

The *Microvolt*

April 2021



Prologue

Publication: *The Microvolt* (USPS 075-430) is the official publication of the Utah Amateur Radio Club, Incorporated, 632 S. University Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84102-3213. It is published monthly except August. Subscription is included with club membership at \$20 per year. Single copy price is \$1.50. Periodicals postage paid at Salt Lake City, Utah. Postmaster: send address corrections to *The Microvolt*, c/o Tom Kamlowsky, 4137 Clover Lane, Salt Lake City, UT, 84124-2711.

Deadline for submissions is the 24th of each month prior to publication. Submissions by email are preferred (k7hfv@arrl.net), but other means including diskettes and typewritten submissions can be mailed directly to: Gordon Smith, 632 University St., Salt Lake City, UT 84102-3213. Reprints are allowed with proper credits to *The Microvolt*, UARC, and authors. Changes in mailing address should be communicated to the Club Secretary: Tom Kamlowsky, 4137 Clover Lane, Salt Lake City, UT, 84124-2711.

Club: The Utah Amateur Radio Club was organized under its present name in 1927, although its beginnings may date back as early as 1909. In 1928, it became affiliated with the American Radio Relay League (club #1602) and is a non-profit organization under the laws of Utah. It holds a club station license with the call W7SP, a memorial call for Leonard (Zim) Zimmerman, an amateur radio pioneer in the Salt Lake City area.

Meetings: The club meets each month except July and August. The meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month at 7:30 PM in the University of Utah's Warnock Engineering Building, generally in room 1230 or 2230, sometimes in 2250 or 105.

Membership: Club membership is open to anyone interested in amateur radio; a current license is not required. Dues are \$20 per year, including a *Microvolt* subscription. *The Microvolt* and membership cannot be separated. Those living at the same address as a member who has paid \$20 may obtain a membership without a *Microvolt* subscription for \$12. Send dues to the Club Secretary: Tom Kamlowsky, WA7ZRG, 4137 Clover Lane, Salt Lake City, UT 84124-2711. Let the Secretary know if you prefer the electronic edition of *The Microvolt* instead of the printed version.

Contributions: Monetary contributions are gladly accepted. Send directly to the Club Treasurer: Chuck Johnson, 1612 W. 4915 S. Taylorsville, UT 84123-4244. For in-kind contributions, please contact any board member to make appropriate arrangements.

Repeaters: UARC maintains the 146.62- and 146.76- repeaters. The repeaters are administered by the UARC Repeater Committee. Comments and questions may be directed to any Committee member. The Lake Mountain repeater (146.76-) is IRLP node 3352. Instructions for IRLP use are on the club website.

Ham Hot-Line: The Utah Amateur Radio Club (UARC) has a Ham Hotline, 583-3002. Information regarding Amateur Radio can be obtained, including club, testing, meeting, and membership information. If no one answers leave your name, telephone number and a short message on the answering machine, and your call will be returned.

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Contents

Latest News.....	3
The Great Squaw Island Dxpedition of 1971	6
The Mysterious WV6's.....	7
Member of the Month.....	8

IRLP Information

For information on using the club's IRLP node on the 146.76 repeater, check <http://www.utaharc.org/irlp>. To get the prefix code required, contact the club Secretary.

For late breaking news listen to the UARC Information Net Sundays at 21:00 on 146.62 or set your browser to: <http://user.xmission.com/~uarc/announce.html>

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The Microvolt

The Official Publication of the Utah Amateur Radio Club, Salt Lake City, Utah
Volume 64, Issue 4, April, 2021

Latest News

April (on-line) Meeting: *All About Digital Modes*

How can you work many stations all over the world with a very modest HF antenna? The answer you've been looking for might be the digital modes. At the April 8 (on-line) UARC meeting, Randy Kohlwey, WI7P, will tell us all about them including how they work, what kind of results you can expect, and what you need to start using them.

As home computers have gotten more powerful, software has been developed that will dig very weak signals out of the noise, making contacts possible that, otherwise, would have been difficult given low power, poor conditions, and/or low-gain antennas.

Randy first became active on the FT-8 mode in October of 2017 and in that time since then has used it to make nearly 16,000 contacts. He will talk about his station setup, what he has been able to work using less than 100 watts, how he operates and what software he uses. If conditions allow, he will give a live demo. If the moon is high enough, he will demonstrate receiving signals with MAP65. If an amateur radio satellite is active during the presentation, he will demonstrate how he uses a Funcube Pro+ and SDR onsole to monitor transponder activity.

To watch the meeting and even ask questions, go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/UtahAmateurRadioClub>.

You can start watching soon after 7 P.M. to make sure you have found the right place.

Except for July and August, UARC meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at 7:30 P.M.

Our Cover

Our cover this month shows a small glimpse of John Jacob's presentation at our March meeting. John listed quite a number of things that can go wrong to keep us from being ready to operate out in the field when an emergency appears. These might include items "borrowed" from our "grab and go" kits, batteries that have not been maintained, or just lack of time and energy to create the kit in the first place.

If you missed the meeting or just want to watch parts of it again, it can be replayed on YouTube by going to:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/UtahAmateurRadioClub>

and looking for the March 12 video.

Technician and General Classes

Our UARC President, Morris Farmer, AD7SR is starting classes in April for prospective Technician and General class operators. The Technician class will start on the evening of Monday, April 12, and the General class on Wednesday, April 14. Each class will meet weekly via Zoom software and continue for nine weeks.

There is no charge for the class, but participants are expected to obtain the ARRL *License Manual* edition for the class of license for which they intend to study. Morris has a few General books. The books can be purchased directly from the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) and

sometimes the Technician book is available on Amazon.

Classes seem to fill rapidly in recent months, so if you are interested, it would be wise to sign up soon. Get in touch with Morris at <mailto:ad7sr@arrl.net> for more information.

News on Application Fees

Jeff Ryan, KØRM, the ARRL Director representing our section writes as follows:

The FCC Report and Order adopted last December concerning fees for Amateur Radio licenses was published in the Federal Register on 3/19. The rules would typically take effect on April 19, however, collection of the amateur fees will *not* begin on that date.

The effective date for new amateur radio fees has not yet been established. The FCC stated in the published Notice (at p. 15061, para. 44, <https://tinyurl.com/y52ff2zy>) that the fees “will not take effect until the requisite notice has been provided to Congress, the FCC’s information technology systems and internal procedures have been updated, and the Commission publishes notice(s) in the Federal Register announcing the effective date of such rules.” The ARRL’s Washington DC attorney expects that the effective date will be some time this summer.

VHF Society Meets

Instead of the traditional February swap meet, the Utah VHF Society held an on-line (Zoom) meeting for its members on February 21. In attendance were 223 of the Society’s 674 members. The members who became winners of various prizes were announced along with what activities will be taking place during 2021.

An ambitious set of repairs and improvements to repeaters in the Intermountain Intertie were announced. The Blowhard site (east of Cedar City) will be getting a new antenna. Work will be done toward a link between the Intertie and the Sinbad System which covers much of Carbon, Emery,

Grand, and San Juan counties. There will be trouble-shooting of audio problems in the repeater on Navajo Mountain, whose site is not easily accessible. The simplex member of the the intertie in Malad, Idaho, will be upgraded. Mt. Elson in Arizona is to become a full-time part of the Intertie.



Mel Parkes, NM7P, VHF Society President, conducts annual meeting on-line.

The Society is reported to be in good financial condition, partly because of a donation of over \$15,000.

The annual member booklet, which lists all the state’s repeaters plus contact information for all the members, will be printed and distributed by mail to all current members. Suggestions that the book be placed on the Society’s website were rejected. One reason is that all the repeater information is already on line, including some detailed information that was not practical to include in the booklet. Another is that members’ contact information should not be placed where it is accessible to all.

Work on a remote-controlled HF station, to be built at Camp Williams, is expected to get under way in the next 30 to 45 days.

The Utah VHF Society is a statewide organization that operates a number of the repeaters that are

part of the Intermountain Intertie and also provides financial help to various repeater groups who provide valuable coverage in various parts of the state. The Society is also responsible for frequency coordination for the state of Utah. For more information see the web site at:

<http://www.utaharc.org/>.

What About Summer Activities?

Are we having our traditional Field Day entry and July Steak-Fry? The fact is that we don't know. Last year they didn't appear to be safe gatherings with Corona Virus hospitalizations and deaths mounting. The sites for the two events have been reserved just in case conditions look favorable.

The UARC Board's official position on the topic is as follows:

"The UARC Board of Directors is, of course, primarily concerned with the health and safety of our club members at any club-sponsored event. To that end we will be closely following the recommendations of the state and national medical professionals. As soon as they give us guidelines to safely hold events with more than 50 people in close proximity, we will announce our plans for normal activities.

"We should note that we have optimistically reserved the site near Payson Lakes for Field Day weekend and a group area in The Spruces for the July 17th Saturday. We hope we will be able to use one or both of our reservations."

—The UARC Board of Directors

International Space Station Back on the Air (Thanks to the *ARRL Letter*)

Some 6 weeks after going silent following a spacewalk that installed new antenna cabling, the

Amateur Radio on the International Space Station ([ARRL](#)) ham station in the Columbus module is once again operational. The Columbus station, which typically uses the call sign NA1SS, is the primary ARISS amateur radio station used for school contacts and other activities. The problem arose after a January 27 spacewalk replaced a coax feed line installed 11 years ago with another built by the European Space Agency (ESA) and Airbus.

While the specific cause of the problem has not yet been determined, a March 13 spacewalk that restored the antenna cabling to its original configuration provided the cure. The plan to return the ARISS cabling to its original configuration had been a "contingency task" for a March 5 spacewalk, but the astronauts ran out of time. The ARISS work was appended to the to-do list for astronauts Mike Hopkins, KF5LJG, and Victor Glover, KI5BKC, to complete a week later.

During the weekend spacewalk, Hopkins swapped out a cable for the [Bartolomeo](#) commercial payload-handling platform that had been installed in series with the ARISS VHF-UHF antenna feed line, returning the ARISS system to its pre-January 27 configuration, Hopkins raised a question concerning a sharp bend in the cable near a connector, but no further adjustments were possible.

On March 14, ARISS was able to confirm the operation's success when Automatic Packet Reporting System (APRS) signals on 145.825 MHz were heard in California, Utah, and Idaho as the ISS passed overhead. ARISS team member Christy Hunter, KB6LTY, was able to digipeat through NA1SS during the pass. With additional confirmation from stations in South America and the Middle East, ARISS declared the radio system operational again.

Work during the March 13 spacewalk also made Bartolomeo operational. "Yesterday was a great day for all!" Bauer said. "Ad astra!"

The Great Squaw Island Dxpedition of 1971

By Paul Plack, KE4KR

April 1 is April Fool's Day in the USA, but this year it also marks the fiftieth anniversary of a great amateur radio prank. In late 1970, I was in my junior year of high school in East Aurora, a suburb of Buffalo, NY, best known as the home of Fisher-Price Toys. I was monitoring local repeaters on a tuneable VHF receiver, and listening to HF on my S-38E while I studied and practiced code for my Novice ticket.

In the winter of 1970-71, a group of wealthy hams was planning a DXpedition to Swan Island in the Caribbean. That island was a long-time CIA propaganda outpost which was being decommissioned, and which would qualify as a new DXCC entity. There was intense interest among DX-ers in the US, and it was clear the operation would make tens-of-thousands of contacts. On Buffalo area repeaters, envious locals commiserated about blue-collar life circumstances and limited funds, working DX from their basements after work, and competing for contacts with big-budget, high-power stations in rare countries.

Matt Oreskovic, WA2JLF, related their plight to 73 Magazine. "Before my SB102, SB640, SB200 get the final tag that says 'from the estate of the late WA2JLF,' I'd like to be an exotic station, sought-after, piled-on, cursed and given undeserving complimentary signal reports. I have some buddies that harbor the same dreams."

What eventually emerged from this banter was a plan to stage a "poor man's DXpedition" from Squaw Island, in the Niagara River north of Buffalo. The island is fully within US waters, and in 1971 was the home of the Buffalo city garbage dump and sewage treatment plant. The plan was discussed openly by the participants on two meters, but everyone listening thought these guys were kidding around. Who would choose to set up

a ham station at a dump? Would anyone be fooled?

Plans suddenly got serious when Buffalo Mayor, Frank Sedita, granted the group a proclamation naming April 1 as "Amateur Radio Appreciation Day," opening the way for a special event call sign. They talked with the FCC's Buffalo field office about funny call signs appropriate to the island, and eventually settled on KD2UMP. All the new General and Advanced calls at the time began with WA or WB, so a KD2 call in 1971 sounded like it might be an island, like KP4 or KH6.

By March 31 tests had been conducted, a tri-band beam was in place atop an extension ladder guyed with nylon rope, and a generator and trailers were in position. The group was authorized to operate under the special call for 24 hours beginning at 0000 UTC on April 1. Matt recalled:

"We logged nine hours of CW on forty with a little DX; we gave Squaw Island as the QTH. For those more curious, we gave the geographic coordinates. By 1100 GMT, twenty started to turn hot and we had a ball with European stations. We added a further clue to the location...we're 400 miles from New York City.' This disclosure placed us in the Atlantic Ocean to some listeners."

Matt said that despite a paragraph of advance warning on page 101 of March, 1971 *QST*, "still, we were thanked for a 'new country' by calling stations." Local hams working KD2UMP generally played along with the joke, while occasional spoiled-sports tried to warn others on frequency of the shenanigans underway. Matt recalls, "One local was so dumbfounded he said, 'why, that's the city dump!'"

For me, an aspiring Novice in 1971, hearing this happening on my general coverage receiver was

not only great fun, but I found it fitting to the self-deprecating sense of humor for which the Buffalo area was known. Where else would you find an FCC field office staff with a sense of humor?

The crew which operated the special event station went on to receive brief, local, fame. They got to publicize amateur radio in newspaper and even TV interviews, demonstrating what a quickly-assembled amateur HF field station could do. Many years later, KD2UMP finally came up in alphabetical rotation as a normal callsign, and was issued in 2020 to a Technician-class ham on Long Island. I wonder if he has any idea of his call's unique backstory.

Matt, WA2JLF, is reportedly the only surviving team member of The Great Squaw Island DXpedition. That's ironic, given his kidding in

1971 about his estate sale. A more detailed telling of the story can be found in the August, 1971 issue of 73 Magazine, archived online.

In the half-century since the island hosted its special event station, the landfill has been capped, the sewage treatment plant shut down, and the island redeveloped into a beautiful city park. Buffalo's city council voted to change the island's abrasive name in 2015. It's now called "Unity Island."

Fifty years after The Great Squaw Island DXpedition, whenever I think about the Parks on the Air program, I can't help chuckling at the thought of activating Antelope Island some April first. CQ DX!

The Mysterious WV6's

Your editor enjoyed Paul's account of KD2UMP and could not help thinking of another instance of folks thinking they were working rare DX but ultimately were disappointed. In this case, however, it wasn't an intentional spoof.

Back in the late '50's the FCC ran out of W7 calls and started issuing K7 calls. Novice licensees had been getting WN7 calls and when Novices upgraded to General, they would simply drop the "N" and keep the same suffix. So, they followed the obvious path for K7's with Novices getting KN7 calls. This worked well for awhile. But unlike the W's and WN's which had served well for decades, the K's were exhausted in little more than two years. The Commission went on to WA calls for those with a General or higher license class. This left a puzzle about what to do with Novice licensees. If I remember correctly it was the 2's and 6's that first ran out of K calls and started receiving the WA calls. For some reason they chose the WV prefix for new Novices.

For we folks out west, during most any time during daylight and early evening hours, the most

plentiful stations heard in the 40-meter CW band were Novice stations from California. For anyone getting started on the air, working a California station, hundreds of miles away, was a big thrill. But after working about the thirtieth California Novice station, it began to get tiresome. Some folks went so far as to call "CQ not 6."

Imagine the excitement when the first WV6's popped up on the air. The reference books showed that WV4 was a prefix reserved for the Virgin Islands. But there was no mention of WV6. This must be a brand new DX station! Imagine further how the tone of the operator's voice changing as he copied "QTH is San Diego, *California*?" How could they play such a dirty trick?!

The next call area to run out of K's was 4-land. They could not use KV4, as it was already committed to the Virgin Islands. It finally occurred to someone that all the WN Novice licenses had expired or been upgraded, so in the other call areas, Novices brought slightly-used WN calls back to life.

Member of the Month

JoAnn Haines, AE7AR

By Linda Reeder, N7HVF

This month we are featuring JoAnn Haines, AE7AK. JoAnn grew up in Palo Alto, California. In 1962 JoAnn joined the United States Marine Corps and stayed there for six years. She became a mortar transfer. She was a bodyguard and a supervisor over security services. Among her jobs was working with dogs, getting them prepared for emergency services. JoAnn did all kinds of other jobs. Whatever needed to get done, she was there.

Some jobs weren't very pleasant, particularly during service in Viet Nam. After getting out of the Marine Corps, JoAnn moved back to California. She was a regular customer to a ham radio store there because of her hobbies of shortwave radio and scanners. One day while she was there, the owner of the store, who was a ham radio operator, asked JoAnn if she was licensed. She said she didn't know what was required to get a license. He promptly sold her a Technician manual. She studied and soon passed the test.

While living in California JoAnn belonged to a big amateur radio club named Paara. While she was there she passed the five word-per-minute Morse

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Code test and became a Technician Plus licensee. After that, JoAnn went on to obtain her General license, and finally, her Extra class license.

This amateur radio club was active in emergency communications. They practiced a lot so they would be prepared when the big emergency came. JoAnn was involved with hurricane Katrina. She would help people find their loved ones.

JoAnn's favorite thing about amateur radio is the people. They help each other with their equipment, operating techniques, and general radio knowledge. It was like a big family.

JoAnn is a member of UARC. JoAnn said she is part Cherokee. There are other hobbies that JoAnn enjoys including painting, arts and crafts, and radio games. JoAnn, thanks for your contributions to amateur radio.



JoAnn Haines, AE7AR