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SIGNALS

Rockwell Collins

Monthly Newsletter of the

Amateur Radio Club

Volume 34 Issue 02 **Web Site** http://www.w5rok.us **November 2012**

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RCARC
Membership Meeting

Tuesday, 27 November 2012
1700 Social 1730 Meeting
1800 Program

Methodist Richardson Medical Center
At Bush/Renner/Shiloh Intersection
Second Floor Conference Room 200

Subject:
TBD—Come and See!

Local Club News

Meeting Notice The program for the November meeting was not finalized at Signals publication time, but be prepared for a good program. See y'all at the meeting.

Officer Elections Two of the RCARC officer positions for FY2013 were filled at the September 2012 meeting. Michael Schmit, WA9WCC, was elected President and Andrew Robinson, K5VRA, was reelected as Treasurer. The floor was opened at the October 2012 meeting for nominations for the vacant club officer positions. Jim Brown accepted nomination to and was elected club secretary. Vice president and Activities Chairman positions remain open.

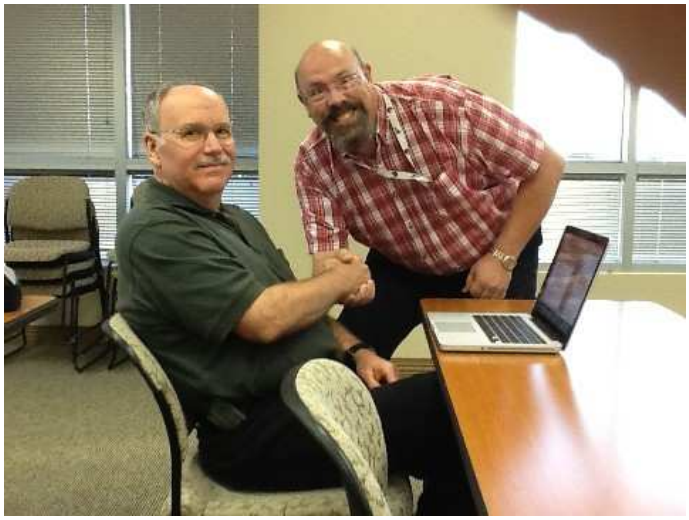
Important Information for ARRL Members - ARRL Division and Section News If you are an ARRL member and do not receive emails from your ARRL Division Director or Section Manager, it is most likely because you did not "opt in" to those emails on your ARRL account. To be included in these emails you must indicate that in your account on www.ARRL.org. Please see the link below for directions on how to indicate that you want to receive these emails.

http://arrlntx.org/main/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/ARRL-Division-and-Section-emails.pdf.

If you have questions feel free to contact me at ke5soo@arrl.org.

ARRL North Texas Section
Section Manager: Walt E Mayfield, KE5SOO
ke5soo@arrl.org

Presidential Inauguration At the October meeting, the office of RCARC President was officially "handed over" from Michael Ketchum K5MDK to Mike Schmit WA9WCC.



The transfer of power occurred with considerable fanfare, speeches and enormous glee, at least on the part of the departing president.

Early Days in the Hobby

by Doug, K8DK on August 2, 2012

My dad was a radio technician. He had a radio shack (Quonset hut) on our property in New Baltimore, MI. He repaired televisions and radios in the late 1940 and early 1950's. With no formal training, *(Cont. on page 3)*

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VE SESSIONS

Dallas tests are held 4th Sat of each month at 10:00. 13350 Floyd Rd. (Old Credit Union) Contact Bob West, WA8YCD 972.917.6362

Irving tests are held 3rd Sat. of each month at 09:00. 5th and Main St. Contact Bill Revis, KF5BL 252-8015

McKinney VE test sessions are held at the Heard Museum the first Sunday of the month. The address is 1 Nature Place, McKinney TX. The time of the testing is 14:30, ending no later than 16:45. ***Note: no tests given on holiday weekends.***

Garland testing is held on the fourth Thursday of each month, excluding November, and begins at 1930 sharp. Location is Freeman Heights Baptist. Church, 1120 N Garland Ave, Garland (between W Walnut and Buckingham Rd). Enter via the north driveway. A HUGE parking lot is located behind the church. Both the parking lot and the Fellowship Hall are located on the east side of the church building, with big signs by the entrance door. Contact Janet Crenshaw, WB9ZPH, 972.302.9992.

Plano testing is on the third Saturday of each month, 1300 hrs at Williams High School, 1717 17th St. East Plano. Check Repeater 147.180+ for announcements.

Greenville testing is on the Saturday after 3rd Thursday, 1000 hrs at site TBA, contact N5KA, 903.364.5306. Sponsor is Sabine Valley ARA. Repeater 146.780(-) with 118.8 tone.

President's Message

There is no President's Message this month due to the transition in the office. Please watch for the new President's message next month.

Secretary's Report

23 October 2012

The meeting was called to order by President Michael Ketchum K5MDK at 1740 with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following attendees were present at the meeting:

Charles Beis	K5UWD
Ira Blum	K5IRA
Jim Brown	TBA
Dennis Cobb	WA8ZBT
Hernando Garcia	KC5FDW
Michael Ketchum	K5MDK
Bob Kirby	K3NT
Steve Phillips	K6JT
Mike Schmit	WA9WCC
Jim Skinner	WB0UNI
Richard Strnad	AA6DV
Paul Veenstra	KC0TEG
Joe Wolf	N5UIC

Officers and Committee Reports:

President's Report: The President's report is in the newsletter.

Vice-President's Report: There was no Vice-President's report

Secretary's Report: The Secretary's Report is in the newsletter.

Treasurer's Report: There was no Treasurer's report.

Website Manager's Report: There was no Website Manager's report.

Station Trustee's Report: Steve Phillips K6JT reported that the packet station had some audio issues and requires a new antenna. Bob Kirby K3NT moved that the club should spend up to $500 for replacing the radio and any other improvements to the packet station. The move was seconded and approved.

Database Manager's Report: There was no Database Manager's report.

Old Business:

There was no old business to conduct.

New Business:

Projects: Bob suggested using the "IT" antenna at the CAF hangar Addison Airport. The antenna will require a work detail to make repairs. Paul Veenstra KC0TEG indicated some of the issues with establishing a club station at CAF. Finally Paul told the membership that Commemorative Air Force aircraft B-29 Fifi suffered serious engine #2 failure at

Midland at the end of the tour season. Fifi is safely at Addison but will need a replacement for engine #2 prior to next season's tours.

Dennis Cobb WA8ZBT suggested replacing the TV in the station with a 26" flat screen for use during weather alerts. Bob moved to allocate $500 for a new TV and interconnectivity. Motion was seconded and approved.

Event Chairmen: Committee chairman are required for Fun Days and Field Day events.

Officer Elections: The floor was opened for nominations for vacant club officer positions. Jim Brown accepted nomination to and was elected club secretary. Vice president and Activities Chairman positions remain open.

Adjournment:
The business meeting adjourned at 1815 for the program.

Program:
The program was a video about 7 Band Semi-Vertical Trap Antenna By Bob Rice VE3HKY.

Early Days in the Hobby

(Continued from page 1) he learned to repair equipment on his own. I was very young, 5 or 6 years old, when I watched him repair radios and televisions. It was interesting to me and he taught me how to test tubes and I became the unofficial tube tester. I would pull the tubes from the piece of equipment, clean them, look up the tube numbers on the charts and find the correct socket to set them into the tube tester The tube testers we used looked so complicated to me but soon I learned how to set the different toggle switches and set the correct voltages to properly test them. If they tested ok, I would install them back into the piece of equipment. If it was bad, I pulled a new tube from the inventory or added them to the list to order new ones to replenish the inventory. My dad would test the rest of the circuits for other failed parts such as resistors and capacitors, and transformers. He also checked for bad solder connections. He always returned the repaired equipment in good running order. This was my dad's way of supplementing his income because this was his part time job.

This experience of working in the repair shop got me started in electronics and interested in Amateur Radio. I was about 15 when a tornado came through Chesterfield Township. One day after the cleanup started I was peddling my bike on Callens Road near the military housing project north of Cotton Road. Since my dad was into electronics he also had a CB radio and I used to talk to a man by the name of Arnold Gottschalk, call sign 19W9224. He also held an amateur call sign of WA8TPE. Arnold told me he was a carpenter working for Selfridge Field and was working at this military housing project that was being repaired after the tornado. Arnold befriended me and we became lifetime friends. He and I used to trade, buy and sell amateur radio equipment. It is sad but Arnold is now a silent key. I have many great memories of him. Many hams in the area knew him. He loved talking about finding amateur radio gear at garage sales. He had an expert eye for finding the deal.

Arnold then introduced me to a friend of his by the name of Ken Traster, K8CQI. Ken lived in Utica and was in the Air Force at Selfridge AFB. Ken would invite me to his home every Saturday morning where I had the opportunity to operate his station as a third party (Ken was the control operator) using 40 meter AM phone. Ken had a Central Electronics Transmitter and a Collins Receiver. What really interested me at the time was Ken's ability to use Morse code with his homebrew keyer and his paddle. He also at times used a straight key with expertise. Ken in turn introduced me to others in the area. Saturday mornings became a regular time when 4 or 5 others would gather to operate the equipment and contact other stations on 40 meters. Another friend, nick-name Fats, had a Heathkit Station that he built, a DX60 transmitter and a HR-10 matching receiver. Fats also had a DX100 transmitter with a SB-10 sideband adapter and a Hammarlund receiver as a second station. We would go back and forth between the two houses on Saturdays. It was a great time and it was exciting listening for other stations and making contacts. Ken and others taught me how to set up a station, tune a transmitter, zero beat a receiver and I learned the technique of soldering. At this point I decided I wanted my license too.

I started by learning Morse code. Months before I was licensed I bought the Ameco Code record album, 33-1/3 size. I started to learn the code using the code album but I set the record player at 78-RPM speed (in error of course and not knowing any better). I learned the code at a much faster speed then most people. I didn't realize at the time what I was doing because I kept complaining to my parents that it was so hard to learn because it sounded so fast. They didn't really check what I was doing so they just said keep at it, everyone else learns it like that and you can too. So I did. I was the fastest novice on the band. I learned the code at about 25-35 wpm. Good thing I didn't know any better. Sometimes ignorance is bliss. Being young and naive at the time gave me an advantage over so many other novices. The only problem I had was finding someone to talk to me in the novice band at those speeds. So I learned to slow down. I made hundreds of contacts over the next several months and was having a lot of fun doing it too.

Back then a General Class operator could administer a novice test. Ken requested a novice exam from the FCC. I remember it seemed like it took forever to receive the test in the mail. I studied for the exam for a month or so and was ready when Ken received the test. There were four of us that took the exam. It took about three months waiting for my ticket to arrive. If you didn't get a letter from the FCC in about a month you probably passed. I knew others who failed and were notified by letter within 30 days. If you

didn't pass your test you had to wait 30 days after receiving your failure letter before taking the exam again. I didn't hear from them so I thought my chances sounded pretty good that I passed. Well as I said three months went by and I received my novice call, WN8QHS in April 1965. The four of us all passed, we now had new call signs of, WN8QHS, QHT, QHU and QHV.

I had little money to work with and so I started saving and my parents helped me buy my first station. It was a Hallicrafters Receiver SX-99, a Knight Kit T-150 transmitter and a Dow Key relay. I also bought a paddle from the Lafayette Radio catalog and Ken helped me build my first homebrew project, a tube type keyer. The transmitter had a VFO but I was rock bound (crystal controlled) and could only use crystals in the novice bands and no more than 75 watts. My first antenna was a multi-band dipole for 40 and 15 meters. This was good because I only had two crystals for 40 meters. I could use the crystal for 7.125 MHz on 40 meters and the 7.050 crystal on 15 meters because its third harmonic put me in the 15-meter band at 21.150 MHz. I made my first DX contact on 15 meters by working XE2SO in Mexico. I still have his QSL card. He sent me his QSL direct and I remember the day I received it in the mail. I was excited to make that first DX contact. I now have 254 countries confirmed. I chase DX on a periodic basis and track them using DxBase software on my computer.

The next couple of projects I built were a Heathkit Twoer and a 160-meter transmitter. The Twoer was a 2-meter AM transceiver. A novice had 2-meter phone privileges during those years. I also built a 160 mobile transmitter from the ARRL handbook and with Ken's help we detuned my AM radio in the dashboard of my car (1954 Ford Station Wagon Woody). Working 160 AM phone gave me the opportunity to meet others in the area. We didn't have 2-meter FM repeaters back then.

I wanted my General ticket. In less than a year from getting my novice license I upgraded to General and my new call sign was changed to WA8QHS. During those years the Novice license was good for one year and you couldn't renew it. So it was upgrade or out of amateur radio. It did however take two bus rides from New Baltimore to the Federal Building in Detroit to pass the test. I didn't drive yet, so I went by bus. I failed at my first attempt. It was very disappointing. I passed the Code but not the theory. You didn't get credit for passing the code in those days.

The next trip, you had to pass the code again. The code was easy for me at 13 Wpm. I just had to get past the written theory. The theory at that time was far more advanced electronics questions then on today's exam. An example would be to draw a Hartley or Pierce Oscillator circuit. Many other circuits had to be identified or drawn. I felt lucky to pass it on my second attempt. You also had to sit in a hard wood chair in the front of the room, in front of everyone to send and receive the code at 13 wpm while everyone sat there listening to your code expertise. It was intimidating at best, especially if you are only 15 years old. One of the examiners was Ed W8BX. Ed is now a silent key. For many years Ed and I had coffee and spoke over the air. He was a great guy who knew a lot about electronics and Amateur Radio.

Now I have been licensed 47 years and I am still having fun. Over those 47 years I have tried every mode. I have used AM, FM, SSB, CW, Radio Teletype, Fast Scan TV, Moon bounce, Satellites and all the different data modes. I had towers, a tri band beam, satellite antennas, elevation and azimuth rotors, lots and lots of different pieces of radio transceivers, and separate transmitters and receivers and all types of station accessories. I have incorporated computers and their related ham radio software programs to my station. I am still an avid short wave and scanner listener. My short wave call sign was WPE8IKB. I received that certificate in December 1963 from Popular Electronics.

Do a search in Google just using that call sign WPE8IKB and you will see a photo of my novice station from 1965. Over the years I had the opportunity to talk to, Barry Goldwater, Ronnie Millsap, and Arthur Godfrey. I talked to Russian Cosmonauts and Owen Garriot an American Astronaut thousands of miles above the earth in space.

This hobby has brought me the study of history, I have learned a lot about geography, space exploration, theory of electronics, and the hobby has made me a good listener when it comes to DX. I have learned how little power and such a small antenna can bring fun and excitement to the hobby. (*Reprinted with permission from www.eham.net)*

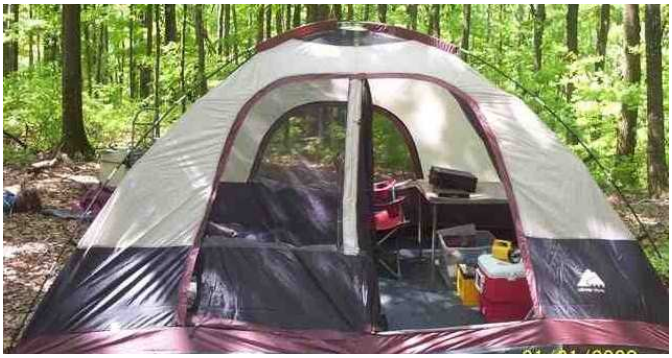
The Search for the Elusive, Perfect Antenna

By Dan Evans K9ZF

The search for the elusive, perfect antenna for the Indiana QSO Party—Operating portable in the Indiana QSO Party

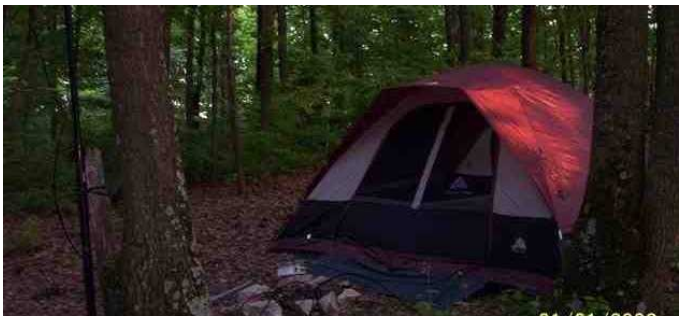
A few years ago now, the *Hoosier DX and Contesting Club* picked up the sponsorship of the Indiana QSO Party. The guys at HDXCC put a ton of work into breathing new life into the contest, and their efforts have been a huge success. I worked my first INQP from my tiny little home station in Scott county, Indiana. Even with my little pistol station, I still had a load of fun. It was a real blast trying to follow the mobiles from county to county. I made a surpris-

ingly high score. Being the only home station on from Scott county made me a pretty popular contact, so even with my 100 watts and a wire I was a "big gun!"



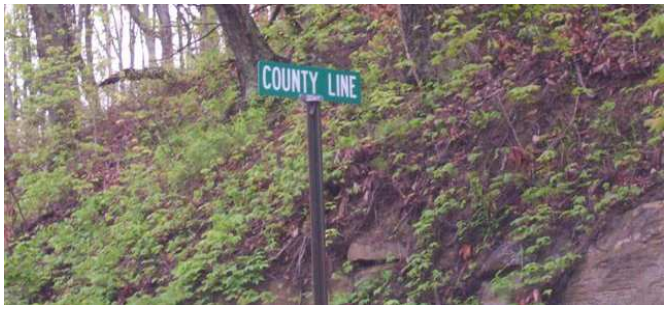
A few years later, I decided to combine the INQP with another of my favorite ham radio activities, portable operation! Never having had much of a home station, I discovered early on how much fun portable and Rover operating can be. So I have made it a yearly tradition to do the INQP portable. Now I have missed a few years here and there due to family obligations, but every year I try to get the camping gear together and head for a hilltop.

For the past couple of years, my favorite hilltop has been on the county line of Washington and Scott, here in southern Indiana. It's one of those hard to beat locations. Secluded, but not far from the parking lot so it's not hard to pack in all of that heavy gear. And to top that, it's at nearly 1000 feet elevation with tons of over eighty foot tall trees for hanging wire! For you folks who are not familiar with Indiana terrain, 1000 feet is huge.



Given the elevation, and the fairly rare counties I was handing out, I've been able to put together some pretty respectable scores. At least for someone using 100 watts and a wire! But each year it seems like I should be able to do better. I guess, like most hams, I'm never satisfied with my choice of antennas. To begin the search for the "perfect" antenna, I guess I should define the goals a bit better. The bulk of the multipliers for this contest are the Indiana counties, and the band of choice is definitely 40 meters. So the perfect antenna would need good short range performance on 40. However, running concurrently with the Indiana QSO Party is the New England QSO Party, and the 7QP out west, so we also need decent state side coverage on 40 and 20 as well. 75/80 meter activity is pretty sparse, but coverage there would be a plus. Now, how is that for a tough order to fill?

For my first couple of outings I used an 80 meter dipole, coax fed, and used a tuner to work all bands. Obviously this worked, but performance on the higher bands seemed pretty lack luster. So much so that for the past couple of years I have brought along 3 separate dipoles, one for 20, one for 40, and a third dipole for 75/80 meters. Even so, performance seems flat. Particularly on 20, where I had a really tough time with every contact. Most of the issue with 20 I can blame on band conditions. 20 has been pretty disappointing for the past couple of years. But after going through all of the work of raising 3 separate dipoles, I would sure like to have better performance.



How do I improve the antenna this year? I would like to put up a full wave, 80 meter, loop fed with ladder line and use a tuner for all bands. But, raising a dipole in the thick tree canopy is difficult, trying to put up a big loop I believe would be impossible. I've considered, and rejected, the idea of using verticals in the past. The lower radiation angle of the vertical seems like it would be a liability for local contacts on 40. However, I think it would likely benefit contacts into New England and 7 land. So this year I've been thinking about a full size 1/4 wave vertical for 40 meters, with the feed point elevated some 10 to 20 feet, and a few radials fanned out from the feed point.

So what do you think? Have you been in this position before? How do you think the vertical will perform? Or, should I just stick with the dipoles and try to do something different on 20? The INQP is 1600 UTC Saturday May 1, 2010 to 0400 UTC Sunday May 2, 2010, Saturday noon to midnight EDT or 11 AM to 11 PM CDT. So I still have plenty of time to make plans, cut wire, and do some testing. So I may change directions again before the big day gets here, so I would appreciate all of your opinions. If you would like more information about the INQP, check out the HDXCC web site at: http://hdxcc.org/ and click the link for the INQP.

73
Dan K9ZF
Amateur Radio Emergency Service, Clark County Indiana.
EM78el (*Reprinted with permission from www.eham.net*)

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CLUB STATIONS
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W5ROK REPEATER
441.875 MHz +5 MHz Input
131.8 Hz PL - RX and TX

W5ROK-1 PACKET BBS ROK Node
145.05 MHz

W5ROK-N1, W5ROK-N2 & W5ROK-N3 HSMM-MESHNET Nodes 2.4 GHz

Tuesday, 27 November 2012

1700 Social 1730 Meeting

Methodist Richardson Medical Ctr
At Bush/Renner/Shiloh Intersection

Second Floor Conference Room 200

NEXT SIGNALS INPUTS DEADLINE:
➔➔➔ 14 December 2012 ➔➔➔