

VE TESTING

Contact: Steve Maresso, KB9OLD at 847/ 477-3518

Testing is conducted quarterly at 7:00 PM on the third Tuesday for the months of February, May, August, and November. Walk-ins are welcome until 8:00 PM. No appointment is necessary. Testing requirements:

1. Cost for 2017 is \$15.00 (Cash or check made payable to ARRL). If initial test element is passed, the person testing may continue take the next test element(s) at no extra charge during the given session. Retesting of an element failed during the same testing 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's License or State ID card) for identification.
4. Social Security or FRN number required.
5. Location: Free Methodist Church, 934 N. Seminary, Woodstock, IL 60098

Wednesday Night 6 Meter Net

Just as a reminder the 6 meter net/forum is held every Wednesday at 7-8:00 pm on 50.130 USB.

See you on Frequency.
Pierre K9EYE
Net Control

STRAY: MY YL once said, "Does that Antenna have to stay up all the time?" I replied, "Yes, it does."

[AA7LX](#) de eham

MEETING NOTICE

May 2, 2017

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

Crystal Lake Bank
5100 Northwest Hwy (Rt. 14)
Crystal Lake, IL 60014

PROGRAM: **An Introduction to Radiosport** by Mike, WB8BZK

Radiosport as it is know in other parts of the world is just plain ol' Contesting. Mike has some experience in this area and may provide a different view.



The infamous Russian woodpecker !

M.C.W.A.

May 2017



DX ADDICTION WARNING

I need to warn fellow hams about an addiction that is quite common among as many as 30% of us. It is DX Addiction. It comes in about three levels of severity. Level 1 is marked by a keen perception of cluster headaches and the tendency to call to a DX station on split for as many as 20 minutes before collapsing into an easy chair. Level 2 is marked by moderate to severe tremors when a DXpedition is on the air. The affected operator will wake at 3:00 AM when his cluster buster sounds an alarm regarding an exotic DX call sign spotted. Level 2 is marked by sweats when a rare call is heard. If an amplifier is at hand, it will be taxed to the max and will heat a two-story home in January. Level two may require some medication such as an antidepressant or a sedative. Level 3 is very severe. The DXer in this category will suffer from insomnia and night sweats. Increased or decreased appetite is often present. Among hams, a decreased appetite is an indicator of acute trauma and may require hospitalization. Those with Level 3 will climb icy towers at midnight to tweak and repair beams and run two amps at one time, if necessary. Level 3 patients will require some hospitalization, medication and talk therapy (which is difficult in itself for digital, RTTY and CW operators).

As a non-recovering DXer, I first saw the tendency to DX Addiction in the early 80's while working CW. I worked my first DX outside of North America in EA3 Land. Just as the station returned my call, the XYL started a mixer in the kitchen below the shack. I pounded the floor with my foot and almost put a gaping hole in the floor. It was in my earlier ham days that the family realized Dad had a problem. But with their support I have coped with the disorder since that day. I am diagnosed as a Level 1.5, which can escalate during certain DXpeditions to a 2.1 Level.

Recently I was feeling kind of blue and empty. I checked my log and due to a heavy schedule and rotten band conditions, I had not worked DX in 28 days! So today I went on my favorite spotter site <http://www.dxsummit.fi/> and saw that the band conditions were lower than a possum with its legs in the air on Route 90. However, 5T2AI was spotted at 14.190 working simplex. I ran to the shack, fired up the rig with 200w and talked with Ahmad 5T2AI briefly. He was 58 on peak here and I hit him with a 56 in Mauritania on first call. My symptoms became less severe and I should be able to sleep well tonight. Even my long OCF Dipole looks happier as the sun is setting.

For you non-recovering DXers, look for some of the following calls as we enter May: VK9L, 3W9DQ, OJ0W, some DU9 calls, T88MZ, E44WE and E31A. These and many other operators will serve as your support group as you suffer DX Addictation. As one considers what people are addicted to these days, maybe this amateur radio addiction ain't so bad!

73 Dave KA9OZP

Prices for Old Equipment and Hams Building Gear

David Todd (KG9RB) on April 24, 2017

Have you ever wondered how anyone wanting to start out in ham radio can afford the prices? I started out as an avid shortwave listener by accident, messing around with an old am radio in the early 70s. I quickly realized “another world” that existed without sight. Soon I was tuning in BBC voice of China radio, Canada, Australian radio with its signature bird call and guitar theme.

Soon I was swimming in books checked out from the library and craving to learn about this strange new world where everyone was sending this unknown secret code. To speed things up I eventually took an after-school code and theory class and built my first transmitter with about \$5 of my own parts and the elmers donated tubes and caps and resistors to all us with a schematic.

Our only job was to find a transformer out of a junk TV and a variable cap out of some old radio. Anyone else do this? I had a s-38b hallicrafters radio for receive. I used a relay with a light switch for xmit receive switching.

What I’m getting at is why put a price that is high on some old equipment. I know some will say its collectible or I spent such and such dollars for it when I started.

Remember folks if you make The prices too high, the less fortunate can’t break into the hobby. Thank goodness for kits and QRP.

Instead of donating rigs to the hams that plead. And you all know that there are scammers out there making a living doing this. Just send them a schematic and some parts or buy a pre-made circuit board with schematics to find the components to fill it.

The point is, old equipment shouldn’t be as high as new. And any ham pleading or begging for rigs should really open their theory books and start building. I agree to help other hams to advance technology or to learn.

Since every ham has to learn theory to pass the exams instead of memorizing it, I suggest doing a national elmer program to donate parts and boards etc. That way the hams with the old gear might just come down in price, especially when the rigs are listed with problems.

I love QRP I love CW and other modes too. I think some have gotten out of touch with the real meaning of amateur

radio. Some hams who get involved with public service, like ARES mean well but sometimes excludes other area hams due to the cliques being formed.

In the end remember your theory you learned and use it. Be an example to young ones give out your magazines to the local youth groups hold periodic free building events so anyone of any age can discover the thrill and magic of Amateur Radio.

By the way I’m speaking from experience. I have Parkinson’s and deal with it daily. When I went from a full time University high voltage technician to disabled, it was shocking no pun intended. My whole world changed except ham radio. I can still build with the help of my 15-year-old son and my wife when she isn’t watching her shows. HI HI.

Anyway, I priced old and new rigs and asked WHY? So, I started building again, and you want to know something? The magic never left.

In summary:

Lower your prices, sell it then buy new to keep our dwindling dealers in business and allowing young hams to start out cheap.

Thank you for reading this and hopefully I won’t get any hate mail. :)

de eham.com

<<<< Ed. There were several comments following this article and many dealt with the “Ebay phenomena” which has since spread to “for sale” sites and even hamfests. At hamfests it can be heard, “well that’s the price on Ebay as one walks around the flea market.” So one ends up paying what may be more for a piece of equipment than is what it’s actually worth. This makes it hard for someone with a limited budget such as a teen or college student. Of course, the old adage of “whatever someone is willing to pay” tends to happen here, but there are many people who make a business of picking up used equipment cheap and peddling it at a profit, alleging that it helps pay for their hobby. IMHO it’s just greed that drives these people. Perhaps they should open a store and get a business license ???

M.C.W.A.

April 2017

Inaugural AM Rally a Hit! Participants Log

Nearly 1,500 Contacts:

The numbers

<http://amfone.net/Amforum/index.php?topic=42770.0> are in, and the first AM Rally <http://www.amrally.com>, April 1-3, was a huge success, with nearly 1,500 contacts reported on the 72 logs submitted. Unique call signs logged numbered 664. Event co-organizer Clark Burgard, N1BCG, feels the actual number of contacts was quite a bit larger, because not all participants submitted logs, although logs continue to trickle in past the entry deadline. Burgard said he's been hearing a lot of newcomers on AM lately, and he believes the AM Rally is a factor.

“Perhaps the most endearing moments were an exchange between an op who got his General and an IC-7300 just in time for the event, and a report from an old timer, who said that he'd 'dusted off my DX-100 and got her ready a week early for the Rally. First time back on AM since 1969,” Burgard recounted. “This was just a sample of the positive spirit shared that weekend.”

Burgard said that several AM “tall ships” anchored throughout the bands greeted newcomers and helped all to make some easy contacts.

The top stations in terms of total contacts were W1AW at ARRL Headquarters in Connecticut; and Steve Cloutier, WA1QIX, and Stephen Harris, KB1VWC, both in Massachusetts. W1AW and Cloutier -- an AM Rally co-organizer with Burgard and others -- are ineligible to receive certificates, however.

W1AW logged 178 contacts in 29 states, while WA1QIX made 138 contacts in 26 states, and KB1VWC snagged 132 contacts in 28 states. Rounding out the top five were inveterate AMer Paul Courson, WA3VJB, in Maryland, with 121 contacts in 28 states, and John Bogath, N2BE, in New Jersey, with 57 contacts in 29 states. Some of the stations submitting logs worked just a single contact.

“Considering the solar flare, which wiped out the lower bands for a significant portion of the event, it was an amazing turnout,” Cloutier told ARRL. “For the future, it would be better to have the event in

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* * * * *



Amazon has it !

M.C.W.A.

May 2017

Woodstock Challenge Road Run & Field Day

The City of Woodstock has given us permission to use Emricson Park for our Field Day operations for many years.

In exchange we man their mile checkpoints with our radios during the Woodstock Challenge Road Run to make sure everyone stays safe.

We usually have breakfast in the morning where you receive a map and T shirt before heading out to be on course before the race starts at 8am. One person mans the start / finish line in the park and radios the start to each MCWA member along the course. The MCWA members along the course radio in the first and last person at each mile marker so everyone has an idea of how smooth it's going. Once the last person has passed your check point you are free to go.

Since the ESDA repeater on 146.835 is the closest to the park that group has been kind enough to let us interrupt their 8am Saturday net for this event.

Once again this year the Woodstock Challenge Road Run is Saturday, June 17, one week before Field Day.

Many MCWA members have volunteered for this event many times. All it takes is a car, VHF radio, and some free time.

If you would like to help out, contact Ken, KB9I, at kfarver@mc.net, with your name, phone number and T shirt size.

Thanks, Ken.

STRAY: Why do people say QRZ when it is obvious no one is calling them back?

[VE3UUH](http://www.ve3uuh.com) de eham

Headset Fun

By Mike Higgins, K6AER



Hams are always looking for a cheaper solution to good microphone audio. With all the gaming and cell phone headsets we really have quite a few choices beside using the mic that came with the radio. Many headsets use a three ring 3.5 mm plug for the microphone and in the last few years more and more headsets are using the 4 ring 3.5 mm audio plug. This requires ordering on line for Radio Shack does not carry this 4 ring plug jack. The interface box for these headsets can be built for under \$20. The headset shown above I bought at Walmart for \$9.80 in the cordless phone department. So far It has had very good reports. Now I will admit Bob Heil is gaging at the thought of a \$9 headset but the hobby is supposed to be fun. Walmart has about 12 headsets listed for under \$25. Project time took about 2 hours to build the interface box.

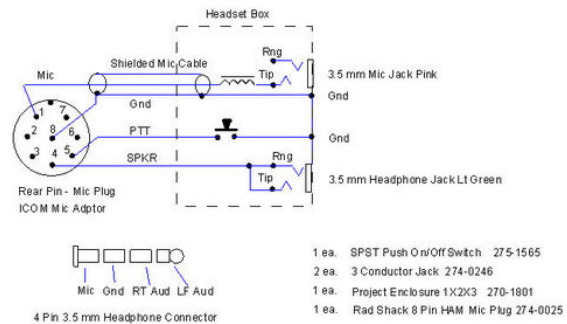
Transceiver wiring is straight forward. Most radios have a bias voltage (5-8 Volts DC) for the microphone, PTT, Ground and Audio out at the microphone connector or the rear accessory jack located on the radio back. The interface box I built is for the IC-706 IC-7000 and 7300 series radios. You can find out the pin arrangement for any radio on the internet. Make sure the bias voltage is positive on the mic line when you buy one of these headsets.

The box is set up with twin jacks, one for the microphone and one for the receive audio. If you use a 4 pin headset they generally come with an adaptor cable for the twin jack application. On top of the box is a PTT button and an On/Off transmit switch. You may want to delete the toggle switch for the PTT button can be made to continually stay on if the button is depressed far enough. All the wiring is dead bug in application. In addition, I added a toroid in the mic audio line to reduce possible RF from getting into the microphone audio. The Toroid material is type 43 with about 10 windings of number 26 gage coil wire. The toroid is very small and does an excellent job of stopping RF on the about 10 windings of number 26 gage coil wire. The toroid is very small and does an excellent job of stopping RF on the

audio line.

The cable from the box to the radio connector is a Cat five cable with most of the wires pulled out. Only three wires are needed along with the shielded mic line which also carries the ground. I pulled the three wires and mic audio line back through the Cat 5 sheath to make the cabling enclosed to the 8 pin microphone plug.

The schematic for a dual connector interface box is shown below:



On the

air use: When setting up the microphone audio you want as much dynamic range as possible. That means when you are not talking the RF output from the radio should be zero. Voice peaks are 90% full transceiver wattage without **OVER DRIVING THE RADIO**. Contrary to popular radio myth, it is not good to have all the meter needles flailing to the right. Good SSB audio is not necessary a function of microphone cost but careful level setting and a quiet shack. If you are getting RF into the microphone the other station will report fuzzy distortion on voice peaks. The microphone should be about 1 inch from your lips, just off to the side, so as not to be driven by breath noise.

Walmart will let you return any headset if you are not satisfied. One of the best bargains my ham buddies have found is the Yapster-TM-YP100 headset at Walmart for under \$20. The audio both transmit and receive is excellent along with the comfort and affordability.

So now is the time to experiment and have fun.

de eham.net



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

DXCC Deletions It seems that some folks may not be very thrilled with ARRL's recent deletions of Midway and Kure Islands. These two have been on the DXCC List for several decades and thanks to President Obama's expansion of a marine park near Hawaii these two DXCC entities have been deleted according to DXCC criteria. Unfortunately, some feel that the criteria may have been misinterpreted. Hope to have more as story unfolds in coming months. Meanwhile, ARRL is pushing for another entry level license which in this Editor's opinion is based on manufacturing and advertising more than good judgment.

Worldwide Ignorance Had a recent chat with a British friend on the other side of The Great Pond about how uninformed some folks all over (not just U.S.) are about basic operating procedures and the like. It all came about because of another post regarding what times go into logs. Seems that many stations are now using the ending time as time of QSO rather than the beginning time. This is causing problems for some in QSL process. Why is this sort of thing happening ??? No doubt because of the lack of "Elmers" (mentors) who used to teach the proper procedures and technical stuff to the "new kids on the block". Nowadays, most are left to fend for themselves if they are able to find the information. Sort of reminds one of getting an M.D. on the internet! HmMMM

Antennas Why run out and buy a wire antenna when you can make one yourself? Probably because it's easier than doing the actual work or somebody recommended the Flopol 6 dipole kit. Well, a dipole is a dipole and there is no magic in that. Jack, W9MU, has mentioned in many programs that it is a good basic antenna which will do the job. Don't fall for some of the hype going around about antenna performance. Before running out to get a new antenna, learn everything you can about antennas and what will work best for your location and expectations.

W1AW operator and ARRL Assistant Lab Manager Bob Allison, WB1GCM, offered his observations about working the AM Rally from the Maxim Memorial Station.

Throughout the weekend, the AM windows were very busy with radio amateurs operating AM mode using vintage vacuum-tube and solid-state equipment. Transmitters heard ranged from World War II-era BC-610s to Johnson Desk Kilowatts and other heavy metal, such as converted AM broadcast transmitters and solid-state homebrew units using Class E modulation. Plenty of name-brand transceivers were on the air, and many operators were excited to use AM for the first time. The on-air atmosphere was relaxed and cordial, with operators sharing their ham radio experiences and equipment used.

In the past couple of years, many manufacturers of Amateur Radio transceivers have made their equipment sound good and talk well on AM, without having to make complicated adjustments. That's great! W1AW was active on 80, 40, 20, and 15 meters, making 177 contacts. Equipment consisted of a K7DYY Super Senior 80/40-meter transmitter, with external speech compressor and equalizer, a Collins 75S-1 receiver, and a dipole antenna suspended above ARRL Headquarters. A Johnson Valiant transmitter and National NC-303 receiver were also put on the air for a few contacts.

ARRL thanks AM Rally organizers Clark Burgard, N1BCG; Brian Kress, KB3WV, and Steve Cloutier, WA1QIX. Burgard praised W1AW and WA1QIX for their significant contributions to the successful event and participants for their dedication. "I'm sure there are stories of hardened determination and profound sacrifice that weekend!" he added.

Harris topped the field in Category A, vacuum-tube commercial AM amateur equipment (KW1, 32V3, DX-100, etc.). Only a few stations entered in Class B -- homebrew largely vacuum-tube transmitter, and Rex Greenwell, K0KP, in Minnesota, was the top scorer. W1AW was number 1 in Category C -- commercially built solid-state transmitter, although the top station eligible for a certificate in that class was David Hockaday, WB4IUY, in North Carolina.

Just two stations entered in Category D -- homebrew solid-state transmitter: WA1QIX and KC9HFR, in Wisconsin. Ditto for Class E -- hybrid (solid state plus tubes) commercially built transmitter, with WB2JCC in New York, and KM3D in Pennsylvania making a handful of contacts between them. No one entered in Category F -- hybrid (solid state + tubes) home-built transmitter. Only three stations turned in logs in Category G -- converted AM broadcast transmitter, with WA3VJB topping the field, followed by KC8ZUL in Ohio, and K0SF in Minnesota. In Category H -- military transmitting equipment -- were five stations, topped by W6SAI, the Bill Orr Legacy Radio Club in Alabama. There were eight entries in Category I -- software-based (SDR), with KP2XX at number 1.

Three special event stations -- N1A, W1G, and W2A -- were active during the AM Rally.

Some 44% of contacts were made on 75 meters, with 40 meters a close second at 40%, and 20 meters at 13%. Less than 2% of participants reported making contacts on 160 or 15 meters, and none were reported on 10 meters, likely due to poor HF conditions that weekend. Fewer than 1% made contacts on 6 meters.

Burgard said he hopes the AM Rally will turn into an annual event with even greater participation, now that it's left so many positive experiences in its wake.