

# **THE AERO AERIAL**



**P2M MARS at Martin's Lagoon**  
*Picture Courtesy Md. Aviation Museum*

The newsletter of the Aero Amateur Radio Club

Volume 4 Issue 3  
March 2007

Editor Frank Stone AC3P

## Officers

Frank Stone AC3P  
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Al Alexander K3ROJ

## **ABOUT THE AERO AMATUER RADIO CLUB**

Meetings: First and Third Wednesdays at 7:30 pm at Coffman's Diner  
(Middle River and Orem's Rd.)

Nets: See Local Area Net Schedule

Repeaters: W3PGA (147.24 MHz - / 449.575 MHz -)

WEBSITE: <http://www.aeroarc.us>

## Net Reports

2 Meter Net: WB3FMT (NCS), AC3P, W3JEH, KB3KRW, KB3JDE, K3ROJ, W3VRD

70 Cm Net: Cancelled for BARC Minifest

10 Meter Net: WB3FMT (NCS), W3VRD, AC3P, KB3KRW

### LOCAL AREA NETS

<b>Day</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Frequency (MHz)</b>	<b>NET NAME</b>
Daily	9 – 10 am	147.03	ORIOLE Net
Daily	6 – 6:30 pm	3.820	Maryland Emergency Phone Net
Daily	6:30 – 7 pm	146.670	Baltimore Traffic Net
Daily	7 pm and 10 pm	3.643	Maryland/DC/Delaware Traffic Net
2 <sup>nd</sup> Tues	7:30 pm	146.670	Baltimore County <u>RACES</u> Net
2 <sup>nd</sup> Wed.	8 pm	28.445	AERO ARC Net
4 <sup>th</sup> Wed	8 pm	147.240	AERO ARC Net
5 <sup>th</sup> Wed.	8 pm	449.575	AERO ARC Net

## The BARC Mini-Fest

If it's the last Wednesday in January, it must be BARC Mini-fest time.

Each year this free event put on by the Baltimore Amateur Radio Club gets better. It was true again this year.

The BARC mini-fest filled the Home Arts Building with buyers and sellers of all types of used and new items.

Originally started as an indoor "tailgate" venture, the mini-fest seems to be drawing some commercial vendors as well. The atmosphere is reminiscent of the old Calvert Hall Hamfest of the 1970's.

Aero members were well represented. The 5<sup>th</sup> Wednesday 440 MHz net was substituted by an eyeball round table at the fest. W3JDF and W3VRD were tending a sales table.

A good time was had by all and we look forward to it again next year.

Speaking of hamfests, BARC is looking for volunteers to help with the March Hamboree, if you can help contact Robin AA3SB at [aa3sb@arrl.net](mailto:aa3sb@arrl.net).

## Bringing Home the Mars

The Glenn L Martin Aviation Museum is trying to bring home one of the historic seaplanes built by the Martin Co. here in Middle River as a premier display. Two P2M Martin Mars aircraft have been put on the auction block by their Canadian owners. They are still in flight condition and recently used to carry water to forest fires in Canada.

The museum is raising funds to place a bid for one of the planes. If the museum is successful, area residents could see the Mars taxiing up Dark Head Cove whence it first left as a U.S. Navy aircraft.

The Mars name has several connections to Middle River. The old Mars Estates Apartments and Mars Supermarket were named after the seaplane.

In light of the Aero Club's early connection to the Martin Company, the membership voted to donate \$100 to the museum's effort.

The Aero Amateur Radio Club wishes The Glenn L Martin Aviation Museum best of luck in securing this piece of Middle River Aviation History.

## Emergency Communications



The regularly monthly Baltimore County COMMEX for February 13<sup>th</sup> was cancelled due to an impending ice storm. Instead an impromptu net was called and RACES members were put on alert.

Fortunately the storm passed and it was not necessary for RACES to deploy.

## NTS New Local Frequencies

With the new frequency allocations that took effect in December 2006 the local National Traffic System affiliate nets have QSY'ed as follows:

**MDD (CW)** has moved to **3557 kHz (+/-);**

**MSN (CW)** has moved to **3563 kHz (+/-);**

**MEPN** has moved to **3820 kHz (+).** The backup frequencies of **1920 kHz (winter), 7243 kHz (summer), 28350 kHz** ground wave and **two meter FM** will still apply.

## Station Activities

W3VRD racked up major points during the January VHF contest. KB3JDE looks forward to a debut on the next 10 meter net. WA3TAD was spotted at the BARC mini-fest. K3CXC was spotted at Giant and reports that he will be retiring from his job at Martin State Airport.

## VE Corner

*By AC3F*



The FCC's announcement that the code test would go away as of February 23 brought a flood of applicants to the January 27<sup>th</sup> VE Testing session at White Marsh. A record number of 13 applicants line up to register. Some were there to get there General or Extra CSCE before the change. Others were there to get a Tech license.

They came from all over too. There were applicants from Dundalk and Towson. But some traveled from Virginia, Pennsylvania and Delaware too.

Alas, this session would be the final opportunity to take a code test. The Code Test Team waited in vain as no one came forward to give it a try, even when it was offered at no extra charge.

In the end there were 7 new Techs, 3 CSCEs for General, and 2 upgrades to Extra.

Thanks to KB3KRV, KB3KRW, K3ROJ, KB3RMX, WB3FMT, and AC3P for helping.

Welcome to Mike, K3YGC, who joined our VE team for the first time.

With the coming change in testing, a special was scheduled for February 24<sup>th</sup> at North Point to process CSCEs for hams who had already passed elements 3 & 4.

Then next regular test session will be at White March March 24.

**SO NOW YOU'RE HF-ACTIVE**

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"Wow, I never thought this day would come. The FCC finally flexed its regulatory muscle and notified the world that US Amateur Radio operators will no longer be required to pass a Morse code proficiency test to indulge in the world below 50 Mhz. What does this mean for ME?"

This is a fair and honest question that many Technician class amateurs will be faced with in the coming weeks and months as American hams learn to accept the end of a long standing tradition and the beginning of a new era. It is natural to be excited about the new privileges that you will be granted. You are eager to plan your new HF station, purchase some new gear, and maybe even erect a tower and directional antenna for that DX band you've been hearing such great things about. There is so much out there to do and be a part of, you don't know where to begin.

I can assure you, this is a road that everyone has traveled in their quest as an amateur operator, code or not. You'll be certain to receive the wise counsel of some older fellow who has more than a few tips to share. A friend who upgraded his license to General last year will offer his insight into propagation and techniques for busting a pile-up. The local club will be offering a class on operating procedures. No worries, for there is a lot of resources at your disposal. All you must do is display a willingness to learn.

As exciting as the news is for you and as eager as you are, you can't help but wonder what mode you will like the best. Everyone says that PSK-31 offers the most efficient use of the spectrum and can cut through a host of propagation conditions that other modes can't. You saw an Extra class ham on Field Day working a digital station and this was the mode he used. It was interesting and he sure looked like he was having fun, but it kind of reminded you of an internet chat room like QRZ.COM.

Your buddy, the guy who upgraded his license before the new rules, swears that SSB is the most fun mode. He barely squeaked by on his code test and never looked back. He regularly checks into the WAS nets and is close to his goal on 80 meters and already confirmed 40 meters. There certainly won't be a lack of new friends to make on phone. Hmm...Maybe this will become your favorite mode too.

But there's one other fellow who keeps showing up and offering you suggestions that make a lot of sense but you're just not sure if you have it in you. He's the local CW guru and he spent the last two years coaxing you to master the code before the requirement was dropped, but you failed to heed his advice. You know it is probably too late to learn it now, the new rules go into effect next week, but you must admit that with the "pressure" off the idea of casually studying the code is intriguing. You've read some stuff on the internet about colorful figures in the history of amateur radio and telegraphy like Hiram Percy Maxim and T.R. McElroy. You've watched your CW friend use his Blue Racer during a contest and were fascinated by his skills. You feel a certain connection to this storied tradition even when you tap out "SOS" on your desk with your index finger. What is stopping you from turning your years of procrastination into something you think might benefit you in the long run?

My friend the answer is simple. Nothing is stopping you, nothing at all except the same thing that hindered every CW op who ever "dit his first dah." Learning Morse code is a work in

progress. It is an endeavor of achievement that has a certain beginning but no real end. No matter what skill level your CW associates may brag to possess, they all make mistakes and have plenty of room for improvement. Just knowing this should set your mind at ease and give you inspiration!

Yep, you finally got that new HF rig via UPS delivery. The tower isn't up yet, but you managed to hoist a coax fed dipole into the old oak tree in the back yard. You cut it for 40 meters in hopes that it will offer the most playing time at this point in the sunspot cycle. Everything is hooked up and ready to go.

Power "ON"....Shschhhhschhtishahshhi....Static. "Hmmm what frequency is that? Oh, out of band."....Zzschshizz...dadidadit dadadidah...dadidadit dadadidah. Oh boy, you recognize that familiar sound. Someone is calling CQ in code. Well, at least you know your antenna and feed line are working ok. Tune up...tune down...tune up. Nothing but static crashes and faint voices. You can't make anything out. Everything seems to be in order, filters configured for SSB. This is 40 meters, and you are on the lower sideband. "Oh well, I guess the band is dead".

So you tune back down to the CW sub band. Amazingly, as you move back to that CQ frequency, you must hear at least three ongoing QSOs along the way. Two of them are way to fast to make heads or tails, but one guy is sending slow enough that even YOU can copy a few of his characters. "Wow", you think. "I could do THAT!" You put the headphones on and lean back in your chair, close your eyes, and listen to the rhythm. You only know a handful of letters...S,O,C,Q....uh..uh...well SOS and CQ...but you are amazed that every time you hear these characters you immediately recognize them. "Hey, 26 letters in the alphabet, and I already know four!" You think to yourself, "Not bad."

My friend, you've just been bitten by the bug. There is a mystery behind all of those funny tones in the ether, and we've all found a childlike fascination with them at some point. You stand on the threshold of letting it be more than a fleeting interest. You have an opportunity before you to affiliate yourself with a tradition that has stood the test of time, and will stand strong many, many more years despite the actions of the Commission. Will you be just another op who jumps on board the sideband rollercoaster of QRM and static, or will you take the time to learn and develop a skill that will stay with you a lifetime?

This message is brought to you in hopes that you will consider the opportunities that CW brings. There is a large group of hams young and old whose only desire is to see the art and skill of telegraphy passed on for as long as it is feasible. Back before the FCC R&O, many of these folks seemed abrasive, but you must realize that they knew this day was coming but wanted nothing more than to delay it for as long as they could. Their desire is not to hold back deserving and ambitious hams that have much to offer. It never was. They simply seek to maintain the traditions which are the history of this hobby. They want to preserve and foster a mode of communication that they love and are proud to be a part of. Were their concerns and their motivations so unworthy?

Next time you fire up that brand new rig and hear the tell-tale music of Samuel Morse's creation, think about these things, and consider getting in touch with that fellow with the Vibroplex. I'm sure he'll be glad to invite you to his shack to show off his bug collection, and no doubt he'd be the first to take the time out to teach you those other 22 letters and some numbers to boot. Just think about it.

For Sale

**Estate Sale**

<b>SWAN 350B 80, 40, 20, 15, 10 meter 125 watt transceiver</b>	<b>\$ 150</b>
<b>SWAN SWR 1A Power Meter</b>	<b>\$ 10</b>
<b>Ringo 10 meter vertical (Must be removed from roof)</b>	<b>\$50</b>
<b>MFJ901 Antenna Tuner</b>	<b>\$20</b>

**All prices negotiable.**

**Contact Frank Stone AC3P**  
**410-687-7209 [ac3p@juno.com](mailto:ac3p@juno.com)**

## March 2007

				1	2	3
						ARRL DX Contest Phone
4 ARRL DX Contest Phone	5	6	7 Meeting Coffman's 7:30 p.m.	8		10
11	12	13	14 10 Meter Net 28.445 MHz 8 p.m.	15		17
18	19	20	21 Meeting Coffman's 7:30 p.m.	22		24 CQ Worldwide WPX Contest Phone
25 CQ Worldwide WPX Contest Phone	26	27	28 2 Meter Net 147.24 MHz 8 p.m.	29		31 Greater Baltimore Hamboree Timonium Fairgrounds