PARA -
serving the
Delaware Valley
for over 39 years!

P A R A

>> GENERAL MEETING May 20, 2009 - 7:30 PM !! <<
(Wednesday after Dayton)
Lower Providence Township Building
Eagleville, Pennsylvania

PARA WEB SITE: http://para.buxcom.net

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Philadelphia Area Repeater Association
Membership Information

PARA is an association of members that operate and support Amateur Radio Repeaters and links in Southeastern Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey. PARA was formed in 1970 and incorporated as an IRS 501c3 non-profit in 1973 through a merger of several repeater groups.

PARA repeaters serve the Amateur Radio community for normal everyday hobby communications as well as provide a system for emergency and disaster communications. PARA also promotes technical developments which ham radio has done so much of in the past.

PARA has four quadrant repeaters and one regional system on the 2-meter band as well as other repeaters on the 224 MHz and 440 MHz bands. PARA also has an Amateur TV System that relays television signals in the Philadelphia and Wilmington metropolitan areas.

Your membership dues support those repeaters listed below and help assure availability for emergency communications: 146.76 MHz, 146.82 MHz, 146.88 MHz, 146.94 MHz, 146.97 MHz, 443.90 MHz, 223.86 MHz, 224.94 MHz, 224.98 MHz, 52.41 MHz, 439.25 MHz (ATV), and all links between the remote receivers.

Joining PARA

NEW MEMBERSHIP FEES AND DUES .... $ 25.00
YEARLY RENEWAL .... $ 20.00
5 YEAR MEMBERSHIP .... $ 85.00 ($90.00 FOR NEW MEMBERS)
LIFE MEMBERSHIP $400.00
SENIOR LIFE MEMBER .... $100.00 (AGE 65 AND OVER)
ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP .... $ 20.00 (non-hams) no voting privileges

Associate memberships, when licensed, may upgrade to full membership with no additional initiation fee. Members also gain one free month on their membership for each new member you sponsor.

Corporate annual sponsorship memberships are also available: $100, $500, $1000, $5000, etc. Annual sponsorships of $500 or more will receive free advertising in PARA's newsletter. Certificates of sponsorships are given to corporate sponsors.

Please detach & fill out (PRINT) the form below and mail with a check or money order to:
PARA, POST OFFICE BOX 64, VALLEY FORGE, PA 19481-0064

Membership Type: New __ Renewal __ Full individual Ham __ 5 Year __ Life __ Sr Life __
Associate ____ Corporate _____ Amount $ _____

NAME _____ CALL _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE (REQUIRED) _____ OK TO LIST ____ YES ___ NO

E-MAIL (REQUIRED) _____
ARRL MEMBER (Y/N)_____ SPONSORED BY _____

I CAN HELP WITH THE FOLLOWING: TOWERS ____ ANTENNAS ____ BLDG MAINTENANCE ___ Equipment
Maintenance ___ WRITING/PUBLISHING ____ PUBLIC RELATIONS ___ Other _____(01-02-2009)

From the President
Gene Mitchell, K3DSM

Guess what? Here I am again. Due to the sudden resignation of John, KB2ADL, I was reelected to fill his unexpired term. Although I didn't want to do it again, members felt I should return to keep stability in PARA.

Over the last year, several important things have happened. There should be separate articles in this issue to cover details, but here is a quick summary. PARA now has the W3PHL call sign as an additional club call. All is resolved after a long period of application snafus. Yes, a club can have more than one call, N3CDP being the other.

The 82 repeater has been replaced over the last year, thanks to the efforts of John KB2ADL, K3ZKO, and others. All other repeaters are "up and running".

The future of ham radio, despite one loud prediction, appears to be alive and well, but you should do your part and keep radios ready and use them. We live in very unstable times and during times of emergencies, it could be your only communications when the lights go out and cell phones cease to operate. Not only do we have weather related failures, but the potential for terrorism is high. Participation is ARES RACES groups is very strong in most of Philadelphia's surrounding counties and if you are not already involved, you should start to tune in.

It was great to hear that Pennsylvania finally has the tower bill passed. It will go along way to helping many hams.

D-Star communications continues to grow with activity spreading to 2 meters and 440 Mhz. Chester County's system is linked between the 1200 mhz, 2 meters and 440 mhz. Lor, W3QA gives us this information: "The fun net is held every Thursday at 10PM EDT on the 1-C reflector. The net is hosted on the W6DHS repeater (Mt. Diablo, CA) and NCS is KI6NHY. The W3EOC C repeater in Pocopson on 146.490 MHz (+ 1.0 MHz offset) is linked to the "one-charlie" so all you have to do to enjoy the net is tune in and listen in D-Star DV mode. This Global Village net is all about D-Star and the topics discussed are fascinating--not to mention the net draws participants from all over the USA, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. If you want to get up to date, or learn some fine points about D-Star operating, this is the place."

I received an email this week from a "ham" that was actually responsible for getting me interested in ham radio while we were both in 8th grade. He informed me that he was no longer doing any ham radio because the frequencies are so quiet, there is no one to talk to. That scares me a bit. If we all take that attitude, ham radio will certainly die. I do notice a lack of activity as well. Let's not forget to turn on our radios and use them.

Another article in this issue will explain what happened at WCOJ over the last months. The Computer Corner Show lives on at 5DRadio.com Saturday mornings along with some new shows, including ham radio. BrandywineRadio.com, a new Internet Radio station here in Chester County, also carries the Computer Corner Show, along with other talent from WCOJ. It certainly is a station worth tuning in and listening to. It has news from Chester County. As of April, 2009, the Computer Show is also broadcast on WCHE 1520 out of West Chester.

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Gene's Computer Outlet
2095 Valley Hill Rd
Malvern, Pa 19355
610-590-0451
www.g-c-o.com

Listen to "Computer Corner"
On the Fifth Dimension Radio Network
www.5DRadio.com
WCHE 1520 AM
BrandywineRadio.com

Saturday Mornings 8 – 9 AM
With Host Gene Mitchell K3DSM and
Joe Myshko N3YGW

WCOJ lost its Voice

WCOJ, the Voice of Chester County for almost 60 years, lost its voice on September 30th. WCOJ had became part of Route 81 Radio when its owner put a group of stations together almost 4 years ago. In order to do this, a venture capitalist was involved along with a bank. The Board of Directors was made up of 2 directors from the bank, 2 from the venture capitalist group, and the owner, who was CEO. Several months after the group of stations was put together and all operating under the Route 81 Radio flag, the board voted the owner out of his job as CEO and hired a new CEO. At this point, Route 81 Radio was fully under the control of the bank and venture capitalist.

In July of this year, 2008, the bank held a foreclosure sale and became 100% owner and in control. Route 81 Radio was dissolved and a new holding corporation was formed. Banks don't like to own their financed assets and everyone knew the station was for sale. What the employees didn't know was how the bank would sell the station. WCOJ had great programming. It was all talk and very sellable. The problem was that the economy was hurting sales over the last year. The bank wanted a quick sale without any contingencies.

On September 30th, employees were assembled for a meeting at 2PM. By 201PM, employees were all let go with only 30 days severance pay. Robert Henson, host of the big show was allowed to go on the air for the 4-7 PM "Big Show". Robert is the best of the best and he handled it well. He went 45 minutes into the show as if nothing happened before a caller asked him point blank about the rumor. Robert confirmed the rumor on the air and the phones rang off the hook till 7PM. Callers were very upset and couldn't believe it. Robert was the only host that was able to say goodbye. Network programming ran till midnight. At midnight, the station's chief engineer, Gene Mitchell, was ordered to pull the big switch and the station went "dark" for 6 days.

"Holy Spirit Radio" was the purchaser. The station is now broadcasting Catholic Radio's EWTN network 24 hours a day. Gone are the school closings, local news, and the various call-in shows, including the Computer Corner Show that also was very popular.

Gene Mitchell, as mentioned, had this very popular computer show running for exactly 4 years to the week. Listeners were calling him and stopping in his shop, asking if he would continue somewhere else. He even had calls from other radio stations wanting his show, but also wanting him to pay for his time. Gene was also aware of a relatively new Internet Radio station called BrandywineRadio.com that went live in June. Gene's wheels were spinning but he didn't want to travel to Kennett Square to do his show. He started looking at equipment and evaluating what he would need if he were to do the show out of his Frazer shop.

Gene called his son and asked what he thought of 5DRadio.com. Michael's immediate answer was that the web URL was available, because Michael had come up with the exact same idea and the same time. Both Gene and Michael had run the Fifth Dimension Computer Bulletin Board since 1980, and Gene turned it into a personal web page of interesting information for his friends and family in 1995, when the web started becoming popular.

WCOJ lost its Voice (continued)

Gene called Bee Net, the former sponsor of the show on WCOJ and asked how much it would cost for hosting the web site. Rich Goldberg, the owner, paused several minutes, and finally answered, your new web site is ready and waiting. "But how much", Gene asked? Rich answered that it would be free. Bee Net also gave Gene an email address for the show and also committed a fast server for storing all the past shows for Podcasting Things were starting to look good.

Gene had sketched a block diagram of a new internet broadcast system, and he had catalogs laid out on his workbench. One of his listeners and customers came in to the shop and asked what he was planning. Gene told him his idea and he thought it was great. Gene mentioned that a good mixer board was beyond his budget and the cheaper ones just wouldn't properly do the job. His customer scratched a note with the amount of $1500 and his signature, committing to make the project fly. Gene immediately ordered the console, the hybrid telephone unit, and several microphones. He assembled a computer on a desk along with a dual CD deck, ran some cables, and waited for the console to arrive. It only took 2 days in shipping and within an hour everything was hooked up. He used the same free streaming service that WCOJ used for the first 3 weeks.

Audio quality wasn't great, using a standard computer's sound card and both Gene and his listeners knew it. Another customer and listener had mailed a $200 check for the project and Gene added 2 professional sound cards to the computers. One was for the streaming computer and the other was for the broadcast computer, the one that makes the "canned" announcements and also can be used to automate programming.

Gene knew the limitations of the free streaming service, so he purchased software and started streaming from his own server at the shop. His son Michael, spent hours setting up the server and finally everything was ready. Michael even added code to the 5DRadio web page so that visitors didn't have to click on the links to receive the stream any more. Simply visiting the web page activated the stream in any Windows computer.

Gene's intentions are to grow the Fifth Dimension Network. He has already picked up the Lincoln Radio Journal, a show that both precedes and follows the Computer Corner Show. Gene has produced a half hour special on ham radio and intends to follow up with additional segments in the near future, including one on FM and repeaters. A special on Rotary club is also running. Most programming right now is on Saturdays, but occasionally, some of the programs are "looping" in rotation on other days and times.

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Please note new PARA General Meeting Date and Location

(See last page for details)

MOVING ???

If moving, please notify **PARA** of your new address as soon as possible. The Post Office will **NOT** forward your mail after 30-days. With each issue of *PARA-graphs* several copies are returned by the Post Office marked "**RETURN TO SENDER, NO FORWARD ORDER ON FILE**". Please forward your new address so we may keep our database up-to-date and, of course, *PARA-graphs* in your hands.

ADVERTISING in *PARA-graphs*

At the November 1999 Board meeting approval was received to accept ads in *PARA-graphs* to help offset ever-raising printing and postage costs. The following per issue ad schedule was approved:

Full Page $125. Half Page $75. Quarter Page $50. Business Card $25. Non-Commercial Classified 3 lines $10. Repeat ad in following issue(s) will receive a 10% discount. Contact Dick K3ITH to place an ad.

This and past issues of *PARA-Graphs* may be found at:

http://para.buxcom.net or http://para.k3dsm.net

INTERESTED IN WRITING FOR *PARA-graphs* ??

Several great articles have been submitted in past issues by your follow **PARA** members such as Larry W2CAM, Hank W3GSC with help from Vince N3AGD, Gene W3ZXV, and Gene K3DSM. Please feel free to submit anything Amateur Radio related. Articles may be mailed to our PO Box, or e-mailed to k3ith@arrl.net Thank you. Dick K3ITH

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>>> PLEASE NOTE <<<

MEETING DAY: WEDNESDAY

NEW MEETING DATE: MAY 20, 2009
(Wednesday after Dayton)

MEETING LOCATION:
Lower Providence Township Building
100 Parklane Drive
Eagleville, PA 19403
(Some GPS units show Norristown)

Directions:

1. From King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, take Rt. 202 South to Rt. 422 West to the Oaks Exit.

2. At the exit ramp turn Right onto Egypt Road and take the second Left onto Pinetown Road.

3. Go to the second stop sign and turn Left onto Eagleville Road.

4. Go to the traffic light at Ridge Pike and proceed straight into the Lower Providence Township property; bare right and follow the driveway to the township building which is beyond the public library.

Talk-in will be on the PARA 146.760 MHz Repeater