

THE HELLGATE STATIC



April 2010

Upcoming events that need your assistance!

by Jerry, N7GE

Once again we are requested to assist the Grizzly Triathlon event personnel with communications during the triathlon in the event there is an accident or injury to a participant. This year the event will take place on April 10th and we will need at between 12 and 14 volunteers to be able to position themselves along the course at designated spots and be able to provide communication back to the HARC coordinator in the event of an injury or issue that needs attention by the race officials. There will be a meeting afterwards for the volunteers if you have the time to attend have some nourishment and refreshments at no charge to the volunteer.

Let me know as soon as you can if you are available and I will put together the location for each person to man.

The next event will be the YMCA River Bank Run that will take place on the April 24th. This event usually requires more volunteers and starts at 8:00 AM. This event also will have a meet afterwards for nourishment and refreshments if the volunteers can make time to attend.

If it is possible to assist with either or both events, please let me know as soon as possible.

Thanks in advance for participating in this club event that helps us to maintain our non profit status and our club designation of a special event club.

If you are able to assist for either or both events please let Jerry know at jehli@modernmachinery.com or 523-1137 or cell 239-2223.

Thanks and 73's



Section Letter

The Annual Stevensville Hamfest was a rousing success. There were many in attendance from some distance away. A good supply of used gear and equipment was available. All in all, a great gathering. Thanks to Argus and Marcie for an enjoyable event.

The Idaho State Hamfest will be held in Boise on April 24th. If you are interested in attending, read the info available on the website.

Montana's 76th Glacier Hamfest is coming in July. Registration is open now. Don't forget to make your campsite reservations at the same time. Each year has been a good one and with luck, the weather will be good again this year.

Take time to pull down your antennas and inspect them for Winter damage. Look for worn hardware and loose fasteners, stretching from Ice loading, damaged transmission lines, broken insulators and damaged insulation. Remember that coax lines suffer deterioration when exposed to sunlight and moisture invades the jacket over time. If you've got old cables out in the weather, consider replacement with quality coax or at least a loss test on it, at different frequencies. Keep the info in your log for future reference. Increasing loss curves are a good reason to replace soon, as the line is at the end of it's useful life. Don't take an old lossy line to a hamfest and try to sell it as good cable. Junk it or at least mark it as old or lossy.

Thanks to all,
73
Doug Dunn, K7YD

Events Calendar

April 10 th	Grizzly Triathlon - Volunteers please contact Jerry, N7GE, n7ge@bresnan.net
April 12th	HARC monthly meeting at 7:00 pm, VEC testing starts at 5:30 pm.
April 17 th	Grizzly Man Race - Volunteers please contact Bill, W4YMA, billfarrell@hotmail.com
April 23 rd - 25 th	Idaho State Convention & Hamfest - visit www.idahostateconvention.com for more information.
April 24 th	Riverbank Run - Volunteers please contact Jerry, N7GE
May 1 st	7QP Contest
May 10th	HARC monthly meeting at 7:00 pm, VEC testing starts at 5:30 pm.
May 22 nd & 23 rd	TOSRV - Tour of Swan Valley - Volunteers contact Bob, N7MSU
July 16 th - 18 th	76 th Annual Glacier-Waterton International Peace Park Hamfest
1 st & 3 rd Sundays	Montana Races Net, 3.947 MHz at 8:00 am http://www.mtraces.org/
Saturday	Montana QCWA net, 3.935 MHz at 8:30 am
Daily	Montana Traffic Net, 3910 kHz at 6:30 pm MDT (00:30 GMT) http://montanatrafficnet.com/
Every Sunday	ARRL Montana Section HF Information Net, 3880 kHz at 8:00 am
Every Tuesday	Coffee at Arby's South, 2:00 pm, give a shout on 147.04 MHz to see if we are meeting.
Every Wednesday	HARC VHF Net meets at 147.04 MHz (+offset) at 9 pm
Every Saturday	"Ham" breakfast, Paradise Falls Restaurant, 7:00 am

Montana QSO Party

Montana QSO Party takes place April 9th, 0000Z to 11th 1300Z. The following frequencies are suggested for contest operation:

CW: 1.81, 3.54, 7.035, 14.04, 21.5, 28.05

SSB: 1.845, 3.810, 7.244, 14.262, 21.365, 28.325

Modes of operation include phone, CW and digital. Exchange RS(T), State / Province / DXCC Entity.

For more information about contests, visit <http://www.arrl.org/contests/>

Hellgate Amateur Radio Club is a 501(c)3 not for profit organization. Information concerning tax deductible donations of funds or equipment, or donations of any other kind, should be addressed to:

Hellgate Amateur Radio Club
PO Box 3811
Missoula, MT 59808-3811

Meetings held 2nd Monday of each month, 7:00 pm at Missoula Fire Station #4, 3011 Latimer off of West Broadway near Quality Supply. HARC members have a chance to win the Door Prize. *You must be present to win!*

Visit our web site at <http://www.w7px.org/>

Club Officers & Volunteers

Elmer, WG7P elmerm@hughes.net
President

Eric, NZ7S nz7s@msn.com
Vice President

Michael, AE7MH ae7mh@arrl.net
Secretary

Jerry, N7GE n7ge@bresnan.net
Treasurer

Liz, WG7E lizm@montana.com
Membership

Bob, N7MSU n7msu@arrl.net
Awards

Vick, K7VK k7vk@arrl.net
Exams VE Contact

Mike, AE7MH ae7mh@arrl.net
April Newsletter (rotates monthly)

Mike, KE7IZG mleary2001@yahoo.com
Webmaster

Repeater Committee

Paul, N7PAS (2010) n7pas@bresnan.net

Byron, NN8A (2010) arl3051@wildblue.net

Donnie, W7XY (2010-2011) fort@montana.com

Kevin, KE7WR (2010-2011) kgoffe1@msn.com

HELLGATE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB - Meeting Minutes for March 8, 2010

Firehouse #4, Missoula

Meeting called to order by Elmer, WG7P at 7 pm

Introductions were made with 22 members and 1 guest

Secretaries Report — Mike, AE7MH — **Motion Bill, W4YMA 2nd Betsy KF7ECS** to Approve the minutes as published for the February 8th meeting — **Motion Passed**

Treasurers Report— Jerry, N7GE — Jerry was unable to attend the meeting due to professional commitments – no report

Committee Reports

MEMBERSHIP—Liz, WG7E – Reminder that dues may be paid to either Liz, W7GE or Jerry, N7GE in person or can be sent to the PO Box. There is a new member application form available if your contact or membership information has changed. Remember your membership gives you voting rights and allows you to participate in club auctions as well as supports the club!

REPEATER — Eric, NZ7S — no report

NET OPERATORS — 3/17 **Mike, AE7MH** 3/24 **Dean, N7DLP** 3/31 **No Net – no volunteer** 4/7 **Paul, N7PAS** 4/14 **Bill, W4YMA**

Proposal was made that if we do not have more volunteers for the Wednesday night net, should we discontinue having the net?

OLD BUSINESS

STATIC—MONTHLY EDITOR, APRIL — **Michael, AE7MH** THANKS MICHAEL AE7MH FOR MARCH

GETTING TO KNOW ARTICLE? **Donna, KC7WRA** – Donna also requested that she receive a printed copy of the newsletter.

NAME BADGES — Elmer, WG7P— Name badges can still be ordered \$6 each. Other badges or engraving is available, Elmer will put you in contact with the supplier directly

ARGUS HAMFEST—ELMER WG7P—19 Club members attended, Michael, AE7MH gave a report on the VE testing, Lewis, AC7UZ shared about the selection of goodies and the fun had by all.

MICROPHONE FOR CLUB'S ICOM 706 – Microphone received – Clarification of microphone purchase, original microphone was not received with the donation of the Icom 706 from Mike McCracken. The original microphone was not lost by the club..

FIELD DAY 2010 — Elmer, WG7P — HARC has held field day at a number of locations in the past, it was discussed that the club might consider returning to some of these locations including Fort Missoula, Blue Mountain and Mount Sentinel. Members present voted to hold this years event at Fort Missoula and to have a Pot Luck. Further planning will continue as we get closer to Field Day. Field Day will be held June 26th & 27th

GENERAL CLASS — Kevin, W1KGK — 3 students present at the first class, several people at the meeting expressed interest in attending class, however the schedule was not communicated well. People interested in attending the class have been encouraged to attend.

TRAILER—Lewis, AC7UZ— **Voting held by members present** to approve pursuing the investigation of the trailer donated to the club and explore the possibilities of use as a storage trailer or a communications trailer. Information that needs to be gathered includes insurance for the trailer and contents, storage of the trailer, access to trailer and tracking of it's contents, licensing and registration, wiring needed for lights, materials needed for finishing the interior. **Members present voted in favor of pursuing the project, although this was not the formal approval of the purchase of the trailer.**

OTHER ITEMS

NEW BUSINESS

GRIZZLY TRIATHLON APRIL 10—Jerry, N7GE — signup sheets passed around, if you can assist, please contact Jerry

GRIZ MAN ADVENTURE RACE APRIL 17—Bill, W4YMA—minimum of 5 to 7 people are needed, the race starts at 6:30 am, signup sheets passed around, if you can assist, please contact Bill

RIVERBANK RUN APRIL 24—Jerry, N7GE—signup sheets passed around, if you can assist, please contact Jerry

OTHER ITEMS — Remember that Tour of the Swan valley is May 22nd and 23rd this year.

PROGRAM—Bob, N7MSU presented and discussed the 7QP (7TH AREA QSO PARTY) contest, how the contest works and locations that have been operated from were shown and discussed. HARC members are encouraged to participate.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

IDAHO STATE CONVENTION APRIL 23-25—www.idahostateconvention.com—20-30 handheld or mobile radio as prizes (\$4,000), raffle off special events station, Yaesu FT-8800 early bird registration drawing, vendors, over 300 attend

WORKED ALL HELLGATE AWARD—ARE YOU UP TO THE CHALLENGE? Bob black, K7BA will be on the net Wednesday 3/10 to help those whom need him as a contact. Otherwise, don't be afraid to call him on the phone and setup a QSO!

RADIO PIN/EVENT COLLECTOR—José Luis, EA1AX, www.ea1ax.es from Spain is interested in obtaining pins from club events or other amateur radio events. If you have any pins that you would be interested in selling, please contact him via his web site.

REPRESENTING CLUB — Elmer, WG7P — Remember that if you are speaking on behalf of the club or representing the club's view, make sure you have the authority from them club to represent those view.

BUY OR SELL?

GOOD OF THE ORDER

DOOR PRIZE DRAWING—Larry, K7IZG won the 7 piece SAE nut driver set

MOTION TO ADJOURN—Motion Paul, N7PAS 2nd Michael, AE7MH to adjourn.

Tower Safety—It's More Than Just the Harness

By Christine Burke, KØALT

Editor's Note: WRO readers in November 2009 were treated to the cover story "One of Them," a humorous look at having a non-ham spouse, by Christine Burke, KØALT. After submitting the piece and attending a seminar on antenna tower safety, Burke learned the old lineman's belt she wore in the cover picture "did not set a very good safety example." This month Burke revisits her tower and brings a new perspective on safety techniques and climbing gear that can help assure antenna work is no accident.

It started with a bang – or more accurately, a *thunk*.

Mike Higgins, K6AER, stood in front of a room of people interested in learning about antenna tower safety at an amateur radio conference last year with an old leather climbing belt in his hand.

"Do you have one of these in your garage?" he asked. "Throw it away." And into a wastebasket it landed. "If one of these stops your fall, you'll either be dead or paralyzed."

"Yikes!" I thought. It looked just like the one in my basement. I had used it many times.

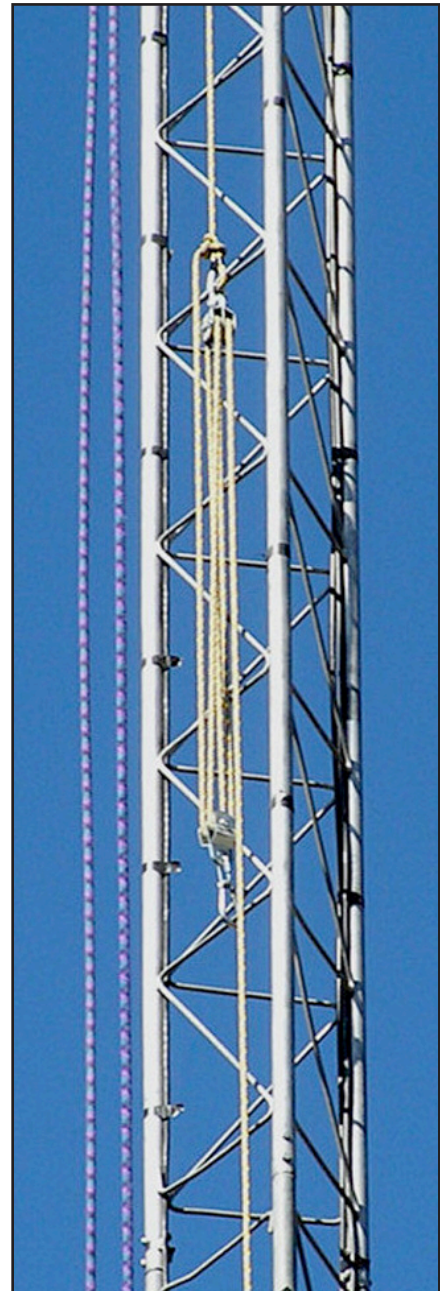
Mike went on to demonstrate the characteristics of an OSHA-approved fall arrest harness. He showed us fall lanyards and positioning lanyards, emphasizing the importance of staying attached to the tower at all times.

Although I was unhappy about the cost, I knew I should purchase a new harness. We didn't need a top-of-the-line model. But we did need a fairly decent one that would allow one of us to be on the tower for two or three hours at a time in reasonable comfort.

I procrastinated until one day my tribander stopped working. It was time to plan a tower project.

After exchanging a few e-mails with K6AER, I went shopping on the Internet.

Christine Burke, KØALT, got her Novice license in 1970, her General in 1971, and her Extra in 2005. Most of her ham radio activity has been since 2004. She enjoys DXing and contesting from her QTH in rural western Colorado. Her other interests include cycling and whitewater canoeing.



This hoisting system uses two double pulleys, also called "blocks." One pulley is fixed, or "standing" and the other moves. If the hauling rope comes from the standing block, the mechanical advantage is 4. With no friction, a 100 pound load could be lifted with 25 pounds of force. If the hauling rope comes from the moving block, the mechanical advantage is 5. Real-world friction reduces the advantage. Note that a temporary steel thimble protects the rope where it is attached to the top pulley.

I sorted through a bewildering array of harnesses and lanyards, looked around for the best price and placed my order for a harness, a positioning lanyard and two fall lanyards.

I got a size medium, which would fit either my husband or me.

With the harness on the way, I began calling friends and discussing the details of the project with my husband, Mike Gross. When it comes to planning the actual maneuvers on the tower, he is the brains of our operation.

I knew we needed to pull the rotator, loosen the U-bolts on the monobander, and lower the heavy mast until the tribander, which was the top antenna, came within reach.

But how were we going to handle all that weight? "Let me think about it," Mike said. He began making sketches for a pulley system.

Ropes and Pulleys

Having proper climbing equipment is only one aspect of safe tower work. Another major consideration is handling heavy loads. To lift or lower them safely and efficiently requires practical skills with ropes and pulleys.

Although it involves some expense, it's essential to have a good quality rope of sufficient length.

The main load-hauling rope needs to be twice as long as your highest attachment point (probably a gin pole length above your top section), plus 20 or 30 feet for your ground crew to pull on, plus more for a block and tackle.

Depending on how you position your hoisting gear on the tower, the block and tackle could easily use another 30 to 50 feet of line. Any part of the line that has to pass through a pulley should be continuous and free of knots.

Once I was on a ground crew that had to stop, tie off a heavy load and untie a knot to get the line through the pulley at the bottom of the tower. It didn't feel safe.

Rope that is appropriate for your hauling system is unlikely to be available in the sale bin at the local home improvement store. What you'll find there is mostly in 100-foot lengths, and it might be too stretchy.

We got our hauling rope from a discount camping store that carries mountaineering rope. The low-stretch, tightly braided polyester rope used by climbers and rescue teams is called "static line" or "accessory cord."

It is durable, abrasion-resistant, and will pull your load rather than stretching out when you haul on it. (Climbers also use stretchy "dynamic" ropes for fall protection, so take care to get the right kind.)

For our purposes, the diameter should be at least 3/8 inch, or 8 mm. If you get your rope from a marine supply store, look for low-stretch line that is suitable for halyards.

Besides the main hauling system, we also use a delivery system for sending tools, the rotator, and other small items up and



Christine Burke, KØALT, practices using her new fall arrest safety climbing harness on the 69-foot tower at her rural western Colorado station.



Mike Gross, KØALT's husband, connects a balun to her lowered tribander antenna during a recent tower climbing excursion.

down the tower. You can be less choosy about this rope.

The delivery system only requires a single pulley at the top. The canvas tote bags that are given away at conventions make handy delivery buckets.

When we maneuver an antenna up through the guys, a person on the ground uses a tag line to adjust its angle or position. A 100-foot rope from the hardware store will probably be sufficient for this use. And because no pulleys are involved, you can safely tie two ropes together to get the desired length.

To lower our mast, Mike rigged a pulley system with several components. At one end of the line was a cast iron hook secured in the bottom of the mast. From there, the line went up to the top of the tower, through a pulley, and down the tower. Part way down the tower, on the outside, he inserted a double block and tackle.

At the bottom of the tower was one more pulley to allow for a horizontal pull. A load that would have been dangerously heavy became easily manageable for me with the help of one backup person.

For more information about rigging ropes and pulleys to create a mechanical advantage, there's a great little illustrated book called *Moving Heavy Things*, by Jan Adkins.

A tie-off post about twenty feet from the tower allows the ground crew to rest while work is being performed above. We sank a four-by-four with about three feet in the ground and two feet above ground.

Not All Knots Are Safe

If you are going to use ropes to do work, you'll need to know a few good knots.

There's a difference between *hitches*, which attach ropes to objects, and *bends*, which tie two ropes together.

I was surprised to learn that the reef or square knot that we learned as children is not an all-purpose knot. When improperly used, it can be downright dangerous.

According to Clifford W. Ashley in *The Ashley Book of Knots*, "There have probably been more lives lost as a result of using a Square Knot as a bend (to tie two ropes together) than from the failure of any other half dozen knots combined."

Useful bends include the sheet bend, the carrick bend, and Ashley's bend.

For attaching a rope to a mast, an antenna, or a piece of coax, use a hitch, such as a rolling hitch. The bowline is excellent when you need a loop that doesn't cinch up.

It's not necessary to invest in the encyclopedic, though fascinating book by Ashley. A smaller book, such as *The Handbook of Knots, A Step-by-Step Guide to Tying and Using More Than 100 Knots*, by Des Pawson, can be a fine resource for learning the basics.

Site Inspection

It's easy to become so goal-driven that you develop tunnel vision. When my tribander stopped working, I spent a lot of time fussing over traps and worrying about the rapid approach of winter.

It didn't even occur to me that the tower guys might have become loose after a couple of years of no adjustments. I'm embarrassed to say that a friend had to point it out to me. We get into more about guys in the sidebar "*Tower Safety: Areas of Special Concern.*"

So, before starting a tower project, do a site inspection. Look at the area around your tower base. Cut or remove tall, thick

grass and weeds that can obscure trip hazards such as rocks and holes. Your ground crew needs a clear path for rope-pulling and other tasks.

Also check any areas where you might need to drag a rope. We learned the hard way that if you drag a rope through a patch of prickly pear cactus, you'll get a rope full of spines. Fortunately, the spines came out after we ran the rope through the clothes washer. (Always wash rope inside a mesh bag!) I also dug up the offending plants before the next work session.

Hard Hats Only Work When They're On Your Head

Any good article on tower safety will mention hard hats, especially for the ground crew. The problem is that the hat only works if you wear it.

It's a challenge to get people to use them. Without a chin strap, even a snug-fitting hat can fall off the first time you look up at the top of the tower.

Tower Safety: Areas of Special Concern

- **Don't over-tighten tower bolts.** It can compromise the structural integrity of the tubing, or make it tougher to remove the sections if you need to take it down.
- **Tower legs are particularly vulnerable** to corrosion near the concrete base. The concrete should be crowned so that water drains away and dirt does not collect there. Even galvanized metal can rust. Bill Brown, KØUK, applies a coat of rust-resistant paint on the lowest tower section if it is used as a base.
- **Water collecting in tower legs** can cause serious damage, especially when it freezes. The installation specifications for Rohn towers call for the tower legs to extend into a gravel bed underneath the concrete base for drainage purposes. Even so, water can build up in the legs. Bill drills a tiny weep hole in each leg, near the concrete. Each year Bill applies some rust resistant paint to this hole, making sure it doesn't block the hole.
- **Over-engineer the guy anchor points.** Bill sets a piece of four-inch or six-inch steel I-beam in concrete, with a couple of feet extending above ground. Elevating the attachment point above ground level makes it easier to work on.
- **Maintain the proper guy tension.** Guys will normally loosen a little during hot weather due to thermal expansion, and this is acceptable. If you remove too much of the summer slack, they will be too tight in the winter. This will either cause the guys to stretch, or it will put too much tension on the tower. Some old timers can adjust guys by feel. It's probably better to obtain a tension measuring device. The Rohn manuals provide tension specifications for guys at 60 degrees Fahrenheit.
- **Inspect critical components once a year.** Check guy cables for rust. Examine guy assemblies, turnbuckles, nuts and bolts, and the overall appearance of the tower.
- **Always wear safety glasses** when working with steel cables, as well as a good pair of gloves. Leather is preferred due to toughness, but other materials can also work well.
- **Take care of your ropes.** Keep them clean and store them indoors. Ultra-violet light can weaken ropes. Before each use, inspect them for abrasion and other damage.
- **If you are climbing a tower other than your own,** find out who installed it and what specifications they used. Plus, do a thorough inspection of all critical areas similar to your maintenance routine.

— Christine Burke, KØALT

After that, what are the chances that you will bother to put it back on? Chin straps can be purchased as accessories, or you can fashion your own.

There is apparently a shortage of chin straps on ships and oil rigs operating in the Gulf of Mexico. In recent years, hundreds of hard hats have washed up on the beaches of Texas. Mike and I picked up two nice ones while on vacation last year.

According to Mike Higgins, K6AER, hard hats should meet the OSHA safety rating 1910.135 or ISO International Standard No. 3873-1977.

Listen to the Old Timers

Bill Brown, KØUK, has been a ham since he was 13 and has been climbing towers even longer.

As a young man in Kentucky, he helped his uncle and others with projects on both ham towers and commercial towers. Since he moved to Colorado in 1973, he's been involved in building several of the big contesting stations, as well as commercial tower work, such as taking down the old KSTR tower in Grand Junction.

"The main thing is common sense," Bill says. "It just doesn't make sense to work on the tower when it's too windy, rainy, or snowy, or when there is lightning nearby. And getting too close to power lines with any kind of object – that's just not smart."

"You should never be rushed. Your approach to the work needs to be calm and well-planned. If you start to get tired, come down the tower and take a break.

"If your hands or your feet start to get cramped, you'll start making mistakes. And you have to be strong and fit. If you're not, you shouldn't be up there. It's physically demanding. Know what your body can take.

"Also, I don't climb in the mid-summer when it's too awfully hot. I work on my tower in the mild weather."

Over-Engineer for Safety

Falling people and falling objects are not the only potential risks in tower work. The tower can buckle, or worse, fold or collapse, if it is not properly installed and maintained.

Bill stresses the importance of following the engineering specifications when installing a tower. "If you don't have the engineering manual for your tower, you can probably find it on the Internet," he says.

"Those specifications have a good margin of safety in them. Build to that spec, or even stronger, and don't cut corners. That way, if the wind blows, you know you have the extra 15 to 30 percent of strength."

Respect, Not Fear

Bill Brown was nine years old when he first hopped onto a tower and climbed up 20 feet to retrieve a dipole support rope. That's when his uncle realized it was time to teach the boy about safe climbing techniques.

"I started out with the old-style linesman's belt," he recalls. "I was never really afraid, but I always had respect. Fear doesn't do you any good. Working on a tower is the same at 30 feet as it is at 200 feet – it just doesn't feel that way to a lot of people. But you have to be calm and relaxed.

"Don't try to do something that is out of your league. Leave it alone, or ask someone who has the knowledge and experience to help you."

Teamwork and Planning

Bill Brown's advice for beginners is to "be a grunt on the

ground until you really know what you're doing. As you mature and get stronger, you can climb higher."

I asked him what he looks for in a ground crew. "You've got to have people with experience, and people who listen to them.

"In an inexperienced person, I look for the ability to take directions and not be a know-it-all. I don't want to work around macho behavior – people who are taking chances.

"An older fellow who used to climb a lot – but can't now – is wonderful to have on the ground crew. He is in synch with me. He or she will generally know what I'm doing, and anticipate what I need next.

"We have to be able to think two or three moves ahead. We have to understand the forces that are involved, and not stress the equipment or ourselves."

Working in three dimensions while 70 feet up can get complicated. When a project involves more than just a minor tweak, my husband writes a list of every step in the project.

Often, the act of making the list will raise new issues that we can deal with ahead of time. This reduces the amount of time spent on the tower, and prevents us from forgetting a step.

Forgotten steps can be costly in terms of time and energy. Once, we forgot to drill a hole. Mike had to send the part down, come down the tower, drill the hole, and climb back up. Even if he had trusted me to drill the hole, he would have had to wait on the tower.

I've learned a lot since we installed our tower in 2004. The antenna project in 2009 showed me that I still have plenty to learn.

Fortunately, my mistakes have been small ones, such as getting cactus spines in a rope, or forgetting to drill a hole. In the future, I'll continue to listen to the voices of experience, and remember to keep the big picture in mind.

DXRS DONATE THOSE FOREIGN STAMPS!!

By Bob N7MSU

- Hams that QSL with foreign countries often end up with a pile of envelopes franked with foreign stamps. Please, don't pitch them in the circular file. They can be useful to others. Our sister Missoula club, the Garden City Stamp Club, is happy to take them.
- Keith Yale, the club's secretary, tells me that, while current foreign stamps are not usually very valuable, the club often gives them to beginning hobbyists or auctions them to raise money for the coffee fund.
- I've made several small donations over the years, since Wayne N7TAE passed away.
- If you have some stamps to donate, leave them on their envelopes. Don't steam or cut them off, as the franking over the stamps lends them some value.
- You can contact Keith Yale at 549-2163.

Getting to Know Our Club Members

Articles featuring club members appear monthly as available. If you would be willing to write a brief article about yourself sharing some of your background and experiences please let K7VK Vick or WG7P Elmer know.

This month: Donna, KC5WRA

My name is Donna Pecastaing. I was born in Cheyenne Wyoming in October 1944. I remained there until I was 8 years old, when my family and I moved to New Mexico. My father was a disabled veteran and our family needed to have the support of my mother's family to help care for him. Mother found work at a pharmacy, and was able to continue working until her retirement 25 years later. Father was an excellent mechanic and worked as often as his health would allow. Our family never had much money; but dad's love was radios. His collection included many different brands of radios including Hallicrafters. Dad would stay up late at night and listen to radio broadcasts. I have inherited this trait from my father, I can be found listening to the radio or scanner until the very early hours of the morning.

I started singing at age 4 and started singing seriously when I turned 12 years old. I also added playing piano to this mix when I was 10 years old; I continued to play the piano through college. When I was 12 years old, I figured out that I really wanted to become a teacher; I just wasn't sure what I wanted to teach! In high school and college my passion for music and theatre arts continued. I have bachelors of Fine Arts degree from the University of New Mexico. In addition to my studies toward this degree, I also took courses in history, anthropology and geology.

I got my first job teaching music, guitar and drama in Cuba, New Mexico. The kids there were 75% Navajo with the remaining 25% being made up with a mixture of hispanic and other backgrounds. I was fortunate to have learned spanish from my mother when I was younger. After 7 years of teaching in Cuba, I moved to the Pueblo of Zuni, New Mexico where I taught until my retirement in 2001.

While living in Zuni, I earned my technician amateur radio license and the call sign of KC5WRA. Living on the reservation, often amateur radio was the only way to communicate as not everyone had telephone service or had regular access to power. Living on the reservation was a remote life, but an interesting one. I often learned more than I taught out there.

How come I moved to Montana? Well I had always wanted to move back up north. I wanted to move where there was lots of water, rivers, lakes, streams and plenty of good water to drink. Living all those years on the reservation, water was always a challenge, drinking or other wise. Many of my former students moved north to work in the oil fields of South Dakota, Wyoming and Montana. In 1997, several past students got together and paid for a trip for me to visit. Needless to say, I was flabbergasted at this gift.

Visiting Missoula, I fell in love. I went home and taught four more years. July 4th of 2001, I packed my things and moved my new home located in Milltown. Amateur radio friends helped me drive the convoy of two large U-Haul trucks, my van, seven cats and two dogs to Montana.

Before moving to Missoula, I had arranged to get employment with Partners in Home Care. They trained me to be a Personal Care Attendant and how to help patients with their needs. During my working career in Montana I have worked for three other home care companies and presently I am working for Express Employment Professionals. I am working with only two clients as I have slowed down a bit for this type of work. I also play piano for the eleven Missoula area nursing homes and for the Community Hospital Rehabilitation Unit. Needless to say, my calendar does not have a blank spot on it. I keep busy!

If I had more time for hobbies, I would spend more time with the Hellgate Radio Club, the Hellgate Gem and Mineral Club, reading and practicing the many instruments that I have. I am also studying for my general class amateur radio license. I can often be found studying between 12 and 3 am or whenever I can work in a minute or two.

Thank you for allowing me to share part of my life with you and I look forward to reading about other members whom are willing to share part of their lives.

Donna

7th Call Area QSO Party -- May 1-2, 2010

1300 UTC Saturday to 0700 UTC Sunday (6 AM to midnight PDT the first Saturday in May). 7th call area stations work everyone, others work 7th area stations only. Work stations once per band/mode. 7th area mobiles (and those participating in other concurrent QSO parties or contests) may be worked again as they enter new counties. Rule changes are shown in bold italic.

Entry categories:

- Single-op: high-power, low-power <150W, QRP <5W; CW, Phone, Digital, Mixed
- Multi-single (including assisted single-op): High, low and QRP
- Multi-multi. No differentiated mode or power levels
- 7th-area County Expedition: single-op, multi-single, multi-multi
- Mobile: high-power, low-power, QRP; CW, Phone, Digital, Mixed

Awards: Certificates will be awarded to the top three finishers in each category within and outside the 7th call area, plus the top finisher in each state/province and 7th area county; a 25-QSO minimum applies. See the web site for a list of plaques to be awarded.

Exchange: 7th area stations send signal report plus 5-letter state/county code (e.g. ORDES; see list). County-line stations send multiple codes, e.g. UTRIC/IDBEA (state code needed only once, e.g. ORDES/JEF). Non-7th-area stations send signal report plus state/province/"DX" two-letter codes. Stations in other QSO parties send their appropriate exchange. The 13 "Provinces" are VE1-9, VO and VY0-2. County-line contacts may be logged with one entry showing all counties or with separate entries for each county.

Bands: 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6 and 2m, simplex only. Suggested operating frequencies: 1815 and 40 kHz up on CW, except on 40m, where 7025-7035 is suggested; 1845, 3855, 7180, 14255, 21355 and 28455 on SSB; 3580+, 7035+, 14070+, 21070+ on PSK; 3585+, 7038+, 14075+, 21075+ on RTTY. Check 80m at 0500Z, 160m at 0530Z. All CW and Digital contacts must be in the CW/Data sub-bands.

Scoring: 2 points per SSB QSO, 3 points per CW or Digital QSO. County-line contacts count as multiple QSOs for both stations. 7th area stations multiply QSO points by states (50) plus provinces (13) plus other DXCC entities (maximum 10). Non-7th-area stations multiply QSO points by 7th area counties worked (259).

Logs: All logs must be received by June 5; logs containing more than 40 QSOs must be submitted electronically via email or floppy disk. Send logs to 7qplogs@codxc.org -- include the station callsign in the email "Subject" line. Cabrillo preferred (7QP details here) but any plain text format will be accepted. A web form is available for online Cabrillo log-file generation and submission. Be sure your entry includes name, address and/or email address, station callsign, entry category, location code(s) and operator callsigns (if Cabrillo, they should appear within the Cabrillo file itself). Send paper logs with a completed summary sheet to 7th Call Area QSO Party, c/o CODXC, 61255 Ferguson Rd, Bend, OR 97702. Check to make sure your callsign, with correct entry category, appears on our web site's Received Logs page -- normally within two days of receipt.

Other: All equipment and antennas must lie within a 1000-foot diameter circle. A county expedition is an operation from a temporary location using antennas installed for the contest period, using temporary antenna supports or trees. Mobile stations must be self-contained and capable of motion. Any computer-to-computer mode is considered digital. The same station may be worked on each band on CW, Phone, and Digital. All contacts must be made without using repeaters, digipeaters, satellites, etc.

Help: On the web site at <http://7qp.org> are the complete rules; lists of county names and abbreviations; state/county maps; county sign-up sheet; summary sheet; state coordinators; logging-program info and configuration files; list of plaques and donors.

HELP TOSRV CELEBRATE ITS 40TH!

By Bob N7MSU

On May 22 & 23 TOSRV will celebrate its 40th anniversary. Bicyclists for all over the USA are expected to be coming to Missoula to ride the Tour of the Swan River Valley, one of the nation's oldest cycling, road rallies. HARC has been with TOSRV the whole way, and you can help again.

Start planning now. Mark your calendars. Check out your radios and antennas. Contact N7MSU for details. Thanks and CU there.

Equipment For Sale:

KC7OPD Estate Sale

Contact John W7KNT for Info (777-5122)

Antennas, Towers and Rotors need to be removed, will make package price if interested. Also, open to offers.

Kenwood TL-922A KW Amplifier 160 through 10 meters, pair of 3-500Z's, 10 meter mod needs to be installed. With Manual. \$ 1,000.00 or best offer.

Icom IC-737 Transceiver, 100 watts, 160 through 10 meters, general coverage receiver. With mic and DC cord, manual, & Astron SS-30 30A power supply. \$ 500.00

MFJ 493 Memory Keyer. \$ 50.00

Drake MN2000 Antenna Tuner. \$ 200.00

MFJ-1701 Antenna Switch \$ 40.00

Antennas, Towers, and Rotors:

Telex / Hy-Gain Ham-IV, CD-45-II Rotor with control

Ken-pro KR-500 elevation rotor with control.

GAP Titan vertical antenna, 75 through 10 meters. \$ 200.00

Mosley TA33 tri band antenna, 10,15,20 meters. \$ 100.00

Roof mount 10' tri-pod tower

Alliance HD-73-1 Rotor with control

Cushcraft A627013S, 6,2, & 70cm Antenna

Ameritron remote coax switch

40' aluminum tower

Hy gain UB 64DX antenna, 6 meter, 4 element beam



Is amateur Radio important to you? Do you know the threats to our hobby?

JOIN and SUPPORT the ARRL, our greatest advocate for amateur radio.

Become a member today, for more information visit <http://www.arrl.org>



Hellgate Amateur Radio Club

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