



HAM HUM is the official newsletter of the AK-SAR-BEN Amateur Radio Club, Inc. in Omaha, Nebraska. It is printed monthly and is distributed to members of the club, local disaster officials, local electronics outlets, and editors of other ham radio newsletters.

Articles about activities of members are solicited. The subject matter must be of general interest to radio amateurs and be understandable to a significant portion of the membership. No payment will be made to contributors and submissions will be subject to the usual editorial review. Articles containing statements that could be construed as libel or slander will not be accepted. No guarantee can be made that an accepted article will be published by a certain date. Send your contributions to Ham Hum, P.O. Box 24551, Omaha, NE 68124-0551 or email [hamhum@aksarbenarc.org](mailto:hamhum@aksarbenarc.org). Please contact the editor for permission to reprint anything appearing in the Ham Hum.

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## Contest Calendar

### January, 2009

ARRL RTTY Roundup	1800Z, Jan 3 to 2400Z, Jan 4
MI QRP January CW Contest	1200Z, Jan 10 to 2359Z, Jan 11
Midwinter Contest, CW	1400Z-2000Z, Jan 10
North American QSO Party, CW	1800Z, Jan 10 to 0600Z, Jan 11
Midwinter Contest, Phone	0800Z-1400Z, Jan 11
North American QSO Party, SSB	1800Z, Jan 17 to 0600Z, Jan 18
ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes	1900Z, Jan 17 to 0400Z, Jan 19
NAQCC Straight Key/Bug Sprint	0130Z-0330Z, Jan 22
CQ 160-Meter Contest, CW	2200Z, Jan 23 to 2159Z, Jan 25

### February, 2009

Vermont QSO Party	0000Z, Feb 7 to 2400Z, Feb 8
10-10 Int. Winter Contest, SSB	0001Z, Feb 7 to 2359Z, Feb 8
Minnesota QSO Party	1400Z-2400Z, Feb 7
Delaware QSO Party	1700Z, Feb 7 to 0100Z, Feb 9
ARRL Inter. DX Contest, CW	0000Z, Feb 21 to 2400Z, Feb 22
REF Contest, SSB	0600Z, Feb 21 to 1800Z, Feb 22
UBA DX Contest, CW	1300Z, Feb 21 to 1300Z, Feb 22
High Speed Club CW Contest	0900Z-1700Z, Feb 22 CQ
160-Meter Contest, SSB	2200Z, Feb 27 to 2159Z, Mar 1
North American QSO Party, RTTY	1800Z, Feb 28 to 0600Z, Mar 1

For details check the following web site the week prior to the contest.  
<http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/index.html>

## Upcoming Events

January 9	AK-SAR-BEN ARC Club Meeting, 7:30 PM, Red Cross
January 10, 17	BARC 2 Part Technician License Class, Allen Long K0AAL, <a href="mailto:education@bellevuearc.org">education@bellevuearc.org</a> for info
January 17, 24	AARC 2 Part Technician License Class <a href="mailto:beaham@aksarbenarc.org">beaham@aksarbenarc.org</a> for info
January 27	HDXA & AARC VE Test Session, 6:30 PM, Red Cross
January 31	Midway ARC Hamfest, Kearney NE, Talk-in 146.625- (123.0) <a href="http://www.w0ky.kearney.net/BB.htm">www.w0ky.kearney.net/BB.htm</a> for info
February 7, 14, 21, 28	BARC 4 Part General License Class, Allen Long K0AAL, <a href="mailto:education@bellevuearc.org">education@bellevuearc.org</a> for info
February 10	AK-SAR-BEN ARC Business Meeting, 7:00 PM Red Cross
February 13	AK-SAR-BEN ARC Club Meeting, 7:30 PM, Red Cross
March 21	LARC End of Winter Hamfest/Nebraska State Convention Lancaster Event Center, Lincoln NE
March 31	HDXA & AARC VE Test Session, 6:30 PM, Red Cross

# CONELRAD

Tom Sanders

When the United States and the Soviet Union, allies during World War II, became enemies in the Fifties, the possibility of Soviet warplanes attacking the American mainland became real. America's leaders also realized that signals from domestic AM radio stations would help approaching bombers find U.S. cities. On a portable radio, a distant AM station's signal becomes stronger when the radio is turned in one direction. An enemy navigator could thus tune to 770, for example, turn his plane until the station he heard was the strongest, and fly in that direction to New York City.

In 1951, President Harry S Truman signed legislation authorizing CONELRAD to begin operation.

CONELRAD - CONTROL of ELECTRONIC RADIATION - required all AM stations in the United States to sign off in the event of an enemy attack, save for those designated to stay on the air at either 640 or 1240. Multiple signals on the same frequency, coming from different directions, would prevent enemy planes from using one station as a direction finder.

Manufacturers of radios were required to mark the CONELRAD frequencies on all sets sold in the United States. Many of these radios survive and are in daily use today. The marking can be a triangle inside a circle -- a variation on the Civil Defense logo -- just a triangle, a dot, or the letters "CD," depending on the size of the radio.

I don't know why these two frequencies were chosen. Possible reasons might include the fact that they're an easy pair of numbers to remember, and at opposite ends of the AM broadcast band, making the markings on radio dials more visible.

Radios in those cool Fifties cars, then, display this additional reminder of life during the Cold War. Stations were required to test the system once a week. They'd sign off, come back on with a tone, and explain that it was only a test. Once a year, every station except those designated to move to 640 or 1240 went silent for a half hour. I remember hearing the last national "Operation Alert" in 1961. It was strange to hear nothing on the radio except one station where the announcers were casually talking about why everyone else was off the air, while reminding everyone to be thankful it wasn't the real thing.

Intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), armed with nuclear warheads and remote controlled, with no need for AM radio signals, made CONELRAD obsolete. The 640-1240 plan was replaced in 1963 with one that allowed stations to broadcast emergency information while remaining on their assigned frequencies.

CONELRAD lives, though; in the memories of Cold War kids like me who were raised on radio, and in the collections of radio buffs who look for sets with dials that have those little triangles.

Tom Sanders is a novelist and radio historian from Lexington, Michigan.  
Tom Sanders / KC8YBX

# Our English Language (You've Gotta Love It!)

Let's face it -- English is a crazy language. There is no egg in eggplant nor ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in pineapple. English muffins weren't invented in England or French fries in France. Sweetmeats are candies while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat.

We take English for granted. But if we explore its paradoxes, we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.

And why is it that writers write but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham? If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth beeth? One goose, 2 geese. So one moose, 2 meese? One index, 2 indices?

Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one amend, that you comb through annals of history but not a single annal? If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it?

If teachers taught, why didn't preacher praught? If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat? If you wrote a letter, perhaps you bote your tongue?

Sometimes I think all the English speakers should be committed to an asylum for the verbally insane. In what language do people recite at a play and play at a recital? Ship by truck and send cargo by ship? Have noses that run and feet that smell? Park on driveways and drive on parkways?

How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and wise guy are opposites? How can overlook and oversee be opposites, while quite a lot and quite a few are alike? How can the weather be hot as hell one day and cold as hell another.

Have you noticed that we talk about certain things only when they are absent? Have you ever seen a horseful carriage or a strapful gown? Met a sung hero or experienced requited love? Have you ever run into someone who was combobulated, grunted, ruly or peccable? And where are all those people who ARE spring chickens or who would ACTUALLY hurt a fly?

You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language in which your house can burn up as it burns down, in which you fill in a form by filling it out and in which an alarm clock goes off by going on.

English was invented by people, not computers, and it reflects the creativity of the human race (which, of course, isn't a race at all). That is why, when the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out, they are invisible. And why, when I wind up my watch, I start it, but when I wind up this essay, I end it.

Submitted by  
Scott WB0QPP  
73's (Amateur Radio for Best Wishes)

All I Want for Christmas Is....

When I was a kid, we had an album (remember records on vinyl?) that had a bunch of Christmas songs for kids. The song I remember most goes:

All I want for Christmas is my two front teeth,  
My two front teeth, my two front teeth.

Gee, if I could only have my two front teeth,  
Then I could wish you Merry Chrith-math (sang with a lisp).

Seeing as how I've had my two front teeth for nearly 50 years now, and I pretty much have everything I want, I got to thinking about what I want for ham radio for Christmas this year. Here's what I've come up with so far. In no particular order, I want:

- MORE SUNSPOTS!
- the median age for ham radio operators to actually decrease this year. This means not only recruiting kids, but also younger adults.
- the pessimists who are continually talking down ham radio to find new joy in the hobby and begin working to make it great.
- the FCC to appoint someone as effective as Riley Hollingsworth to take over as the enforcer of the amateur radio service regulations.
- the FCC to pay a little more attention to amateur radio regulations and not treat them as an afterthought.
- the silliness on 75m phone and 14.275 MHz to go QRT.
- the ARRL to work harder on making itself truly the "national association for amateur radio" and on increasing the percentage of licensed hams that are ARRL members.
- to be able to brag about all of ham radio's "purposes," not only providing emergency and public service communications. According to Part 97, these are:
  - \* advancing the state of the radio art;
  - \* improving our technical and operating skills;
  - \* expanding the number of trained operators, technicians, and electronics experts; and
  - \* enhancing international goodwill.
- ham radio clubs to grow and thrive even in these tough economic times.

When I asked this question on Twitter, I got a couple of answers that were versions of a couple of wishes above, but I also got a few more:

- WORMT wants "all of us to get on the air more and act as good ambassadors for the hobby," and
- NT7S wants the hearts of ham grinchers to grow a couple of sizes.
- N1WBV wants redesigns for most ham radio websites.

I pretty much agree with all three. Happy New Year!

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When not waiting for Santa to decide if he's been naughty or nice, Dan, KB6NU, teaches ham classes and blogs about ham radio ([www.kb6nu.com](http://www.kb6nu.com))

## Ham Hum Delivery

If you would like the Ham Hum delivered electronically by email, please let N0UP [n0up@cox.net](mailto:n0up@cox.net) know. We will make sure your hum arrives when the mailed hum would arrive. This is an opt-out of receiving the Hum by mail only. If you do not request an emailed copy, you will continue to receive it by postal mail. Ed.

## Newsline

For the past couple weeks, Newsline has been played on the K0USA 146.940 Repeater following the 9:00 pm Sunday night ARES net. Special thanks to Mary N0TRK for bringing Newsline back to .94

## Technician Class

The AARC will be hosting a Technician Licensing class held on two consecutive Saturdays starting on January 17th and January 24th. Classes will be held at the LDS Chapel located at 176th & Sprague. This is just north of 176th and West Maple Road in Omaha, behind the Dillon Brothers Harley-Davidson motorcycle dealership. Class will start at 9am and will run until about 5:00 each day, with a break for lunch.

Testing will be with the normal session hosted by the AARC and HDXA on January 27.

There is no charge for the class, but you may purchase a study manual for \$15.

Class space is LIMITED... so email [beaham@aksarbenarc.org](mailto:beaham@aksarbenarc.org) to sign up now!