



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

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Stray The exciting part of Amateur Radio is the communication form of Contesting; that anyone from anywhere around the Globe can be a part of it too.

[AA7LX](#)

MEETING NOTICE

December 6, 2016

Socializing: 6:30 PM

Meeting: 7:00 PM

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

PROGRAM: Guest Speaker is
our new ARRL Division Director Kermit
Carlson, W9XA

Bring your questions, concerns, gripes, pet peeves, etc. to the meeting.



“Hello MCWA Members, Dues for 2017 remain at \$10 and are now due (unless you've already paid). Please either give a check or cash in the amount of \$10 to our Treasurer, Joe N9OK, at the next MCWA meeting. If you prefer, you can mail a check to Joe at his home address of 4410 Billingsgate Ln, Woodstock, IL 60098. Please don't send cash in the mail.

You can check whether or not your dues are paid up by referring to the MCWA Membership Roster, available at the Yahoo reflector in the Files section.



M.C.W.A. NEWS

December 2016



“SLIM PICKINS”

The term “slim pickins” or “slim pickings” is a phrase that basically means that the choices are limited. And this phrase seems to define the recent DX offerings on the HF bands. Looking over my logs, I do see DX contacts, but the majority of QSO's are domestic. This is in part due to the fact that I participated in the Sweepstakes Contest for a couple of hours. There was a definite time of 15m openings at the very end of October but those conditions did not hold up very long. Usually at this time of year we can log DX from Asia around dusk on 15m but ole Cycle 24 is wheezing and gasping for life.

Having said this, sunspots have not been registering zero and the SFI readings have been moderate, but the A and K indices have been very high at times. In recent days there have been some openings on 6m. We usually expect these openings around Christmas but the weather and everything else has been unusual this fall season. The changing of the leaves was late this year. Band conditions have been odd as well.

Things appear a bit mixed up.

I still use the “Band Down Method” when I go into the shack. I listen to conditions on 10m and work my way down. Usually 17m and down will afford some contacts and mixed in are occasional DX stations. 20m has been holding up to about an hour past sundown some evenings and after 20m fades one will find DX from 30m and down. South Africa has been strong on 40m around 0300 UTC and one can work some DX on 80m near the DX window from 3.790 to 3.800 mhz. If you enjoy CW and digital modes, you will find some decent DX on the 40m and 80m data portions. And by the way, don't forget 60m. DX spots have been rather consistent on 60m.

As we enter December, look for E44QX operating low power from the West Bank. VK9NM, ZS8Z and T88GA will also be on the air. We are not seeing too many promises of a P5 operation at the beginning of 2017.

The challenge of working DX during “slim pickins” is still exciting and fun and I expect that I won't give up the quest as the year ends and the daylight grows less until winter solstice. You will always find DX on some band and it will be your chance to promote peace on earth and goodwill to all.

Merry Christmas and 73. Dave KA9OZP



Learning Morse Code without Trying

New study demonstrates silent, eyes-free text entry

It's not exactly beating something into someone's head. More like tapping it into the side.

Researchers at the Georgia Institute of Technology have developed a system that teaches people Morse code within four hours using a series of vibrations felt near the ear. Participants wearing Google Glass learned it without paying attention to the signals —they played games while feeling the taps and hearing the corresponding letters. After those few hours, they were 94 percent accurate keying a sentence that included every letter of the alphabet and 98 percent accurate writing codes for every letter.

This is the latest chapter of passive haptic learning (PHL) studies at Georgia Tech. The same method — using vibrations while participants aren't paying attention — [has taught people braille](#), [how to play the piano](#) and [improved hand sensation for those with partial spinal cord injury](#).

The PHL projects are all led by Georgia Tech Professor Thad Starner and his Ph.D. student Caitlyn Seim. The team decided to use Glass for this study because it has both a built-in speaker and tapper (Glass's bone-conduction transducer).

In the study, participants played a game while feeling vibration taps between their temple and ear. The taps represented the dots and dashes of Morse code and passively “taught” users through their tactile senses — even while they were distracted by the game.

The taps were created when researchers sent a very low-frequency signal to Glass's speaker system. At less than 15 Hz, the signal was below hearing range but, because it was played very slowly, the sound was felt as a vibration.

Half of the participants in the study felt the vibration taps and heard a voice prompt for each corresponding letter. The other half — the control group — felt no taps to help them learn.

Participants were tested throughout the study on their knowledge of Morse code and their ability to type it. After less than four hours of feeling every letter, everyone was challenged to type the alphabet in Morse code in a final test. The control group was accurate only half the time. Those who felt the passive cues were nearly perfect.

The research was recently presented in Germany at the 20th International Symposium on Wearable Computers.

“Does this new study mean that people will rush out to learn Morse code? Probably not,” said Starner. “It shows that PHL lowers the barrier to learn text-entry methods — something we need for smart watches and any text-entry that doesn't require you to look at your device or keyboard.”

Previous research on PHL used custom hardware to provide the tactile stimuli, but here researchers use an existing wearable device.

“This research also shows that other common devices with an actuator could be used for passive haptic learning,” he says. “Your smartwatch, Bluetooth headset, fitness tracker or phone

“In our Braille and piano PHL studies, people felt vibrations on their fingers, then used their fingers for the task,” said Seim. “This study was different and surprising. People were tapped on their heads, but the skill they learned was using their finger.”

Seim's next study will go a step further, investigating whether PHL can teach people how to type on the trusted QWERTY keyboard. That would mean several letters assigned to the same finger, rather than using only one finger like Morse code.

The work is supported in part by the National Science Foundation (Grant Number 1217473). Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the sponsors.



M.C.W.A.

December 2016



NITE BEFORE XMAS

'Twas the night before Christ-
mas,
And all through two-meters,
Not a signal was keying up
Any repeaters.

The antennas reached up
From the tower, quite high,
To catch the weak signals
That bounced from the sky.

The children, Technicians,
Took their HT's to bed,
And dreamed of the day
They'd be Extras, instead.

Mom put on her headphones,
I plugged in the key,
And we tuned 40 meters
For that rare ZK3.

When the meter was pegged
By a signal with power.
It smoked a small diode,
And, I swear, shook the tower.

Mom yanked off her phones,
And with all she could muster
Logged a spot of the signal
On the DX PacketCluster

While I ran to the window
And peered up at the sky,
To see what could generate
RF that high.

It was way in the distance,
But the moon made it gleam -
A flying sleigh,
With an eight element beam,

And a little old driver
Who looked slightly mean,
So I thought for a moment
That it might be Wayne Green.

But no, it was Santa,
The Santa of Hams,
On a mission this Christmas
To clean up the bands.

He circled the tower,
Then stopped in his track,
And he slid down the coax
Right into the shack.

While Mom and I hid
Behind stacks of CQ,
This Santa of hamming
Knew just what to do.

He cleared off the shack desk
Of paper and parts,
And filled out all my late
QSLs, for a start.

He ran copper braid,
Took a steel rod and pounded
It into the earth
Till the station was grounded.

He tightened loose fittings,
Resoldered connections,
Cranked down modulation,
Installed lightning protection

He neutralized tubes
In my linear amp...
(Never worked right before -
Now it works like a champ).

A new low-pass filter
Cleaned up the TV.
He corrected the settings
In my TNC.

He repaired the computer
That wouldn't compute,
And he backed up the hard drive
And got it to boot.

"A new Kenwood? An Icom?
A Yaesu, for me?
An Elecraft, TEN-TEC
Or Flex, could it be!"
(If he thought I'd been bad
It might be QRP!)

Yes! The Ultimate station!
How could I deserve this?
Could it be all those weekends
I worked Public Service?

He hooked it all up
And in record time, quickly
Worked 100 countries,
All down on 160.

I should have been happy.
It was my call he sent.
But the cards and the postage
Will cost a month's rent!

He made final adjustments,
And left a card by the key:
"To Gary, from Santa Claus.
Seventy-Three."

Then he grabbed his HT,
Looked me straight in the eye,
Punched a code on the pad,
And was gone - no good bye.

I ran back to the station,
And the pile up was big.
But a card from St. Nick
Would be worth my new rig.

Oh, too late, for his final
Came over the air.
It was copied all over.
It was heard everywhere.

The Ham's Santa exclaimed
What an old ham expects:
"Merry Christmas to all,
And to all, good DX."

via Mike Metroka, WB8BZK

&

Thanks to Gary Pearce, KN4AQ via
www.ARvideoNews.com



Dec. Hamfests

Nothing in area until January

Dec. Contests

2 - 4	ARRL 160 meter contest
4	10- meter RTTY Contest
10 - 11	ARRL 10 meter contest
17 - 18	Stew Perry Topband Contest
18	ARRL Rookie Roundup

For more contests see: WA7BNM calendar

Dec. DX

Till 12	3B9HA Rodriguez Is. (DXCC)
Till 15 Base	8T2BH Indian Artarctic Bharati
Till 31	9A70 Special calls
Till 31	Canadian prefixes CG, CG, CH, CI
Feb 2017	Myanmar
Feb/Mar 2017	9X954 Rwanda by DF2WO
TBA 2018	3Y0Z Bouvet Is.

OPERATION APPROVED FOR DXCC CREDIT.

The following operation is approved for
DXCC credit: Central Kiribati, Kanton
Island, T31T,

2016 operation.

Officers & Staff

President.....	John Dewey, KA8CAR ka9car@arrl.net
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Past President.....	Jim McDonald, N7US
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Director.....	
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Webmaster	Ken Farver, KB9I
Librarian	Jeff Schmidt, KC9WSJ
VE Commander	Steve Maresso, KB9OLD
Chairman of Nominating Committee	Dave Cooper, KA9OZP
Social Media Director	Dave Whaley, NT9E

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STRAY When will XYL's realize that, when the
OM is doing nothing, he is doing something.
[N9LCD](#) de eham

STRAY When will XYL's realize that, when the OM is doing
nothing, he is doing something.
[N9LCD](#) de eham

STRAY If I had a dollar for every time someone misspells Yae-
su as Yeasu...I'd be able to afford a Icom IC-7850.
[AD0AR](#) de eham

STRAY It's called an AMPLIFIER, not a linear. Lin-
ear refers to the state of the AMPLIFIER, ie: linear or
non- linear.

[W8LGZ](#) de eham



M.C.W.A. NEWS

December 2016



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Field Day 2017 It was sad to see the total lack of interest in Field Day 2017 at the November meeting as compared to the number of hands that went up at the October meeting. What happened ??? Did members change their minds or did we have a different group at the November meeting ? Field Day has long been a tradition with MCWA, but something happened for a few years and people lost interest. Other clubs may have siphoned off participants over the years MCWA was inactive. Surely with 93 current members we could find some interest in field day ???

QRM You're a DX station running a huge pileup of U.S. and European stations and suddenly some operator decides you're on his personal frequency, so he starts tuning up and no one can hear a thing. What do you do ? The smart thing is not only change frequency, but also to change modes ! Heard the very thing happen at end of October when the DX station had that happen to him. He was on CW and promptly went silent only to show up on RTTY a few minutes later. A clever way to with unruly operators.

DX "A DXpedition operator who doesn't call separately for Low Power, Mobile and QRP operators is a poor operator in my opinion. Give the little guys a chance!!! [\(KG4RUL\)](#) " Pretty much sums up this editor's opinion of DX operations where operators get to flex the kilowatt + muscle . All the QRM really is a discouragement to the neophyte /would be DXer. Fortunately, there are some who try to teach newcomers the game as was so well handled in K9IR's presentation last month.



The Death Of The Elmer And The Rise Of The Expert

from VK4FFAB on November 8, 2016

Of late I have found that my zeal for sharing what I have been getting up to in radio has been at an all time low. Its not that I am not excited about what I am doing, I am having a wonderful time doing radio, it's that there seems to be little point sharing on social media or forums. I am not alone in this either, with many people that I speak with similarly disillusioned and are dropping out entirely.

And why are we dropping out? Simply, there are too many Experts and not enough Elmers. What's the difference you may ask? Well, the point of the Elmer is to encourage you to continue, to go further and to keep trying. While the expert is all about stroking his own ego so we all know who has the biggest.

The prime example of this attitude is Homebrew. Someone will post a rather cool project they put their heart and soul into building and after 1000 views the post might garner 4 or 5 comments and typically the comments are not very relevant to the project. But, if someone asks "What Resistor Should I Use" you will have Mom, Dad, The Kids, Aunties, Uncles, Second Cousins and a few Twice Removed's banging on for 10 pages whether to use 1/4w 1/8w 5% 10% etc, stroking each others egos along with plenty of, "back in my day when I worked for the military industrial complex..."

Every expert under the sun and anyone with an opinion crawls out from under their proverbial rocks to show just how expert they are, and tell us how expert they used to be. And this attitude is typical of just about every topic group there is, people who share their achievements and accomplishments, their posts will gain no traction while the controversial and utterly stupid posts will go viral.

Have we really come so far in radio that the best we have to offer is argument about trivialities? If not, how about more comments like "Thanks for sharing." "Keep at it." "Atta boy." And perhaps then, people will start sharing again because there are more Elmer's and fewer experts.

[Several excellent comments followed this article at Eham and can be found at: <http://www.eham.net/articles/37729>]



M.C.W.A. NEWS

December 2016



Modernizing the Technician Class License

There are nearly as many Technician Class licensees as all other classes, combined.

After getting licensed as a Technician, the big question becomes, “Now what?” Before we go there, let’s give thoughtful consideration to how the world has changed since the last modernization (elimination of the “Tech Plus” license).

Aging club membership and a dwindling supply of Elmers (the two things most people believe are pivotal to hobby success) leave many new, young (and not so young) licensees “high and dry.”

The generally local nature of VHF operations limits an essentially VHF-bound licensee with few options to expand their amateur radio friend, peer and Elmer resources through on-the-air interactions.

The fact that so many people “stall” at the Technician level implies that they see little reason to upgrade despite being part of the “incentive licensing” thought process. One has to wonder if the traditional approach to “incentive licensing” works in the modern world.

Social Interaction In The Non-Ham World

Research has shown that modern, young-adult enjoy peer groups that extend well beyond the bounds of the physical world. They make friends, grow relationships and communicate globally as “digital natives” on the Internet. If they don’t find local peers, they find peers and friends “anywhere in the Internet universe.”

That level of communication is available to people without a license. This reality begs the question, “Why are federally licensed Technicians restricted to frequencies that are mostly VHF and “local”, especially when we want them to communicate with others, find peers/Elmers and grow their skills?”

Giving The Technicians A “Taste”

Exclusion is no longer an incentive to upgrade. Consider “flipping” the strategy by giving Technicians expanded (but appropriately limited) HF voice privileges to give them a taste of what awaits them by upgrading.

Consider this modest proposal:

Technicians already have (vastly unused) CW privileges on 80 meters, 40 meters and 15 meters. Suppose they had HF voice privileges on those same bands, too! Something as simple as the same spectrum that General Class licensees enjoy, but restricted to 10 watts (I’m just spit-balling the power-level, for discussions’ sake).

Stop. Think about it for a day before you react.

This is where you are asked to resist an “attitude of entitlement” (e.g. – “I had to work to get this...I don’t want to give it away to a ‘lowly’ Technician!”) and focus on what is best for the hobby.

Remember: The suggestion focuses on just 3 HF bands and a power limit that is over 10 dB lower than all other HF voice licensees. Giving them a “taste” can be a strongly motivating factor to them to both continue activity and upgrade.

Concrete Benefits

With almost as many Technician Class licensees as there are ALL other classes, combined, there would be an immediate DOUBLING in the number of potential consumers of both new and pre-owned HF equipment and accessories.

With this many new HF operators, your “CQ’s” are likely to be answered by more than “static hiss”. Operators could find Elmers and niche-interest groups “anywhere in the HF universe.”

In Conclusion:

Does this go far enough? Maybe you think that this proposal should include other aspects or clauses? Share your thoughts, please.

As you assemble “contrarian thoughts”, also think about how to address/fix the “cons” rather than using them as a reason to avoid innovative thought. If you think of a “down side”, propose a “fix” too!

-W2EV

{Ed- This is just one’s man’s proposal and it should by no means construed as any “Official Position” by any group. Getting this past the FCC is a major hurdle which would be a lengthy process. This was in Eham.net forums and the comments which followed ranged from “Let’s hang this guy” to “This might be a good idea”. This could gain popularity, but we’ll have to wait and see. }



M.C.W.A.

DECEMBER 2016



The results are in from the ARRL on Field Day 2016 and the K9RN MCWA club effort finished very well. Amid all the food, fun, socializing, and other activities, we also managed to make some contacts on the radios using our portable emergency-like set-up from a shelter in Emricson Park, Woodstock. As you recall, we had cw and phone HF stations, plus VHF and a Get-on-the-Air (GOTA) stations in operation. This combination placed us in the 2A category for the event. These stations produced 1415 contacts during the 24 hour period. Those contacts along with several important bonus point activities produced a final score of 6200 points.

The 2A category was the most popular with 376 entries across the US and Canada. In this category, the club placed 34th overall, which was 6th in the Central Division (9th call area) and 1st place in Illinois.

Once again, thanks to the event organizers in the club and all the members who sacrificed their weekend time to help setup/teardown, operate, encourage, loan equipment, solve problems, and explain Amateur Radio to the many visitors. It was truly a club event, with many members playing a part.

Roger, KF9D, 2016 Field Day Chairman

* * * * *

Field Day 2017

Before you know it Field Day 2017 will be here. I would like to find out who would be willing to operate FD next year with MCWA.

We will be running 2A again (2 Transmitters plus VHF and GOTA station). If you will be available to operate at the CW, Phone, VHF, or GOTA station please let me know.

Dave, NT9E

Urge the U.S. Senate to Pass the Amateur Radio Parity Act

As a constituent and one of more than {{TOTAL}} FCC - licensed Amateur Radio Operators in the State of {{STATENAME}}, I am writing to ask that you now support the Amateur Radio Parity Act when it comes to the Senate floor during the upcoming lame duck session of Congress. The legislation has passed the House by voice vote in two different forms: as H.R. 1301 in stand-alone form and as part of the Communications Act Update package, S. 253.

This bill replaces S. 1685 and provides a mutually satisfactory compromise reached between the ARRL (the national association for Amateur Radio) and the Community Associations Institute (CAI), which represents home owners associations. This bill allows for effective outdoor Amateur Radio antennas for public service and emergency communications while protecting the prerogative of community associations. As amended, the legislation now enjoys universal support from both organizations

The bill has also received the endorsement of the American Red Cross, which stated that this "legislation will greatly enhance the volunteer communications efforts by radio Amateurs that have benefited public safety organizations for many years." The National Hurricane Center added their voice in support and wrote that "(A) amateur radio operators are sometimes the only sources of eyewitness information from inside the storm." And The Salvation Army wrote "(W)e rely on Amateur Radio, and this legislation is urgently important to the continued provision of their volunteer services in emergency communications. We urge the passage of H.R. 1301..."

{{STATENAME}} has always relied on and benefited from Amateur Radio's critical communications support in time of need. We have been prepared for, and involved in the response to virtually every disaster in {{STATENAME}} volunteering to provide communications, at no cost to anyone. The bill will allow Amateurs to continue to provide the same critical communications service to our communities as we have for over the past 100-plus years.

Thank you for your consideration.

Your Contact Information

Title

First Name

- Please enter your First Name

Last Name

- Please enter your Last Name
- Your first and last names "" cannot be the same.

Street

- Please enter your street address
- Please enter your valid street address
- The street address "" is not valid.

City

- Please enter your city

State

Zip Code

- The ZIP Code "" is not valid for the state "empty_value".

Email

- Please enter your email address