

Hamfest Calendar
2015

May 3 [Sandwich, IL](#)
May 15-17 [Dayton OH](#)
Jun 7 [Princeton IL](#)



[VE Exam Schedule](#)

Apr 19 2015 Twin City Amateur Radio Club
1:00 PM (Walk-ins allowed) ARRL/VEC
Debra J. Fligor N9DN (217) 762-3232
Email: n9dn@n9dn.net
Univ of IL Fire Service Inst 11 Gerty Dr Champaign IL

May 14 2015 Terre Haute Radio Club
7:00 PM (Walk-ins allowed) VEC: LAUREL MD
Virginia L. Monastyrski (812) 243-9052
Ryves Youth Center 1356 Locust St Terre Haute IN

Twin City Amateur Radio Club

Champaign-Urbana, Illinois

April 2015

Milt Forsberg K9QZI Editor



Meeting April 14

The next TCARC meeting is April 14 at 7:00 p.m. at the [UI Fire Institute](#). The program is a video of an outstanding Luncheon talk from the ARRL Centennial last Summer. It is by Rick Roderick, K5UR, ARRL First Vice President, with introduction from Brian Milesosky, N5ZGT, ARRL Rocky Mountain Division Director (July 17, 2014). Join us for an informal meal at Culver's South Neil St prior to the meeting!

To get to the Fire Institute, go south on First Street from the Assembly Hall to the UI Credit Union - That is Gerty. Go West on Gerty to the end of the street. You will be in the Fire Institute parking lot. We are in one of the classrooms inside.

TCARC Board Meeting

The TCARC Board meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at Culver's on South Neil Street. This arrangement allows Board Members who are also ARES members to go directly to the ARES meeting at 7, and lets them spend one evening for 2 meetings instead of taking 2 evenings. All club members are welcome to attend the Board Meetings.

Our Next VE Session

April 19 2015 1:00 p.m.

UI Fire Institute

Please contact Debbie Fligor, N9DN, for information.

Local Nets

ARES	444.100	Tuesday 9 p.m.
Illinois D-Star	443.48125	Wednesday 9 p.m.
Champaign Co	146.760	Thursday 9 p.m.
Illini Net	14.320	11:30 a.m. Daily
		◆Except Thursday

Auction is a Big Success!

Our annual TCARC Auction on March 28 was one of our best ever! Attendance was about the same as past years, but more equipment appeared and very little junk was brought in. Several transceivers sold for a few hundred dollars, something we have not seen in recent years. Donations to the club helped a lot, as always. Total sales of all items was \$3,350. With our 10% commission, income from donated items, bidder number sales, and other donations, our net for the event is \$854. This includes the purchase of the main door prize, an HT, payment to the church, and contribution from Amateur Accessories to cover the church payment. No food was sold this year and no one seemed unhappy about that. Soft drinks were available in machines at the church. The computer program provided by Jon Crisman ran very well and is a big help to managing the event. We thank everyone who helped with the auction as well as those attending. We send a special thanks to Steve Zahos of Amateur Accessories for attending!

TCARC Officers and Board Members

President	Wayne Hamilton AB9FJ	384-4310
Vice President	Paul Toth N9XDN	840-3522
Secretary	Chris Anderson W9CMA	403-1599
Treasurer	Milt Forsberg K9QZI	352-5075

Board Members

Jeremy Lamb	KC8KGJ	2016	621-8036
Al Wolfe	K9SI	2017	722-8803
Jim Crisman	N9AJV	2015	202-7402

VE Coordinator

Debbie Fligor N9DN	244-4446
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Website	www.w9seh.org
Analog Repeater K9CU	146.760
D-Star Repeater W9YR	443.48125

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A Real Fox Hunt!

Recently, WCIA News reported that a Savoy neighborhood suddenly lost control by garage door openers and car remotes. In the interview, someone was quoted saying that it could be Ham Radio! Several Hams took offense with this statement as the interference was continuous for a few days. Ben, K9BF, went looking for the cause. He was interviewed by WCIA and appeared on the news the next day. WCIA did state in the second interview that this was NOT caused by Ham Radio and that Ben was an experienced Ham looking into the situation. It was an excellent interview, very positive for our hobby. [Link to the News Clips](#)

Here is Ben's report on his findings:

As most of you know, I have been investigating a problem in a neighborhood in Savoy involving the loss of operation of a number of car key and garage door remotes along with a few other things. It was suggested in a news report that it might be a ham radio operator and of course that caught my interest and I have the equipment to investigate. So the next day I contacted one of the residents and spent time with them that evening in an effort to track down the source of the interference. It was easy to determine that a strong signal on 314.955 MHz was de-sensing the receivers in about a half block area. However, due to the nature of the signal and reflections off the houses in the area, it was impossible to pin it down to one specific house. The best I could do was to narrow it down to four houses all in a row with the middle two being the most likely as indicated by the signal strength shown on my spectrum analyzer. At that point, I had all the homeowners shut power off to their houses in hopes that the signal would disappear, it did not. This suggest that the source is either battery or UPS powered. I questioned the home owners about having any battery powered devices that might possibly still be operating. The only thing they could come up with is a fiber to wire converter in each of their basements that have UPSs powering them. That turned out to not be the cause. The next natural step was to enter their homes and use my spectrum analyzer to determine which house had the strongest internal signal level. At this point it was late and I was very tired and felt a little uncomfortable about entering their homes. Unfortunately the signal was gone by Thursday morning. Below is a link to a possible cause and after being thoughtful about the entire event, it seems to be the most likely. I am continuing to be in contact with the home owners and I have met a young man in that area who is an electrical engineer. He has access to a spectrum analyzer and is in full understanding of the problem. I have pretty much turned the issue over to him to follow up on if the noise returns.

73 Ben Fisher K9BF

Update on findings from Ben:

The interference stopped yesterday morning but I made a visit to the subdivision last night anyway. The remote keyless entry idea did not pan out. They were all working and were not anywhere near powerful enough to de-sense anything. The frequency was at 314.955 MHz and appeared to be a continuous retransmission of a burst of digital data and it was powerful enough to de-sense garage door receivers and car key-fobs for at least a half blocks distance. This is a fairly new subdivision with underground utilities and such. None of the known consumer transmitters at that frequency are powerful enough to block out that much area. One of my ideas was that it could have been a new device someone purchased and started playing around with last Friday. They may have realized it as being the source and simply turned it off yesterday morning and are remaining quiet about it out of a fear of embarrassment. But a new idea occurred to me overnight, a utility company meter reading transmitter. A transmitter used for this purpose would have to be powerful enough to get out of the subdivision to the antennas nearby on one of the utility poles. Each home has a separate transmitter which would send a burst of digital data when asked to do so and it would remain operational even with the main breaker to the houses disconnected. My research revealed that this kind of data reporting is usually done at 420 MHz or some other frequency that is not 315 MHz. The interfering signal was definitely at 314.955 MHz and was gone last night. So the criteria for the signal is a frequency of 314.955 MHz, powerful enough to de-sense receivers within a half block area or so, transmits data bursts and does not need AC power from the homes in the immediate area suggesting that it may be battery powered or associated with a device using a UPS.

VE Exam

Our next TCARC VE Exam Session is Sunday April 19 at 1:00 p.m. All elements are available for testing. This is the last time we use the current General Class Question Pool. The General questions change July 1 2015. The exam fee is \$15 as set by the ARRL VEC. This entitles the candidate to take one of each of the elements. A photo ID is required unless there is none available. Also, candidates are to bring a copy of any current license as well as the original.

Fox Hunt

The [ARES](#) group will have a Fox Hunt on Sunday, April 19, at 2 p.m. in Meadowbrook Park in Urbana. There will be instruction available for new hunters. TCARC members are welcome to attend and enjoy the fun of radio fox hunting.

Yaesu System Fusion Repeater

Our new [Yaesu repeater](#) is performing well in test mode. It is temporarily running on Al's K9SI repeater on 444.100. Since the K9SI repeater has no external connections, we felt it was a good choice to let the Yaesu repeater replace it for a short time. Everything remains the same including 162.2 tone and antennal. The power is less on the Yaesu, but it appears to perform well. Analog signals into it will be retransmitted analog. However, if a Fusion digital signal is sent to it, the repeater will output digital. Fusion digital is not compatible with other digital protocols. We do intend to replace the K9CU 146.760 repeater with the Yaesu, but some interface items need to be constructed to permit Echolink to operate. We won't put the Yaesu on K9CU until we are convinced that there will be no change from the present functions. We have not decided if digital will be an option when it is on K9CU. Stay tuned for further developments.

Field Day

The 4th weekend in June is fast approaching! We want to make plans well ahead of time to be sure everything is in place. We will operate at the same location as we have recently, the Ford-Harris Park. Paul, N9XDN, is heading up the operation and will look for some tentative commitments at our April meeting. He is looking for operators, station equipment, and support. Please let him know if you are interested in participating in this fun weekend. No firm commitments are made at this time, but it will help to know the level of interest. Paul will discuss this at the meeting.

Peoria Superfest Tickets

At the request of the [Peoria Superfest](#) Committee, Milt K9QZI has tickets for sale to this event which is September 18-20 2015. Always a big hit with TCARC members, Superfest is held at the Expo Gardens. Advance tickets with 2 prize stubs are \$7.00. At the gate, tickets are \$10 with one stub. See Milt for your advance ticket!

2015 Dayton Hamvention May 15-17 2015

In just a little over a month, 25,000+ Hams will head to Dayton, Ohio, for the annual Hamvention. This is a don't miss hamfest. Almost all vendors advertising in QST and CQ magazines will attend with their items to demonstrate and sell. The parking lot contains around 2,500 flea market spaces, all filled with vendors selling almost anything imaginable related to our hobby. The word is that if you can't find it at Dayton, it doesn't exist! If you want to sell items there, flea market spaces are still available. Use the [Hamvention](#) web to order spaces as well as entrance tickets. Spaces are \$70 each and advance tickets are \$20. At the gate, tickets are \$25. Parking is at a premium for visitors, but space is available in the old Shiloh Mall, a mile away. Bus service runs from that parking to the hamfest grounds as well as many Dayton hotels. Some hotel rooms are still open, but it is getting tight. An online hotel search can show where rooms are available. Most hotels increase room rates for the weekend, and some extremely overprice rooms. Most rooms run from under \$100 to \$200 plus. Rates above that exist, but are most likely very overpriced.

In addition to a huge opportunity to purchase all kinds of electronic items, many outstanding forums are presented all three days. Speakers are experts in the subject and are often well known to the Ham community.. Manufacturers like to introduce new products at the show, so watch for that new ham rig to be shown!

The best days to attend are Friday and Saturday. The Hamvention is still open Sunday, but many of the outside vendors head home Saturday evening. Inside tables are still active on Sunday.

TCARC members are welcome to use, free, our fleamarket spaces FW2731 to 2734. Supported by TCARC and K9QZI, this location may be used at no charge to sell items or just sit and relax. Soft drinks and snacks are available as well as chairs and shade. These spaces are located near the center of the West half of the flea market.