

M.C.W.A. NEWS

April 2014
Vol. 14, No. 4

McHenry County Wireless Association

Since 1978
35 Years



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VE TESTING



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 photo ID needed.
SS# or FRN#

Steve, KB9OLD
847/477-3518

APRIL MEETING

April 1, 2014

Crystal Lake Bank
5100 Rt. 14, Crystal Lake, IL
6:30 PM - Socializing
7:00 PM - Meeting

PROGRAM :

“Noise Sources to Ham Receivers”

By Tom, W9NBG

The talk is intended to help the ham recognize electronic gadgets that could be a source of noise to their receiver. Too keep them from buying the problem device and taking it home. Also to understand why these devices or some systems pollute the spectrum with RF Noise.

MCWA Treasurer's Report April 2014

Thanks to those that paid their 2014 dues at the March meeting and welcome to the new Members that joined at that time.
Feel free to contact me about any Treasurer related issues.

73 Bob Lubecker NZ1B
3812 Monica Trail
Crystal Lake, IL 60014
boblubecker@gmail.com

Bank Balance:
Per. 2-28-14 Statement

Beginning Balance	\$5,068.86
Checks written	.00
Deposits	60.00
Interest	.39
Ending Balance	\$5,129.25



The Peak Above the Peaks

The current peak of Cycle 24 which has opened up propagation across the world on all HF bands continues. With the lengthening of daylight, as we passed the equinox, 20m to 10m have offered DX into Asia up to 10:00pm local time.

My log since the last article shows DX such as 9J2T and A61XZ in early March on 10m and 12m. After dark, I worked RI9ANC in Antarctica on 17m on first call. EY7AD was another catch on 17m a couple days later but took a little more time as there was a big pile-up...

The 9J2T DXpedition, mentioned above, did an excellent operation and I worked them on 10m, 12m and 15m without difficulty. HL2DBP is in the log in mid-March on 10m.

Currently, W1AW (KH2) is on the air for the ARRL's 100th Anniversary and I logged the call on 12m last night and on 15m this evening.

All of the above QSO's were done with up to 200w output and a couple of OCF dipoles. I have an inverted V off centered dipole (OCF) that is especially good for Asia. About 80% of my Asian contacts are made with that antenna. I am not a big gun operation. I state this so everyone can be encouraged to pursue DX. I also use a vertical multi-band antenna for DX on rare occasions.

Over April be on the lookout for DX calls like 5J0X, A35V and A35X, A22LL, T88QX, JD1BLY and JD1BMH.

If you want DX action, this is the time, and if you need to put up some antennas, most of the snow and ice is gone (at least at this moment---hi hi).....
Good DX and 73 Dave KA9OZP

Upcoming DX

Afghanistan	T6DD	Until Sep. 5
A. Samoa	KH8/DL2AWG, et al	4/9-20
Austral Is.	TX6G (Raivavae Is.)	Until April 1
Antarctica	R1ANR (Novo Runway)	Until April 6
Angola	D2SC	Until Dec.
Aves Is.	YW0A	April
Botswana	A22LL	Until 4/30
Bear Is.	JW2US (EU-027)	May
Cyprus	5B/UA4MCK	5/7-14
Falkland Is.	VP8BTU	Until 4/25
Gough Is.	ZD9M	Oct.
Honduras	HR5/F2JD	Until 4/6
Kenya	5Z4/LA4GHA	Until Dec.
Lesotho	7P8PB	Until 4/3
Lord Howe Is.	VK9L	10/13-29
Mayotte	TO7BC	Until 4/4
Madeira Is.	CT9/DL3KWR, DL3KWF,	Until 4/2
Mellish Reef	VK3MT	Until 4/9
Ogasawara Is.	JD1BMH	4/27/11-
Reunion Is.	FR/F5MNV	Until 4/8
San Andres Is.	5J0X	Until 4/14
Somalia	6O0LA	Until Dec
So. Shetlands	RI59ANT	Until 11/26
Sri Lanka	4S7KKG	Until 4/15
Togo	5V7BJ/5V7MP	Until 3/31
Turkey	TC10SWAT	Until Dec 31

(from 425 DX Bulletin)

NORTH KOREA ---> Rick, N6VVA has posted Info Update #3 to the "P5 CW Only & IOTA AS-197 Project" [425DXN 1141]. "As behind-the-scenes efforts for P5 license approval by my NGO contact continue along with 5 competing groups in the quest", he says, "I have made a final decision about implementing a 'Blacklist' should P5/K6VVA become a reality at some point in time". Read the complete release at <http://www.k6vva.com/p5/p5infoupdates.html>, and the "Blacklist Clarification" at <http://www.k6vva.com/dnq2>.

Stray On forums, there are no such things as dumb questions. But there are many dumb answers, mostly because people don't READ the original post and so don't actually know what the question is! PLEASE read the post!
G7MRV *(de Eham.net)*

HIGH SPEED CW ----->





FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

1st DX Contact ! This past Saturday I made (at 01:28 UTC) my first international ham contact with a guy in Ireland (EI7M) 14.240!!!!!!!!!!!! Denis (EI6HB) was using the contest call EI7M and was working rapid fire. With a call phonetically as long as mine, Kilo Charlie Niner Whiskey Yankee Foxtrot I was finding myself challenged that I would even spit out the words fast enough before he heard someone else. But after a couple failed attempts I was thinking, maybe I should try clipping him; so on his next pass I keyed the mic after he said Echo India, and when I released he called back, "Whiskey Yankee Foxtrot, can you come again with the call?" How exciting!

I repeated the full call again - and he restated Kilo Nine Whiskey... So I corrected him and he stated I was 59 #1730! So I am sending out my 1st QSL card internationally today!

On Sunday evening I had a friend over Desmond (KB3LKM) and since 20 meters was closing down, we tried to tune the antenna for another band. And we got it on 17 meters! For those who have been watching me, I haven't had much skill in this area so have been sticking to 20 meters. I made an Arizona contact with W1AW/7 which is apparently a portable ARRL station. I'll be getting a card to him also.

So - Feeling pretty excited these days. 1st contact on 17 meters, 1st international contact, and tomorrow, my youngest, Jonathan is taking his Tech exam! Thought you'd all appreciate my news ;-)

Dave - KC9WYF [One of our MCWA Members!]

[Excepted & edited from K9RN reflector]

{Ed. note: Dave has since gone on to make more DX contacts since this appeared on K9RN reflector. Save some DX for the rest of us, Dave ! There is nothing that can compare to the thrill of one's first DX contact ! }

STRAY I have come to the conclusion that we hams carry a lot of groceries! So often I hear a guy say, "the xyl just came home and I gotta go bring in the groceries". (Can't we think up a more honest way to end a contact?)
K4KJC (from Eham)

Another Stray At a plant in KY, all 'dumpster diving' was prohibited for safety reasons, or you lost your job. I can remember watching dozens of perfectly functional Tek 'scopes get tossed into the dumpster just because a newer model came along.....SAD! ron N4UE (de Eham.net)

Special Events There has bit a bit of chatter lately amongst a few of the MCWA members about doing some sort of special event station this summer. Since we no longer do Field Day as a Club, perhaps some sort of weekend special event station could be set up somewhere in the county ??? Suggestions are always welcome and it may or may not be a club activity. Before you suggest anything check ARRL/QSL for other special event stations; so you'll have an understanding of how special events are run.

International Marconi Day

A few dozen special event stations will take to the air April 26, 0000 UTC to 2359 UTC, to commemorate International Marconi Day (IMD). Among them will be GB4IMD, in Cornwall, England, OE14M, in Vienna, Austria, IY0IMD in Italy, VO1AA, on Signal Hill in St Johns, Newfoundland, VK2IMD in Australia, and WA1WCC on Cape Cod, Massachusetts. All stations planning to participate are urged to register. A list of registered participants is on the IMD 2014 website.

International Marconi Day is a 24 hour Amateur Radio event held annually to celebrate the birth of Guglielmo Marconi on April 15, 1874. IMD is held each year on a Saturday close to Marconi's birthday, with Amateur Radio stations on the air from around the world, including some Award Stations operating from historically significant sites.

=====>

The event is not a contest; it is an opportunity for amateurs around the world to make point-to-point contact with historic Marconi sites using HF communications techniques similar to those used by Marconi, and to earn an award certificate for working or hearing a requisite number of Marconi stations.

— Thanks to The Daily DX; International Marconi Day

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FCC Consent Decree Requires Radio Amateur to Relinquish His License

As part of a Consent Decree released March 19, a Cocoa, Florida, radio amateur has agreed to give up his Advanced class Amateur Radio license. Terry L. Van Volkenburg, KC5RF, also has agreed to make a \$1000 “voluntary donation” to the US Treasury, in installments, and waive all rights to contest the validity of the Consent Decree. In turn, the FCC is terminating a 2012 enforcement proceeding involving unlicensed transmissions that interfered with a sheriff’s department radio system. On March 1, 2013, the FCC found Van Volkenburg liable for a \$25,000 forfeiture, which the Commission subsequently determined he would be unable to pay. The Enforcement Bureau also agreed not to institute a new proceeding on the basis of the one just concluded.

“The Bureau further agrees that in the absence of new material evidence, the Bureau will not use the facts developed in the investigation through the effective date [of the Consent Decree] or the existence of this Consent Decree to institute on its own motion any new proceeding, formal or informal, or take any action on its own motion against Mr Van Volkenburg concerning the matters that were the subject of the investigation,” the Consent Decree provided. The Commission said it was entering into the agreement and terminating the enforcement proceeding in part “to avoid further expenditure of public resources.”

Prior to signing the Consent Decree, the FCC said, Van Volkenburg requested in writing that the Commission cancel his Amateur Radio license.

The FCC investigation began in September 2012 in response to an interference complaint filed by the Brevard County Sheriff’s Department. The Enforcement Bureau subsequently determined that Van Volkenburg transmitted on 465.300 MHz without a license, interfering with the radio system in the county jail.

In settling the enforcement action, Van Volkenburg “admits, solely for the purpose of this Consent Decree and for Commission civil enforcement purposes” that the radio transmissions he made on 465.300 MHz sparking the investigation violated the Communications Act. (ARRL News)

[Ed. - scratch one more miscreant !]

Starting Ham Radio, The Road Less Taken

The most taken route to Ham Radio is probably the Technician license, followed or preceded by the purchase of an HT or a mobile VHF/UHF rig. Then comes the General after a while and the OM's first steps into HF SSB. Some will continue to the Extra Class and maybe even CW. Nothing wrong with that but why not start from the “other end” and why?

In April of 2012 I decided to build a RockMite kit, a little 20m crystal controlled transceiver you could buy for \$29. I hadn't touched a soldering iron for twenty seven years but it is like riding a bicycle, well, somewhat. I wasn't a Ham then and didn't know much about how to become one. I had no preconceptions of where I should start. Morse code seemed like a good idea at the time. I like simplicity and efficiency. From what I read, that's what I was getting. I was elated when I first heard static in my earphones, along with some faint CW and a song by Journey! The RockMite's bandwidth is as large as a barn door. I couldn't transmit but I didn't know any Morse code anyway.

I should have spent some money on the ARRL Technician license book right then but instead I immediately ordered an Elecraft K1 kit. I also installed the “Ham Morse” app on my iPod and started the Koch method of learning Morse code. What did I just get into! I couldn't chicken out, having just spent \$300 on a radio I couldn't use. So I started at 20wpm; ended up slowing down to 7 wpm. What a mistake that was. I very slowly climbed up to 12 wpm. Now I had to think about getting my ticket...

The Technician license doesn't offer much bandwidth for CW so I was already thinking of getting the General as soon as possible. It didn't take long for me to pass most online practice tests so I tried the General ones. They weren't that much harder. I ordered the General book, and why not, the Extra book as well. The three books had pretty much the same chapters, just much more in depth for the Extra. I started reading the same chapter from each book in order, then the next one, etc. I had decided then to attempt all three exams in the same session. There is no penalty for trying and I would save a few dollars on top of a couple trips to the exam center. Chance favors the bold.

I had no doubt about passing Technician and General as there isn't much more material in the General book. Extra was a bit harder and it seemed I had forgotten most of the math on the way to the Red Cross facility. I had to “educationally guess” quite a few answers and whether it was chance or my subconscious helping out, I passed. As soon as I saw my call sign appear in the FCC database I plugged-in my K1 into my PAR end-fed in the back yard and browsed to lower end of 40m until I heard F5IN calling CQ. I sent my call sign... He replied! I have no idea what he said, but he did repeat my letters. That was on September twenty first of the same year.

Learning Morse code has been a blessing. There is nothing as efficient and simple as a small CW QRP radio, period. It took me a year and a half to get to 20 wpm, something I am not proud of, but I am reaping the rewards now, in money saved and fun of operation. I now have built a little Weber MTR which I have taken

Road Less Taken ... Cont'd

camping and to my favorite coffee shop to operate outside under an umbrella, sipping coffee. Nobody notices the Buddistick clamped to the white picket fence. The radio is the size of a pack of cigarettes and gets me to Europe from Florida on a regular basis, as far as the Black Sea. I have regular skeds with my friend Ray in Virginia eight hundred miles away, sometimes using as low as 100mW. CW is like using a laser instead of a flashlight.

What better way to enter Ham radio? I suspect that it is where I would have ended-up anyway after trying countless rigs and modes of operation, to what is in my opinion the essence of radio. I don't have a shack. My whole station fits in a small Pelican case (1150), including the antenna, batteries and paddles. I have a small solar panel to charge my eight AA cells. Since the radio sips 35mAh on receive, they last one to two weeks of daily operations anyway. Best of all, I don't hurt my back when I go hiking.

My point is that you don't need to limit yourself to a Technician license when starting. Aim at least for General. You also don't need to spend a fortune on gear. That might be the attraction for some but the older I get the more I seem to like simple, elegant and cheap solutions to real challenges. Morse code is not easy to learn, or at least wasn't for me, but anything worth doing usually isn't. "When All Else Fails," you will hear Morse code on the air long after the power goes out and generators have run out of gas.

from AK4YH on February 22, 2014 (Eham.net)

{Ed. - This is a tough way to get into ham radio and anyone who goes this route is certainly to be congratulated. }



W9DXCC - NEW LOCATION (Press Release)[edited]. Schaumburg, IL – The Northern

Illinois DX Association, sponsor of the annual W9DXCC DX Convention and Banquet, announces several exciting new changes to reflect the growth of the convention and the continuing support from amateurs. W9DXCC 2014 will be held September 19-20th, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, 1800 East Golf Road, Schaumburg, IL. The Hyatt Hotel is a larger venue and is well suited for W9DXCC's continued expansion. It is located in the heart of Schaumburg's Woodfield region, close to a large variety of restaurant and entertainment options. The hotel is located minutes from Chicago's O'Hare airport and has on-site Avis and Budget car rental. The Hyatt is located across from the world famous Woodfield Shopping Center, one of the largest indoor shopping malls in the United States – perfect for accompanying spouses!

The 2014 convention will feature a full day of DX University sessions on Friday and an expanded convention setting on Saturday. Commercial exhibit areas have been expanded and are closer to the main convention activity. Many other exciting changes are being planned.

Mark your calendars NOW for September 19-20th! We recommend arrival on Thursday as the Friday sessions will start early Friday morning. To make your Hyatt hotel room reservation, call 1-888-421-1442. Be sure to identify yourself as part of the W9DXCC group in order to obtain our special rate of \$89 plus tax per night.

For more details on W9DXCC, please go to <http://w9dxcc.com/>.

