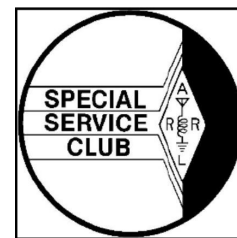


# Big Sky Wave



A publication of the Great Falls Area Amateur Radio Club – W7ECA

## PREZ SEZ

Greetings from the shack of N7NBB. I've had a blast on HF these past few weeks. The sunspot numbers are favoring propagation on 17 meters and above, to all kinds of interesting places. In the space of about 20 min last Saturday, I worked Curacao, Argentina, Brazil, Aruba, St. Vincent and a few more. As yet, it hardly compares with the craziness of several years ago, but this past week has given me renewed hope the cycle is indeed "cycling" back. Newer hams, if you have never experienced a peak in worldwide propagation, hang in there. The WOW factor is about to hit you. I'm not wishing you any ill at all, but perhaps I foresee a "sick day" or two in your future as you stay home from work for a day or two to reap the benefits of cycle 24. Cycle 24 is just starting to build up. If you hold a Technician Class license, maybe now is a good time to hit the books, study up and go for General or Extra. But TECHS, you are not out of the game totally. This spring and next fall will usually have sporadic E openings with VHF and 6 Meter contacts out to several hundred miles or more. Those openings are a bit more fleeting than a solid opening on 10 meters that lets you talk with France, Germany, Japan and elsewhere with minimal power and antenna, but they can

**Continued page 6**

## MONTANA QSO PARTY

**Hello fellow Hams far and near!**

It's nearing that time once again for the Montana QSO Party!

Clear your calendar for **Friday April 8th starting at 6pm local time and running till Sunday April 10th, at 6pm.**

This should be a FUN event as we've added MANY new features. More categories, more modes and more power levels!

Lyndel, N7LT  
 Montana QSO Party Manager  
 Kalispell, MT  
 n7lt@mail.yellowstone.net

QSO Party Web Page: [www.fvarc.org](http://www.fvarc.org)

### A.R.E.S. TRAINING

Classes should be taken in order! the order is 700-100-200.

ICS-700 Wed March 16th 8-noon

ICS-100 Wed March 23rd 8-2pm OR  
ICS-100 Tues April 19th 8-2pm

ICS-200 Wed & Thurs May 11-12 8-3pm

All classes will be at the Civic Center (Gibson Room) Lunch will be provided for the 100 and 200 classes.

Contact George AA7GS ASAP to reserve your spot!  
868-2212 or aa7gs@arrl.net

George Forsyth AA7GS  
212 Skyline Drive N.E. (home)  
Great Falls, Montana 59404 aa7gs@arrl.net

George Forsyth (work)  
207 2nd Ave. So. (shipping)  
Great Falls, MT 59405  
george@securemontana.com

FEMA Training  
<http://training.fema.gov/IS/crslist.asp>

Cascade County (Montana) Emergency Coordinator  
Montana DES Dist. 2 Emergency Coordinator  
Amateur Radio Emergency Services

Net Control: North Central Montana Amateur Radio Emergency Service  
AE7OC 7PM Thursdays 146.730 (N7YO)  
echolink 37656



**Don't forget about your 2011 GFAARC membership dues.**



Need a new project to build?  
Check out this web site

<http://www.longrope.com/circuits>

Michael Allen W6EAV Fort Benton



**NEW Technician Ham**  
**Welcome**  
**KF7OKT**  
**William Hall**  
**Ulm, MT**



Eric Martin K7ABV

Hello,  
 This is Ken, W7GMC. I'm the Assistant  
 Emergency Coordinator for Montana ARES and  
 I'm also the Army MARS training coordinator,  
 callsign: AAA8TMT.  
 I run a repeater on 147.360(+) 100 hz tone. The  
 repeater runs both Echolink and IRLP and is  
 located near 36th Ave NE and 7th St NE on the  
 north edge of Great Falls. Commands are as  
 follows:

Basic Controls

- 0 - Check status of IRLP
- B - Random IRLP call
- C - Speak time
- 73 - Disconnects any call via Echolink or IRLP

Weather

- #1 - play wx report for Great Falls
- #2 - play wx for Great Falls
- #3 - Play wx short alert
- #4 - Play full weather alert
- #5 - Play Skywarn alert

CUSTOM SPEED DIAL

- \*1 - IRLP 3571
- \*2 - IRLP 7430
- \*3 - Echolink 280287
- \*4 - IRLP 3871
- \*5 - Echolink 544291



*Big Sky Wave* will be sent out 1 week  
 after the clubs monthly meeting.  
 Please have all submissions  
 sent in 2 days before publication  
 date.

**Please send  
 all submissions to  
[alien@galaxygms.com](mailto:alien@galaxygms.com)**

If you can't e-mail bring your  
 submissions to  
 Galaxy Games  
 1807 3<sup>rd</sup> St NW #20  
 Great Falls, MT 59404  
 In the WESTGATE MALL

## Cookie Monster List

- APR. Wanda Cummins – W7POO
- MAY. Ray Whitney - AE7JN
- JUN. Jim Sims – KE7BIN
- JUL. Rod Jackson - AE7JJ
- AUG. Summer Picnic – none needed
- SEP. Cam Smith – N7NBB
- OCT. Eric Martin – K7ABV
- NOV. John Gunness - KF7ECH
- DEC. ?? need someone ??



## ARRL Montana Section Contact information

### Section Manager

Douglas Dunn K7YD

### State Government Liaison

Terry Whiteside W7WWW

### Assistant Section Manager

William Kornec K7LMT

### Section Emergency Coordinator

Todd Gansel AE7V

### Section Traffic Manager

Herbert Allard KA7YYR

### Affiliated Club Coordinator

Eric Martin K7ABV

### Assistant Section Manager

Loren Nichols AA7MT





The **V.E. team** offers license testing on the **Tuesday FOLLOWING the FIRST MONDAY** of each month. April's testing session will be on April 5th, the day after our general meeting on April 4th. For more information, please visit [www.w7eca.org](http://www.w7eca.org) and click on "LICENSE TESTING" in the menu. You can also call 406.899.2550 (Cam's Cell).

## A.R.E.S. Net

Meets every Thursday at 7:00pm MST  
On the 146.73- repeater

**A.R.E.S. Training information on  
Page 2**



## The Montana Traffic Net

The Montana Traffic net meets **EVERYDAY**  
at 00:30 UTC on 3910 Khz.

For more information go to  
<http://www.montanatrafficnet.com>



<http://www.w7eca.net/forum>

**SIGN UP NOW  
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR**



## 146.73(-) w/ 100 Hz Tone

Located atop Highwood Baldy Mountain @ an elevation of 7625 ft. 35 miles east of G.F.

This repeater is linked full time with our repeater in Zortman Mt.

This repeater is also tied into the **ECHO LINK** VOIP system. **ECHOLINK** connections provided by Jim Cummins N7YO

## 147.300(+)

The “Three-O” repeater is located in Black Eagle. It is primarily a local (city wide) repeater, equipped with an **OPEN AUTOPATCH**.

## 147.120(+)

Located above King's Hill Ski Area in the Little Belt Mountains on Porphyry Peak, at an elevation of 8192 ft. This repeater can be linked into the Highwood / Zortman system as needed.

## 444.350(+) requires 100Hz CTCSS

Located with the “Three-O” repeater, and shares the **OPEN AUTOPATCH**.

**146.680(-) MRLA SYSTEM** (linked) Located at “KNEES” approximately 35 miles North of G.F. Is linked FULL TIME into the **MRLA** system. Can also be accessed via **446.680** Simplex from within G.F.  
**MRLA** Custodian is George Forsyth AA7GS

## 147.260(+) Zortman Repeater

Located on Antione Peak in the Little Rockies range near Zortman. Can be linked to the Highwood Baldy repeater. The link can be controlled from either end.

## PREZ SEZ continued

but they can be just as exciting ! GOOD DX to you all !  
This month I'm putting out a plea, and a challenge to you to become involved in packet radio. VHF packet used to be an important mode here in Montana (and elsewhere too), but with the advent of the internet and a gazillion internet based E-Mail providers, instant messaging, virtual office meetings, etc. packet sadly dwindled down to almost nothing. Now, through the efforts of a few "packet pushers" across the state, packet radio is experiencing a resurgence. And not without good cause. From an emergency standpoint, many emergency and medical service providers, rely on the internet and cell phones as their ONLY source of exchanging data. If something catastrophic were to disrupt that infrastructure, they would be lost. Enter packet radio. Shelter supply lists, injured / causality reports, and many other critical and time sensitive files could be exchanged via packet radio. I won't dwell on the emergency aspect, but suffice it to say If a disaster were to happen, Amateur Radio operators using packet radio might just play a life saving role. Apart from that, packet is another greatly underused mode HAMS have at their fingertips. You can keyboard (chat) back and forth in realtime... in pairs or group roundtable discussions. Or you can send (small) files or messages to be read later. Most packet TNCs (terminal node controllers) have a Mailbox function, with the ability to store messages (E-Mails?) for later retrieval. (That statement probably doesn't have the "IMPACT" that it did back in the 1980's but I suspect it's still a thrill to go into your radio room and see a little LED light flashing indicating "YOU'VE GOT MAIL" ! ) More and more mountaintop repeater sites also have a packet "digi-peater" that forwards your messages, hop by hop, to their intended destination. After a long period of inactivity, I'm getting back into packet radio, and I hope you do too. If this sounds like something you'd like to get involved in, start by sending me an E-Mail : n7nbb@arrl.net, and I'll help you get in touch with those in the know.  
Until next month, 73 and GOOD DX !  
Cam – N7NBB

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### ***IN THE NEWS : THREE YACHTSMEN KILLED BY SOMALI PIRATES WERE HAMS***

Four Americans -- including three Amateur Radio operators -- who were being held hostage on their yacht by pirates off the coast of Oman have been killed. **Scott Adam, K9ESO**, and his wife **Jean, KF6RVB**, along with **Bob Riggle, KE7IIV**, and Phyllis Macay were on board the S/V Quest when pirates boarded their vessel on Friday, February 18. The Adams were based in the Los Angeles area; Riggle and Macay were from Seattle.

**ECHO LINK COMMANDS**

Node Sponser Jim, N7YO  
 Node # 37656  
 Located on Highwood Baldy, 146.730(-) 100Hz

<b>* plus node number</b>	<b>Connect to node</b>
#	Disconnect
##	Disconnect all
#00	Disable Echolink
*00	Enable Echolink
A5	Connect random link
A6	Connect random node
A7	Connect random user
A8	Reconnect last connection
A9	Echolink Status

**Station Shortcuts:**

*1	Connect to W7ECA-R (Porphery Peak)
*2	Connect to K7KTR-R
*3	Connect to KK4FE
*4	Connect to WA2FFY
*5	Connect to WB4BLI-R
*6	Connect to WR7HLN-R

**Echo time Text to Speech commands:**

0*	Info file
1*	Help file
2*	Current time
3*	Node Status
4*	Current WX
5*	WX Forecast
6*	WX Warnings
01*	Record Link
02*	Stop Record
03*	Playback
10*	Toggle voice announcements on /off



**Highwood – Zortman  
Linking Codes**

Highwood Up = A43  
 Highwood Down = A40  
  
 Zortman Up = B43  
 Zortman Down = B40



**GFAARC  
AUTOPATCH**

- “STAR” UP - “POUND” DOWN  
 ID BEFORE AND AFTER USING
- 1.) Make certain you are on the correct frequency 147.300(+)
  - 2.) Make sure repeater is not being used.
  - 3.) Push your PTT and ID with your callsign, state you are accessing the autopatch.
  - 4.) Release PTT and listen to verify the repeater is operating properly.
  - 5.) Depress the \* (star) key on your DTMP pad and WITHOUT releasing the PTT button dial the telephone number.
  - 6.) Release the PTT, and listen. You should hear the number you dialed repeated back to you in morse code.
  - 7.) Next, you will hear a series of beeps while the autopatch controller completes your call.
  - 8.) You should then hear the phone ringing.
  - 9.) Remember when your party answers they won't be able to hear you until you key your mic and start talking.
  - 10.) Briefly tell them you are using the autopatch and it is not a private line. Note – you are ultimately “in control and responsible” for anything the other person says.
  - 11.) When finished, key your transmitter, Id and state you are closing the Autopatch, then depress the # key. This will return the repeater to normal operation.



## NEW LOCATION Saturday Breakfast

I would like to notify you of a change in location of our Saturday Morning Breakfast group, and invite you to come check it out with us !

(Some just come for the Coffee or soft drinks... Purchase of a Breakfast is NOT required) The day, of course is the same... SATURDAY, and the time doesn't change either. It's still at 9:00am. However we will be going to try a new location, and see how that works out for our group.

Starting THIS SATURDAY February 5th we will meet at 9:00 at the "GOLD DUST RESTAURANT & CASINO, which is located at 770 6th Street Southwest.

As some of you know, the Double Barrel was only one of several suggestions of a new location, when it became necessary for us to move from the Senior Citizen's Center due to them no longer serving breakfast on weekends.

According to several "breakfast regulars" who have been to the GOLD DUST, they think it might be a "better fit" for our group. I've been told the food is good, the coffee hot, and the prices are on par with what we are paying now. Also, there is a lot more room, and they can accommodate 20 or more of us, like we used to get on some occasions at the Senior Citizens Center. There also is a lot more space for parking at the Gold Dust.

Although it is primarily our radio club that meets for breakfast, please note that this is a SOCIAL EVENT that ANYONE can attend - regardless of club affiliation, membership or license status... We'd love to see you, meet you, & help you get involved. If you have an interest in Amateur Radio in the Great Falls Area, this is a good place to start to meet a few folks.

If you have any questions or need more specific directions, please don't hesitate to E-Mail me.

Hope to see ya there !this Saturday. !!

Cameron Smith – N7NBB  
President: GFAARC (Great Falls Area Amateur Radio Club)



**Location**  
**Southwest corner**  
**Walmart Parking Lot**

## 03/19/2011 | Celebrating The Start of the National Wildlife Refuge System and the 108th Birthday of Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge

Mar 19, 1400Z-2100Z, W4OT, Vero Beach, FL. Vero Beach Amateur Radio Club. 28.450 21.350 14.240 7.255. Certificate. VBARC, PO Box 2082, Vero Beach, FL 32961. Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge was the first. [www.vbarc.net](http://www.vbarc.net)

**W8FT, celebrating 90 years of existence of the Findlay Radio Club**, Findlay, Ohio; from 1300Z March 20 to 0100Z March 21 on 3.555, 3.855, 7.055, 7.260, 14.055, 14.255, 21.055, and 21.285 MHz. All contacts will receive a special QSL card from the club honoring the event

## 03/27/2011 | Bataan Memorial Death March Marathon

Mar 27, 1000Z-2300Z, K5B, Las Cruces, NM. Mesilla Valley Radio Club. 21.337 14.330 7.225 3.893. QSL. Special Events Station K5B, c/o Mesilla Valley Radio Club, PO Box 1443, Las Cruces, NM 88004. [www.n5bl.org/bataan](http://www.n5bl.org/bataan)

## 03/31/2011 | 2011 Mule Days

Mar 31-Apr 2, 1400Z-0000Z, W4GGM, Columbia, TN. Maury Amateur Radio Club. 21.040 21.085 21.360 14.040 14.071 14.085 14.260 7.040 7.060 7.085 7.260 3.560 3.580 3.960. QSL. MARC, 205 Cowan St, Columbia, TN 38401. PSK31, RTTY, CW, SSTV & phone. Mule Days is an annual celebration of all things related to mules; s held in Columbia TN, "Mule Capital" of the world. It began in 1840 as "Breeder's Day," a meeting for mule breeders. It now attracts over 200,000 people and takes place over 4 days. [W4GGM.org](http://W4GGM.org)

## 04/01/2011 | 6th Annual OzarkCon QRP Forum

Apr 1-Apr 15, 0000Z-0000Z, K0N, Branson, MO. 4State QRPGroup. 14.060 7.040 7.030 3.856. QSL. Bart Lawson, 711 E 31st St, Pittsburg, KS 66762. The Special Event station has been a proud part of this QRP forum for five of the six years. We feel that it brings a special sort of attention to the forum as well as QRP operation in general. All contacts will be made at a power setting of 5 or less watts and on cw. [www.4sqr.com](http://www.4sqr.com)



CQ Worldwide 160 contest, but was called home Saturday morning with a broken furnace. Managed to work 100 stations with a score just over 6000 points. (on a half wave 160 dipole hooked to my pickup truck!) Maybe it'll work better next time...

**George Forsyth AA7GS**



GFAARC  
P.O. BOX 1763  
Great Falls, MT  
59403-1763

**FIRST CLASS**