

RADIOWAVES



MARCI Newsletter

FROM THE PRESIDENT: Last month yours truly wrote (with some optimism I might add) about our country having a new president and that there was an effective vaccine to deal with the COVID 19 virus. I feel far less optimistic about this news now for several reasons. First and foremost, where is the vaccine? If it is here which one of you is hoarding it? Meanwhile, I'm sorry to say that my good friend Steve Frick N4OGR, passed away from COVID 19 earlier in the month. Also just this week I learned that Judy Hawrysko, wife of George Hawrysko a previous MARCI present and our current VP, also had succumbed to the virus just this week. I'm so sorry George. This was quite shocking news indeed. I cannot put into print here how I felt hearing this and getting it directly from George by phone. You could hear the pain in his voice while he spoke. I hope this is the last of these kinds of calls from anyone about anyone. And let us not forget Jerry Johnson, AE4XW another MARCI member who passed late last year due to complications associated with the virus. These are sad days my friends. Last month I'd hoped for 'A slow return to 'normalcy'? The word was SLOW followed by another word PATIENCE. But these words should also be followed by 'it may take much longer than any of us thought.'" Please take care of you and yours.

As there are some other items of business to discuss with you all I will simply ask that you please tune in via ZOOM this Tuesday night, Feb 2nd at 7:00pm to our General Membership Meeting. The LINK TO THE ZOOM MEETING IS ON THE HOME MARCI WEBSITE HOME PAGE.

Wednesday nights at 7:30pm on the MARCI repeater is the Marci Ham Trader's Net. Dave Flail, W3IK keeps things interesting with horse trading, trivia questions, and just some horsing around.

Please renew your MARCI Dues for 2021. Individual dues are \$25 per member with an additional \$5 for another member in the household. Through the hard work of Ed Skalecki NI4MX, Kemp Mednick KM4PYH, and Chris Ebert KB2ICN, the MARCI Website home page now has a link to allow the use of PayPal for dues renewal for your convenience.

I caught up with Jim Woodson KE4INM, who all of you know of course. I'd forgotten to publish the picture of his accepting the MARCI Ham of The Year Award. I have had that included in this month's issue so enjoy.

I hope to see all of you on Tuesday night. Take care and PLEASE tell someone that you love them.

-Mike, K4CVL



FROM THE EDITOR: Our hearts and prayers go out to George Hawrysko, our Vice President who lost his wife to Covid 19 recently. Having lost my wife some years ago, I can certainly feel his loss very clearly.

Since Hamfests are going to be a uncertain activity for the foreseeable future the announcement that Orlando Hamcation is attempting a virtual hamfest in late February comes as a welcome bit of news. By all means, try to support any effort to create alternatives to face to face meetings, hamfests, etc.

Another way of maintaining some aspects of the social side of club membership is to think of outdoor activities that can be done while keeping a proper social distance and wearing a mask. One such activity is transmitter hunting also known as “fox hunting”. Several clubs in Connecticut are holding almost weekly fox hunts where the “fox” is actually several “foxes” or transmitters of various outputs from 1 watt to 10 milliwatts or less. These are all co-located so as to give each hunter a staged approach to the “Fox in a Box”. The “Fox” operator specifies an area where the fox will be located such as a specific town. This keeps the search area a manageable size for the hunters. Their efforts have been very successful with hams from other clubs joining the effort and inviting club members to their “foxhunts” in other locations. One should point out that they are doing all this in temperatures of 30 to 0 degrees F.

Here in Florida, another activity that is ideal in the winter season is the erection and/or maintenance of our antenna systems. During the summer it is far too hot to work outside except in the early morning and in the fall we are in Hurricane Season so we definitely have other things to worry about.

Portable Power
For Your HT

by Geoff Haines, N1GY

The technology for battery power has improved markedly in the past few years. Handi-Talky batteries that used to have 6 to 800 milliamp-hours at max have in modern times expanded to 1600 to 1800 milliamp-hours. This lets us use our HTs for much longer. In emergency situations like severe weather or other disasters, even that may not be long enough. Over the years, various products have been offered to extend the talk time of the typical HT.

One of these products was the Ham Battery from Quantum Instruments Inc. This company produced a leather-clad battery pack that could be clipped to your belt and connected to your HT with a coil cord. The power was supplied by a rechargeable battery pack consisting of three 4 volt SLA type cells connected in series. Various adapters were available for different HTs as well as an un-terminated cord for various purposes. Unfortunately, while many hams purchased this device, overall sales apparently were too low to keep the unit on the market. While the company still supports the unit with repair and service, the Quantum Ham Battery is no longer available.

With the improvement in Lithium Ion Batteries, the 2000 Milliamp-hours offered by the Ham Battery seemed less of an improvement than it used to, and most of the units were mothballed by their owners. As the original 4 volt cells wore out, the expense of installing new cells was considered too high and the units were tossed or stored away.

Recently, I picked up a couple of 7 amp-hr SLA Batteries at a regional ham fest. I planned on using them for something, I just wasn't sure what. A few days later a ham friend gave me an old Quantum unit. I also had one buried deep in my junque pile. The missing connecting cords were a problem, but the wheels in my mind began to turn.

A call to Quantum Instruments confirmed that the connector plugs were still available although for how long is unknown. Most current HTs have a cigarette lighter adapter available as an option. By wiring the Quantum coaxial power plug to an inline cigarette lighter socket we could connect the HT to the output from the Ham Battery.

I disassembled the Quantum unit and removed the dead 4-volt cells from the unit. Two machine screws hold the unit together and removing them allowed me to slide the innards of the pack out (with some effort, I might add). I disconnected the cells from the charge controller and disposed of the 4-volt cells in an ecologically sound manner.

Adding some wire to the controller and installing standard 0.25 spade connectors on the extended wires allowed me to connect the controller to one of the 7 amp-hour SLA batteries. Make sure to connect positive to positive and negative to negative. The wires on the back of the control unit are the usual red and black so this is not difficult.

I cut down the leather enclosure to surround just the control unit. I used a slightly different technique on the second unit I built, but the idea is the same. With the wires to the SLA battery extended through the case, the whole package can be carried in a "fanny pack" or a small camera case. In the one I had on hand the SLA battery went into the main compartment, the controller went into a front pocket and the lighter socket was left dangling from the pack.

Of course, before the unit was packaged, the obligatory "smoke tests" were done. With the 7 amp-hour SLA connected in place of the 2 amp-hour three pack of 4 volt cells, the controller functioned absolutely as designed. The "fuel gauge" row of green LEDs indicated the condition of the battery, the charge LED lit up when the charger wall wart was plugged into the device and the on-off LED lit up when the switch

on the unit was thrown. A test with my Yaesu VX-5R and it's optional auto charger cord showed that the radio worked just fine with the 13.0 v DC output from the SLA battery and the control unit.

With the first unit packaged in an inexpensive camera bag from the local discount department store and a shoulder strap scrounged from my old luggage, the power pack works like a charm. Recharging the unit may take a little longer than the original, but 7 amp-hours lasts a whole lot longer than 2 and it can be charged right after each use, unlike nicads which some feel have to be run out before recharging.

With the utilities out for several days after a severe weather event, the extra operating time will be very important. Additionally, the pack can be used to power a QRP rig for several pleasant hours of outdoor amateur radio when the weather is nicer.



QST Feb 21

C Y V L R E V I E C S N A R T
M N P M O S T E P P I R Y S C
T M E S H A D R R N R F W C H
H X W W P A D R Y T U E B R O
I B R B P P N S M S I A E R K
G V V Y Z V M N I V L N D J E
H Z E E J Z X O E U U N O K Y
P K Y V L X N R N T K L M R A
O X Q P P B H D O Q N M I O E
W D U M M Y A T I J N A T W S
E M O C I D U T T A M T L T U
R R H T R A F E R R M H U E R
J M T L A Y G M X O L O M N B
W K N D E T R O R L P L N T T
C C Q T G D T C Q T C C L D C

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ANTENNA	FUSION	MULTIMODE
AUTOTUNER	GEAR	NETWORK
BALUN	HIGHPOWER	PORTABLE
CHOKE	ICOM	REVIEWS
COMET	KEYPAD	STEPPIR
DIAMOND	LOADS	TRANSCEIVER
DUMMY	MESH	YAESU

SWAP / TRADE / SELL : If anyone has gear they wish to sell or donate, please send the particulars to the editor for inclusion in the next issue. The want or sell ads are free so please avail yourself of the service. Note: this list is getting a bit long in the tooth, so if anything here has already been sold or is no longer on offer, please let the Editor know so it can be removed.

FOR SALE:

Offer to build: Custom extension cables for any remote-able radio such as the Yaesu FTM-300, 350 etc.

PowerPole Power Distribution Blocks in 4+1, 6+1, and 8+1 sizes \$10, \$15, \$20 each respectively Can custom build to suit.

Foot operated PTT switches brand new from MPJA wired with 3.5mm mono plug on 10' cable. ¼" adapter available if needed. \$10

IN ADDITION: I have more parts and components than I will ever use, so if you need something, a transistor, a plug, a jack, etc etc. call me first, I will give you a great price (as in no charge).

Call Geoff at 941-447-8579 (cell) or 941-752-3696 (home)

For Sale: By Dave Flail, W3IK. W3IK@ARRL.NET

- **COMET GP-98 TRI-BAND ANTENNA** \$150.00
 - New, out of box
- **PALSTAR SP30H COMMUNICATIONS SPEAKER** \$145.00
 - Some minor scratches
- **ASTRON RM-12A RACK MOUNT POWER SUPPLY** \$ 65.00
- **UNIDEN BCD436HP HAND HELD DIGITAL SCANNER** \$475.00
 - Includes Programming Software

For Sale: from Burch Akin: I have a Force 12 C3 HF bean that I bought about 2 years ago for \$1100. It's brand new in the box. I'll take \$800 for it. Contact me at K4QXX@arrl.net

CLUB MEETING: To be a ZOOM session via the Internet on February 2, 2021 at 7PM

Monthly Board Meeting TBA (may be replaced with a teleconference)

Monthly ARES Meeting TBA

Club and Other Nets:

MARCI Info Net	Sunday 7:00 PM	146.820 – 100 Hz.
ARES Net	Monday 7:00PM	146.820 - 100 Hz.
MARCI Traders Net	Wednesday 7:30 PM	146.820 –100 Hz
David Flail, W3IK is the NCS for the Traders Net		
Manatee Skywarn Net	Thursday 8:00 PM	146.820 - 100 Hz.

PLEASE PARTICIPATE IN ALL THE NETS ANY TIME YOU CAN. The nets on Monday (146.820) and Thursday (146.820) are logged for the Manatee County Emergency Management and create “bill-able” hours of Volunteer Participation which often results in County provided equipment for ARES. And DON’T FORGET about the Regional Nets on NI4CE on 145.430 and 442.950. The Eagle Net, the NTS Traffic Net is on every night at 8:30 PM. The regional Skywarn Net is on Tuesday at 9 PM, The Technical Net is on Every Thursday at 9 PM or immediately after the end of the Eagle Net should that net run a little over. Our Club Net on Sunday night is recently very poorly attended. Our club has over 60 members. Surely at least 15 Or 20 of you can take 20 minutes out of your Sunday evening to check into your own club net! The most common complaint I hear about repeaters of all sorts, local and regional, is that **“there’s no one on”**. The old saying about **“if you don’t use it you will lose it”** was never truer than now