

W7TCK News

Capital City Amateur Radio Club

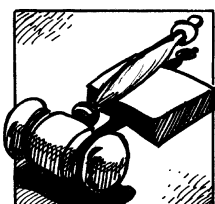
Helena, MT

John McDougall K7JM – Editor

November 2004

From The Pres...

I'm going to digress a bit from my normal set of Ham Radio topics this month –



primarily because I was coming up completely blank for any topic to write about in regards to Ham Radio.

As I write this it's still a couple of weeks away from the November election. The polls are so close that who will end up as President of the U.S. for the next four years is too close to call, although things appear to be leaning towards Bush this week. One thing which I will be interested in seeing is how much of a role electronic voting machine errors play in this election.

For those who aren't aware of it, in the wake of the Florida fiasco, the federal government mandated states replace certain types of voting machines – primarily the punch card types with all the hanging, pregnant, dimpled, and otherwise malformed chads – with something else. Many states elected to switch to electronic voting machines for some very
(Cont. P.2 PRES)

NOVEMBER MEETING

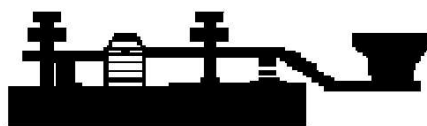
Monday

November 1st

Salvation Army Church

1905 Henderson

7:00 pm.



VE Exams

6:30 Sharp

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Board of Directors

- Pres: Forrest Christian, AC7DE
- Vice Pres: John Curry, K7EBL
- Sec.: Rich Weddle, KC7VVZ
- Tres.: Dan Stinson, KC7KKH
- Newsletter Editor: John McDougall K7JM
- Training: John Geach, KS7R
- Technical: Don Heide, W7MRI
- Volunteer Exam Team Leader: John Geach, KS7R

ARRL holiday toy drive for Florida youngsters in full swing

October 22, 2004 -- Ham radio clubs and individual amateurs across the US have indicated they'll be taking part in ARRL's recently announced nationwide holiday toy drive to benefit children in Florida displaced or left homeless in the wake of recent hurricanes. Joanne Ramsey, KB1KWJ, one of the hurricane relief/recovery volunteers working in Central Florida, saw the devastation and the need following Hurricane Ivan. **(Cont. P.3. Toy Drive)**

(Cont from P.1 PRES)

valid reasons such as ease of use, enhanced accessibility for the disabled, and faster results. In fact, I understand that all states are required to have some sort of accessible voting system in place at each polling place within the next few years, which probably pushed most states towards the electronic systems.

The problem with these machines is that they are basically computers, and as a result, are subject to the same types of problems you have with a computer – that is, crashing, setup errors, and software bugs. Plus, you are trusting the accuracy of an election to the vendor of the machines. In many (most?) cases, these machines do not actually print out any paper trail of the votes as they occur. If a machine fails, the votes stored in that machine are lost. If a machine has a software error which counts votes for the wrong candidate (or randomly moves votes to another candidate, there is no way to verify what ballots were actually cast. And so on. And don't even think about the situation where a vendor wants to make sure someone wins an election. There are solutions to the problems, including printing a paper copy of the ballots for possible later recounts. In most cases these have not (or will not) be implemented with the existing voting systems.

The main reason I will be interested in seeing how the voting machines play a role in the election is because of Florida. Florida is one of the heaviest users of electronic voting systems – primarily because their old systems were so bad. Florida has already had problems with the voting systems during the primaries and other elections they have held since they purchased the machines. And, as of today, Bush is only leading in Florida by 1-2%. It's kinda scary thinking that the outcome of the next election may hinge on the electronic voting machines actually working correctly in all the counties.

Moving on to an election closer to home, our club officer elections are coming up in December. During the November meeting the nomination committee will be presenting their slate of nominees for the offices. If anyone would like to be

nominated for or to suggest someone for a position, please let John, KS7R, or Dick, N7RB know.

In addition, the Ham of the Year committee is also deciding on who will get this coveted award this year. If you have a suggestion, please let Rich, KC7VVZ or another committee member know.

I think that's all for now.

73's

Forrest AC7DE.

ARES Notes

WINTER IS COMING!

As winter approaches, it is probably not a bad idea to do a bit of preventative maintenance on your radio gear, as well as your house and vehicles. Along with a lot of others, I have been going through the Montana ritual of preparing for winter. Shutting off hose bibs, coiling water hoses, cleaning the furnace and filters and other chores. I winterized my RV trailer, draining the water and then pumping RV antifreeze into the system before draining the holding tanks. I charged the battery and then thought about pulling it from the trailer and storing it in the garage.

That caused me to do a bit of research on storing batteries. I was directed to a web site that will tell you everything you ever wanted to know about batteries, and then some. That site is www.powerstream.com. When you get into it, type "battery storage" in the search window, then stand back.

I ran my portable generator to charge the onboard battery, as well as putting stabilizer in the fuel to prevent moisture accumulation. Storing the unit in the garage and running it for a short period of time on a monthly basis will have it ready to go if needed. I have also taken a critical look at the coax from the house to the tower, as well as checking out the antennas for any obvious problems. They all look good and should make it through another winter.



It would be a good idea to do a quick check on coax, towers and antennas, if you have not already done so. If work needs to be done, it is easier now than when there is a foot of snow on the ground. Check out your mobile units as well, for any problems such as cuts, scrapes or breaks in the coax where it comes into the vehicle. If your vehicle is not kept in a garage, you might want to check the age and strength of its battery. It has been suggested that car or truck batteries should be replaced after three winters outside in Montana

It doesn't hurt to be sure you really are ready for winter, even if you think you are.

73, de Bob K7HLN



From The Editor

By the time you read this, I will be located at my new QTH in Jefferson City. That is, if everything went all right. As explained in last month's W7TCK News, my time resources are pinched to the maximum and therefore this newsletter might be a bit smaller than usual, or may contain other stories written by folks other than myself or club members. Please, bear with me. When I am done here, I will pack up the computer and it will sit in the mountainous stack of other boxes that we are living between. Read Bob's column on Winter readiness. I am officially Winter Ready as everything is tucked away in boxes waiting for "The Day."

As mentioned before, our new QTH includes some area that I will have an opportunity to create into my dream Ham shack. It may be months down the road, but if you hear a non-mobile signal from K7JM or see my icon on your APRS screen, you will know that I am making progress.

During the November meeting, we will be taking nominations for officers that will be voted upon in December. It is vital to be part of this process. I hope you will take part in the vital process, right, and responsibility of voting this election day also.



As one last note, the Pre-Holiday potluck has unfortunately been canceled due to tight time constraints and obligations on many people.

God bless you all this Thanksgiving season. Take time to thank Him for all of our blessings.

73,

John – K7JM Editor



(Cont. from P1 Toy Drive)

Florida, saw the devastation and the need following Hurricane Ivan.

"This is really going to make a difference for those children," she said. "I still see the images of hungry little faces I was not able to feed. The sadness in their eyes was very hard for me to deal with." Thousands of families are without a permanent place to live, and that situation could well extend into the holiday season. "For a child suddenly living out of a tent, or car, or someone else's home, the 2004 holiday season will be anything but jolly," said ARRL Public Relations Manager Allen Pitts, WIAGP. "But hams across the country are coming to their rescue in a second new way through the League's program."

Between now and Thanksgiving, November 25, hams radio operators throughout the US are invited to send new children's toys, accompanied by a QSL card, to Ham Radio, The United Way White Dove Project, 50 Kindred St - Suite 207, Stuart, FL 34994. Carol Hodnett, of Martin County United Way, said the hurricanes and their aftermath have been especially traumatic for children. "In addition to the frightening experience of going through the hurricanes," she pointed out, "youngsters are coping with a great deal of stress felt within their families and at school." Martin County United Way is handling the toy distribution. Pitts said the focus is on Central Florida communities because they took the brunt of the three storms.

Additional details about the Hams for Toys program are on the ARRL Web site.



The W7TCK Newsletter is published by the Capital City Amateur Radio Club.

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CCARC Web Page: www.w7tck.org
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CCARC Regular meetings are at 7:00 pm on the first non-holiday Monday of each month at the Salvation Army Church 1905 Henderson.

The CCARC Volunteer Exam Team conducts sessions at 6:30 pm in Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, Nov, and at special times as announced.

W7MRI Repeater: 147.82 (-offset)

Net every Tuesday at 7:30 pm local time on the 147.82 (-offset) repeater.

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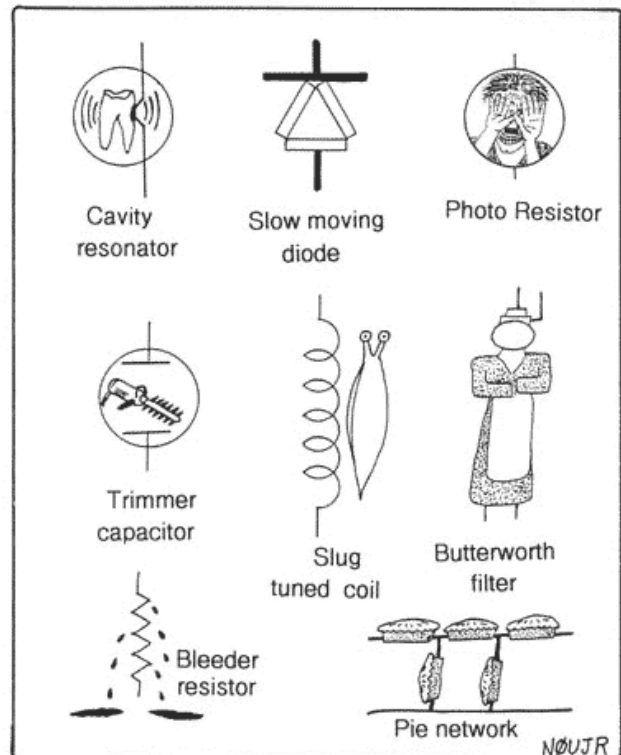
All expressions of opinions and all statements of supposed facts are published on the authority of the author and are not to be regarded as expressing the view of CCARC.

Biscuits and Gravy

Come to Hardee's on Saturday. Every Saturday morning between 9:30 and 11:00, as many as twenty hams show up for "EYEBALL" QSOs.

COME JOIN THE FUN!

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