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## The Voice of the North Hills Amateur Radio Club

August 2008 (Updated)

This month's newsletter is available electronically. A couple of Club members have requested I always send them printed copies of the newsletter. If you want a printed copy, please let me know. My e-mail address is [wa3yoa@nharc.org](mailto:wa3yoa@nharc.org). I will bring a few printed copies with me to the next meeting. A copy of this newsletter will be posted to our Club's website [www.nharc.org](http://www.nharc.org).

I am working on the next printed newsletter now. I hope to have it in the mail early October. If you have an idea for an article, please let me know.

### Ham Rail Fan Adventure

The 2008 Ham Rail Fan Adventure will be held Sunday, October 19, 2008. We will take Amtrak for a round trip from Pittsburgh to Altoona. The cost is about \$40 per adult. Please make your own reservation by phone (1-800-USARAIL), or by the Internet [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com), or at the local Amtrak Station in Pittsburgh at 1100 Liberty Ave. (at lower level of Pennsylvania Station, a.k.a. The Pennsylvanian). Our train departs Pittsburgh at 1:20 PM, but we must be at station no later than noon to secure our tickets. We will assemble in a special area so we can get preferred boarding and seating before other passengers. We are able to do this because this train originates in Pittsburgh. We have a scheduled arrival in Altoona about 3:49 PM. Our scheduled departure from Altoona is about 5:05 PM returning to Pittsburgh at about 8:10 PM.

It is important to make reservations now! The factors that require such action are (1) the price increases about 30 days before departure, (2) the date is in the middle of fall foliage season, (3) passengers from the Chicago, IL to Washington, DC train that stops in Pittsburgh will be reboarding, and (4) passengers coming from New York, Philadelphia, and Harrisburg will be on the westbound train. Food and beverage are available on the train at prices no higher than local restaurants.

Please let me know after you have ticketed so I can add you to the list. Please join us on the trip, and join our RailFan Net, every Thursday evening at 9:30 PM on the 146.880 MHz repeater in Pittsburgh. My work phone is 412-761-6400, my home phone number is 724-935-3466, or eMail [wekristoff@nidhog.net](mailto:wekristoff@nidhog.net).

de Bill / N3BPB

## School Bus Races

If you have not been to one, don't laugh.

Tuesday, August 12, 2008, 7:00 PM at Lernerville Speedway, on PA route 356 between Freeport, PA and Butler, PA. The event is a little crazy, but it is fun. The website is [www.lernerville.com](http://www.lernerville.com).

We gather at the King's on route 356 just west of PA route 28 at Freeport between 5:00 PM & 5:30 PM before going to the track.

At the racetrack we sit in the area of the first turn. Come through the admission gate and go to the right as far as you can and then down to the track. We will be sitting on the left.

c u at the track! de Bill / N3BPB

## Hamfest 2008



The Club's Hamfest was another success story. The weather was gray and looked like a storm was about to hit but it stayed dry. A sunny day would have helped the attendance but staying dry is always a good thing. The other good news is the raffle sold out! In case you have not visited the Club's website, the prize winners were:

- 1st Prize: Icom IC-7000 won by Juan Manfredi, NA0B
- 2nd Prize: Icom IC-91AD won by Joe Mracna, AA3XE
- 50/50 Cash Drawing won by John Seiler, KA3PPH

More detailed information should be made available at the Club's business meeting next Wednesday at 7PM at the Northland Public Library.

## **Repeater Committee Report**

I would like to thank everyone who has made a donation to the Repeater Committee's treasury this year. We are very fortunate to have such gracious supporters. Your financial support is very important to the operation and expansion of our repeaters. We are selling tickets for a raffle that will be held at the Club's activity meeting in October. The prize is an Icom IC-91AD.

In 1991, our repeaters were in extremely bad condition. 444.4 was dead. 146.88 barely worked. 147.09 was on the air with borrowed parts. We were also about to lose our main repeater site. The Repeater Committee's treasury had about \$800.00 in it. We needed more than that amount just to pay the auto-patch and control telephone bills and insurance bills. The outlook was grim.

Several of us gathered together and formed the core of the Repeater Committee that is still with us today. This small group of very dedicated people created a plan to rebuild our repeaters into some of the best repeaters in this area. Given the initial value of the treasury, many of us loaned money for equipment until there were enough donations to cover the costs. N3CVL was the major lender in the group. There were times when we owed him over a thousand dollars for months. We also pledged to raise funds to cover the purchases of the much needed new equipment. Our goal after the purchases was to always have at least \$3,000.00 in our account to cover expenses, repairs, and to expand the repeater systems. We did just as we promised. With your extremely generous support, we met and exceeded our goals!

With the bulk of the purchases behind us and the donations exceeding our goal, we dropped our auto-patch dues from \$20.00 a year to \$0.00. You came through when we needed you so we stopped the dues collection for a brief period of time. That brief period has been more than ten years. We have continued to raise funds via our annual raffle and by your donations. The Repeater Committee thanks you very much for your continued financial support and your support for our work and team.

The promise in 1991 was if you gave your support, this small group of people would give you new repeaters that would last for 20 years. Time has marched on and the 20 year mark is only a few years away. In a few weeks, the Committee will begin a new fund raising project. It will build on the success of the annual HT raffle. Our goal is to be proactive and not reactive to our aging repeaters. It is time to begin the process to replace each repeater and antenna. The cost to do this will be significantly more than in the early 90s. This is why we are starting now. In addition to replacing our FM repeaters, we would like to expand the D-Star repeater system by adding a 2 meter module, a 1.2GHz voice module, and a 1.2GHz data only module.

The letter we will be sending to all of the NHARC members and other repeater users will ask for an annual contribution of only \$20.00. More if you are willing and able to do so. It is a small amount of money for such a worthy project.

Let's keep our repeaters the best in town!

Thanks,  
Ed DeHart / WA3YOA  
Repeater Committee Chairperson

## 2008 NHARC Membership Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Call Sign: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip + 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: (home) \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: (work) \_\_\_\_\_  
License Class: \_\_\_\_\_ ARRL Member: (yes or no) \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Receive Newsletter via E-Mail (yes or no) \_\_\_\_\_

Club dues are \$15.00 per year. Your donations are also very welcome. Make check payable to **North Hills Amateur Radio Club**, and mail your check with SASE to the Club treasurer, Cathleen Heiles, 134 Easley Rd, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15237 (412-486-2785) or bring your dues to the next Club meeting.

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## Repeater Committee Donations

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Call Sign: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip + 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: (home) \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: (work) \_\_\_\_\_  
License Class \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I am enclosing a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to help defray the costs of operation and maintenance of the repeaters. Donations of \$20.00 or more include auto-patch privileges on the 146.88 and 147.09 repeaters. New repeater members must include a copy of their current amateur license. Make your check payable to: **North Hills Amateur Radio Club – Repeaters**, and mail to Repeater Committee's Treasurer William E. Kristoff, Jr. N3BPB, 205 Twin Oak Dr., Wexford, PA 15090-8635 (724-935-3466).

## **City of Pittsburgh 250th Anniversary**

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the founding of the City of Pittsburgh. Eight western Pennsylvania area amateur radio clubs together decided to operate separate Special Event stations to commemorate the anniversary.

Earlier this month, August 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, the organizations set up their own operations and used special call sign designators to make contacts with amateur radio operators around the country to celebrate the anniversary.

The North Hills Amateur Radio Club W3EXW, and the North Hills Senior High School Amateur Radio Club K3NHC, operated from the hamshack at the high school. Times of their operations were from 12:00 noon until 6:00 PM both Saturday and Sunday. The NHARC used the call sign W3EXW/250 on 20 Meters and accumulated 115 contacts, while the High School Club used K3NHC/250 on 2 Meters and totaled 25 contacts.

Those who made contact with the Special Event stations and supplying their QSL information by mail will receive a commemorative certificate from the event organizers. The certificates are a full color picture of the City of Pittsburgh along with a brief history of the city and information confirming the contact.

Special thanks go out to Mike Benko K3NH, and his crew, for operating with us and sharing their equipment and facilities.

John / N3RQD

## **Annual NHARC Club Picnic**

The event is for all amateurs and Club members. A simple get together. Just bring yourself. Food and beverage will be provided. We will assemble simple amateur HF and VHF/UHF radio stations. Signage will be in place for our radio club with a sign saying public welcome. Remember, Sunday, August 17, 2008 from 9:00 AM ( set up ) until ????????. North Park, Sesqui Grove on the southeasterly corner of Babcock Blvd. at Wildwood Road.

Bring yourself, your appetite, and others who are interested in ham radio.

Bill / N3BPB

## **NHARC Scheduled Meetings (Updated)**

**Meetings start at 7:00 PM unless otherwise noted.**

August 13, Business Meeting at the Northland Public Library.  
August 17, NHARC 3rd Annual Club Picnic at the Sesqui Grove in North Park from 9 am until??

September 10, Business Meeting at the Northland Public Library.  
[September 24, \(Updated\) Activity Meeting at the St. John's Lutheran Church.](#) [U.S. Postal Inspection Service Communication](#)

October 8, Business Meeting at the Northland Public Library.  
October 22, Activity Meeting at the St. John's Lutheran Church. Fall Auction & Repeater Committee HT Raffle.

November 12, Business Meeting at the Northland Public Library.  
No Activity meeting in November.

December 10, NHARC Holiday Party (location and time to be determined)  
No Activity meeting in December.

**[www.nharc.org](http://www.nharc.org)**

For timely information about the Club, please visit the Club's website at least once a week.