

M.C.W.A. NEWS

September 2014
Vol. 14, No. 9

McHenry County Wireless Association

Since 1978
36 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

SEPTEMBER MEETING

September 2, 2014

Crystal Lake Bank

5100 Rt. 14, Crystal Lake, IL

6:30 PM - Socializing

7:00 PM - Meeting

PROGRAM : Trans-Atlantic and Around the World Balloons Use Amateur Radio For Tracking

By Steve, K9DCI

Penny Staley, K9PLS, SK

It is with deep regret that we note the recent passing a of Penny, K9PLS, wife of Tom, K9TMS , past President of MCWA . Penny passed away after a 6-month battle with an infection. Her Memorial Service was April 24 in Grayslake. Our condolences to her family. There is a small ham community in Lake & McHenry counties and we feel any loss . RIP Penny.

2014 ARRL Field Day Logs Received List Available for Review

08/26/2014

The ARRL "Logs Received" page now contains all 2014 ARRL Field Day logs received to date (scroll to bottom of page), including logs submitted via e-mail, web applet or on paper. The ARRL Contest Branch requests that Field Day participants review the list and contact ARRL Contest Branch Manager Matt Wilhelm, W1MSW, (860-594-0232) no later than September 12, if anything appears to be incorrect with their entry information.



THE SURPRISING WORLD OF DX

A couple years ago, we were bemoaning the sleepiness of Cycle 24. We had a couple of modest peak periods. Then around March of 2014 we experienced incredible conditions like the good ole days. Even 10m and 12m were open to anywhere you wanted to talk. I am reaping some QSL's now from that memorable time in Cycle 24.

In the last couple of months conditions have cooled down on the upper HF bands. Certain solar conditions, including flares, have limited the DX on the upper bands. Nevertheless, the activity is still there. Sometimes the bands are open and assumed dead. This happened last evening on August 24. I was not expecting too much but logged several Hawaii stations during their QSO party. But then conditions kicked into a higher gear. I chatted with A71AM, Saif, on 20m in Qatar. One could hear stations from the various continents working him. Then I went to 15m and had a very nice QSO with Rod, VK7FRJG in Tasmania. He was 5/5 here and I was giving him 5/7. Just before writing this article I noticed 2m was wide open and I worked some other grids with armchair copy.

Other nice QSO's were logged earlier in August with OX3XR, GA14CG, AM08YB, OH2XX and DR50RRDXA. All of these were worked on 20m and 17m. For the month of August I had only one DX QSO on 10m.

I do believe that 10m and 12m will open up more as we head into Fall, but of course, the daylight is diminishing. Most of the higher band openings will occur up to an hour past sunset. My 40m log is showing more DX activity already. Where did Summer go?

September looks very active for DX. Look for A25GF, TX4A, E6MF, XX9TYT, several A52 Bhutan calls, CY0C, ZD9ZS, P29VCX, P29NT, 7L7X, VK9NT, VK9AN and C21GC (among other announced DX operations).

As the mosquitoes slacken, temperatures cool, and before the snow flies, don't forget to check and maintain your antennas. I predict that although 15m and down will be better, you will still need some antennas to work propagation on 10m and 12m. Cycle 24 isn't done yet, and even if we were at the bottom, there are always surprises in the world of DX.

73---- Dave KA9OZP

STRAY *Remember when "noise level" meant static(QRN)rather than digital hash from computers and HDTV's?*

W2MR via eham.net

STRAY *When we use "q" signals or CW shortcuts on phone, we are paying tribute to those that came before. May we never lose touch with our heritage.*

W4FJT via eham.net



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

GOING APE ? PSK operators go APE in the month of August. This is an event sponsored by the PODXS 070 PSK Club. APE is an acronym for “August PSK Expedition”. Several members take to the field every August from various spots around the country. Some members have operated from lighthouses, Scout activities and portable from a pontoon boat on a lake in Indiana. It's been a lot of fun and makes for something to chase. The only honor bestowed upon these fearless operators is a small sticker to mark the event.

QSL ? This editor was faced with the dilemma of finding a good, inexpensive QSL card printer recently when the last 500 ran out. The last printer was used for years, but due to his advancing age and health problems. His children took over the business, but don't seem up to the task. The last batch of 500 had green ink that could be best described as “50 shades of green”. Searching around the net there were several, but the one that seemed like more bang for the buck was UX5UO is the Ukraine. He offered 1000 cards for \$59 including postage ! What a deal ! More info in a month or two when cards arrive.



STRAY *If you take a radio apart and put it back together enough times, you'll end up with enough spare parts to make another one!*
-WA7SGS (via eham).net

STRAY *QRP Amplifier is an oxymoron.*
W8LGZ (via eham.net)

Balloons Carrying Amateur Radio Payloads Still Circling Earth

Three simple plastic foil-envelope balloons carrying Amateur Radio payloads and launched from the UK by Leo Bodnar, M0XER, remain aloft and continue to circle the Earth. The oldest, identified as B63, was released on July 8 and became the second of Bodnar's balloons to circumnavigate the globe. The first to do so, B64, went up on July 12 and had completed one lap around the Northern Hemisphere by July 31. Air currents have carried the balloon within 9 km of the North Pole and within 10 km of its launch site. The last balloon to make it around the Earth was B66, which Bodnar released on July 15.

Each balloon carries a tiny 10 mW solar-powered transmitter that can alternate between APRS and Contestia 64/1000 digital mode on 434.500 MHz (USB). The Amateur Radio payload weighs just 11 grams.

As of August 25 at 15:30: The B64 balloon (M0XER-4 on APRS) was north of Moscow, Russia, at an elevation of more than 40,200 feet; the B63 balloon (M0XER-3 on APRS) was located nearly 42,000 feet above South Korea, and the B66 balloon (M0XER-6 on APRS) appeared to be over the Celtic Sea and approaching the tip of southern England.

The numeral following the “B” denotes the number of similar balloons Bodnar has launched (B-65 failed to deploy). The transmitter stores positions during its flight and transmits a log file that can recall 5 days of previous locations in the comments field of its APRS transmissions. If it has been out of radio contact, however, a straight line will appear on the APRS map.

de ARRL.org

MCWA Treasurer's Report Sept. 2014



No report this month. Monies are still there.



This looks better than ice bucket challenge



Soylent Green Factory

Upcoming Hamfests

- * **Radio Expo 2014 - 9/13/14**
Belvidere, IL <http://chicagofmclub.org>
- * **Peoria Superfest - 9/20/14**
Peoria, IL - <http://www.w9uvi.org>



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

de KK9DX

The Gift of Friendship

David E. Greer (N4KZ) on August 24, 2014

I entered the ranks of ham operators in the late 1960s while a high school student. While there were many hams in the former Soviet Union in those days, most contacts with Soviet operators consisted of signal report, QTH, name and rig type - almost always homebrew or converted military surplus - and little else. The political situation there prevented them from engaging in old-fashioned ragchewing. We worked many Soviet hams but never really got to talk with any of them.

But all that changed as the Soviet Union entered a period of glasnost - openness - in the mid-1980s. By the 1990s, many aspects of Soviet life had changed, including the lifting of travel restrictions for many of its citizens. That led me to have a most remarkable QSO with a Russian ham in the mid 1990s. I've told this story on the air several times but decided it was time to share it for a wider audience. When this story was first shared with me by a Russian ham several hundred kilometers east of Moscow, it put a lump in my throat. It was a great illustration of the generous nature of hams worldwide.

And, no, I don't remember his call sign. I still have my stack of 32 paper logs before I switched to computer logging in 2000. But I was too lazy to search for it. Perhaps a reader or two in Boston has direct knowledge of this and can verify the facts.

It was the mid 1990s and I was on 15 meter SSB one day. I began conversing with a Russian ham who spoke terrific English. We were having a wonderful ragchew and I kept thinking how much times had changed since this would have been impossible years earlier because of the political situation there.

The Russian operator told me that for the past several years, he had regularly worked some American hams in the Boston, Mass. area on 20 meter SSB. He got to be good on-air friends with the group. In the meantime, the Russian had been saving his money and travel restrictions had been eased, he explained.

He made the decision to fly to the USA and meet his ham radio friends in the Boston area. It was a wonderful visit, he said. He and his friends dined out and shared great times over food and beverage. He stayed in the homes of several of his American friends and was treated warmly and shown great hospitality.

But the best was yet to come, he said.

He was invited to attend a ham radio club meeting in the Boston area on a Saturday afternoon. He didn't know it but club members had passed the hat beforehand and used the money to buy him a good used HF rig.

So the meeting was progressing nicely when the club president paused and asked the Russian visitor to come forward. It was at that point the president explained that their visitor would soon be returning home after a wonderful stay in the Boston area and that his ham friends wanted him to have something to remember them by.

At that point, they produced a used but like-new Kenwood TS-440S transceiver and presented it to the Russian ham. At first, he told me, he didn't quite realize they were GIVING this rig to him. He thought perhaps they were merely showing it off.

But slowly the news began to sink in, he said. The club members were giving him this Kenwood as a gift. Something he could take home and keep forever and forever.

"I cried like a baby," he said to me. "I could not believe how generous they were."

So, the Russian took the Kenwood TS-440S home and put it on the air. He told me that hams in his country knew of such equipment - they regularly saw the advertisements in ham radio magazines - but few, very few of them had ever actually seen much less owned this type of ham equipment. Today, many or even most Russian hams have very nice commercially manufactured rigs. But that wasn't always the case.

Having this rig in my shack made me very popular," he said. "Many Russian hams rode trains for very long distances to come to my home to see this rig.

"And they just kept coming. Every weekend for months and months."

This story made a huge impression on me even though it's nearly been 20 years since I first heard it. It put a lump in my throat then and still does.

de eham .net