



FEEDBACK

VOLUME 59 ISSUE 10

OCTOBER 2014

**MASSILLON AMATEUR
RADIO CLUB OFFICERS**

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**MRN NET Sunday 8:00 PM
3.60 MHz**

**WEST STARK INFO NET
Fridays 8:00 PM 147.18
MHz
(except 1st Fri of month)**

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OCTOBER MEETING

The meeting for the month of October will be held on October 3, 2014 at 8:00 PM at the Massillon Senior Center. The doors will open at 7:00 PM for the pre-meeting get together.

At this meeting we will need to finish up the Hamfest preparations. Volunteers are needed to handle the various assignments. So far we only have the table and chairs assignments done and the Hamfest prizes have been picked up thanks to President Ralph K8HSQ. Still needed is someone to do the security assignments and the food vending. These areas were not covered last month. Perry, W8AU, usually handles the Auction duties but at this time it is not known if he will be able, We will find out at the meeting. The Volunteer VE Exams will be handled this year by Rex Simmons, NX8G.

The Hamfest 2014 is coming up on Sunday, November 2nd 2014. We need people there around 5:30 AM to open the doors so vendors can begin to unload their goodies to sell. Members are needed to "man" the doors Volunteers are also needed to sell tickets (BEGINNING at 8:00 am at the main door in front of the building) and check tickets for entry to the main hall.

General table set up will be on Saturday around 9:00 AM. Usually the more members we have to set up the easier and quicker it goes. Also needed is to run electric cords to various tables and place signs around the building .

So you can see we will need all able bodied members to help with the Hamfest this year. Preliminary report on the Swiss Festival will be given at the meeting. Much to do ! See you at the meeting !!

OCTOBER PROGRAM

The program for the month of October will be an "extended period of hamfest planning" ; if needed. In other words no program is being planned of October.

For the next 3 months we are going to dedicate the program time for planning and "electing" new Officers for the next year . The October meeting will be dedicated to final Hamfest planning and obtaining volunteers for the various Hamfest related jobs. November will be dedicated to the election of new officers for 2015. After changes made to the MARC Code of Regulations, officers can retain their position if they are willing. No longer do they have to serve just one year. And no longer does the Vice President automatically move up to the President's chair. The December meeting will be dedicated to the election of new officers(or retained Officers). As per our Code, the election will be handled by our Trustees.

WINTER FIELD DAY

SPAR, Society for the Preservation of Amateur Radio, is sponsoring a Winter Field Day, January 24-25, 2015. Times in Zulu are: 1700z-1700z.

N8W will be operating near the town of Mineral City. Modes will be Phone, CW and PSK. Our team is KD8ENV(Mike), N3JJT (Scott), KD8BBK(Tony) and WD8MBE(Tom).

SPAR Winter Field Day will be listed on the ARRL Special Event List.

MARC MINUTES September 2014

President Ralph K8HSQ called the meeting to order at 8:00 PM, September 5, 2014 with 25 members and guests present, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a round of introductions.

There was no program because several of the members were providing support for the HOF Grand Parade and had to leave early. The remaining members stayed and had nice "Eye Ball" QSO sessions.

Motion to suspend reading of last month's minutes

First by Bud WA8KWD,
Second by Fred KD8SMO,
Motion Passed

TREASURERS REPORT, ending July 31, 2014, by Gary WC8W.

Motion to accept
First by Bud WA8KWD, .
Second by Wade WD8MIU,
Motion Passed

VP REPORT, by Terry N8ATZ:

Birthday wishes to members having birthdays this month and listed Periodicals Available. The hamfest prizes have been picked up from Universal Radio. The club banquet will be held on January 10, 2015. Gary explained the new Senior Center Building rules. Jim reported on the tower work done at the repeater site. The safety cable was secured to the tower to eliminate the noise we were experiencing on the repeater signal.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Spare/Backup Repeater: Construction underway. No estimated time of completion.
Service Monitor: Still undergoing repair.

OLD BUSINESS:

No news regarding Hamfest tables.

NEW BUSINESS:

Wade, WD8MIU, suggested a mentoring program be formed to help the newer hams improve their electronic skills.

Stevan Hall KC8ACF: Donated refreshments for coffee break.

As usual, Shirley did a terrific job supplying very yummy cupcakes. She even supplied sugar free cupcakes for those members that require NO SUGAR.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Patty, KD8UXL and seconded by Lee KD8UEA.
Meeting adjourned at 21:00.

50/50: \$16.00 won by Don, W8DEF and was donated back to the club.

SUBMITTED BY: Ralph, K8HSQ.

... HAMFEST DETAILS ...

Hamfest details are in full swing. At this month's meeting we need to fill all the normal hamfest positions - table reservations; ticket sales; prizes; security; club table; auction; mobile checking; etc. These are important jobs that are important to a successful hamfest. This is a total club participation event, we need everyone's help, not just a few volunteers. If not, it's time to get out of the hamfest business !

Our main mailing will be similar this year as we will be mailing post cards out and not full size flyers as in the past. This will cut costs for us. The October issue of QST has the club hamfest notification and I expect table reservations to begin filling up soon.. Also the League has once again donated four very nice gift certificates to use as main / door prizes. Gary informs me that we have our main prizes ready to go and Universal has also tossed in lots of extra door prizes for us as well.

As always, we need volunteers to help with table setup on Saturday, November 1st around 9:00 - 9:30 AM.

Final details will be worked out at the October club meeting. Please join us for both the meeting and of course we hope to see you all on Hamfest Sunday !

... FALL IS HERE ! ...

As I work on my column for this month, I realize that it's almost Autumn. The day's are shorter and the nights longer. The weather is cooler and the trees are changing already.

So what does all this mean to radio operators? For me, it means more time to devote to our hobby. It also means more time for my other favorite activity, project building. And let's not forget about antennas. No matter what they say, I prefer to work on my antennas in nice weather. I had some tree trimming done around the house that was way overdue. That's the good news. My G5RV is broken again and now I don't have any low hanging branches to hold it back up again, that's the bad news!. I hope to try a different type of wire antenna more conducive to my new tree configuration. Maybe an end fed type ? I'm also planning on putting up a HF vertical for the winter operating.

Regarding projects, I have a few ideas on some digital interfaces that I hope to start on once things settle down, this is still my favorite mode of operating and works well for my low profile station.

I'm also about a year behind in the various ham magazines that I would like to catch up on. So while I'm not looking forward to a long snowy winter, I am looking forward to some fun radio time.

... MORE HAM RADIO TIMELINE ...

Let's continue our look back at the significant events from ham radio history picking up with 1925.

1925 - The International Radio Union (IARU) is formed in Paris.

1927 - The Federal Radio Commission is formed.

1927 - The International Radiotelegraph Convention, held in Washington, DC defines "amateur" frequency allocations. Call sign prefixes are allocated by country. The International Radio Technical Consultative Committee is formed.

1928 - The ARRL holds its first contest, the 1928 International Relay Party.

1933 - The Federal Radio Commission (FRC) starts to require all license candidates to appear in person for testing.

1934 - The 1934 Communications Act establishes the Federal Communications Commission, replacing the FRC.

1934 - The ARRL holds its first Field Day exercise.

1936 - There are now about 42,000 hams in the US.

1938 - ARRL Station W1AW is built.

1939 - World War II restrictions begin for amateurs in other countries.

1940 - US Amateurs are prohibited from talking to other countries due to the war.

That's it for this month. See you at the meeting and especially our Hamfest !

73's
Terry - N8ATZ

Who's that knocking.....

A woodpecker?

by Jim - K5LAD

Hams who were active on the HF bands during the 1970s and 80s are very familiar with "the woodpecker" on their radios. The woodpecker appeared suddenly and without prior notice and really played "heck" with the ham bands back then. The source of this noise was the cause for many different theories because it did not seem to be transmitting on a particular frequency and seemed to be very elusive to hams and some commercial stations alike. It was some weeks from the first time it was heard, that the source was first suspected and later identified. The sound of the signal was completely unlike anything we had previously heard on our equipment.

Actually it was identified as coming from somewhere in Russia and was identified as an "over-the-horizon radar" signal. Regular radar, first used during World War II was originally on what we would call VHF frequencies but as it was quickly developed and improved and was moved higher and higher in frequency. Radar is essentially a line-of-sight system, which gives effectiveness but does limit the distance and range of the radar's usage. It's a bit like the bumper sticker often seen on large 18 wheeler trucks which says, "If you can't see my mirrors, I can't see you." Regular radar antennas, if raised in elevation, can see for quite some distance but can only see as far as the signal can travel in a line-of-sight. These signals are hampered by the horizon due to the shape of the Earth." (I'm assuming, here, that the reader subscribes to the established fact that the Earth is round. If you're a member of '*The Flat Earth Society*' perhaps you'll want to move on to another article)

The Russian engineers had been experimenting with extremely high-powered radar signals that were being transmitted on the lower frequency bands. These signals were reflected by various layers; just as ham signals are reflected (if we're lucky). The 20 meter ham band seemed to take the brunt of the destructive signal but it was also possible to hear this signal

on bands both above and below 20 meters. The signal seemed to quickly drift or move around over a wide range of frequencies and cause much damage to the usefulness of several ham bands.

The "over-the-horizon radar" signal was, of course the Russian government's attempt to watch for American missile attacks. The extension of the line-of-sight range would give them a tremendous time advantage should a missile attack occur. Because of this, they didn't care whether we liked it or not.

The nickname "the woodpecker" was given to the noise because the noise most closely imitated the sound of a woodpecker outside your house and tapping on your door, or in this case, tapping on your receiver. The taps, which were from one to 5 per second, were so powerful that they totally assaulted the AGC (automatic gain control) of a regular ham-band receiver. Thousands of QSOs were assaulted and ultimately prematurely terminated due to this obnoxious interfering signal. It was later learned that they were using transmitters running millions of watts into massive antennas having immense gains.

Once the source had been identified, there followed several years of discussions between numerous governments, including the United States, and the Russian government. The discussions included nice requests, not so nice requests, threats, and all sorts of diplomatic attempts but the woodpecker interference continued. Sometimes the signals were less troublesome, sometimes they were so bad that the bands were unusable but they continued for years. It was such a problem that several commercial transceivers, designed and manufactured during the 70s and 80s, had a specific position on their noise blanker that was tailored for elimination or reduction of the woodpecker signal. As I recall, even a few redesigned their noise blanker to be especially for the woodpecker. Some of these circuits were more effective than others. The woodpecker interference signal had a different timing sequence from other types of noise so the blanker had to be designed for just that sequence to be effective against it.



It was later learned that the primary transmitting and receiving site for this radar system was near the Russian city of Chernobyl and when that area had a bit of a problem with their near-by nuclear reactor; much, actually most, of the local activities were terminated or moved. A Google search of information on the woodpecker will yield some interesting stories and pictures of the original facility. The picture is one showing part of the massive antenna site used to transmit the woodpecker signal. The cage-looking pieces are parts of thick dipole elements used to cover wide ranges of frequencies as it moved around.

One of the quickest ways to invoke an angry reaction from an HF-operating ham from the 1970s and 1980s is to innocently ask them, "Hey, do you remember the woodpecker from the ham bands twenty or thirty years ago?" It is highly recommended that before you ask that question that you either have a good bit of real estate between you and who you're asking or else to be wearing your fastest Nikes.

(Thanks to Charlie KB8STV for submitting this article)

ARRL NEWS

ARRL Bulletin 16 ARLB016
From ARRL Headquarters
Newington CT September 4, 2014
To all radio amateurs

SB QST ARL ARLB016
ARLB016 New Amateur Radio Vanity Call Sign
Fee Set at \$21.40

The FCC has adjusted very slightly downward - to \$21.40 - its proposed Amateur Service vanity call sign regulatory fee for Fiscal Year 2014. In a June Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM), the Commission said it was planning to hike the current \$16.10 vanity fee to \$21.60 for the 10-year license term. The FCC released a Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (R&O) in the proceeding on August 29, in which it recalculated the fee to \$21.40 for the 10-year license term. The \$5.30 increase still represents the largest vanity fee hike in many years.

The new \$21.40 fee does not go into effect until 30 days after the R&O is published in The Federal Register.

In the R&O, the FCC said it considered eliminating the regulatory fee for Amateur Radio vanity call sign applications but decided not to do so "at this time," because it lacks "adequate support to determine whether the cost of recovery and burden on small entities outweighs the collected revenue; or whether eliminating the fee would adversely affect the licensing process." The Commission said it would reevaluate this issue in the future to determine if it should eliminate other fee categories.

The FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau sets the vanity call sign regulatory fee using projections of new applications and renewals, taking into consideration existing Commission licensee databases, such as the Universal Licensing System (ULS) database.

The FCC reported there were 11,500 "payment units" in FY 2014. The Commission said the vanity program generated an estimated

\$230,230 in FY 2013 revenue, and it estimated that it would collect nearly \$246,100 in FY 2014.

The vanity call sign regulatory fee is payable when applying for a new vanity call sign or when renewing a vanity call sign, although some older vanity call signs are not subject to the regulatory fee.

NNNN
/EX

KB6NU COLUMN

Should QSOs from remote stations be given DXCC credit?

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

In July, the DX Advisory Committee Report recommended several rules changes for the DXCC program (http://www.arrl.org/files/file/About%20ARRL/Committee%20Reports/2014/July/Doc_27.pdf). Among them, was a recommendation that rule I.9 be changed such that a QSO is acceptable for DXCC credit only when the remote station and the operators home station location are no more than 200 km apart.

As with any rule change, this precipitated a lot of comment in the amateur radio community. A thread on the eHam.Net forum (<http://www.eham.net/ehamforum/smf/index.php/topic.98348.30.html>) got quite a few comments. N7NG had a nice blog post (<http://n7ng.wordpress.com/2014/03/05/remote-control-dxing-and-dxcc/>) on this controversy.

Perhaps the most strident post on this topic was written by WW1X (<http://ww1x.com/opinion/2014/08/14/in-defense-of-remote-dxcc.html>). He called these recommendations uninformed, misguided, and detrimental to the future of our hobby. Detrimental to the future of our hobby? Seriously?

Of course, WW1X has a vested interest in this debate. He's the lead developer for RemoteHamRadio.Com, a company that charges other hams to use the super stations that they've set up around the world.

(cont. page 8)

Note that the DX Advisory Committee is not saying that amateur radio operators should not use and enjoy these remote stations. All they're saying is that the QSOs made with them, unless they are located less than 200 km from an amateurs home station, are not eligible for DXCC credit. I'm sure that if you asked any of the members of the committee they would agree with WW1X that the remote stations serve a very useful purpose for amateurs who are not able to set up their own home stations.

WW1X prattles on about how DXCC is not a contest. It's not a competition. There are no winners or losers. It's a personal achievement award, plain and simple. This is just silly. Of course it's a competition. As N7NG rightly points out if it's not a competition, why publish the DXCC Honor Roll?

What I think is detrimental to the hobby are hams who use RemoteHamRadio.Com to simply add to their DXCC scores. I see no sense in doing so, and furthermore, where's the personal achievement? Anyone who can afford to pay what they charge-and it's not a small sum of money-can work the rarest DX with one of those stations.

A friend of mine, Mark, W8MP, is a RemoteHamRadio.Com customer, and it's a boon for him. He loves being able to work DX from his home in a development where no outside antennas are allowed. He's not trying to pad his DXCC score. He does this for the pure love of talking to other hams in far-away places.

When the final decision is made, I hope the DX Advisory Committee goes back to first principles as set forth in FCC Part 97.1 and makes their decision on whether or not allowing DXCC credit for remote station QSOs contributes to "the advancement of the radio art" or is an "extension of the amateur's unique ability to enhance international goodwill."

=====

When he's not writing this column for club newsletters, Dan, KB6NU enjoys working CW on the HF bands and teaching ham radio classes. For more information about his operating activities and his "No-Nonsense" series of amateur radio license study guides, go to KB6NU.Com or e-mail cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

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October 2014

W8NP Monthly Planner

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<p>2014 Conneaut ARC Hamfest, CTC J. Michael, 814-440-6679, Conneaut, OH</p> <p>Kalamazoo HamFest, CTC Jeff 269-205-3560, Kalamazoo, MI</p> <p>Massillon Radio Net - 3599.5 kHz, 1930</p>		<p>Stark County ARES Net on 147.12 at 7:00 PM</p> <p>VE Test Session, Pioneer AR Fellowship, 1900, Ctc: Leonard, 330-608-2267, Akron Baptist Temple</p>			<p>West Stark Info Net - 147.180 at 2000</p>																																																																																														
26	27	28	29	30	31	<p>Upcoming Events:</p> <p>11/1 Grant ARC Hamfest, Georgetown, OH</p> <p>11/2 MARC Hamfest</p> <p>11/15 - 11/16 Fort Wayne Hamfest and Computer Exp</p> <p>11/22 Massillon Holiday Parade</p>																																																																																													
<p>Massillon Radio Net - 3599.5 kHz, 1930</p> <p>USECA Hamfest, Ctc Rosemary 586-382-0831, Madison Heights, MI</p>		<p>Stark County ARES Net on 147.12 at 7:00 PM</p>			<p style="color: red;">Halloween</p> <p>West Stark Info Net - 147.180 at 2000</p>																																																																																														

Please contact K8INN for updates, changes, or additions.

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W8NP Webmaster	Terry Russ	N8ATZ

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