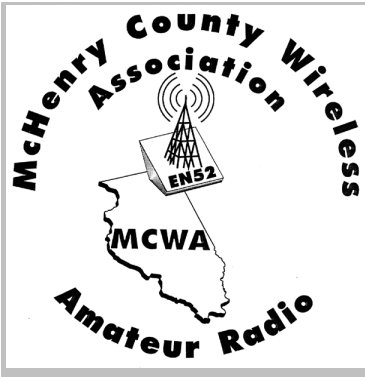


MCWA NEWS

Since 1978



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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

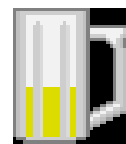
Meeting Notice

Tuesday, August 7
7:00 - 7:30 - Socializing
7:30 - Meeting

Program: Mark, N4RK, will present a program on HF communications from a commercial passenger plane. In case he has a conflict that keeps him away from meeting, there will be an alternate program.

Join Us ?

In August, 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.	\$3997.00
Interest	.67
Dues	00.00
Checks	0.00
End Bal.	\$3997.67

Barry, K9YVT

7/31/12



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Stable Instability

In thinking of Cycle 24, the words “stable instability” came to my mind. I Googled these words to see if they are original, but they are already terminology being used to describe the economy. In this realm it signifies that the economy is unable to sustain itself.

In relation to Cycle 24, let us say that it is terminology to describe the continued sporadic, erratic, and up-and-down nature of what we have been witnessing on the sun. As I write this article, the sunspot number is over 100 and the solar flux is at 140. We could do better. In addition, the noise from flares and geomagnetic conditions has been very disruptive to HF propagation. 15m, 17m and 20m have often been more usable at night. 12m and 10m have continued to be mostly closed with occasional openings. 10m and 6m have also experienced some E layer skip a week or so ago. This generally allows for short hop DX with some extra distances from time to time.

The other evening I heard 9K2GS say that the bottom of the cycle was more stable and dependable. I would disagree to some extent. When the bottom was here, he was not typically running 20 over 9 on 20m. Cycle 24 has had good moments. Complaining about the numbers won't accomplish anything. Good operators will cope with it and use bands with the MUF as their guide

in selecting their band usage. Even this is not indicative of the whole story. I have worked stations on the upper HF bands when it was assumed that they were closed. With this cycle, learn to expect the unexpected and adjust to it.

Over July my log shows QSO's on 6m, 10m, 15m, 17m, 20m and 40m. Due to the high noise levels, I veered away from 80m and 60m. However, these bands have had moderate usage over the month.

Some of my more memorable contacts were with special event stations. With the Olympics in progress, you may wish to work 2O12L or 2O12W. I worked the London station on 17m on July 26. These stations will be on the air through September. It was also nice working CY9M and TO2D.

Under the current instability of the cycle, if I had one band at my disposal, it would be 20m. If I could choose two, I would add 17m. These have been the hottest bands lately.

Before writing this article I did a band check. I worked UA4LCH on 20m and RC0F on 15m. The numbers are showing some slight improvements.

Some solar experts are suggesting a double peak for Cycle 24. The next and last would appear sometime in 2013. But remember, this cycle's instability is stable!

In August keep an ear open for ZA1TC, D64K and 5H3ME. The ZA1 is Albania and that would be a nice catch for most.

Some things are stable such as God's attributes. But Cycle 24 will remain stable in regard to its instability. I find this a challenge that brings changing conditions and new opportunities on the bands.

Good DX and 73 Dave KA9OZP

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From The Editor's Desk

What ? Heard during July IOTA contest ... DX station gives signal report to U.S. station. and says "73". DX station says "QRZ ?" and same U.S. station replies "QSL". An obvious "newbie" !

MCWA Anniversary Last month was MCWA's 34th Anniversary. MCWA started out with Field Day 1978, but the first official meeting was after field day. Happy Birthday to us !

IOTA Italians On The Air ? Nope ! It's actually Islands On The Air. Many long years ago, an SWL named Geoff Watts in England started collecting QSLs from various islands around the globe. RSGB (English equivalent of ARRL) picked up the program and expanded it to what it is today. There are literally hundreds of islands out there and many of them are easy to reach unlike many DXpedition sites. Here is U.S. islands like Long Island (NY), Galveston, the Florida Keys, Padre Island, and many other islands along the East & West coasts count for this award. Europe boasts many similar islands. What you do need for the basic award is QSLs from 100 islands. During the course of any year there are many expeditions to islands all over the world. It's a fun little awards program. You'll hear numbers like NA-144 which identify the islands. Visit: www.rsgbiota.org for more info.

Serbia The new Prime Minister of Serbia is a Ham ! Ivica Dacic, YU1YU, was elected recently. Will there be a tribander over the Presidential residence ? (Tnx: ARRL Contest Update)

Operating Tip: Retired USCG Radioman, Chris K4HC relays that "the proper meanings of the Procedural Words Roger and Wilco are:
Roger - Message received and understood
Wilco - Message received and understood, and I will comply.
Therefore, saying "Roger Wilco" is akin to saying "73's". The two are NEVER used together. Hollywood got it wrong on this one."
(Tnx: ARRL Contest Update)

73's is never pluralized ! It was a numbered CW message meaning "good night and best regards". This is often heard over the air in the plural form "good nights and best regardses" . Very poor grammar at best and you" sound like a newbie. Might as well be saying "seventy trees".

ARRL Rookie Roundup Changes (Aug. 19)
ARRL has changed this 12 hour event by adding RTTY and a multi-operator category. There is also a new Team Competition category with a max of 5 operators at different locations, but all must be Rookies. (See: arrl.org/rookie roundup)



"THIS COMPUTER IS EQUIPPED WITH AN AIRBAG IN CASE YOU FALL ASLEEP!"

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DXing Basics

Working pile ups

Pile ups are probably a good example of ham radio at its worst. The sound of 10,000 stations calling and spread over 5 to 20 kHz. is raucous cacophony at best. Most of these pile ups are the result of many stations failing to listen.

How's that, you say ? Some stations will join the "feeding frenzy" by jumping into the fray without knowing the DX station's call sign. Nothing is more annoying than hearing "what's your call ?" from a station working the DX. Usually that is followed by asking the QSL route or some other equally dumb question. Like hunting you need to know what it is you're hunting.

Glenn, K9GLN, related a story from many years ago which certainly applies. There was a deer checking station in Marengo where all the hunters brought in the deer they had shot. One city fellow brought in his deer and everyone there started howling with laughter. Why ? He had shot a goat ! The moral of this is you need to know your prey.

So, to avoid problems you need to be armed with info up front before the rig is keyed. There are DX clusters and news bulletins which give info on when & where DX stations are operating. This helps in tracking your prey

and zeroing in on target. When you get on frequency, take time to listen, listen, listen. Find out where the DX is operating. He may be transmitting on same frequency (simplex) or he may be transmitting on one frequency and listening "5 to 10 up" (split) .

Following the DX station's instructions will make for faster QSOs. If the DX says "NA only" he means just that. Usually the DX will have to tell European stations to shut up several times because they are QRMing from not following instructions. It also works for U.S. stations who keep on calling when the DX says "Europe only". or "South America only". Following the DX station's instructions will make things a whole lot easier for everyone. Usually in a split operation giving your call once or twice will get through eventually. Tossing you call out 10-12 times won't do much good except to make you sound like a beacon station and get you on the LID list. When a DX station hears you, he will respond with your call sign and a report. You should respond with similar and "Thanks" (be polite !), but keep it short. That will allow for more contacts for others. Imagine sitting at a radio all day sending/logging "W9XXXX 59", it has to be boring.

Operating split frequency requires watching your transmit frequency constantly. You do NOT want to transmit on DX station's frequency (we've all done it !). You'll unleash the "kilocycle kops" who yell "up, up , up !" which causes more QRM.