

M.C.W.A. NEWS

January 2015
Vol. 15, No. 1

McHenry County Wireless Association

Since 1978
36 Years



Officers & Staff

- President Kent , K9KMD
kent.dulaney@gmail.com
- Vice PresidentDave, KA9OZP
coopernet@sbcglobal.net
- Secretary Roger, KF9D
kf9d@arrl.net
- TreasurerDave, N9ITE
dlcox2@gmail.com
- ProgramsJack, W9MU
jack@w9mu.net
- Newsletter Jerry, N9AVY
n9avy@arrl.net



MEETING: January 6, 2015

Socializing = 6:30 PM
Meeting = 7:00 PM

PROGRAM: "Coherers"

By Kent, K9KMD

If you don't know what a coherer is, come and find out !

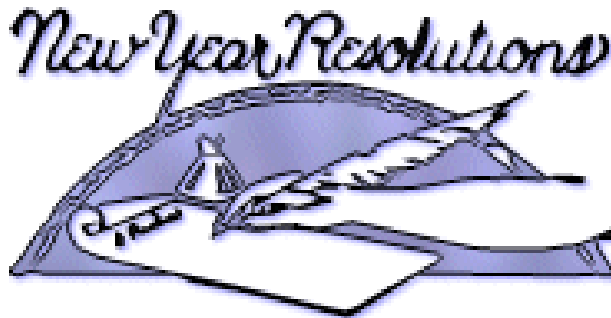


see page 6

Testing By Appointment Only !

7 PM on 3rd Tuesday of month
(Sept. thru May)

Cost is \$15 one time charge
for session no matter how
many elements are taken. Must
show original license and/or
CSCE if upgrading . Valid pho-
to ID needed.
SS# or FRN#



Like political promises !

Steve, KB9OLD



Filling in for Dave this month is our very own Jim, N7US.

DX Update

Winter is an exciting time to be a DXer. This is the best time of the year to look for DX on the low bands, and the high bands, 12 and 10M, are seeing probably the best conditions that we'll see for several years. Check the low bands during hours of darkness and the high bands during daylight. I really like VE3NEA's DX Atlas program which shows areas of sunlight and darkness and plots DX spots. Check out: <http://www.dxatlas.com/>.

My best catch in December was A71BX in Qatar on 80M. My 80M antenna is just a half sloper (a quarter-wave long) hanging off my crank-up tower, which is about 50' high now. Working DX on the low bands is much easier with CW than SSB as the signal-to-noise ratio is better due to the narrow bandwidth. An amplifier helps more on 160 and 80M than the high bands, but skill and the antenna are more important.

The most exciting DXpedition coming up is K1N on Navassa Island in the Caribbean, which is ranked #1 on the needed country list. They'll be active around the end of January. Read the details at: <http://www.navassadx.com/>.

I recommend reading DX bulletins and watching the cluster to keep informed on the latest DX happenings. I prefer The Daily DX and The Weekly DX bulletins (<http://www.dailydx.com/>), and I usually connect to telnet cluster nodes VE7CC-1 or AE5E-2 using the free software at: <http://ve7cc.net/>. With that software you can easily configure your settings at the node (e.g., VE7CC-1) to send you only the spots that you want to see.

DXLab's SpotCollector highlights all the DX spots that I need as new band countries for the DXCC Challenge award, so I can click on them to automatically QSY my radio and turn my antenna. So turn on your radio and have fun working DX!

73, Jim N7US

New Element 3 (General Class) Question Pool Released

SB QST ARL ARLB022
ARLB022

The Question Pool Committee of the National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC) has released the 2015-2019 Element 3 (General Class) question pool. The new question pool becomes effective for all Element 3 examinations administered on or after July 1, 2015, and it remains valid until June 30, 2019.

The question pool files are available in PDF, Microsoft Word (.doc), and ASCII text formats. Section G7A requires the use of one illustration, a schematic identified as G7-1. This drawing file is published separately. Further information can be found on the web at, <http://www.arrl.org/news/new-element-3-general-class-question-pool-released>.



It's only the General test... things could be worse !



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

What's Wrong With Amateur Radio !

Good question ? Nope. We should be asking ourselves “What's Right With Amateur Radio ?”

We need to find the things that we entered the hobby for , the things that piqued our interest. For some of us, it was the thrill of talking to distant countries (DX). For others it may have been just getting on the air and chatting with different people. There is a niche for all of us where we can feel at home.

Maybe we're just tired of a steady diet of the same old thing, day in and day out. That's a sure sign of boredom which can be remedied by exploring other facets of Amateur Radio. Just like vanilla ice cream can be boring, it may be time for a change up to a different flavor. After all, one of the objectives of Amateur Radio is experimentation.

Perhaps this could be a “New Year's Resolution” ? Try something different ! They say “variety is the spice of life”; so that should apply to Amateur Radio as well.

New DXing Technique

Last Saturday night I saw S01WS spotted on 80 meters and I thought I might have a good shot at it. There were several DX'ers already there, but not many. After a couple calls the S0 station came back to “NU4?”. I assumed that was me. As I sent my call again I noticed many other stations responding. I thought “ That's odd, sure are a lot of NU4's active tonight.”. In any case the S0 station sent “NU4B 599” and as I was sending my report many stations from the US continued to call, then somebody tuned up on frequency, and there was an Italian station IW2... that kept repeating his call

WHEN HAMS HAD 11 METERS

According to 1948 handbook
27.160 - 27.430 A0 A1 A2 A3 A4 FM

The 1948 Handbook frequencies didn't align with the 1947 Atlantic City ITU conference decisions on the ISM (Industrial Scientific and Medical) band, which was fixed as 26.957 to 27.283. That would explain why the band had changed slightly by 1953. I expect a trawl through QST would find the exact dates of the change.

Antenna Safety Here's a site that will calculate antenna radiation levels.

http://hintlink.com/power_density.htm

STRAY Ham Radio is probably the only hobby where you can have a piece of equipment struck by lightning, ie., junk and sell it for over 1/2 of its original value!

NOAAH via eham.net

Per FCC records and KK9DX, following persons are not allowed to use KK9DX repeater with present and or future call signs:

Robert M. Abraham W9RCM
Andrew T Sylthe KC9ONA
Ray Kelly ex -K1MBE
N9ROB club call
KD9BKM club call





MCWA Treasurer’s Report – January 2015

Here is the monthly treasurer’s report. We received 16 renewals at the December meeting. Feel free to contact me about any Treasurer related issues. 73

Bank Balance Beginning Balance:	\$4683.24
Checks written	\$0.00
Deposits (Renewals)	\$160.00
Interest	\$0.00
Ending Balance:	\$4843.24

Dave Cox – N9ITE
410 Lake Ave Woodstock, IL. 60098
DLCoX2@gmail.com

From the President

Well another year has passed us by, but yet a new one appears. There was a lot of DX out there through the year even though it is thought we are now on the “down” part of the sunspot cycle. I hope the band conditions will be as good in January, February and March as they were last year. Only time will tell.

DX – Navassa Island DXpedition is coming up during January. Navassa is an unincorporated territory of the United States. It is a small island (2 sq mi) lodged in the Caribbean between Jamaica, Cuba and Haiti. It is very high on the “want list” for DX countries. It has been over twenty years since they have let any hams on the island to operate. Even for the non-DXer’s it should be easy to contact in one or more modes on one of the many bands after the Big Guns get finished

working it. A hundred Watts or less with a wire antenna up no more than 25 ft. (mine) should do it.

The ARRL Centennial QSO Party is at an end. The year long operating event celebrated by hams making contacts to ARRL representative assigned in each state (DC & territories) comes to an end along with 2014. Participants would have accumulated points and worked new stations. For those who are not competitive on the air, making a few contacts soon got you “pulled in”. It was really great in working all states (WAS) including the WARC (World Administrative Radio Conference that added 12, 17, & 30 mtr. bands in the 80s) bands which are little harder to get. I have talked with several club members who have managed to fill in all bands, including the WARC bands and with all three operating modes – cw, phone & data.

Many of you may have heard by now of the passing of Jerry Bough, W9FE. Jerry was a former member of MCWA for many consecutive years. He died Friday, December 12, 2014 at his home in Hebron at the age of 69. He was born on September 26, 1945, in Shoals Indiana. He is survived by his wife of 47 years, Jane Bough and three children, two grandchildren, a brother, a sister as well as several nieces, nephews, great nieces and great nephews. As a club, we sent a sympathy card to the family. Next MCWA meeting program is on the “Coherer” (what’s that?). Our first receiver. Think about what your amateur radio club should be doing for you in the coming year. Field Day? Family Club Picnic ? Both ?

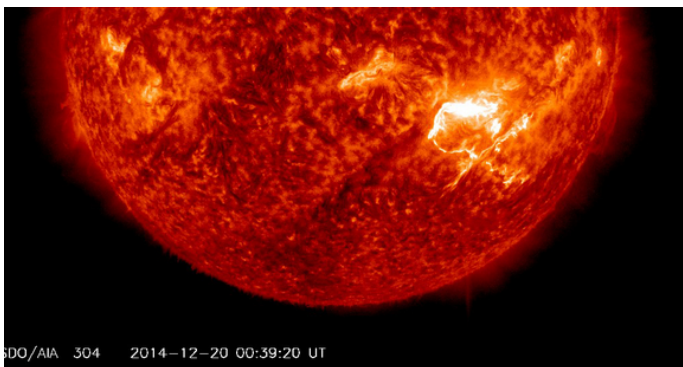
See you 6:30/7:00 Tuesday, January 6th in the basement of the Crystal Lake Bank on Hwy 12 & Pingree Rd. All who are interested in ham radio are welcome.

73

Kent, K9KMD

MCWA Club President

Happy New Year



and astronauts in space.

A powerful X1.8-class solar flare erupts from the sun on Dec. 19, 2014 in this view from NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory spacecraft tracking sun weather.

The sun fired off a massive solar flare late Friday (Dec. 19), after days of intense storms from our nearest star.

The huge solar flare registered as an X1.8-class event, one of the most powerful types of flares possible, and was captured on camera by NASA's powerful Solar Dynamics Observatory. The flare triggered a strong radio blackout for parts of Earth as it peaked Friday at 7:28 p.m. EST (0028 Dec. 20 GMT), according to an alert from the U.S. Space Weather Prediction Center overseen by NOAA.

The solar flare erupted from a sunspot region classified as Active Region 2242, and more sun storms could occur from the region. [Biggest Solar Flares of 2014 in Photos]

The sun fired off a massive solar flare late Friday (Dec. 19), after days of intense storms from our nearest star.

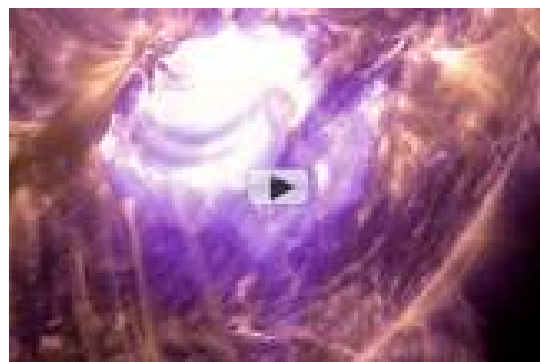
The huge solar flare registered as an X1.8-class event, one of the most powerful types of flares possible, and was captured on camera by NASA's powerful Solar Dynamics Observatory. The flare triggered a strong radio blackout for parts of Earth as it peaked Friday at 7:28 p.m. EST (0028 Dec. 20 GMT), according to an alert from the U.S. Space Weather Prediction Center overseen by NOAA.

The solar flare erupted from a sunspot region classified as Active Region 2242, and more sun storms could occur from the region

“The region remains large and complex,” SWPC experts wrote in the update. “More minor to moderate radio blackouts are expected, with an ongoing chance for another strong event.”

Friday's solar flare capped an active week of sun storms. Earlier in the week, another active sunspot region called AR 2241 fired off two intense M-class (moderate) flares, one late Tuesday (Dec. 16) registering as an M8.7-class sun storm, and the other on Thursday (Dec. 18) that ranked as an M6.9 solar flare. Sunspots are regions of intense magnetic field activity on the sun that can trigger solar flares.

X-class solar flares are the strongest solar flares the sun can unleash. When aimed directly at Earth, they can disrupt communications and GPS navigation systems on Earth, and even pose a threat to satellites



McHenry Wireless Association VE Testing

Contact is Steve Maresso (KB9OLD) 847-477-3518

Testing by appointment only Appointments must be scheduled by the Saturday prior to the exam session.

7PM Third Tuesday for the months of September, November, January, March and May.

Testing Requirements:

1. Cost for 2015 is \$15.00. (Cash, or check made payable to ARRL) If initial test element is passed, the person testing may continue to take the next test element(s) at no extra charge during the given session. Retesting of an element failed during the same test session will require payment of an additional \$15.00 test fee.

2. Must show original, and provide copy of Amateur Radio license and/or CSCE (if upgrading).

3. Must show a valid Government Issued Photo ID (Passport, Driver License or State ID Card) for identification.

4. SS Security Number or FRN number required.

Location: Free Methodist Church
934 N. Seminary
Woodstock, Il. 60098

We had to do the whole report thing over again and I got a new one on 80 meters.

This evening I was listening to ZB2FK on 40 meters and I heard much the same as the other night. Many stations calling while the ZB2 station was in QSO, many calling while the ZB2 was transmitting, many stations calling continually no matter what was actually happening on frequency. I looked up some of the calls and found out that 2 were No.1 Honor Roll members, one was a DX op at HV3SJ, V3, and several other places. I think about all of them have been amateur radio ops longer than me.

I'm guessing this is a new DX'ing technique. I was going to ask them how it worked, but to be honest I'm a lowly QRP op and I didn't want to appear like I didn't know what I was doing. So you guys are the big time experienced DX'ers, how does this work? Say, if the DX station is transmitting and I send my call, how does the DX station hear my call? The HR member from Louisiana sent 339 even though I never heard ZB2FK come back to him. Then he sent 339 out of the blue on top of another QSO about 5 minutes later. How do they know they made the QSO? I read the QRZ.com page for the MN HR member and he said he had 2 rigs that could operate simultaneously - is that how they do it?

Does the DX station op get mad about these continuous calls? It seemed to me that at one point ZB2FK was getting agitated and was trying to indicate he only wanted the station he was calling to respond, but then I figured out he was probably agitated at the station he was calling for not coming back fast enough so he could work the HR members. (Although some of these stations using this technique got through, many did not, including the HR members) Which is why I'm asking how to use this technique successfully. I thought I might have to buy an amp, but I noticed an NE4 station from Florida that was using an inverted vee and 100 watts and he was doing everything he could to call right when ZB2FK was transmitting and on top of in progress QSOs. I'm guessing an amp isn't really needed. It just requires impeccable timing.

Then, in the background, I heard the same IW2 station in Carpignano, Italy from the other night calling and calling and calling and calling. I looked him up.....man he is a big time DX'er - he has more rigs than I have rooms in my house. And a nice tower appropriately decorated with several nice antennas. This technique must be a winner if all these guys are using it. Although the DX stations he was trying to work (S01WS and ZB2FK) must not have very good ears because the IW2 never did get through when I was listening.