

M.C.W.A. NEWS

October 2014
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McHenry County Wireless Association

Since 1978
36 Years



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SEPTEMBER MEETING

October 7, 2014

Crystal Lake Bank

5100 Rt. 14, Crystal Lake, IL

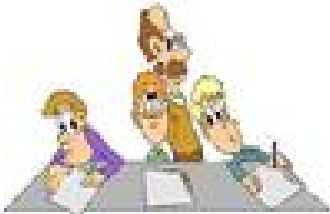
6:30 PM - Socializing

7:00 PM - Meeting

PROGRAM : "G5RV the Don Rickles of Antennas"

By Jack Hudson, W9MU

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

President's Message

Hello to everyone. My name is Kent Dulaney K9KMD newly elected president of MCWA. I have been retired now for over a year after working for the Motorola for over 45 years. I was originally licensed with WN9RDK in 1974 and as a result of attending a ham radio class sponsored by the Western Illinois Radio Club in Quincy, Illinois. It has always amazed me how a person can talk into a "thing" that is connect to an antenna and have their voice come out of a similar "thing" somewhere else in the world – pure magic. I first discovered ham radio after making a crystal set back in the mid-50's (yes I am old). Because of the wide band reception capability of the "Xtal Set", I heard the call "this is W9GSK...." who was an unknown ham neighbor operating up from the broadcast band on 160 meters. The rest is history, as they say which I hope it isn't over. I enjoy most facets of our hobby, ham radio including low-bands, VHF/UHF, cw, phone, the digital stuff, DX, contesting and just everything the hobby offers. I have, when things are working, capability of all modes from 160 meters to 1.2GH with the exception of only FM on 900Mhz.

Well now the "brag sheet" is presented, I won't be able to make my first meeting (September) as president. My former employer asked me to come back as a part time contractor. I am sorry about that but that same week was scheduled for me being out of town prior to the MCWA election. I will try not to let it happen again. Our Vice President Dave, KA9OZP has



THE DIFFERENCE

A YEAR MAKES

Do you remember how DX was flowing like property tax in Illinois a year ago? My log was loaded with DX in September of 2013. The big difference between September 2013 and September 2014 is the propagation on the upper HF bands. We were talking all over the globe on 15m, 12m and 10m. We definitely were on the peak of Cycle 24. Now we are on the sloping side. But in spite of this decline, there has been DX on the upper HF bands and a decent amount of propagation on on 15m and down.

During the middle of this past month I heard a big pile-up on a split operation on 15m. I set the split and worked the station on the first call with a huge worldwide pile-up. Then I listened for the call. Who was attracting so much attention? It was TY1AA in Benin. Japan has also been stronger on 15m and is easy to work up to an hour or two past sunset.

What has stretched out the bands a bit? The SFI and SN have been averaging about 100 each. That is some help for propagation. But in the Spring and Fall each year the world experiences the equinox. This stretches long distance propagation. South America, Africa and the South Pacific have been coming in especially strong. A couple evenings ago, I worked two stations in Antarctica on 20m back to back. Joe KC4AAA at the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station was 5/9. When I told him I was using 200w and an OCF dipole he was amazed. He stated that my signal was very strong at the South Pole. Mike RI1ANT was 5/6 here and I gave him 5/5 at the Mirny Base in Antarctica. 15m has been good. 17m and down have been very good. Expect these conditions to continue until the shortest days of winter. Even then I predict that we will have some decent propagation on all HF

bands from time to time. In all honesty, these bands are often open with few operators. Get a contest on the air and the bands light up. Yes..... There is often more propagation than what we think. When I worked TY1AA a couple hours past sunset on 15m, the rest of the band was quite inactive. Japan could be heard on a couple frequencies on 15m

As we cross into October, MANY DX operations will be on the air. I cannot list all of them here, but be on the lookout for such calls as 7Q7VW, T30D, V63XP, 3D2YA, TX5Z, A35RT, YJ0X, S79KB, VK9DJ, VK9DLX, VK9XSP, V6 calls, 9150JO, 5R8M, 9N7CJ and XX9 calls. More DXpeditions are in the planning stages for the months ahead and we will keep posted.

As the days shorten, the lower HF bands will be offering lots of DX during the night. Remember that this hobby has many spaces of spectrum that have characteristics that vary according to the season. There's always DX somewhere. Get on the air and work these international stations.

73 - Dave KA9OZP

STRAY *There are certain instances when the use of radio proverbs are helpful. If all of you OTs cant take time to mentor 'greenies', you should sign "out". Roger?*

N2OBM de eham.net

STRAY *You measure the quality of a radio receiver by what it leaves out, not by what it picks up.*

W2MR de eham.net



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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

MCWA BOARD MEETING

There was a board meeting of the MCWA Officers Sept. 25 at the Colonial Restaurant in Crystal Lake. There were several items covered from Officers duties to policies and the infamous MCWA Constitution. The constitution is sadly in need of a rewrite; however, no one really wants to tackle it. The last attempt was made by Barry, K9YVT, who found it so frustrating he had to move out of state to a peaceful, quiet setting. Future meetings should be open to all members, but we'll need an RSVP so we'll have enough room.

NEED YOUR INPUT As Editor it's not always easy to come up with new material every month. This is where YOU come in (yes, both of you !). Members input is always welcomed. Please feel free to share any ideas or articles you may have. Thanks !

FACEBOOK, ETC. For the past several months this editor has been monitoring the various ham radio related pages. One in particular stands out (it will be unnamed) . It's mostly a group of Techs/Generals and maybe an Extra or two. What stands out is their lack of knowledge in putting up antennas. Some have no clue as to how to use an SWR bridge nor an analyzer. Fortunately, there have been several who have stepped in to help. This is something we need to do ... share the knowledge we have accumulated in this hobby. The newcomer is often lost in the maze of getting everything working . We need to keep every ham we have and not let them drop by the wayside because they couldn't get a working station.

STRAY *Amateur Radio golden rules: Listen, observe, question, learn, remember, and then do it. (Stop procrastinating!)*
KG4CLD de eham.net

STRAY *The day I buy a wire HF dipole, is the day I should surrender my ham license.*
KK5DR de eham.net

STRAY *If stupidity got us into this mess, then why can't it get us out?" - Will Rogers (1879- 1935)*
N5SOM de eham.net



The guy the low, gravelly voice



Have you seen her in traffic ?

President's Message - cont'd

said he will conduct the meeting prior to Jack, W9MU presenting the September program. The program is on the popular and famous (or infamous) G5RV antenna. Jack "Knows" antennas which should prove to be a very informative evening.

However, stay tuned. Our November meet should be will be "a barn burner" with a field trip to the Fermi Lab located south of most of us in Batavia (about 45 min to an hour). Jack, W9MU talked with Kermit, W9XA who is a very active ham and works at Fermi. He also just happens to be our Central Division Vice-Director of the ARRL. Kermit has set up a meeting place and a tour. We would have a walking tour of the proton source, the linac (linear accelerator) and the main control room. Also, we will tour the exhibits about Fermilab on the Wilson Hall 15th floor. This will be our November and on our first Tuesday of the month meeting day – November 4th at 7:00pm at Fermilab. Please plan now on coming. I am sure we could car-pool down and back. More information to come.

Fermilab has been at the forefront of particle physics for more than 40 years. At the laboratory, they build world-leading accelerators and detectors to conduct some of the most advanced particle physics experiments possible. They collect and analyze the data from those experiments with some of the most powerful computers in the world.

I am looking forward to the coming year and the meetings each month in Crystal Lake. With your help we can keep MCWA the best Amateur Radio club.

Tnx Kent K9KMD

Sorry, but Treasurer's Report didn't make this issue - Ed.

Actor Tim Allen Gets His Ham Ticket For Real

09/30/2014

Actor and comedian Tim Allen now not only plays an Amateur Radio operator on television, he is one! Allen got his Technician license on September 4, but did not release the news until this week. In his weekly ABC comedy TV show "Last Man Standing," Allen's character Mike Baxter, is supposed to be KA0XTT, and the show has featured ham radio in some episodes.

"Last Man Standing" producer John Amodeo, NN6JA, told ARRL that the agreement with Allen was that "we would not publicize his license until he approved it." Allen revealed to Tom Medlin, W5KUB, for one of Medlin's webcasts that he had passed his Technician license test but did not mention his call sign, Amodeo said. "Obviously, most hams are capable of finding Tim's call sign, if they feel the need," he conceded.

"We arranged for Tom Medlin to do a 'surprise' interview' with the [ARRL VE team that administered Tim's test," Amodeo said. "They are Rob, AA6RA; Tim, N6QJ, and Julian, N3JF. ARRL VEC Staffer, Amanda Grimaldi, KB1VUV, helped us arrange the test."

More than 2 dozen members of the "Last Man Standing" crew — and now Allen, its star — have been inspired by the show's Amateur Radio component to get licensed. On September 28, the K6H "Hollywood Hamnado" special event station was on the air, with "Last Man Standing" crew members at the helm. The Southern California-based PAPA Repeater System, in association with the Broadcast Employees Amateur Radio Society (BEARS) and Disney Emergency Amateur Radio Service (DEARS) sponsored the special event.

Amodeo said K6H went very well. "We had about 35 operators and guests on Stage 9 here at CBS Studio Center" he told ARRL. "All enjoyed being on the set of 'Last Man Standing.' Naturally, we brought in breakfast (bagels and donuts), lunch (sandwiches), and, at wrap, pizza. The feeling was like a Field Day and a mini Hamvention." Amodeo said that all six K6H stations had "continuous contacts from start to finish."

Safety Schmafety

Eric P. Nichols (KL7AJ)

KL7YS “Young Squirt” popped in for coffee the other day, wending his way around a teetering maze of rickety bookshelves on the way to the creaky staircase leading down to my dungeon. I didn’t hear him come in as my trusty David Clarks were clamped securely around my cranium, completely shutting out the universe, in deep concentration on the bottom end of 40. He announced his presence by quickly flashing the shack lights off and then back on.

Phil Leggett was his name, but I never called him that. I never even called him Phil. He had a perfectly good ham radio suffix which I always used instead. It fit him to a coaxial T.

“Hi Squirt,” I said, barely acknowledging his presence. “Be with you right after I sign off with this TA3,” I lied.

Squirt blew some dead flies out of a mug, glopped some coffee sludge out of the decrepit urn that wheezed on the edge of the workbench next to the operating position, and plopped down on the guest stool. I taught squirt how to drink shack coffee; he’d been as pure as the driven snow before I got hold of him. He still had this annoying thing about safety, though. I figured sooner or later I’d break him down in that area, too.

I worked six more stations after the TA3 before I figured I’d better entertain my young guest. I finally doffed my skull crushers and gave Squirt my undivided attention.

“Glad you made it! I have a few jobs for you to do, if you’re so inclined.”

Squirt took a sip of the coffee. “Sure. Helpful is my middle name.” He put the mug down and spun around on the stool a few times.

“Right,” I said. “Well, I need to resurrect that monster homebrew amp on the floor by your feet. I Might have a buyer for it. Just getting older and dustier down there. You wanna hoist that up to the

to the bench for me? I’m getting pretty old; I don’t want to sprain anything, you know.”

“Uh, sure,” Squirt said, glancing furtively around the basement. “Do you have any gloves I can borrow?”

“You afraid of getting your hands icky?” I teased.

“No, I don’t want to cut myself in case there are any sharp edges on the cabinet.”

“Why do you think God invented Band-Aids?” I said. “Do you need a doily to set the thing on, too?”

Squirt rolled his eyes as only a teenager can do. I directed his attention to a cabinet that hadn’t been opened in years...because it had a half-full acetylene tank propped up against the door. “There’s probably some gloves in there,” I said, accommodatingly.

“Aren’t these supposed to be chained to something?” Squirt asked, incredulously. “If it got knocked over, it could blow this place right off the map.”

“Then don’t knock it over,” I suggested.

Squirt glared briefly, and set to work rolling the acetylene tank out of the way. He opened up the cabinet door and peered inside; beholding the ancient bottles of unknown potions perched on the shelf inside. “What is THAT stuff?” he queried, pointing to an unlabeled quart flask partially full of a dull grayish metallic something or other.

I squinted across the floor in the dim light. “Well, I’ll be dipped in shellac. I wondered where my mercury got off to! I haven’t seen it in...oh...twenty years or so!”

“M-m-mercury?!” he sputtered. “You mean like mercury mercury?”

“What other kind is there?” I answered.

“Isn’t that BAD stuff?” Squirt gasped.

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“Only if you drink it or snort it. You don’t plan on doing that, do you?”

“How much IS that?!!” he sputtered again.

“Oh, about thirty pounds I imagine, from the looks of it.”

“Why would anyone need thirty pounds of mercury?!!?”

“I don’t need it...I’ve just sort of collected it over the years. By the way, don’t break that bottle; it would take us forever to clean up the mess.”

“I...uh...won’t,” he said, with a certain paleness in his voice. He peered at another bottle. “Um, what’s C Tet, if I dare ask?”

’s C Tet, if I dare ask?”

“Oh. That’s Carbon Tetrachloride. It’s great for cleaning electrical contacts.”

“Isn’t that banned or something?!” he gasped again. There seemed to be a lot of gasping going on. Silly safety-oriented kids.

“Well, if you mean you can’t buy it any more, that would be true. But I have enough to last for a lifetime. I don’t think the Carbon Tet Nazis would bother to come down here, anyway.”

Squirt promptly closed the door to the cabinet, as if in so doing he would prevent the escape of some zombies. “There aren’t any gloves in there,” he said. There probably were, but I’m pretty sure he just wanted to get out of there in a hurry. He rolled the acetylene tank back into position.

‘I-I guess I can do without gloves,” he announced at last.

“Here...I’ll help you hoist the thing up to the bench,” I suggested. “I’m not that old and decrepit.”

‘Lift with your legs, not your back,” Squirt instructed, as I was about to commence with the latter. I’d been lifting boat anchors with my back for the past fifty years with no ill effects, but I decided to humor the

little twerp, just for kicks. I dutifully squatted down in proper fashion on my side of the rig, and we had it on the bench with no strains or sprains.

“I think your amplifier is leaking,” Squirt observed, glancing a gloppy substance which adhered to his fingers.

“Oh, just some transformer oil, I’m sure,” I said.

“What’s transformer oil? I thought transformers were...well...transformers.”

“Most of the time, yes. But some of the bigger ones...like this here...used oil for cooling. We filled them with Askarel in the day.”

“What’s Askarel?”

“It’s just one of a few different types of PCBs we used. Used to pick it up at the power company super cheap.”

“P-p-p-C-c-c-B-b-b-b-s,” he sputtered again. “You mean like...P-p-p-C-c-c-B-b-b-b-s, the really bad stuff?!!?”

“A few PCBs never hurt anyone. I used to be up to my armpits in the stuff when I was in the broadcasting biz. I haven’t grown any unusual appendages.”

Squirt stared at his hand like it was glowing green with radioactivity. I grabbed his hand and licked the offending substance off his fingers. “Nope...just mineral oil...my bad. PCBs have a more bitter taste. This rig is more newfangled than I thought.”

Squirt rolled his eyes. “Gee, that’s really great to know. You’re a very insane man.”

“Thank you. Well, let’s fire this beast up and see what happens.” I unrolled the power cord and noticed that it was a 220 VAC plug for which I had no matching receptacle.

“Well, I guess we can’t do anything,” Squirt said, sounding oddly relieved.

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“Not at all! Grab me two extension cords. I’ll just run one from two outlets on opposite sides of the room; they’ll be on different legs.”

“Say what??”

“Hey Squirt; it’s just electricity.”

“Don’t you know anything about the Electric Code??!!”

“Electric code, Schmelectric code. They were written by politicians. Ohm’s Law was written by God himself...it doesn’t give a rat’s patoot about no electric code. Get me those extension cords!”

Squirt reluctantly complied, producing two semi-non-disintegrated extension cords from the darkness. I jammed one pin of the 220 plug into the hot lead of one extension cord, and the other pin into the other one. “There! Just like professional!”

“Uh, don’t you need a neutral or something?” Squirt suggested, turning somewhat greenish.

“Oh...probably wouldn’t hurt,” I said. “I think I’ll just grab that jumper cable over there and ground the cabinet to the bus bar on the back of the bench. Ground is ground.”

After connecting up the jumper cable, I gestured toward the main power breaker on the front panel of the beastly boat anchor. “You may have the honors, Squirt.”

“Do you have a broomstick or baseball bat or something to flip it with? I really want to be a ways away from this...like in a different room...or different neighborhood...or something.”

“Don’t be such a pantywaist, Squirt. Ham radio is a man’s hobby.”

Squirt sighed and then positioned himself in a sprinter’s crouch, facing away from the bench in order to make a quick getaway should it be necessary. He reached behind him and, with visible trembling, flipped the switch. A fan came to life, accompanied by a mild hum and a gentle orange glow. A few moments later, the eerie purplish blow glow of mercury vapor rectifiers bathed the room.

. A few moments later, the eerie purplish blow glow of mercury vapor rectifiers bathed the room.

“What’s that!” Squirt asked nervously, getting ready to sprint out of the room again.

“What’s what?”

“That purple glow!”

“Those are mercury vapor rectifiers.”

“It’s supposed to do that?”

“Do what?”

“Glow purple like that! It looks like it’s gonna blow!

“Just some friendly ionization. Doing what they do best.”

“Shouldn’t we be wearing...um...lead aprons or something?”

“A little ultraviolet never hurt anyone. You could use a tan anyway.”

We admired my handiwork for a minute or two...or at least I did...when we were unceremoniously interrupted by a sizzling sound, followed by a loud hum and then a few clicks and clacks, and then utter darkness. Squirt began to scream as if he was alone in an absolutely pitch black basement with a madman and a demon-possessed linear amplifier.

“Call 911! Where’s the first aid kit! We’re going to die down here!”

“Oh, fer Pete’s sake, calm down! It’s just a couple of popped circuit breakers. Mercury vapor rectifiers sometimes backfire if they haven’t been used for a while.”

Little did Squirt know, I was prepared for just such an occasion. I always kept a fully charged 300uF, 450 volt electrolytic capacitor on the shelf above my operating position. I knew exactly where it was, even in the dark. I also knew where my industrial strength shorting stick was.

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Why did chicken cross the road ?

I whispered in the darkness. “Shh....do you hear that?”

“No. What?” Squirt answered, nervously.

“Listen very carefully.” I brought my shorting stick to the terminals of the capacitor and ker- BANG!! A shot like an M-80 rang out as the blue white arc lit up the room for a fraction of a second, just long enough for me to see Squirt’s horrified expression before he passed out cold onto the floor with a thud.

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Squirt doesn’t come to visit much any more...I’m not sure exactly why. He’s probably too busy conducting safety seminars or something like that. Well, there’s always another young ham around the bend, I figure.

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**HAMFEST CALENDAR**

10/5 SE Iowa Hamfest - West Liberty, IA

10/11 Cent. WI Swapfest, Colby, WI

10/12 SEWFARS Swapfest , Hubertus, WI

10/18 WI ARES/RACES Convenion, Wisconsin  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 11/2 Davenport  
ARC Hamfest, Davenport IA

11/2 Fox Cities Swapfest, Appleton WI

11/15 Ft. Wayne, IN

1/10/15 Midwinter Swapfest, Waukesha, WI

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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

