

# April 1996

## **BOONE HOSPITAL MEETING LOCATION EXTENDED!!!!**

Robert McMinn, KB0TCR, our VP, informs me that we may use our current meeting place of Cafeteria Room B in Boone Hospital on E. Broadway in Columbia at least through July, after which our regular meeting place at Boone Electric is slated to be ready. There will be a video program after the meeting about Amateur Radio in space - - satellite communication and such. We will also test as usual. Come on down!!!

## **CLUB PACKET STATION**

On Monday, 18 Mar, Jim, WY0B, discovered the power supply (WY0B's personal property) to the packet station at the Red Cross to be "fried". It also turns out that the Kenwood VHF radio that is connected to the TNC is damaged, as well as the MFJ keyer also attached through the TNC. Lightning is believed to be the culprit, as there are no arresters or a good ground at the station. The station will be down until repairs can be made to the involved equipment.

## **ROSTER**

The 1996 Club Roster is almost ready. It is based on the current paid membership of the club, and currently has about 42 names. It will be part of the May newsletter. If anyone does NOT want their home phone to be listed in the roster, please let me know at (573) 875-1943, or by e-mail to mfoeckin@mail.coin.missouri.edu. Thank you!!!!

## **FIELD DAY UPDATE**

As in the last newsletter, Field Day '96 will be held June 22- 23 at Pine Ridge State Park on Route Y near Guthrie. According to a letter I received from the rangers, if other campers complain about our generators, we will have to not run them during the late night. If anyone can supply deep cycle batteries and Coleman type lanterns for this eventuality, it would make for greater preparedness (after all, isn't this what Field Day is all about?). We will probably be using tents for shelter, and laptop computers for logging, and should give some thought to power for the computers also. It would be best if we are able to run both the CW and phone stations all night, especially since the low bands will be best for propagation in this point in the sunspot cycle.

## **C. DILLARD (SMITTY) SMITH, SK**

I regret to inform our readers of the passing of C. Dillard (Smitty) Smith, W0AOP, on 12 Mar 1996. He was 82 years old and had been licensed longer than most of us have been alive. Smitty was active in the very early days of the club, and a newspaper clipping with a photograph of him is posted in the CMRA club station. He will certainly be missed.

## **OPERATING HINT**

I have found that a useful "beacon" for 10 meters, in addition to the CW beacons that populate the 28.250 - 28.300 range, is the CB frequency 27.025 (Channel 6). This is considered by CB'ers to be an AM "skip" channel, and when this frequency is open, it is likely that 10 meters will also be open at that time. The operators will often give their QTH, but it may be a bit difficult for the uninitiated to decipher (the "sandpile" is Florida, for example). A word of caution: This is the Chicken Band at it's very best (or worst) and many of the operators that you hear are running considerable power (more than 1000 W) through high gain antennas, so your 100 W Kenwood out to your dipole on 28.400 may not "get out" quite as well. Hopefully as we move

into spring we will see more openings up there, as with its low noise is a pleasurable band to use.

## **INTERNET**

There are a number of home pages at <http://www.4w.com/ham/> for various interests in ham radio. KA9FOX has a contest and DX oriented home page, N6TR (Tree Tyree) has a public domain CW logging and contesting package available for download, and the "sultans of Shwing" (a group participating in various CW contests) also have a page here. CAUTION: some of the material on these pages is adult oriented. There are a couple of companies with pages on this server that make low band antennas and such. 4w also makes available home pages for (supposedly) \$2.50/month to amateurs, on which up to a half megabyte of Web data can be stored.

## **HAM RADIO, PUBLIC SERVICE OR PUBLIC NUISANCE**

### **(RFI and the urban amateur)**

By Mark Foecking, AA0UJ

Good day to all. I'm sitting here, radio on and amp tuned up, listening to an 20 meter SSB station in the Ukraine run American stations. It is right at sunrise now, and I imagine if I key up and call him, that I could get through the little pileup and bag a new one. However, there is also a thought in the back of my head that if I key up at this hour with full power on SSB, that I will come home to find my feedlines cut, or worse. It's happened once, and while it was relatively easy to repair the damage, it might not be the next time. I have been approached by various neighbors concerning interference, and have been able to help a couple, but some others feel that the best solution is to take down those ugly antennas and just watch TV and talk on the phone like "normal people".

The ARRL calls ham radio a "national resource". It is an undisputed fact that hams have helped in disaster after disaster with communication and other services. PRB-1 is a law that provides federal preemption of antenna regulations, and has been used successfully in several cases of antenna disputes. Yet, just try to purchase or rent a house in a new subdivision, and the deed or lease will almost certainly contain a provision prohibiting outdoor antennas of any type, or even an outright ban on transmitting devices. Guess if you're upscale enough to live in one of these places, you're upscale enough to afford cable TV, and "normal" enough not to want to cause a nuisance by doing something as nerdy as running a radio transmitter. Why, people ask, don't you just call your friends on the phone when you want to talk to them, instead of fritzing up everyones phones and TV's with that stupid thing?

Personally, I don't like to be forced to spend money in ways that I consider unnecessary. I don't think antennas are any uglier than concrete flamingos or burro and cart planters. Consumer electronic devices are supposed to reject undesired signals. Unfortunately, these views are at odds with most of the population's. Even though, in an emergency, my radios would be far more useful than their cordless phones and TVs, I am looked upon as an odd banana for my interest, and am not able to convince people otherwise. For them, the solution to interference is not for me to filter and ground their equipment, but for me to stop using the radio, or at least do it when everyone is asleep. As consumer electronics become more common, this problem will only grow worse.

Solutions? The only sure fire one, aside from operating at 2 in the morning, is to move to the country away from close in neighbors. In the city, there will always be those people who cut coax, and otherwise complain about interference without letting you do anything about it. The public service aspects of ham radio, while probably the best publicized part of the hobby, are still unknown to most people. Also, it is not well known that most hams are more than willing to help with interference problems, as they understand them better than most. It may be necessary to bear the cost of filters yourself. Even though you have no legal obligation to pay for them, it is easier for people who are suffering interference to cut your coax (or punch you out) than to buy

a \$10 high pass filter, and is a minor cost compared to that of setting up your station. Show people what you are doing, if they express even the mildest interest. Explain that in a tornado, ice storm, or earthquake, that you would be a conduit to the outside world that might not exist any other way. Be tactful and diplomatic, even if it means missing rare DX by not transmitting during the Big Eight finals with Missouri leading by 2 points (HI). There are too many hams who have become inactive for no other reason than not wanting to hear any more RFI complaints. RFI has severely injured our hobby, and while I don't think it will wipe it out, the negative public opinion generated by uncontained interference will result in more restrictive antenna and power laws, as well as outright bans on operation in some places. Let's inform and help our neighbors as best we can, so that we will be seen as a public service instead of a nuisance. 73 and CUL OM/YL de Mark, AA0UJ...