

PARAGraphs

From the President (Gene, K3DSM) August 2005

Due to family situations of our editor, this will serve as PARAGraphs for the summer

PARA is ready to celebrate 35 Years this year, if my calculations are correct. But after 35 years, are we ready to reorganize PARA to get with the times and meet many challenges that we face? Ham radio is slowly fading. It is estimated that only one third of all licensed hams are active. It also seems that PARA is fading with poor attendance and lack of activity on the repeaters.

There were about 18 people that showed up at the May meeting and those that didn't attend, missed an excellent program. In fact, we have had excellent programs at each meeting for the last few years. Paul N3UD and Lynnette W3GZZ brought 6 ICOM ID-1 transceivers, along with my lonely ID-1 and they were sending high speed data to each other, as shown on a projection screen. Paul is quite the engineer, as he explained the inner workings of sending data packets through the ICOM system. Chester County ARES-RACES now has 2 ID-1 systems operating from Bucktown and West Chester, and any one wanting to use them needs to register their "MAC" number with Lor W3QA. N3UD appears to have the first ICOM repeater based on the D-Star system and it should be operational by the time you read this. If you are interested in getting an ID-1, check with Paul first as he is able to get them at a super price, well below what any of the stores are selling them for.

It was well noticed at the May meeting that the Northwestern Quadrant seems totally dead, with no one showing up for the 5 th meeting in a row, even though there was one report of the 88 repeater operating with a very limited range from Quakertown. Over half the members in attendance reported that they were in the "76 Quadrant", since that was the only repeater that they used. (76 is not a Quadrant, according to the By-Laws, but maybe it should be)

Out of the various conversations at the meeting and after the meeting, some indicated that PARA seemed disorganized and somewhat dysfunctional indicated by the lack of interest and confusion of quadrants. Questions were raised about why 76 has no representation and why there was no one representing 88. Other questions were raised as to why we didn't have activities. That answer: PARA was organized as a repeater support group and not a club. What I don't understand is why only 2 people answered the questionnaire, when that was the perfect opportunity to respond with questions like these.

I have been asked to see if enough members would support major constitution and bylaw changes for substantial reorganization where either board members could be elected at large rather than from quadrants or at least to have 76 represented with directors, since it is a very important part of PARA. If any members would want to help write proposed changes, please contact me and we can start on the idea. I am not going to do it alone. In fact, if any one wants to be President, please indicate so, as after 6 years, it is easy to wear out.

I have also been asked about finding a better meeting place, but that, my friends, is something that the board has sought after for several years for their meetings, and nothing seems to work out. We once had a meeting at Micro Center, in one of their classrooms, which was a very interesting meeting place. When I inquired for a second time, they had established a cost for meetings (\$150) and that didn't make sense for us to pay that. Some of the best places we ever had, included the "Space Center" and Channel 6 and Channel 10, but because of security, those places are out now. Even Freedoms Foundation was good, but times have changed, and that is no longer available. The board has met at restaurants, but when only one third of the group wants to purchase a meal, we wear out our welcome. If anyone can come up with a good central location with easy access and no fees, that site could be considered. Ideally, the corridor from King of Prussia to City Line seems best for everyone. But guess what, that's where we are now, at St Gertrude's Church. It really isn't that hard to get to and the parking and facilities are pretty good.

For those who are following, my radio show "Computer Corner" on WCOJ-1420 is working out great on Saturday mornings at 8AM. One of the recent topics was on BPL, including some background on Short Wave and Ham Radio. Since Google and IBM and others are now investigating heavily in BPL, its time for another shot at them. (www.wcoj.com/computer). Most past shows can be downloaded (MP3 files) from the WCOJ Computer Corner web site.

For those who are new to PARA, welcome aboard! There is plenty of information on the web sites at para.buxcom.net and also at para.k3dsm.net

The fall issue of PARAGraphs will contain the meeting program information as well as election notice for several offices including President. There are board positions open as well. If you would like to serve, please email me genem@bee.net.