



# M.C.W.A. NEWS

Vol. 16, No.7

Since 1978

July 2016

## MEETING NOTICE

July 5, 2016

Socializing: 6:30 PM

Meeting: 7:00 PM

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

**PROGRAM:** Field Day Post Mortem

By Roger, KF9D

### Officers & Staff

President.....	Jim McDonald, N7US
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	jack@w9mu.net
News .....	Jerry Heien, N9AVY
	n9avy@arrl.net

### 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 2016 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. SS Security Number or FRN number required.
5. Location: Free Methodist Church, 934 N. Seminary, Woodstock, IL 60098

## Field Day Wrap up

Another Field Day in the logs. The weather featured truly summer-like days: hot and humid, buggy, but little of the forecasted thunderstorm activity.

Propagation was not the best we have seen on previous years as we are on our 5th straight day of no sunspots, so little activity on the higher bands. This year 6 meters even forgot to give us many of those brief but frantic thrills. These factors did nothing to dampen the fun and enthusiasm of the group however. A good turnout of members, guests, and visitors kept things active and interesting the entire time. The team managed to keep a phone and cw station active for the 24 hour period, along with the VHF station during daylight hours plus the GOTA station saw several visitors making contacts.

The totals are not all in yet, so come to the July 5th MCWA club meeting to hear a summary of the final results.

I would like to express my gratitude to all who participated in some way. As always, it is a group effort that makes it a success. Our station captains: KA9CAR, K9MS, N7US, KC9WSJ, WB8BZK, W9MU, those that brought out their stations and equipment, our operators that spent extended time under less than ideal conditions especially guest cw operator N9CO, and the visitors and guests that came out to see amateur radio in action.

I'd also like to especially thank those that helped with set-up on Friday and those that came back for tear-down on Sunday afternoon. Their help was greatly appreciated at those times.

Overall, I feel it was a good success for MCWA. Come to the July meeting and hear some of the stories and laugh at a few of the candid pictures from Field Day 2016.

Roger KF9D

Field Day Chairman





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## DX Update

Dave, KA9OZP, asked me to fill in for him this month.

Looking back in my log, I had a little over 300 contacts in June, almost all of which were on 6M Sporadic-E, and most of those were on CW in the ARRL VHF Contest. I did work John, K9EL, who just returned from another vacation in French St. Martin, where he operated as FS/K9EL. I was also called by EA8DBM in the Canary Islands; both contacts were on CW. This Sporadic-E season hasn't been as productive as past ones, but 6M is still lots of fun when the band is open. Though many operators ragchew, the openings often don't last long so the routine is to work as many stations as possible when the band is open.

I watch <http://www.dxmaps.com/> and the telnet DX clusters for spots from the ninth call area on 6M to let me know the band is open. I use my Elecraft K3, SteppIR antenna, and often my Elecraft KPA-500 amplifier, which runs 500W. I've had the K3 since 2009 and am very happy with it. Most stations don't have amplifiers, and many use simple antennas.

I haven't submitted for ARRL's VUCC, which is the VHF/UHF Century Club, yet but I intend to do it soon. Almost all of the grid squares that I have confirmed on 6M are on Logbook of the World, so I have many worked but unconfirmed because I haven't mailed QSL cards. LOTW makes QSLing painless, especially with a logging program like DXLab's DXKeeper, and the program makes recordkeeping automatic.

When the sunspots aren't cooperating and DX is hard to come by, consider working on the many types of other awards that ARRL offers. Check out <http://www.arrl.org/awards>. WAS, Worked All States, is offered in many varieties, including bands and modes. The 5BWAS is popular and challenging, as QSLs are required from all states on 80, 40, 20, 15, and 10M.

The Triple Play WAS Award started in 2009 and requires LOTW confirmations from all states on voice, CW, and digital modes. There was a flurry of activity when the award first started, and many completed in it the first few weeks. The awards are numbered, and I received #113 on 2/4/09. Now, almost 1800 awards have been issued.

Despite low sunspots, many DXpeditions are still scheduled. The current issue of W3UR's The Weekly DX highlights 9X Rwanda, JT Mongolia, PJ5/PJ6 Saba/St. Eustatius, S9, Sao Tome & Principe, V8 Brunei, and JT Mongolia. A schedule of DXpeditions is at <http://www.dailydx.com/calendar.html>.      next page      ----->

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### Update - cont'd

If you're interested in DX, be sure to register for W9DXCC, which the Northern Illinois DX Association sponsors each September. It's September 16-17 at the Hyatt Regency Schaumburg. Friday has Contest University and DX University, and Saturday has top-notch presentations of DXpeditions, propagation, and a presentation by the VP of Engineering of FlexRadio.

The convention includes prizes, vendor exhibits, a banquet, QSL checking, and, best of all, the opportunity to make new friends and visit with old ones. Check out the website <http://w9dxcc.com/>.

So turn on your radio and have fun working DX!

73, Jim N7US

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When I saw this I remembered a story related by Art, K9XI, of his early days in Ham radio back in Michigan. Seems he had one of those Turner microphones with a PTT switch which that would lock mic in transmit .. handy for hands free operation in those days. Anyhow, Art had a big old cat who was in love with the microphone. One day Art had left the rig on while he went off somewhere for the day.

Mr. Cat decided he needed attention and since no one was around, he curled up to the mic and started purring. While purring his heart out to the mic he somehow locked it in transmit and the band was filled with his purring. When Art arrived home he found his rig keyed up, full of cat hair. Later on Art got on the air and was bombarded with "meowing" from many who had listened to hours of beautiful melodic purring! Don't think he ever lived that one down.



STRAY It was fun elmering Elmer on the JT65 mode. Never too late to teach an OM a new mode!  
KC9RNK de eham

Several years ago at Dayton Gary (K9NQ) and I were roaming the flea market there when a sudden downpour caught us out in the open; so we made a dash for the nearest shelter. It was a seller's tent and as we entered, drenched to the skin, the seller asked if there was anything we were looking for. Gary immediately rattled off, "a dry dummy load"! The seller had a laugh on us! [n9avy]

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## White Noise Smart Meter, Direct TV

Ken Ewing (W6LW) on May 12, 2016

As the general noise floor increases we tend to accept it. After a Direct TV installation and inevitable receiver overload with the amp on, I began the sometimes-frustrating cure process starting with snap on ferrite clamps at the dish and power supply.

This was somewhat effective for the overload but I was startled at the reduction of the noise floor in receive. Turns out the installer connected the ground wire for the dish to the nearby smart meter panel rather than a ground rod.

I grabbed the handheld and tuned to a VHF AM aircraft frequency and sniffed around the meter and dish components. I found a blast of white noise at the top left of the smart meter and followed it up to the dish.

Turns out to be the housekeeping switching supply in the smart meter radiating up the dish lines. I routed the dish ground wire from the entry arrestor to a ground rod. This fixed the noise and overload. If you have a similar problem, verify the dish ground to real ground. Check your local code.

### Comment from KK5JY:

Isn't it interesting how all of these "communications devices" are the ones causing so much RFI? DSL modems, satellite receivers, TVs, etc.

I suspect that the SBE is correct on this issue. Until FCC (or Customs, take your pick) starts seizing containers of non-compliant or otherwise RFI-generating devices when they enter US ports, it is going to be nearly impossible to get control of the noise floor.

And just think how much federal revenue could be generated if they did. After the millions of dollars in seized goods and fines stacked up for a while, the manufacturers would have all kinds of new incentive to play nicely with the airwaves.

And before anybody says that the feds are not interested in doing such things, you should read this article (and the preceding and linked articles that describe why this all happened):

<https://www.sparkfun.com/news/1428>

This is a hobby electronics site who had one of their shipments seized, because it had a vague resemblance to another product, and so for trademark reasons, they lost their shipment. In some ways, the story is a bit comical (albeit expensive to SparkFun), and it appears that some kind of resolution was eventually reached. That said, if the import officials can do this to cheap electronics because of the color of the plastic, then they are perfectly equipped to seize the RFI-makers that plague us (and the AM broadcast band) in clear violation of the law.

Just sayin'. :-)

[Ed. - This seems to be a growing problem. My own noise level has gone from about S-2 to about S-7 to S-9 on pretty much all HF bands. May be time for RFI hunt... ]

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## July Hamfests

- 9 Swapfest'16 Oak Creek , Wisconsin South of Milwaukee)  
<http://www.qsl.net/wa9txe>
- 10 Fox River Radio League Aurora (IL)  
<http://frrl.org>
- 17 Peotone KARSFEST  
<http://w9az.com/karsfest.html>

## July Contests

- 2-3 PODXS 070 Firecracker Sprint
- 4-10 10-10 Spirit of 76 Contest
- 16 Feld Hell Sprint
- 16-17 North American QP - RTTY
- 22 NCCC RTTY Sprint
- 30 Feld Hell Sprint



## July DX

- Until 11 J6/NY3B Dominica
- 13 D44TWO Cape Verde
- 14 3B8/M0RCX Mauritius
- 15 V47JA St. Kitts
- 30/11 FW1JG Wallis Is.
- 31/12 8T2BH Bharati Base Antarctica



## [Obituary for Mike Dimiceli a\(N9OGU\) at Leamon Funeral Home](#)

Mike Dimiceli, 73 of Lena, IL, formerly of Elgin, IL passed away in Chamberlain, South Dakota on June 22, 2016. He was born on May 5, 1943 in Palo Alto, CA, the son...

Mike was a member of MCWA several years ago.  
RIP Mike !

## SAFETY TIP

Batteries Indoors “ I don't recommend a vehicle battery for non-emergency use. At minimum, use a deep-cycle battery. These look just like a car battery, but the lead plates inside are thicker. This allows much greater discharge without harming the battery, with the trade-off being that there is less instantaneous demand current available (as might be needed when starting a car). But caution should be observed when using unsealed lead acid batteries in a confined environment (i.e., indoors) - the charging process (in particular, overcharging) **can release hydrogen gas which is highly explosive.** DO NOT attempt to use batteries without first understanding their nature and the processes that occur during charge and discharge. It is important to understand the potential dangers involved in the chemical reactions and the high electrical currents these batteries are capable of ! ”



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FROM THE  
EDITOR'S  
DESK

13 Colonies Special event July is time for the annual 13 Colonies special event again. Start Date-July 1st (9AM eastern (1300 UTC)..End-July 6th Midnight (0400 UTC July 7th). Come join in on the fun honoring the Original 13 Colonies, our military and Vets and our Independence. [www.13colonies.net](http://www.13colonies.net)

<http://www.13colonies.net> It's always been a lot of fun collecting all the various stations.

## FCC Says "No" to Lifetime Amateur Radio Licenses

06/22/2016

The FCC has denied the petition of an Arizona radio amateur, who had petitioned for lifetime Amateur Radio licenses. Mark F. Krotz, N7MK, of Mesa, had filed his Petition for Rule Making ([RM 11760](#)) with the FCC last November, and the FCC invited public comments in February. Krotz wanted the FCC to revise § 97.25 of its rules to indicate that Amateur Radio licenses are granted for the holder's lifetime, instead of for the current 10-year term. Hundreds of radio amateurs commented on the petition, but the FCC was not swayed by those favoring the idea.

"Based on our review of the record, we are not persuaded that the petition discloses sufficient grounds for the requested rule change," the FCC said in a June 21 [Order](#). "Krotz's primary argument is that extending the term of amateur licenses to the lifetime of the holder would reduce the Commission's administrative and personnel costs, but it is not clear to us that the proposal actually would enhance administrative efficiency." That's because the vast majority of license renewals are submitted online and processed automatically by the Universal Licensing System (ULS), "with minimal staff involvement," the Order said.

The FCC said it had further reduced its overhead by no longer routinely mailing out paper licenses. "[I]f license terms were extended to the holder's lifetime, we likely would receive more cancellations on account of the licensee's death, which are labor-intensive, because staff must carefully verify the deceased's identity and licenses in order to guard against erroneous cancellations," the FCC said in its Order, signed by Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Deputy Mobility Division Chief Scot Stone.

Krotz argued that the General Radiotelephone Operator License (GROL) already is issued on a lifetime basis, but the FCC said that's not a comparable situation, because an Amateur Radio license is both an operator's license and a station license, "and there is no Commission precedent for issuing a lifetime station license."

In 2014 the FCC granted lifetime credit for examination elements 3 and 4, but applicants seeking relicensing under that provision still must pass examination element 2. The FCC pointed out in its Order that this was done to address the concerns of commenters that a licensee who had not renewed also may not have maintained or expanded his or her knowledge and skills.

de arrl

## FCC Transitioning to New Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS)

06/17/2016

The FCC will transition to its new Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) on Monday, June 20. This will be a "hard launch;" the legacy system will no longer be available after the transition. All documents in the legacy system will be accessible in the new system, and saved links (bookmarks or favorites) to documents and proceedings should not need to be adjusted. This modernization project is expected to significantly improve the resiliency and performance of ECFS. The Commission will continue to take feedback and improve the system leading up to and following this transition.

"[T]o best ensure that this important public engagement system is fully functional during regular business hours, the Commission will take down the legacy ECFS application starting at 11:59 PM ET on Friday, June 17, and the system will be unavailable through the weekend," the FCC said in a Public Notice. "The Commission plans for the new system to be available and fully operational by 8 AM ET on Monday, June 20. The old ECFS system will not be available once the new one is operational, but all files will be accessible in the new system."

The FCC said if it runs into any "unforeseen delays," it will issue a Public Notice on the front page of its [website](#), to inform users. Since the new ECFS is expected to be fully operational during all FCC business hours, the agency does not plan any changes to any deadlines.

de arrl

STRAY For a group that likes to communicate, hams sure don't like to reply to emails! A little courtesy goes a long way. When a fellow ham sends you an email, acknowledge them -- don't ignore them!

[AF7EC](#) de eham

STRAY Showed my wife the review of the \$13K IC 7851 in QST. She asked if the review discussed the impact on one's marriage!

[W1GOV](#) de eham

STRAY Open mind? I agree with your right to agree with me.

[KB3ZAA](#) de eham