

MCWA NEWS

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February 2012



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VE TESTING

Testing by appointment only

7 PM 3rd Tuesday every other month

.. Mar. 20.. May 15 , 2012

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, February 7
7:00 - 7:30 - Socializing
7:30 - Meeting

Program: Guest speaker will be Wendell, N9REP, who will talk about radio support for the Udder Century Biker Run. This should be udderly good !

Badges: Looks like our new badges were a huge hit with almost 40 ordered so far. At \$10 the badges were a good investment and even look good !

Thanks to all the members who paid their dues for 2012. However, there are still 16 members who either owe dues for 2012 or wish to be dropped from the club roster.

Dues for 2012 will be accepted at the February meeting, but if you cannot attend the February meeting, dues can be mailed to the Treasurer, K9YVT at 336 Georgetown Drive, Cary, IL 60013. Also, remember that the KK9DX repeater (145.41) is NOT supported financially by MCWA. Donations to that worthwhile fund can be made to KB9I.

Barry, K9YVT
Treasurer MCWA

Treasurer's Report



Opening Bal.	\$3627.92
Dues	320.00
Interest	.60
Checks	96.97
End Bal.	3947.92

Barry, K9YVT

1/31/12



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♥ MCWA NEWS

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EASY DX

The sunspots and solar flux have been higher during Cycle 24, but the numbers are still reasonable for good DX and should remain so and increase in the days ahead. The “noise indices” have been higher than we would like and have resulted in QRN, especially on 160m through 20m. Another minus is that the upper HF bands have been dropping out a little sooner after sunset than a month or so ago. This will receive some compensation from the lengthening of daylight as Spring approaches. Spring Equinox is about six weeks away.

DX has been very workable during the day and 10m, 12m and 15m have been dependable with some variations. 15m is especially workable during grayline propagation. Tonight 15m is very active on either side of sunset. Asia and South America are quite strong.

Another easy way to find DX is during worldwide contests. I have picked up some African countries during contests. These upcoming events are faithfully listed in QST, various websites and by Googling. I have a goal of working all African nations during this point in the ham hobby.

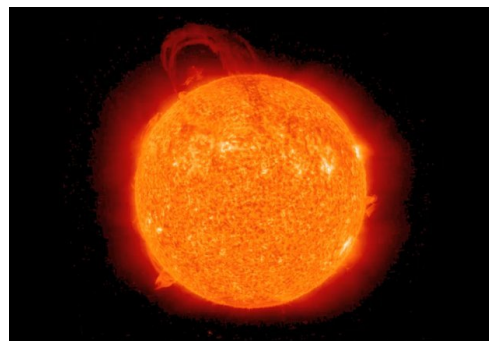
A third way to work DX is to log the various DXpeditions. I was greatly pleased by the DXpeditions across January. I was able to work PJ4C, VP6T, HK0NA and TN2T. I commend all these groups for excellent efforts and a job well done. One way to spot upcoming events is to bookmark www.ng3k.com under “Announced DX

Operations.” Here you will see all types of DX events---Individuals and DXpeditions.

A fourth way to follow DX is to bookmark a Cluster site. My personal preference is www.dxsummit.fi. Talk with other MCWA club members and you will find out their Cluster preferences.

Get on the air. If you need to upgrade your license, testing will occur at The Free Methodist Church the third Tuesday in March. Notify Steve KB9OLD if you may be testing.

It does not take much to work DX during peaking sunspot cycles. Repeatedly, I hear hams working the world with 100w and a simple antenna. Personally, I work the world with 200w and an OCF dipole. I have a few wire configurations I can switch to to favor certain bands and directions. With a “no-winter year,” experiment. String up something and work the world.



It's
easy!
73
Dave
KA9O
ZP





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From the Editor's Desk

60m Changes While many of us do not use 60 meters, those who do will see some changes coming. The 5 channels used will see a power increase, authorizes 3 additional emission designators, and prohibits the use of automatically controlled digital stations. (More info at :

<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/02/02/2012-2744/amateur-radio-use-of-allocation-at-5-mhz>)

Threat to Mobile ? Keep watching Illinois lawmakers for HB3970 & HB3872. These bills should not be supported ! As written they could make Amateur Mobile Operations illegal if interpreted incorrectly. What we are looking for is a bill that specifically exempts Amateur Radio mobile operation. Be vigilant !

Armond Noble, N6WR (SK) It is with sadness we announce the passing of N6WR. For many years he published World Radio until it was sold to CQ Magazine in 2008.

Virtual Tour of W1AW On February 12 at 5 PM (EST) there will be a live webcast tour of W1AW, the Hiram Percy Maxim Memorial Station in Newington, CT (<http://www.awecast.tv/channels/arrl/>). Guess it's next best thing to being there !

WRC-12 The World Radio Conference 2012 is going on right now in Switzerland. Amateur station 4U1ITU has changed it call temporarily to 4U1WRC in honor of the conference until February 17. For those who don't know about WRC, it's a meeting of representatives from all over the world who decide of spectrum uses for the next 5 years or so.



Please join us after the meeting at the Squire on Rt. 14 in Crystal Lake. It's about 1 block West of Rte. 31 on North side of 14. We usually have a couple of pizzas and drinks can be iced tea, soda or brewski's. Lots of ragchewing and we may solve all the problems of the world. It's a lot of food, fun and fellowship !

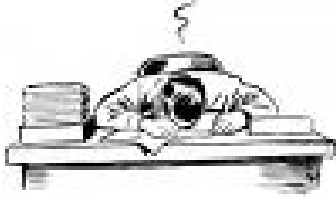
FCC Sets Date for Medical Devices on 70cm:

ⁱⁱⁱ In November 2011, FCC Commissioners unanimously agreed <http://www.arrl.org/news/fcc-grants-secondary-service-allocation-to-wireless-broadband-medical-micropower-networks> to allocate spectrum and adopt service and technical rules for the utilization of new implanted medical devices that operate on 413-457 MHz (70 cm). These devices will be used on a secondary basis as part of the Medical Device Radiocommunication (MedRadio) Service in Part 95 of the FCC rules. In the Federal Register for Friday, January 27 <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-01-27/pdf/2012-1540.pdf>, the FCC announced that the effective date for these new rules is Monday, February 27. The new rules expand the existing MedRadio Service rules to permit the use of new wideband medical implant devices that employ neuromuscular microstimulation techniques to restore sensation, mobility, and other functions to paralyzed limbs and organs. These medical devices hold enormous promise to advance the state of medical care, lower health costs, and improve the quality of life for countless Americans. The rules will allow these new types of MedRadio devices to access 24 megahertz of spectrum in the 413-419, 426-432, 438-444, and 451-457 MHz bands on a secondary basis.



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From The Editor's Desk

St. Charles Hamfest & Breakfast Just a recap of this annual event. 25 MCWA members and non-members met at Burnt Toast in Elgin for breakfast. Unfortunately, the place didn't open until 7 am. We all had a great time with lots of food and fellowship. A little after 8, we all headed for the Fest. Several members won door prizes. Saw many old friends as well. A good way to spend a Sunday.

National Extraterrestrial Visitor Day Feb. 7. Yes, they have a day for that! So, if you know someone who is not from this planet be sure to wish them a Happy E.T. Day!



Valentine's Day! Happy Valentine's Day to all ... Chicago style!



LoTW to Add CQ WPX Award Starting April 1, 2012 ARRL's Logbook of the World will support CQ Magazine WPX award. (It's about time!) LoTW has been very successful with the DXCC, WAS and VUCC awards while relieving a lot of the chore of cranking out QSL cards and waiting months/years for a return. CQ believes they will have similar success with the WPX. Other CQ awards may be added in future.

Speaking of tools...when we go to multiops or Field Days or work parties, it's easy to lose track of your tools. To avoid tool trauma, here's a Boing Boing article with some ideas for marking your tools for easy identification. (Thanks, Zhu Zhu Xiao) Tnx: ARRL



Pizza and ...

your favorite beverage plus the company of some of the finest hams in the area. All this after the MCWA meeting on Tuesday night at the Village Squire on Rt. 14 in Crystal Lake! Just a East of Rt. 31. Everyone is invited! Average cost is \$10 per person including tip & tax.



GET ON CW!

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This is to make it clear from a distance that this is your tool, not someone else's. This is most handily addressed with spray paint. (Though you can also use tape and/or colored rubbery dip handle stuff.) I recommend using two different colors. The chance that someone else might use blue is pretty large, but the chance that more than one person would use blue and orange is much smaller. I, for possibly obvious reasons, use orange and white.*

The best time to do it is when tools are new so you don't have to clean them to get the paint to stick. You don't need to cover your tools in spray paint, just enough to make them identifiable. Things you don't want to not get paint on include:

Working surfaces (the jaws of wrenches, teeth and edges of saw blades, parts that slide against other things, etc.)

Identifying marks (Wrench sizes, measurements, etc.)

Safety warnings.

Moving parts (Hinges, gears, latches, adjustment screws, etc.)

Air vents.

Serial numbers.

Rubberized grips.

For smaller tools I cut a hole in a piece of card to quickly mask the parts I want to paint.

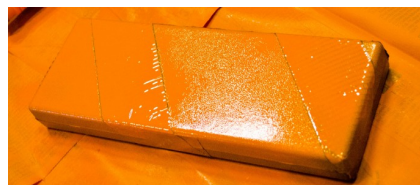
Marking your tools: The black box.

This is the back, masking the hinge to keep it from getting gummed with paint. It's also a great way to use up this ugly brown duct tape.

After everything is masked off safely, possibly with a fetching pattern, lay down some newspaper and apply a coat of heavy duty paint. If you're using it on plastic or metal you'll get better results using a paint designed for those surfaces, though I use general purpose paint and rarely have trouble.

Marking Your Tools: First color

Wow is that orange.



Wait for it to dry. Apply a second coat if you want, but we're not making art, so it's not mandatory. Then apply the highlight color. If you want to get fancy you can stencil on a logo or ID, but I just put a stripe across it, again using cards to make a quick mask.

Marking Tools: Adding highlights.

And that's it! Tools easily found and no more fights over whose allen wrench that is. Or caliper.

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Marking Your Tools: Complete

I dare my caliper to get lost now. Well, at least the box.



Theft prevention and recovery

While spray paint will prevent confusion over whose tools they are, and it might deter a thief, it has some problems:

- 1) You may not want to spray paint your tools.
- 2) It's still not unambiguously identifying information.

Marking Your Tools: Engrave

Though how you engrave your ID on your engraver I'll never know.



If you ask just about any law enforcement agency or insurance company in the country they'll tell you to engrave an ID# on your tools. You can make up your own number, as long as it's reasonably unique. (No "1337" or "16309" for you.) Some agencies recommend your driver's license number, though I'm not sure how much damage that would create if it became widely known. (Unlike, say, a social security number.) And while you're at it, record the what and where of it for your insurance.

It's pretty simple to engrave most tools. You can buy a diamond tipped engraving tool for a dozen dollars or so, or you can use an engraving tip for a rotary tool. You can probably even use the tip of a diamond file. If you have lots of tools you can get custom-made engraving blocks that have your ID in hardened steel. All it takes to mark an item is to place the block on your tool and whack it with a hammer. There are also custom made ID tags that you can "permanently" glue to a flat spot on your equipment.

If you have any other tips for marking your tools, either to get them back from thieves or keep them separate from your friend's, let me know in comments.

*They're my colors! You keep away!

