



the hU**U**b

the quarterly newsletter of the
Upper Rio FM Society, Inc.

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Albuquerque, New Mexico

“I have seen the future ... and it is digital!”

I am not sure who said these words, but I am certain that anyone who has been to a recent electronics trade show has thought them. After seeing the bewildering maze of new radios and TV sets and gizmos and gadgets that await us all - how could you not?

This digital future has already come to amateur radio in the form of new operating modes and new digital signal processing features in the radios that we have come to know and love. The knob-less and switch-less “software defined radio” is here. So is the ability to operate without a transceiver at all as in EchoLink and IRLP. A lot of these techniques still rely on analog RF transmission circuitry somewhere in the communications chain.

The next step is digital RF transmission. It’s already here and has been with us for some time. Cellular telephony today uses direct digital transmission. So does Satellite TV and Satellite Radio. So does HDTV, be it over-the-air or over-the-cable. And it has come to amateur radio in the form of Digital Smart Technologies for Amateur Radio or D-STAR.

As this digital technology matures and becomes more prolific the question becomes, “Is this the path for me?” The answer to that lies in another question, “How will you know unless you educate yourself about it and start experimenting with it?”

It is toward that end that the Board of Directors of the Upper Rio FM Society, Inc. is pleased to announce that they are looking into getting on the D-STAR bandwagon. This is not in lieu of our current analog repeater system, but along side of it. This begins with learning about D-STAR, what it is and how it works and that takes us to our next regularly scheduled meeting ...

2nd General Membership Meeting of 2011

The Upper Rio FM Society, Inc. will hold its Second Quarter membership meeting of 2011 on Tuesday, April 12th at 7:30pm in the Fellowship Hall of the *historic* Immanuel Presbyterian Church located at 114 Carlisle Blvd., SE, in Albuquerque. [*See the story elsewhere in this newsletter. Ed.*]

Please enter the church hall from the North-most entrance on Carlisle. Also, remember that there is no church parking across the street, West of Carlisle.

A Presentation on D-STAR

At the conclusion of the regular business meeting there will be a presentation on the technology of the D-STAR system. At the recommendation of Mrs. Pat Wood (KE5FVS) and through the efforts of President Mike Langner (K5MGR), we are happy to announce that Kiernan (Kerry) Holliday (WA6BJH) will make the trip down from Santa Fe. Kerry will bring with him his D-STAR radios and give us

an excellent introductory overview presentation on the D-STAR system: what it is and what it has to offer to amateur radio. If you've ever wondered what D-STAR is all about, or if you have some specific questions on how it works, you should not miss this meeting. You could be learning about the future of the URFMSI.

Immanuel Presbyterian Church on the National Register of Historic Places

As reported by the Associated Press on March 25, 2011 (and on KOB-TV4) the Immanuel Presbyterian Church has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The church has been a landmark in Albuquerque's Nob Hill neighborhood since the 1950's. The state Historic Preservation Division made the announcement that week.

Immanuel Presbyterian Church is a rare design by New Mexico master architect John Gaw Meem in the Territorial Revival style. It's one of Meem's later works and is a departure from much of his earlier work in the Pueblo Revival style. Terry Moody, of the state Historic Preservation Division, says the church also is significant for its association with the growth of the Nob Hill area and of Albuquerque's expansion to the East from it's roots in the Old Town area.

Located just South of Central at Carlisle, along Historic Route 66, the Immanuel Presbyterian Church with its illuminated steeple is a source of pride and inspiration to the people who live in the surrounding Nob Hill area.

An Update on the Development of the Asterisk System

The existing linking system at the Hub has been in service for far too many years. Getting replacement parts and understanding the intricacies of the system design is becoming

more and more difficult. To solve this problem the Board voted to invest some time and money into researching a replacement system that was designed around an open software package called *Asterisk* that runs under the Linux operating system. Hardware and software was purchased and work began to study and implement a demonstration system. Unfortunately, the work soon slowed to a halt, mostly because of difficulties and inexperience with the Linux OS.

However, Mike Pendley (K5ATM), Mike Eaton (K5MJE) and Tom Russo (KM5VY) have recently made significant headway in solving these problems. Mr. Pendley came to the latest Board Meeting and gave a very promising report to those present. The following text is from Mike Pendley and it should give you a good idea of where this project stands as of today.

The Upper Rio's home-designed and home-made linking hardware system has worked nearly flawlessly for longer than I have been associated with the Society. It has been in operation 24-7-365 for at least 20 years and probably longer. It is a tribute to the folks that designed and fabricated the system. I wish I could give them all credit but I just don't know the history. Perhaps another member can complete this story in a future edition of this newsletter.

My story is about the effort to rip that system out of the hub and replace it!

Now some would say, "If it isn't broken then don't fix it!" but a better plan is to design and implement a replacement system while the original is still working – that way, the time needed to implement a well thought out plan is still available.

We are currently working on an Asterisk based replacement system which, through the wizardry of Tom Russo (KM5VY), was recently demonstrated. We don't have room here to go into great detail, but you can learn

more at the next General Membership meeting or by visiting <http://www.asterisk.org/> and <http://www.piconode.org/lox/> or by attending a future NM-ARTS meeting that will discuss this subject.

Help Needed with IRLP, EchoLink and IGATE Systems at the Hub

The following message comes from Board Member Harris Goodwin (WA5SJW) and was presented to the Board at the latest meeting on March 17th, 2011.

The URFMSI hosts two IRLP/EchoLink systems at the HUB that belong to associated clubs. These systems are available to Upper Rio members and other hams in the New Mexico radio community.

About a year ago the hard drive in one of the systems failed and we had to replace it and upgrade it at the same time. In the process the latest version of the Linux Operating System was installed on the new hard drive.

The IRLP system has the capability of running a subroutine called "EchoLink Bridge" which allows the system to run either IRLP or EchoLink software. Unfortunately, the new version of the OS did not support the Bridge function even though the Bridge was properly installed on the new OS. Our resident IRLP wizard, who was working on solving this problem, has moved away and we need to find someone with the knowledge and willingness to help us get this capability back on line. My understanding is that the latest Linux operating system does now support the Bridge function, but I have no expertise in this area or knowledge on how to solve the problem.

If you have experience with Linux, IRLP, EchoLink and IGATE software; and if you have the time and would like to help, then please contact Harris (Goodie) Goodwin at 505-263-8782 or send an E-mail to me at harris@gasballooning.org. Thank You.

New Mexico Amateur Radio Callsign License Plates Wanted

[At the request of Goodie Goodwin, I am running the following advertisement for Bill Johnson (K5ZI). Ed.]

I am looking for New Mexico Ham Radio Callsign License Plates for all years. I am in particular need of plates from 1959-1964 inclusive, plus 1976, 1977, 1983, 1984, 1986, 1987, 1989, and 2000. I am willing to buy or trade. If you would like to help me complete my collection please contact me, Bill Johnson, at K5ZI@arrl.net or by phone at 575-382-7804. My home QTH is Organ, New Mexico.

NMARA Update

The New Mexico Amateur Radio Alliance, a special interest group of the URFMSI, recently participated in two Albuquerque events that brought the hobby of Amateur Radio into the public eye.

Back in February, 2011 the NMARA once again participated in the ABQ Home Expo at the State Fairgrounds. Attendance was up and it was a great show for all the vendors. The NMARA was again donated a 20 foot wide booth space and filled it with their display and two working radio stations. Thanks go to Bill (KY5Q) and Alma Ripley and Don (W5FAH) and Pat Wood (KE5FVS) for their support of this project.

A few weeks later and also at the Fairgrounds, Brian Milesosky (N5ZGT), Pat Libertell (KA5PAT), Frank Kelley (KB7PVU), Scott Webb (N5SQR) and Bruce Campbell Sr. (NK5W) worked a donated table at the Gun Show. They also experienced great traffic and passed out a lot of flyers to people who said they were interested in learning more about our great hobby of Amateur Radio.

And finally, back in February of this year, Don Wood (W5FHA), Larry Goga (AE5CZ)

and Mike Langner (K5MGR) all helped to do a presentation on the “History of Amateur Radio” to the sophomore World History class of Ms. Suzann Owings at AIMS, the Albuquerque Institute of Mathematics and Science. The event was so well received that Dr. Owings has invited them back in early May to install and operate a get-on-the-air station for the benefit of all the students at this charter high school.

The End of the Associate Membership Class

At a meeting of the Board of Directors back in late 2010, it was decided that the membership class of “Associate ” would be discontinued and that all members holding that class would be asked to join the Society as Full Members. At that time there were only 21 people holding the Associate membership class. The reason behind this discontinuation was that a very few members were causing a very large amount of work for the Membership committee.

Over the past several months, as the Associate memberships have come up for renewal, the chairman, Mike Eaton, has been mailing letters to these individuals advising them of this change. At the most recent Board meeting he informed the Board that there were about 12 people remaining and that in a few months all of the Associate members would be removed from the list.

The Board has taken steps to remove any reference to Associate members from both the new bylaws and the membership application form. The Board wishes to apologize for any inconvenience that this change might cause, but the fact remains that dealing with special versions of the Handbook and providing restricted access to the linking codes was simply more trouble than it was worth. The Board would like to extend a thank you to the previous Associate members and invite them to stay on with this Society as Full members with

all the privileges that go with that level of membership.

end of an era, or at least the printed newsletter???

There has been some discussion at the recent Board Meetings that the cost of mailing out printed newsletters is getting rather exorbitant. For example, the cost to print, address and mail the newsletters on a quarterly basis is about \$2400 annually. The Board sees that as a significant amount of money, especially in these tough economic times.

This topic was brought up at the last General Membership meeting in January. The discussion was very interesting. Some members noted that they appreciated the fact that they could take the printed copy of the newsletter with them, wherever they went, and read it at their leisure. Others commented that the printed newsletter was the only tangible asset that they had to show for their annual dues payment. Still others noted that an electronic newsletter, distributed as a PDF document via an email attachment, could include color images, could be searchable and was easily archived. However, its utility as a bird cage liner would be gone.

No decisions were made at the last meeting and none will be made at this coming meeting. As you can see, the printed newsletter still exists because you’re holding it in your hands. But the fact remains that this topic is still open for discussion and our new President will be looking for input from all the members over the next few months. Everyone should be prepared to offer their opinions whenever this question comes up. This is our Society and it can and will be only what we want it to be.

The Possible Loss of the 70cm Band

In case you haven’t heard, there were recently two Division-wide email alerts sent to mem-

bers of the Rocky Mountain Division of the ARRL about a DIRECT THREAT to the 70 centimeter band, courtesy of H.R. 607, otherwise known as the "Broadband for First Responders Act of 2011".

In essence, H.R. 607 in its present form requires the auctioning of 65% of the 70 centimeter band to business users within 10 years of passage. This is to generate revenue that is estimated to be lost as a consequence of setting up and maintaining spectrum in the 700 MHz range for public safety use.

A sample letter opposing this legislation in its present form is available for amateur radio operators to use in making their voices heard. Please visit this website:

<http://www.arrl.org/sample-letters>

where you will find background information on H.R. 607, the sample letter ready for you to use, and instructions on how to submit your letter. A word of emphasis on submitting your letter: Please do NOT mail it directly to your Representative. Due to security measures in place on Capitol Hill, letters to members of Congress are not delivered until they are screened; a process which has been taking literally 6-8 weeks. Don't let your letter become ineffective due to this delay.

Upcoming Events

As usual, the Summer months and the much nicer weather bring with them a plethora of Amateur Radio events all craving our participation. One of those events is almost upon us. The Spring Tailgate sponsored jointly by the AARC and the ARCC is scheduled for Saturday, April 30th, 2011.

Another HUGE upcoming event is the Rocky Mountain Division Convention of the ARRL which will be held in Taos, New Mexico on August 5th through the 7th.

Look for tear-out flyers for BOTH of these events with ALL THE DETAILS at the end of this newsletter.

The Hero's Club

All of you should know that our friend Don Wood (W5FHA) is the New Mexico Section Manager for the ARRL as well as a Board Member of the URFMSI and a tireless supporter of the activities of the NMARA. Of all the things that Don does to support this hobby, the one that seems to give him the most satisfaction is the creation of active amateur radio clubs at some of the local high schools.

Starting these clubs is not easy and one of the most difficult tasks is obtaining the necessary equipment donations to create a useable radio station. Toward that end, Don would like to thank those "Heroes" who have donated radios, antennas, coax and other supplies and their time to this project.

So don't be bashful. If you have some extra gear kicking around the shack and you'd like to reclaim the space for some new gear, please remember to give Don a call. He's only too happy to help you make some space.

A longer newsletter this time...

That's it for this edition of *the hUb*. If it seemed a little longer to you this time, it was. There were five pages of news instead of the usual four. Missing from this edition are the map, frequency list and membership application. Taking their place are an extra page of news and two flyers on the big upcoming events. Should you need copies of the map and the other items, they are available for the download from the URFMSI website and they will return to the newsletter on a space available basis. Until then, 73 everyone and Happy Spring Cleaning.