

THE MOUNT WILSON REPEATER ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER©

VOLUME: 1 NUMBER: 2 APRIL 1991

Welcome to **THE MOUNT WILSON REPEATER ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER©**. The **MOUNT WILSON REPEATER ASSOCIATION**, a non-profit organization, has been established to promote fellowship, food, fun and festivities. The first and only rule is that there are no rules. The M.W.R.A. members have expressed a desire to support the Association for the advancement of Amateur Radio through social intercourse. The Association members may pledge donations of material or monetary consideration to the Association for the purpose of supporting the repeater located at Saddle Peak on a frequency output of 147.435 Megahertz with an input frequency of 146.400 Megahertz. Your monetary donations may be sent to: Kathy Schaffstein, WA6FAH, P.O. Box 292, Fullerton, CA 92632. Please make your check payable to Roy Tucker N6TK.

President	N6NEV	Next M.W.R.A. meeting-----Never
Vice President	\$15	M.W.R.A. Trivia Net: Every Sunday night. 8:PM
Secretary	N6NEV	M.W.R.A. Business Net: Every Wednesday night. 8:PM
Treasurer	WA6FAH	M.W.R.A. Swap Net: Every Thursday night. 8:PM
Repeater Owner	N6TK	Antique Radio Roundtable - Last Friday of the
Trustee	N6GXC	month before the TRW Swap Meet. 8:PM
Social Director	N6PVP	TASMA General Meeting May 11, 1991 10:30AM
Newsletter Editor	EXJAC	Sheriff's Communications Center, 1277 N. Eastern
Graphics Editor	N6VQM	Ave., E. Los Angeles, CA 90063 Talk-in 147.195+

HAM SWAPMEETS, SWAPNETS AND OTHER MEETINGS OF GENERAL INTEREST

So. CA Antique Radio Society (SCARS): usually 3rd Saturday in Feb., May., Aug. and Nov., at the Velvet Turtle Restaurant, Sepulveda and Hawthorne Blvds., @7:AM. TRW: last SAT of every month at Marine and Aviation Blvds El Segundo. General Dynamics: 2nd SAT of every month 10 Frwy. to Haven off ramp to 6th street, Rancho Cucamonga. Santee: 1st SAT every month, Santee Drive-in Theater. Ham swapnets at the following frequencies: Monday-Catalina 147.09mhz. 8:PM / Tuesday-Heaps Peak 145.24mhz. 7:PM Wednesday-Simplex SSB only 144.21mhz. 8:PM. / Saturday-Sunday 40 Meters 7.240mhz. LSB 12-3:PM.

COMING M.W.R.A. EVENTS

There are a number of events proposed as this newsletter is being put together. However, none of them has been firmed up enough to print. Stay tuned for N6PVP and the repeater for any late breaking news. Spontaneous events can occur from moment to moment that's why it's necessary to be listening on almost a 24 hour basis. If you have any suggestions or wish to make a comment please contact our Social Director Rich Yarijian, N6PVP This newsletter is the voice of freedom and remains a beacon of the free.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear: Editor

To the masses on 147.435: I've always had a third-person omnipotent point of view concerning the state of affairs of the repeater and the Mighty Whitey Repeater Assn.(MWRA). I guess this time I have taken the phrase "Watching from Afar" a little too far. Today, being my 40th day of Army life here at Fort Jackson (near Columbia) South Carolina, I have decided to reflect on the repeater, the state of affairs, Army life, and whatever [else] comes to mind. First off, I would like to personally thank N6PVP, K6PXA, WB6ZFU, EX6JAC and whoever else I never [k]new about or met, for that spectacular get-together at LuLu's on 3 Feb. I still have fond memories about that evening, the whole day in fact. I never knew that I, along with all the countless others, was such a cornerstone to life with the repeater. Before I forget, I'd also like to thank the schmuck that robbed the joint, the LAPD for their cameo appearance (in uniform, no less!) and the daredevil stunt team of Phil and Marine Bob with the classic demonstration of how to use Marine Bob's new prototype quick release glasses. Ya gotta love it. Anyhow, that evening is the only source of fresh material for me to rehash during my precious seconds of free time I have to daydream. Browsing through my copy of the first newsletter, today (for the 50th time, no doubt), I have to say that it's incredibly addicting. Being the radio nut that I (and probably all of you) [are]. Having such a good thing as 435 around and then up and leaving it all for a 180° change in lifestyle for an extended duration (I'm in for a total of 5 years) is an incredible mind rattler. Being that I had a head start on the adjustment to military life of about 30 days over my peers and comrades here with the "MAD DOGS"(3d Platoon Basic Combat Training Unit), I see a lot of what I went through with my first initial contacts with what I had left only a few days ago. I see the homesickness, the wannabe AWOL's (gee! I don't wanna get up at 4 AM, I don't wanna be here!) that I had weathered. I know that {most} of these guys make it, I will make it, and most importantly, you are all gonna make it. Your ham radio culture is going to survive. No matter what happens in the ham radio community, there will always be our niche, our corner of the world, our "bit of the spectrum" where we can be who we are, instead of masking ourselves in formality with "HI HI OM" and all that nonsense that clouds most of the self-righteous repeaters in the 70 cm band. I would go further to say that indeed most of them would be jealous of our informality and openness. We are unique in what we do, and there is no other place that I would wanna be. In conclusion, I would like to wish luck and good fortune to all on the repeater, particularly the N6TK, N6PQY (thanks for the nice letter!) the people who are always there: N6TAF [?] and the mars crew, KC6OLD, N6VQM, N6PVP, K6PXA, EX6JAC, and the others I forgot to mention but haven't forgotten entirely. I do miss the many hours of enjoyment I had listening to the radio, as well as the personalities. Ladies and Gentlemen, I will return, perhaps not in the immediate future, but someday. I have tasks and goals I need to accomplish now to prepare myself for BCT graduation that will test my mental and physical stamina like nothing I have ever done before. I will have many stories to tell when I return, so keep the "pot stirred" 'n let the frequency roll!' 73's everybody.

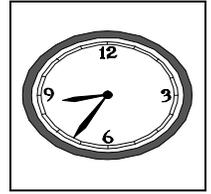
de, Carl KK6RV

P.S. For those who wish to correspond, this soldier loves letters and will respond whenever I've got time. His eminence has the address and will give it (off air, please) upon request.

Editor: Thanks Carl for your your input. I hope some of the users of 435 will take a little time to write. Good luck and best wishes on your graduation.

LOOKING BACKWARD

by Roy T. Tucker, N6TK



EDWIN ARMSTRONG, THE INVENTOR THAT GOT US HERE

AA6TK and I once conducted a public opinion survey at a meeting of the Southern California Antique Radio Society (SCARS) regarding who was the favorite radio inventor. Edwin Armstrong came way out ahead, passing Marconi, DeForest, and others. My own opinion matches that of the radio collectors; of all the radio contributors I feel Armstrong leads the pack. Armstrong was born in New York City in 1890, thus the centennial of his birth recognized last year. While still a teenager he got interested in the newly emerging communication media then commonly called wireless. A mentor was encountered that headed him toward his lifelong involvement in radio invention. This was Michael Pupin, a professor of electrical engineering at Columbia University and an inventor in his own right. Armstrong used the only logical method for a young person to then enter into radio experimentation, he became a radio amateur in the years just before licensing began in 1912.

Even before graduation Armstrong was continually attempting to develop new circuitry for radio utilization and discovered the regenerative principle of vacuum tube reception. Not only did this discovery lead to a big improvement in reception, perhaps even more important it showed that vacuum tubes could be made to oscillate and create an RF signal. Others were drawing the same conclusion about the same time, and long agonizing law suits followed, but most radio historians credit Armstrong as the most significant of the discoverer of the oscillating vacuum tube and its use in reception and for other purposes. Starting with this invention, Armstrong kept perfecting new radio circuits for decades and the results were unbelievable. In fact he invented practically every fundamental circuit used to the present day. While serving in the Signal Corps of the First World War he came up with superhetrodyne. Is there a receiver today of any consequence that is not a superhet? Shortly after that war he came up with superregeneration, a form of reception that for a while was found quite practical in the pioneering apparatus used by amateurs and others for VHF communications. He also contributed to showing the value of the higher frequencies for long distance communication. This involved amateur signals crossing the Atlantic and Pacific in the early 1920's.

Armstrong's biggest challenge was that of trying to eliminate static. Starting in the late 1920's he felt a new form of modulation and detection, that of wideband frequency modulation, might turn the trick. He didn't originally realize that not only would FM be useful in eliminating static it had enormous other advantages for broadcasting and two-way communications such as that used by the 435 crowd. By the late 1930's Armstrong's FM experiments were beginning to pay off and a new form of broadcasting begun. Look at it today! Shortly after the broadcast breakthrough police and fire communications plus military land mobile communications moved to FM. Amateurs would eventually join as well. Unfortunately for the noted inventor his constant legal battles, and other conflicts which he was forced into, got the best of him and he committed suicide in 1953 right in the midst of his biggest court trial. His estate went on with the case and eventually won millions of dollars of unpaid FM royalties. Such was the fate of radio's most popular inventor, the one that got us where we are today.



FROM THE PROPRIETOR
by Roy T. Tucker, N6TK

435'S DICTIONARY CONTRIBUTIONS

The dictionary of the English language has never stood still. New words, meaning, pronunciations, etc. continually appear. The 435 repeater seems to have contributed more than its share, especially if mispronunciations and expressions are tossed in for good measure. Here are a few of my favorites of recent vogue.

1. Maldiscontents --- the repeater is sure full of these guys.
2. Ho Ho day --- Christmas in Billbradeyville.
3. Screw police --- when the repeater is taken over by screwballs -
you call these people.
4. Notorious 435 repeater --- proper designation for the repeater
according to a nationally circulated
amateur radio newsletter.
5. Adjudicate and recapitulate --- meanings sure don't agree with my
Webster's.
6. Burrito benders --- I think these must be related to taco benders.
7. I resemble that remark --- some sort of description of Army.
8. Frequency users and abusers --- too bad we couldn't have more of
the former and less of the
latter. --- a win the war slogan.
9. Sodomize Hussein
10. Mad taper --- unidentified and
Norwalk?). always 5 lights in La Mirada (or is it

ANTENNA MATH

by Frank Smith, W6TZQ



1. $1/8$ wavelength antenna: $117/\text{freq. in Mhz.} = \text{result in Ft.}$
2. $1/4$ wavelength antenna: $234/\text{freq. in Mhz.} = \text{result in Ft.}$
3. $3/8$ wavelength antenna: $351/\text{freq. in Mhz.} = \text{result in Ft.}$
4. $1/2$ wavelength antenna: $468/\text{freq. in Mhz.} = \text{result in Ft.}$
5. $5/8$ wavelength antenna: $585/\text{freq. in Mhz.} = \text{result in Ft.}$
6. $3/4$ wavelength antenna: $702/\text{freq. in Mhz.} = \text{result in Ft.}$
7. $7/8$ wavelength antenna: $819/\text{freq. in Mhz.} = \text{result in Ft.}$
8. For one wavelength: $959/\text{freq. in Mhz.} = \text{result in Ft.}$

ZANAHORIAS ELECTRONICAS

by J. G. Newkom, WA6MHJ



It's always nice to be perfect. The perfect signal, from the perfect mountaintop location -- the latest state-of-the-art equipment: an El Primo fist, full breakin -- teletype gear which keeps functioning even amongst adversity -- in short, a magnanimous compendium of all sorts of things that QST and 73 magazines tell us make amateur radio great.

But it takes only a few squeaky voices, jammers, touch-toners, and just plain lids to dump the whole thing into the toilet. Well, citizens, I've been racking my brain to find something nice to write about 435. Without much success. Oh, there's nothing wrong with the repeater. Quite the contrary. Roy, Jensen, (and now), Mark, have done yeoman service; they're providing a good machine in a reasonably good location which has good coverage and stays on the air all the time. Usually. The days of the infamous Toy Phone and the ubiquitous inputs are a late, unlamented thing of the past.

And there is some organized activity, of perennial general interest: The Great Trivia Net Thingie, (Great Ghu, there's Roy Tucker again!), the Swap Net, (on which the list is sometimes even read after the checkins), the Early Morning Love Net, (Ah, Linda, where is thy sting!) -- the continual -- but, hell, I don't have to go into all of this -- you know whereof I speak. All of which is, for the sake of argument, fun, (if occasionally boring); good natured back fence operation. Of course, two meters is not the world. I keep telling myself that; there actually are some other frequencies out there, on which some semblance of ham radio still persists. It's nice to be able to fire up the rig and come back to some guy in, say, Scotland, who's been trying to make points in some or another DX contest and end up yakking with him for a couple of hours, for the sheer, audacious hell of it -- just because you both want to. It's nice to be able to know (not that it will ever actually happen to many of us) that sometime you may hear someone in distress on a leaky boat somewhere -- wherever -- and able to do something constructive about it.

Indeed. Why, then, should VHF -- more specifically, this pair of VHF frequencies, have become the site of so much craziness? (Some say that NBC TV is monitoring us on a scanner in their news room!) Why, why, has it become -- almost exclusively -- an arena, where backbiting and personal attacks predominate? The issue, of late, has been how to decide when to operate -- if one is to get on the air at all. In this I speak not of the aforementioned idiots -- those with and without licenses who lack the imagination to do anything but thoroughly disrupt the channel for use by others, but of some of the regular, identified users -- who seem to feel that the only route to fame is on the backs of their contemporaries. Backstabbing. Innuendo. Slander. I thought of naming names and describing specifics -- but that would only be doing the same thing on paper that these individuals have been doing on the air -- to what end? Let us endeavor, then, to put all of this creativity and intelligence to some good, or, at least, better purpose: re-instill the camaraderie that the hobby is supposed to be all about. I am not for a minute suggesting a reversal to the HI HI OM mode, but, HEY! Does anyone remember what the hackneyed phrase 'free and open repeating' is supposed to mean? SHOW SOME CLASS, GANG.

[An aside to our esteemed leviathan, Mr. Burton: Kudos on your initial foray into noozelettering. A thankless task. Admirable performed.]

IN THE NAME OF THE FORMER AND OF THE LATTER AND THEIR HOLOCAUST, ALLMEN.

I CAN'T BELIEVE what's happened to gas prices! The other day I handed the kid at the pump a \$20 bill, and he used it to wipe the dipstick!

Quoted by Pete Summers, WLAD, Danbury, Conn.

As a DOCTOR is examining a patient, his nurse bursts in and says "Excuse me, but that man you just treated walked out the door and collapsed on the front step. What should I do?" "Turn him around," the doctor answers, "so It looks like he was walking in."

"THE DOCTOR IS IN"

by The Doctor (anonymous)

It is my hope, Mr. Burton, that you will find these critiques as amusing as they are true and see it fit to publish them. I have dedicated my life to such practice and have written many articles published in magazines pertinent to the field of psychology, but I must admit, this one was just for fun!

As a short background of myself, I have earned a doctoral degree in the field of psychology and am currently in practice as such. With this field I find a great deal of free time and spend it, among other things, forecasting the next moves of the many personalities on this frequency. If I have omitted someone you feel I shouldn't have, just request a critique on the individual through means of the "800-link" and I will happily abide. I might add that I do not have an amateur license but have been listening for what is now close to eight years.

I am leaving my current address and name undisclosed as I realize I may have offended some. I do hope that this inconvenience will not be the cause of my article being unpublished. You will find the call signs listed in alphabetical order and no need to edit any misspellings or grammar mistakes, for there are none. Thank you for your time and effort of the printing of the newsletter and although I am not on your mailing list, I do have access to the newsletter.

SAGACIOUS SATIRE

KC6AMZ: One who uses his age and a altruistic shield as an advantage; no one would suspect one as time honored as he of "stirring the pot."

KC6MMH: Plastic Joe? Plastic Rex! Unlike a rope pulled by two opponents, he will always end up on both sides.

KC6MMX: Although she has the unmistakable air of a person with a goal, she has not yet realized she lives with her greatest hindrance.

KC6ODN: Lead: 2. to direct by influence---OED. By this definition, Drew is a leader, leading a great many of you exactly where he wants you.

N6TK: Wake me when he is through! Just for fun, next time he is on, count the amount of times he says "things of that nature."

N6BJH: Life has taken his sight and some may think unjustly. However, it is he who sees all the more distant and all the more rightly.

N6GNQ: I remember the old John: the one who ate Double-Doubles at the local Norwalk In-and-Out. It is hard to criticize a man who can appreciate a good burger and one who realizes that some burgers are better left as a part of his past.

N6JSX: His imagination has failed him. His illusions are all the imagination he has--- a ferocious poverty.

N6PVP: It is invariable that the next argument he gets in will contain an attack by him on his victim's poverty. To have wealth and not make others poor --- Ah, well this, then, is truly wealth and wealth is what he truly lacks.

N6UZS: The road he has chosen ends soon, but fret not, he is still guided umbilically. I believe him to be the youngest of his siblings, and in this context, youngest is another word for last.

W6TZQ: When a man gets older he can look back upon his life with some sense of satisfaction, of grief, of regret. When the view of the past takes precedence over the life of today, however, life has ended.

WA6MHJ: His life had become useless to him, and he threw it away ... a great many years ago.

K6PXA: No Comment.

WA6SWG: A man sometimes loses his hold on life and spends a great deal of effort to regain it. Lazlo may yet make the machine, but at the expense of walking to work.

WB6HDB: God created the Heaven and the Earth and Bill Brady to rein power upon the Earth---like it or not!

WB6SUS: I believe that one does in his off-time things he can not normally do. This is certainly the case with James, for who can earn a living chasing things he can no longer catch?

WD6ACE: With age comes patience, but unfortunately he received only the former. Do not give him a break the first time he asks for one and you will see what I mean.

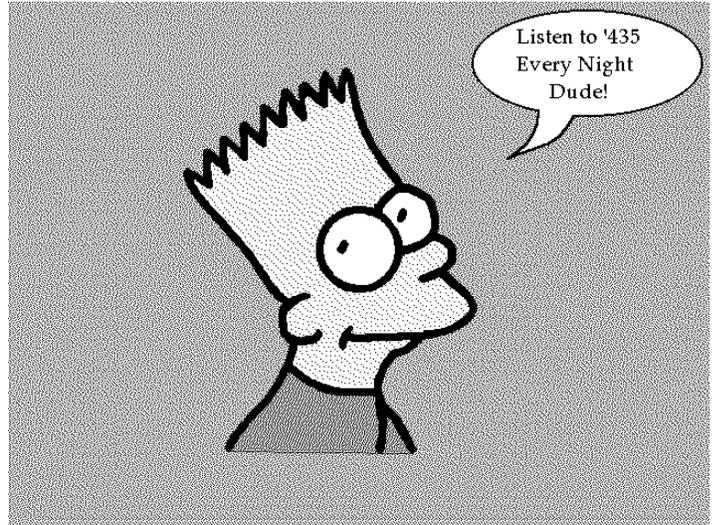
They must have an assholefile...and I'm
~~Sure I'm here to answer to N6UZS..do I?~~
N6MMH to N6NEV

By the way Jimmy, what is sex?
N6UZS to WB6SUS

There's just as many problems as there
are people. N6PVP to N6TK

It's hard to do it sometimes...the
mirrors shake. N6BIZ to WB6MCT

What part of "shut up" don't you
understand? KC6NHJ



"SPREADING SUNSHINE"

by Larry Podach, N6PQY

Last year, I had to go back into the VA Hospital, after a terrible fall; I found out I had not one but two forms of cancer. Feeling depressed and sorry for myself I remembered back, through the years, to when I went into the hospital for the first time. Late one night, while lying in my hospital bed, I heard crying from one of the other wards. Wards filled with not ordinary men, but rather men that had shown extraordinary courage and valor, with a chest full of medals to prove it. My own problems seemed insignificant when compared to what some of these gallant men had to face. I began to think of ways I could bring a little cheer into what seemed to be desperate lives. I began to plot out elaborate, but harmless, tricks to pull on the hospital personnel; hoping to cheer these courageous veterans. Some of my pranks were tremendous successes, others were not, but it didn't matter as long as everyone could forget their troubles and revelled in the results. Now, I can reflect back to these events, of so many years ago, relieving my depression and setting myself back on the right track. People may veiw my revelry as strange, as I smile or even laugh out loud, but I can savor each and every precious moment God may have left for me knowing I can help other disabled people as I have done for myself.

(Editor: Thanks Larry for sharing your poignant thoughts with us. Let's hope they are an inspiration to others, less fortunate, who may read this newsletter.)

EDITORIAL

by Richard Burton, EX6JAC

This edition I have a laundry list of topics to discuss starting off with an apology from your newsletter editor. I promised the next iteration of

"A HISTORY OF THE M.W.R.A" which is going to be delayed, again, until the next newsletter. I listened to many of your comments and decided that a lot of my facts were incorrect, plus, I omitted whole segments, of history, including the N6HCE and WD5JOY era. The delay will give me a chance to research and compile information necessary for writing the article with some sort of credibility.

Our (N6TK's) repeater is sick. The nice 6 cavity duplexer is gone (we only have a 4 cavity duplexer hooked up now). The receiver is sick. Have you noticed how hand/held's don't make it in quite as well as when HN had the repeater. Plus the audio sounds terrible. The equalizer that was removed, when the repeater was sold, needs to be replaced. The repeater output is also down in power which indicates the transmitter may need some attention.

The newsletter is the responsibility of the newsletter editor. I and only I will dictate the policy of what does and does not appear in this newsletter. If anyone has any problems with that then write me and express your concerns. I promise to print anyone's letter.

I'm happy to announce the establishment of the Hugh Stillman, WD6ACE, Award for outstanding service and operating practices on the 435 repeater. Mr. Stillman continues to amaze me and other individuals with his personal generosity and compassion for the plight of the various underprivileged. Mr. Stillman's opinions and views on various subject matters is often sought and regarded in high esteem. Thus I am pleased to establish this award on his behalf. The award and trophy (a pewter cast replica of the south end of a north bound horse mounted on hardwood) will be bestowed upon this months recipient.

This months winner of the Hugh Stillman Award is Laszio Hirsch, WA6SWG. Mr. Hirsch's humble approach to amateur radio (I am the most vonderfull person in the world) is inspirational and something for young children and small forrest animals to aspire too. Mr. Hirsch's technical abilities has been demonstrated over the years. And his generous donations to the Federal Communications Commission exemplifies his experience as a leader in the field of amateur radio communications. We look forward to his future plans to eliminate the malicious interference which is now rampant on the two meter band. Mr. Hirsch's keen sense of fair play will, I'm sure, play an ever increasing role in his attempt to eliminate the problems his brother amateurs suffer on a daily basis. We should all be proud that an individual of his character and demeanor and his forthrightness has chosen our small part of the world to join. And now if you all will stand for a moment and raise your right hand above your head with your index and middle fingers extended to form a "Vee" we will now bestow the official Hugh Stillman Award and hand gestor to a "ledgen in his own mind" Mr. Laszio Hirsch, WA6SWG. And now slowly lower your index finger. Congratulation Laszio!

Contributions to the newsletter are always welcome. To those of you who have submitted articles Thanks a million. I look forward to hearing from more of you. I know some of you have something to say and this is the forum to do it in if you lack the power on the repeater.

THE POWER OF 10

"SO GREAT IS THYNE POWER"

by Army Gamson, K6PXA

Many times we hear our fellow hams expressing some numerical value precisely, yet the value is unclear. For example is it: .005 Watts or 5 Milliwatts OR 5 thousands of a Watt? This is easily expressed using the POWERS OF 10:

5×10^{-3} (5 times ten to the negative 3) Watts. 10^{-3} accurately conveys, even portrays that the significant figure 5.0 has its decimal place moved 3 places to the left. Now lets go the opposite direction: 5000 Watts = 5×10^3 (5 times 10 to the third-power).

The decimal point is moved 3 places to the right. The "POWERS" become more relevant when we get into values, which we often do in electronics, such as 5 trillionth of a Farad. There's just too many zeros. We can say a micro-micro Farad or pico Farad.

It's simply expressed as 5×10^{-12} Farad. Note that 10^3 indicates the zero is moved 3 places to the right of the decimal point. 10^{-3} indicates that the decimal point is moved 3 places (not 3 zeros) to the left of the decimal point.

Another very useful and unique feature of the 'powers' is the ease of multiplication and division. For example 5 million times 2 thousand is done by multiplying the significant figures: $2 \times 5 = 10$ and adding the exponents: $10^6 + 10^3 = 10^9$. The answer is 10×10^9 or 10 billion. Dividing is done by subtracting the exponents. 10 billion divided by 2 thousand: 10 divided by 2 = 5 and $10^9 - 10^3$. The answer is 5×10^6 or 5 million. You can amaze your friends, if you have any, by multiplying or dividing large figures in your head. Can you imagine someone asking you how much is 9.9 billion divided by 3.3 million? Remember the steps: 9.9 divided by 3.3 = $3 \times 10^9 - 10^3 =$

3×10^6 or 3 million. Practice this a little and you can do it in seconds, in your head. You will find mastering the 'powers' very helpful in answering many of the FCC upgrade exam questions.*

The following chart shows the most commonly used powers of 10 prefixes;

	=1,000	1 thousand	1 Kilo(Watt)	10^3
10^6	=1,000,000	1 million	1 Mega(Hertz)	
	=1,000,000,000	1 billion	1 Giga(Hertz)	10^9
10^{-2}	= .01	1 hundredth	1 Centi(Meter)	
10^{-3}	= .001	1 thousandth	1 Milli(Amp)	
10^{-6}	= .000001	1 Millionth	1 Micro(Volt)	
10^{-12}	= .000000000001	1 Trillionth	1 Pico(Farad)	

*In the future editions of this fine newsletter I would like to show more examples of how theory can be fun and easy.

SLATE OF OFFICERS IN NOMINATION FOR TASMA 1991-1992

KB6DFH - CHAIRMAN	N6BVU - SECRETARY
KB6IBB -	WB6JPI - TREASURER
- VICE CHAIRMAN	
N6NYX -	

WHEN DID RADIO-TELEPHONE BEGIN?

by Ben, K4JWN

"Sparks Journal"

Submitted by Army Gamson, K6PXA

In 1896, Marconi discovered that wireless telegraphy could be used as a communication medium. And when did the first radiotelephone get its first use? You ain't gonna believe this, but it occurred just 6 years after Marconi stunned the world with his discovery. And you ain't gonna believe this, either. After many of the world's great scientists stated that voice could never be passed over the airwaves, it was accomplished by a 13 year old boy in San Francisco! To get the full significance of this feat, please remember that Dr. Lee DeForest did not invent the audio tube until 1907. This means that young Francis J. McCarty demonstrated his radiotelephone in 1902, just 5 years before DeForest did his thing. How did the kid do it? I dunno, but he did. His first demonstrated voice demo was across Stowe Lake in Golden Gate Park. Not far, but it did get across that small pond. The next year, 1903, the kid transmitted his voice signal over a distance of 3 miles. In 1905, he set up a transmitter at Cliff House, and transmitted songs n' stuff to a receiver just one mile south on Great Highway. This last demo was for a group of skeptical reporters, who laughed at the hoax this kid was perpetrating on the public. When he first started to transmit, something went wrong and everything was either garbled or not heard at all. But the reporters stuck around to mortify and vilify the kid, but after a while the real stuff started coming through. Then, in disbelief, they insisted that he dig a trench around the receiver, 5 feet deep, so they could be sure they could find the wires which connected the apparatus at Cliff House to the receiver. They finally conceded that McCarty, did in fact, send that stuff over the air. McCarty wanted to set up the McCarty Wireless Telephone Company, and finally did so, but with only 5 people having receivers to hear him. What he attempted to do was to get financial backing, so he went to a former San Francisco mayor, James D. Phelan, who usually plucked some dough into worthwhile causes, and some which were directed to certain tainted political bosses. When McCarty told Phelan that he could talk to a person on the other side of Market St., i.e., office to office, Phelan remarked "Absolutely absurd, those waves or whatever you call them, would get all fouled up in all the street noises. If the man across the street could receive my waves, he would also get a lot of other waves from the horsecars and carriages, and everything else on the street. Why, he would never be able to make heads or tail out of anything I tried to say. Others, however, did finance McCarty with the issuance of 200,000 shares of capital stock at par \$1.00, and 100,000 shares went to McCarty along with a controlling interest. The question that arose among people of the day was: "It appears that if McCarty had not come along with his invention, then audio transmission over the wireless might never have been accomplished?" As a matter of fact, during that same period of time, a few others were doing the same thing....but they were not just teen age lads. Such big names in the wireless field as Vladimir Poulson, Reginald Fessenden and Arthur Collins were sending voice signals through the wireless medium. Later, McCarty used the arc to improve his wireless telephone. Just 2 weeks before he reached his 18th birthday, he was driving a horse cart in Oakland. The horse bolted and McCarty died from injuries caused by his head striking an iron pole.