

MCWA NEWS

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June 2012



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VE TESTING

Testing by appointment only

7 PM 3rd Tuesday every other month

Resumes in September

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

Steve, KB9OLD
847/477-3518

Meeting Notice

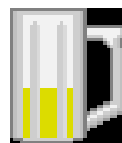
Tuesday, June 5
7:00 - 7:30 - Socializing
7:30 - Meeting

Program: "Why Is SSB So Good?"

Guest speaker: Tom, W9NBG
Talk with build to SSB by using information based on understanding Signal to Noise, CW, AM and DSB.

Join Us ?

After the meeting for pizza & beverages at the Village Squire in Crystal Lake (Rt. 14 just West of Rt 31). We usually have anywhere from 6-20 people and the cost generally works out to \$10 per person with pizza.



Treasurer's Report



Opening Bal.	\$3981.33
Interest	.33
Dues	15.00
Checks	0.00
End Bal.	3996.66

Barry, K9YVT

5/22/12

Norm Beigh, W9YGI

Passed away on May 29 at Harvard Hospital. Norm was a Charter Member of MCWA and a long time member. RIP Norm !

- Northwest Herald 5/30/12

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It's Summer
and the DX is
HOT !

It's summer and the dx is hot. As we head towards summer solstice and as Cycle 24 builds to peak in 2013, the bands have been great. However, we are still deficient on 12m and 10m. These upper HF bands have had sporadic openings, but we are hoping for some sustainability as time progresses. Some solar experts are still doubting that 10m will be stellar in the current solar cycle. We hope their projections are wrong.

Across May, DX was enhanced by a few DXpeditions. The 7O6T team (Yemen) did a fine job. I found it easy to work them on 17m and 20m phone. Some members of the club worked them in numerous modes and on numerous bands. Here again, their 10m and 6m operations did not show great numbers beyond a couple world regions.

It was nice working a DX operation from Mozambique during this time period. C91JD used a verticle antenna mounted near the water. I also worked the Somalia DXpedition 6O0CW during May. Their signal was especially good on 17m. Shortly after these DXpeditions, I worked E51JD Jim, on Rarotonga Island on 15m. Last evening I had a 59 QSO with Bander 7Z1RR on 14.290Mhz in Saudi Arabia.

With these observations in mind, I think you can see that the world is open on low power. In the late evening (near midnight our time), signals from Scandinavia, all Europe, parts of Asia and the

Pacific have been very strong on 20m and 17m. 15m has also been open during the night. In some cases, signals are 30 over 9 from Europe on 20m late at night. I would recommend 17m and 20m for easy DX. 15m will be a little more challenging at night. By the way, some of the Russian and European stations are reporting my signals as 20 over 9. I use OCF dipoles and 200watts.

If you have not done so lately, go out at night and look north. You will see a bright appearance. Go 1000 to 1500 miles north and you would experience 20 to 24 hours of daylight in June. This is greatly enhancing the signals, especially over the pole. The quiver is present in many of the signal paths crossing the north pole. This is one clue as to how the signal is traveling.

Several DX operations will be coming up across June. One that I hope to work is A5A from Bhutan. Already clusters are reporting strong signals from them on 20m through 15m.

The way DX is running, I expect that many Field Day operations will have DX QSO's when they submit their logs this year. 73 Dave KA9OZP

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Volunteers Needed !

October is just around the corner and MCWA needs volunteers to run for Office. If you think you're up to the job, MCWA needs YOU ! We can't expect the present Officers to serve year after year.

MCWA also needs people for programs; so if you or you know of anyone who can give a 20-20 minute talk on any of the various aspects of ham radio or electronics let the Officers hear from you.

If there is anything YOU would like to see in future programs, this is your time to speak up.

Coming in October: Program by a local OO !

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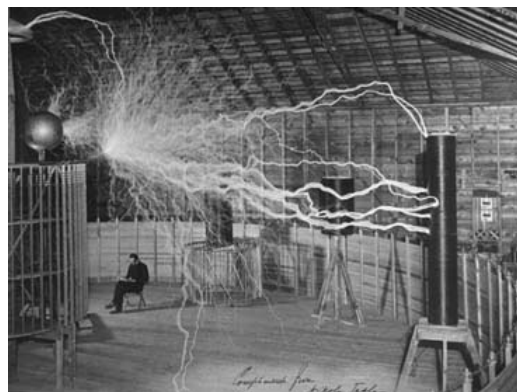
From The Editor's Desk

HB 1390 Success ! The Illinois Senate passed this and it now moves to the Governor's desk for his signature. Many Illinois hams helped with the letteres and email to Reps and Senators.

New Call Sign Congrats to John Kennedy on changing his call sign from KB9RSO to KE9NDY. A neat vanity call !

Congrats to N9KK on finally achieving DXCC on LoTW !

Field Day ! is the last full weekend in June. Make sure you get out to a field site for some operating and fun. In McHenry county FD operation will be at Courthouse in Woodstock (Rt. 47 North) ; some MCWA members will be operating there with RACES/ARES group. Over in Lake county the W9CA group will be operating to accumulate a lot points with a bunch of highly skilled ops. Visitors are welcome. This is a great opportunity for both new & older operators to learn some new skills.



Yes, I think I have RF in the shack !“

JULY MEETING - No meeting ! Relax and do summer stuff.

May Planning Meeting - There was a brief planning meeting on May 29 for Officers. Decisions ! Decisions ! A plan was made for next few months meeting and contingency plans made in case a guest speaker was unavailable. Some other boring stuff was discussed. It was a short meeting.

MCWA Needs New Officers - Tired of hanging out in the audience ? Become an MCWA Officer. The old crew will get you off on the right foot and lend help when needed.

HELP NEEDED ! Harold, W9DIK, needs help in getting a Gap vertical antenna installed on flat roof of his apartment building in Waukegan. He'd do it himself but he's not sighted. Antenna is already assembled and sitting at W9CA in Wauconda. Contact Dave, KA9OZP if you can help.

De HK3C Hams know there is no other service like ours. No fraternity on Earth has the magic to bridge nationality, culture, distance or disparate interests as Amateur Radio. Moreover, few other avocations offer the opportunity for public service, technological development, or for camaraderie or sheer excitement.

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DX Primer - Part II

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DX Primer -Part II

Now that we have had some basics of DX, we need to cover some of the other aspects. of DXing. Last month , it was mentioned that the DXCC total was 341, but that changed with the deletion of one “country” or entity. Malyj Vysotskij Island, R1/M, was deleted back in February because some International Treaty expired and is now considered a deleted country which no longer counts unless it was worked prior to deletion. Sometimes these countries come and go with independence and politics.

It should be mentioned that the DXCC Award is available for endorsement stickers after 100 all the way up to 340 in steps of 5 countries. The first 100 countries is relatively easy, but the next 100 gets a bit more difficult and once you get past 300 they become increasingly harder to work. That's the fun of it !

Working all these countries is the easy part, but getting the QSLs or confirmations is another thing. There are 2 ways to confirm your QSOs; one is by a QSL card and the other is via LoTW (Logbook of The World) which is an online service of ARRL.

Getting the card is sometimes a long wait via the postal service. First, you need to find the stations address which is usually available on

QRZ.com; however, you need to look for any special instructions the DX station may have put on QRZ.com. Often they will require 2 IRC's (International Reply Coupons) or \$2-3 USD f or a card to be returned. Sometimes they will simply ask for QSLs via the Bureau.

This QSL thing can be an expensive proposition when you figure out the cost of postage at \$1.05 , 2 IRCs at \$2.10 each, plus cost of envelopes (2) and your QSL card. It 's over \$5 to ship one card !

This is why the Bureau system and LoTW are cost cutting methods to ship QSLs. The ARRL Outgoing Bureau (you need to be an ARRL member) charges \$6 per 1/2 pound (about 75 cards) depending on weight of you card. The are some countries which are not serviced and they are listed on the ARRL web site.

Using LoTW is easy, once you get it set up. There is no charge and you need not be an ARRL member to use it. The charges apply only when you claim an award. It's something like 15 cents per card. This is about the cheapest way to get DXCC. All you need do is upload your logs in ADIF format and wait for the DX stations to match. Times can be as much as 30 minutes off. LoTW also is used for Worked All States , VUCC and will soon handle CQ Magazine's WPX award. Ther are now something like 50,000 users on LoTW with more being added almost daily.

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DX Primer - Part II

Unlike the ARRL Outgoing Bureau, the ARRL Incoming Bureau can be used by anyone - ARRL member or not. All that is required is to keep at least one SASE (Self-Addressed, Stamped Envelope) on file. Don't rely on the Bureau to send you a notice that you have cards waiting. Many times, unclaimed cards will simply be tossed in a year or so because no envelopes were on file. The people who handle cards are unpaid volunteers who put in many hours of their times each month when they could be working DX or doing other things.

Finding addresses for DX stations on QRZ usually works, but sometimes there are QSL Managers for those DX stations which may or may not appear on QRZ.com. There are several alternate ways to find out where to ship that QSL card. Many of the DX Bulletins publish lists of QSL Managers and corrected addresses for DX stations. The simplest way to find these lists is to just search QSL Managers online. Sometimes you'll get lucky and find a Manager who is here in US and it will cost you 2 stamps, one there and one for return trip ... a bargain !

When sending QSL cards outside of country it is **IMPORTANT** that **NO CALL SIGNS BE ON ENVELOPE !** This is an open invitation to thieves to open envelope looking for IRCs and/or money. This writer has lost many "greenstamps" (US Dollars) over the past 30 years.

One way to "hide" money is to put it inside of return envelope. Please note that some countries do not accept IRCs because they are not members of the Universal Postal Union (UPU). Also note that there are some countries where it is illegal to receive foreign currency and a few DX stations got in trouble over the years.

Probably should mention "services" like Eqsl and

QRZ.com's Logbook which are not good for ARRL awards like DXCC, but have their own awards. Seems like many digital hams use these either because they are part of the digital software they use or because they find them easy to use. Personally, this writer feels the old adage about "too many cooks spoil the soup" is very applicable here. "Nuf said.

Many DX stations will use any one of the above methods of QSLing and some may use any combination of all. There are still many stations who like to have that little piece of cardboard to hang on their wall or stick in a book.

Patience is the name of the game when it comes to QSLing. Cards will not necessarily come back in a week or two or even a month. With the Bureau system it can be a year or two and perhaps even longer. Same holds true with LoTW. This writer had one confirmation that showed up on LoTW from 1980 ! Bureau cards from the 1970's & 1980's are not unheard of; some DX stations are among the world's best procrastinators !

More next month ? - n9avy



"Roger, right over K1MAN QTH ... permission to take out his antennas ??"

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“HAM” Radio Operator?

THEORY 1

The three letters (H.A.M.) are initials, which pay homage to the last names of three of the great radio experimenters of bygone years.

^Heinrich Rudolf Hertz (February 22, 1857 – January 1, 1894) was a German physicist who clarified and expanded the electromagnetic theory of light that had been put forth by Maxwell. He was the first to satisfactorily demonstrate the existence of electromagnetic waves by building an apparatus to produce and detect VHF or UHF radio waves.

^Edwin Howard Armstrong (December 18, 1890 – January 31, 1954) was an American electrical engineer and inventor. Armstrong was the inventor of modern frequency modulation (FM) radio. Edwin Howard Armstrong was born in New York City, New York, in 1890. He studied at Columbia University and later became a professor there. He invented the regenerative circuit while he was an undergraduate and patented it in 1914, the super-regenerative circuit (patented 1922), and the superheterodyne receiver (patented 1918).

^Guglielmo Marconi (25 April 1874– 20 July 1937) was an Italian inventor, known for his development of Marconi's law and a radio telegraph system, which served as the foundation for the establishment of numerous affiliated companies worldwide. He shared the 1909 Nobel Prize in Physics with Karl Ferdinand Braun “in recognition of their contributions to the development of wireless telegraphy and was ennobled in 1924 as Marchese Marconi.

THEORY 2

This theory suggests that “HAM” is the combination of initials of the last names of three college students at Harvard, who supposedly had their own amateur radio station in the early nineteen hundred teen something. This was at a time when experimenters had free reign of the radio spectrum, and any legal administration, red tape or federally assigned callsigns were in their infancy or altogether non-existent. Their last names were (supposedly) HYMAN, ALMAY, and MURRAY, and they operated their little amateur radio station with a (self-assigned) call sign of “H.A.M.” The three young men were merely identifying their station as “theirs” by using their names. (“H.A.M.”)

THEORY 3

Drawing from the congressional “control” theory above, and in an attempt to explain “technical, , radio, and electronic matters” to a non-technical congress and general public, here is yet another theory of why Amateur Radio operators are called HAMS: During the earlier days of radio communication, the commercial and Amateur Radio broadcasters had won their fight against the NAVY. The government (not the military) stepped in to organize and control frequency allocation of these new “short-wave” frequencies. When all was said and done, the government allowed radio amateurs to operate only on certain frequencies which were scattered in an amongst the other licensed (authorized) frequencies. This holds true to this day. The Amateur Radio frequencies were said to be sandwiched “like the HAM in a sandwich” between the other frequencies, and so Amateur Radio frequencies came to be known as the “HAM” segments of a particular band.

THEORY 4

Another theory attributes the term "HAM" to: Hugo Gernsback, publisher of a magazine called "Home Amateur Mechanic" which was very, very popular back in the early days of radio. It was so well known, it was a household word, just as the magazines "People", or "Reader's Digest" are today. Although it was primarily more mechanical in content, it did contain fairly regularly, Amateur Radio construction projects. Thus, when asked what sort of radio a person had, the reply, more often than not, was he: "had one of those "H.A.M." (using just the initials of the well known magazine name.) This theory becomes a bit more believable when you consider the Amateur Radio practice of using just initials or letters for many commonly understood words in order to shorten transmissions and ease sending of messages, especially when using Morse Code. "Home Amateur Mechanic" was simply shortened to H.A.M.

Theory 5

Some speculate the term "HAM" stands for "Help All Mankind" as reflected in the radio amateur's long history of service towards people in distress during natural calamities, disasters and civil emergencies. In fine S.O.S. tradition, this gives us H.A.M.

Theory 6

Others believe the term "HAM" derives its origin from the British. From late in the nineteenth century forward, British sports writers used the "AM" to describe rank AMateurs in sports. It first came into the "electronics arena" from the "wire telegraphers" used by these sports writers. The telegraph operators originally applied it to the younger and inexperienced "cub" reporters. These young sports writers often provided illegibly written or poorly worded copy for the telegrapher to transmit. The professional news telegraphers had beginners in their own line of work, and they picked up the 'AM terminology from the sportswriters, and applied it to their own field. Often the inexperienced new telegraph operators were called "AMs", for the amateurish way they sent messages.

Theory 7

This theory holds that the term "HAM" actually derives from what the seasoned commercial (professional) telegraph operators called the (hobby) amateur radio operators. When the inexperienced hobby radio enthusiasts began to venture on air with crude spark-gap transmitters, based on vehicle ignition coils, their code transmissions must have been pretty poor compared to the commercial telegraphs of the day. The commercial operators referred to the amateurs by using a modification of the old telegrapher's insult (from above) by saying the operator was "ham fisted", meaning that they weren't of professional skill. "Ham Fisted" referred to their style and proficiency of sending telegraph code which could have been done just as well by using a ham (the cut of pork) on the telegraph key to pound out their rudimentary code.

Theory 8

Along those same lines of thought, came this theory linked to the stage and theater, where the term "HAM" is used to denote an actor of indifferent ability, or one who shows off his skill (or lack thereof), by performing in spite of and mostly oblivious to his own ineptitude.

Theory 9

This following theory seems to combine the “ham fisted” and the “un-professional operator” theories from above, but also adds a bit more insight as to why amateur radio operators might be called “HAMS”: Definition of HAM: “A poor performer. [in this case:] ”An operator of poor performance and courtesy“. Even before wireless radio, that's the gist of a definition of the word ”Ham“ given in the G. M. Dodge book: ”The Telegraph Instructor.“ The definition never changed throughout wire telegraphy history. The first WIRELESS operators were, of course, originally land based (wire) telegraphers, who left their offices to go to sea or to man the coastal stations. They brought with them to their now jobs their old habits, both good and bad. Along with them came also slang terms, operating practices, and much of the tradition of their older profession.

