

Volume XXXVII Number VII

July 2025

President Tom Mayka W3TRM Vice-President Rich Abramowitz KC3TLC Secretary **Rick Rinehimer K3TOW** Treasurer Herb Krumich K2LNS **Board of Director** John DiLiberto AB3ZI George Gannis WB3FKQ Elaine Kollar K3VQR George Miklosi K3ZK Jonathan Rizzo KC3EEY Information Officer and Webmaster Rick Rinehimer K3TOW www.murgasarc.org **Newsletter Editor** Elaine Kollar K3VOR Librarian Ian Kellman K3IK Parliamentarian Tim Babbit KD2SC **QSL Manager** Liam McGovern KC3UII **Technical Specialist** Bill Gallagher WA3RA **Club Net Manager** George Miklosi K3ZK **Club Station – K3YTL** Trustee George Miklosi **Club Station - K3JML** Trustee Elaine Kollar **Club Repeater** 145.450 MHz Tone – 82.5 Hz Packet - WBLAN 145.05 MHz MARC NET Every Thursday 9pm Club Repeater 145.450/PL 82.5 The Murgas Amateur Radio Club Inc. meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 8:00 P.M in the Luzerne County EMA .Guests are always welcome.

de W3TRM

Hello everyone!!!

I am writing this article before our Field Day event, but nonetheless, I'm sure we all had a great time and made more good memories, as always. I'll have more to say about Field Day in the August newsletter!!!

Also, don't forget Murgas ARC is hosting its annual Hamfest on Sunday, July 6th at the Polish American Veterans, 2 South Oak Street, Plains, PA. There's always something interesting to see, and always something interesting to buy!!! We hope to see you there too.

The club is still preparing for our 50th Anniversary celebration. Plans are coming along nicely to recreate Father Murgas' overland wireless transmission from Wilkes-Barre to Scranton. Dr. Nathaniel Frissell W2NAF has invited us to populate the display cases in the Loyola Science Center to honor Father Murgas, the Murgas Amateur Radio Club, W3USR, and amateur radio in general. If this is something that sounds interesting to you and you would like to participate let me know.

Enjoy your July and of course, enjoy the great hobby of amateur radio!!!

de KC3TLC

I hope all of you are enjoying the summer weather that finally appeared. The weather appeared just in time for Summer Field Day coming up this weekend June 28-29th at the Lehman EOC from 2 PM Saturday to 2 PM Sunday. I'm sure all of vou are familiar by now with that facility as we have used it for several years now. We will have lots of food and good company. I hope you will come out to operate and spend some time with your fellow MURGAS ARC members.

Also coming up is the Hamfest on July 6th. We need members to come out and help.

Planning continues for the November anniversary celebration of the formation of our club and the first overland transmission of Radio by Father Murgas in 1905. The event will be held on Saturday, November 15, 2025 at the Alley Building of Kings College and at the University of Scranton's Radio Room in the Loyola Science Building. The reenactment will begin at 1:00 PM and will be followed by a reception and open house at the Murgas Room at Kings College and the W3SUR Radio Room at the University of Scranton. Please remember to put that on your calendars. It's important for all of us to attend.

Enjoy the summer weather.

COMING EVENTS

ARRL Field Day

This year the ARRL Field Day will take place on June 28th and 29th at the Back Mountain EMA Building located at 3593 State Route 118 in Dallas. The Murgas Club will operate two stations -one station on SSB and one on CW. Antennas will be switched between the two stations. There will also be a VHF station and a GOTA station. Set up will Saturday morning, June 28th beginning at 10AM. Food, snacks, and water will be provided. Come out and see what Field Day is all about.

MARC Hamfest

The MARC Hamfest is scheduled for July 6th, 2025. Herb K2LNS has 50/50 tickets available, so please try to sell a few. Help is needed with food, parking, admissions, and the club table. Beginning at 10 AM, FCC exams will be given, so VEs are asked to participate. Please make plans to attend and lend your support in any way hat you can.

Father Murgas Reenactment

A reenactment of Father Murgas' first overland transmission will be held on November 15 at King's College and the University of Scranton. The board of directors is looking for club members to participate in the planning and carrying out the recreation. See Tom W3TRM's column for information about the display cases at the University of Scranton.

РОТА

The idea of having a Parks on the Air event in August was briefly mentioned. Further discussion will take place at future meetings.

CLUB NEWS

Condolences

The Murgas Club extends condolences to Tony Piotrowski N3DAP on the recent passing of his mother, Lorraine. Lorraine was a graduate of Mercy Hospital School of Nursing and worked in local hospitals. For many years Loraine played centerfield for the Plymouth women's softball team and loved to read and crochet.

Area Hamfest Calendar

Name Location Date Julv 5 Firecracker Hamfest Harrisburg PA **Julv6 Murgas ARC Plains**, PA July 13 Sussex County NJ Hamfest Augusta, NJ July19 Batavia Hamfest Alexander, NY July 20 Somerset County Hamfest Somerset, PA July 26 NJARC Hamfest Wall Township, NJ

This is a list of area Hamfests. More information can be found on the ARRL website.

Did You Know?

The first time the Murgas Club ventured into a hosting a hamfest was in 1981 when the Broadcasters ARC asked the club to assist them with their hamfest for a share of the profits. The next year the two clubs again shared profits, but this time the Murgas Club received more profits, because they had done a larger share of the work. The third year Murgas ARC held the hamfest on its own. There has been a Murgas Hamfest every year since, except in 2020, when it was canceled due to COVID. Previous locations for the Hamfest were the parking deck at what is now Boscov's, Pocono Downs, the Kingston Armory, Coal Street Park, the Luzerne County Fairgrounds, and The Polish American Veterans Club, which is our current location,

MARC MINUTES Monthly Club Meeting For June 2025

The monthly meeting of the Murgas Amateur Radio Club was held on June 4th, 2025. President Tom Mayka W3TRM called the meeting to order at 8:03 PM. Nineteen (19) members were in attendance. There were no upgrades or call sign changes noted. Guest was Robert Ecklund of Scranton who just passed his Technician exam.

Alex K3EAM reported he had participated in the Ultra Marathon in Central Pennsylvania and that he worked the same location WN3LIF had covered. He said it was a rainy cold weekend.

Herb Krumich K2LNS reported on the club's finances. Dave KC3HLQ motioned to approve the report. WA3RA seconded the motion. The report was approved.

The secretary, Rick Rinehimer K3TOW, reported no correspondence.

Committee Reports:

VE Team - 1 successful new Tech at the exam session before the meeting. No exam before the July meeting, all VE Hands on deck for the Hamfest.

Ham Fest – July 6th all members should help. Help needed in the food area and help parking/organization in the flea market. Herb K2LNS has 50/50 tickets available for members to sell.

Field Day - Last weekend in June, 28^{th} and 29^{th} . Back Mountain EMA building. We think we have a pretty good plan – 2 HF stations, VHF station, and a GOTA station are planned. Anyone who would like to come and work CW is invited. Setup will start around 10AM. Food and drinks are available. Stop by for a while and operate.

Old Business:

A donation to remember Jerry Rodski, K3MKZ was discussed. Sue N3RMX contacted Jerry's daughter Amanda (KB3DTY) who would like Jerry remembered by a scholarship given to someone that is furthering their education. The Board of Directors will further discuss this idea.

Tom W3TRM stopped by the Murgas Room at King's. Tom says the towers may not fit in the room but there are other possibilities. Bill WA3RA asked if the towers could be used at the University of Scranton display. Nathaniel W2NAF has requested the club's help with a display at the University through the fall. Tom needs content and equipment related to Father Murgas. Anyone who wants to help can contact W3TRM.

New Business:

It was asked if we wanted to hold a July meeting because of the holiday and all the activities. It was decided to meet on July 2^{nd} at our normal time.

Announcements:

Herb K2LNS reminded members of the digital contest held the first weekend in June and the June VHF contest 6/13 -14. Herb will be operating at the Stairville Cemetery and welcomes visitors to see his setup in his van.

Bill WA3RA explained that some images in his MARC Times article may not be visible to some in the first posting. They are available on the Group.io page in the Files\MARC Times section.

Jonathan KC3EEY provided an update on the funding for the VLF project he is working on. They have received a grant to allow them to produce multiple units and begin deployment. The first system will be located at an observatory in New Jersey.

The Murgas Board of Directors meeting will be held on June 18th at 7:30 PM. The meeting is held in Luzerne County EMA Building in Wilkes-Barre.

The next monthly club meeting will be held on July 2nd at 8:00 PM. The meeting is held in the Luzerne County EMA Building in Wilkes-Barre.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Rick Rinehimer K3TOW, Secretary

Board of Directors Meeting June 2025

The monthly Board of Directors meeting of the Murgas Amateur Radio Club was held in the Luzerne County EMA Building and via teleconference on June 18th, 2025. President Tom Mayka, W3TRM called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. Directors present were Herb Krumich - K2LNS, Rick Rinehimer -K3TOW, Elaine Kollar – K3VQR. Amanda Rodski, KB3DTY, daughter of SK Jerry Rodski, K3MKZ was also at the meeting.

The Board along with Amanda discussed a way to memorialize Jerry, who was a longtime member, Past President, and participant in the K3YTL Red Rock VHF Contesting group. Amanda told the Board that Jerry wanted some of his estate to fund a scholarship at King's College. After some discussion, Amanda and the Club will contact King's to see if something can be arranged. Since the Foundation for Amateur Radio is no longer coordinating scholarships, this may be a good home for the Murgas ARC N3FA Memorial Scholarship to go. The Scholarship would be made available with preference to an Amateur Radio licensee in the Engineering or Computer Sciences areas of study.

Tom W3TRM mentioned that a group of Boy Scouts will be visiting Field Day. He researched what would be necessary for them to obtain their merit badges. To be a merit badge counselor needs a multi-page application and a background check. Tom is willing to apply if there is a need to do so.

Elaine K3VQR has the food for Field Day set.

Herb K2LNS reported a generous donation to the Club for door prizes at the Hamfest-two complete weather stations.

The next monthly club meeting will be held on July 2nd at 8:00 PM. The meeting is held in the Luzerne County EMA Building, and also via teleconference on FreeConferenceCallHD.com.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Rick Rinehimer K3TOW, Secretary

de WA3RA

July. Field day is behind us, Independence Day and the ham fest are coming up, and then the long hot summer. I hope everybody gets a chance to get out and play some radio!

This month we are going to look at some esoterica, trivia as it were. We are going to look back around 100 years or so. It is a time of transition in ham radio, as we move from spark to CW.

Before tubes were a thing, a spark gap was the easiest way to generate radio signals. The design and operation were pretty straightforward. A capacitor and inductor were connected in series, and fed to a pair of electrodes that had a short space between them. This interelectrode space was called a spark gap. The capacitor (condenser) was charged by a high voltage supply. When the voltage reached a high enough level, it would jump the gap across the electrodes for a short period. The condenser would quickly discharge through the spark gap at a very high current. The inductor would cause a fly-wheel effect causing the condenser to be completely discharged and then charge back up in the opposite direction. The flow then reversed and the process would repeat. As long as the spark lasts, a current flows back and forth through the spark gap and the inductor, then to and from the condenser, alternating in direction with a the frequency determined by the values inductance and capacitance. This created a radio frequency "ringing" effect, at our desired frequency (a WIDE frequency, hundreds of kHz, unlike today's 300 hertz code signals). This back-and forth would happen perhaps forty or fifty times during a short period of time, with each back and forth just a little weaker due to the resistance inherent in the system. A spark signal was known as a *damped* wave because of this constant energy fall-off. The condenser would then be recharged by the high voltage supply and the process repeated, over and over again. The spark transmitter creates a series of bursts of RF current, one each time a new spark is formed. Depending on the LC pair and the size of the spark gap, hundreds to thousands of these bursts would be produced over a given second, determining the frequency of the transmitted signal.

Early on, the ham would simply break the circuit after the gap and send the oscillations off the "ariel". If we think about that, this makes the antenna an active part of the LC circuit. If the breeze moved the antenna wire, the capacitance would change and so would the signal frequency. As time went on, it was realized that we could use a fixed inductance on the transmitter side, and use a transformer to inductively couple the antenna into the oscillator circuit. This meant that the transmitter looked into a fixed load. The antenna no longer was a part of the oscillator circuit, and it no longer had a great effect on the frequency or stability of the transmitter.

The problem with these transmitters, of course is that they were noisy, the signal was coarse, the signal was as broad as a barn door, and there were hundreds of them all going on at the same time. The bands in those days, especially given the state of receivers, must have been bedlam.

In the early 1920s, tubes began to be available (if not affordable) and the simple Colpitts oscillator had been designed. The drawback was that while power tubes were available, rectifiers were not.

What was a ham to do? Obviously, we did not want to destroy an expensive tube trying to run it on straight AC (not a problem for the spark crew since that is how spark transmitter worked) but a major consideration for the wannabe CW operator. Along came something called a "slop jar".

The slop jar rectifier consisted of a series of drinking glasses, filled with a solution of Borax and water. An electrode was placed on each side of the glass, one electrode being aluminum and the other consisting of lead. High voltage AC was supplied to the bank of glasses for a period of time that would allow a very thin coating to build up on the electrodes. The circuit would then be used until the coating became too thick. This would cause the current to rise, heat to be generated, and the nasty chemical solution to boil over. The hapless amateur would then usually need to replace the aluminum electrode. This was no small expense, since there may be 50 to 100 of these drinking glass combinations. Efficiency was never more than about 50%. And other interesting fact about these open rectifiers was that when high current was flowing through them they would glow with a soft purple light. Imagine a hundred -five cent drinking glasses lined up on your shack counter all sitting there flashing purple every time you hit your key!

They were smelly, and rather evil, but they were successful high-voltage rectifiers. By the end of the decade rectifier tubes were available if a little pricey.

Here is an interesting piece of trivia: 100 years ago, where did the average ham, especially one living in the country, find the equipment he needed to create his station? It goes without saying that much of the station was built by hand but you still needed parts for these builds.

The answer – Montgomery Wards! Yep, that Montgomery Wards. Take a look at the included images with this month's article to see some of the parts available in 1920. A world-class spark transmitter could be built with parts bought out of the catalog. They always carried a full line of receivers, under The "Airline" brand. Excellent amateur receivers as well as household receivers were carried right up into the 1970s! Montgomery Ward also had a close relationship with Hallicrafters, their nearby Chicago neighbor. Many pieces of equipment were designed for Wards by Hallicrafters. The Hallicrafters HT-2 transmitter was actually designed for and exclusively sold by the store before it was available directly from Hallicrafters themselves.

I suppose I have blathered on long enough about this interesting time in ham radio.

We will return to some of these ideas later, in the meantime have a great summer!

de WA3RA



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Editors Notes

I would like to thank all those who have contributed articles or information to this issue and encourage other members to submit articles for publication. Sharing your knowledge or experience makes our newsletter informative for others. Articles may be submitted at <u>marctimes@murgasarc.org</u>



46th Annual Wilkes-Barre, PA

Murgas ARC – K3YTL



Gates Open 8AM Rain or Shine Vendor Setup 6AM

Hamfest

and Computerfest

Sunday July 6th, 2025

Near I-81 Exit 170B and NE Ext of PA Turnpike - Easy Access from Rt 309. Near Mohegan PA Casino & other major Hotels.

Polish American Veterans 2 South Oak Street, Plains PA GPS Users enter "2 Oak Street, Plains, PA, 18705" GPS Coordinates: 41.273818/-75.836817

N Talk-In: 146.610 (-) PI: 82.5

*Buy/Sell * New/Used* Radio, Computer, and Electronic Equipment *********

Admission: \$10 At Gate

(Includes 1 Free Tailgate Space Per Vehicle!) XYL & Children Under 16 Free

For More Information:

Herb (K2LNS) 570-829-2695

Murgas ARC

1202 Gemini Street

Nanticoke, PA 18634

NO Overnight Camping Available

http://hamfest.murgasarc.org email: murgasarc@gmail.com 1 Free Tailgate Space <u>Per Vehicle!</u> Additional Tailgate Spaces \$5.00 Each Pavilion Tables - \$10 each on a first come first served basis.

Door Prizes!

ARRL Table

http://hamfest.murgasarc.org

ARRL VE Exams

Testing Begins At 10AM

No Preregistration required. Walk-ins Preferred. *Testing Fee at current ARRL rate.* New Technician Candidates **MUST** have an FCC FRN. Upgrade candidates **MUST** have a copy of their current license or CSCE. All candidates need a photo ID.



CLUB MEETING

Wednesday, July 2, 2025 at 8:00 PM Meeting will be held at the Luzerne County EMA. A conference call option is also available. Details to call in will be emailed.

BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 at 7:30 PM Meeting will be held at the Luzerne County EMA. A conference call option is also available. Details to call in will be emailed.

MARC Times Submissions

Articles for the August newsletter are due by July 27, 2025.

Email to <u>marctimes@murgasarc.org</u>

Follow Murgas on:

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Club website: www.murgasarc.org

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