before our next meeting. We need a clarification particularly in the case where a club has more than one callsign (W3ABT and N3KZ).

Russ made some comments regarding member use of the club callsigns for adding to the Club's DXCC (and other award programs) totals. In particular, both Russ and Jan have been running W3ABT from their home stations in an effort to build DXCC totals on RTTY (Russ) and CW & SSB (Jan). Member requests to use the club calls should be made through Jim, N3JT. In particular, requests to use one of the callsigns for a contest event should be scheduled well in advance.

An initial discussion of holding a Centennial Celebration of Amateur Radio at Penn was held. 2009 will be our 100th year as a club. Note was made that most of the Ivy League universities plus MIT and a few others will be celebrating 100 years of amateur radio in 2009. This could be a great venue for promoting amateur radio, either individually or grouped with other colleges and universities.

Russ announced that the next Club meeting would be held on Monday, March 26, 2007 at 1:00 PM. The meeting was concluded at 2:30 PM.

Minutes prepared and submitted by:
Jan Carman, Secretary and Russ Miller, President