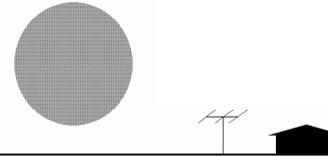


Twin City Amateur Radio Club

Champaign-Urbana, Illinois

October 2007

Milt Forsberg K9QZI, Editor



Hamfest Calendar

Oct 7 Bedford IN
13 Logan IL
20 Decatur IL
Nov 11 Litchfield IL ATV Banquet
17-18 Fort Wayne IN
24 Evansville IN

VE Exams

06-Oct-2007 SANGAMON VALLEY RADIO CLUB
9:00 AM (Walk-ins allowed) ARRL/VEC
JAMES STEVE UPCHURCH (217)529-3218
AMERICAN RED CROSS 1045 OUTER PARK DR
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62704

07-Oct-2007 WABASH VALLEY ARA
1:00 PM (Walk-ins allowed) ARRL/VEC
DAVID L PIFER (812)466-1005
GLAS-COL ANNEX NE CORNER OF 7TH & IDAHO ST.
1730 S 7TH ST (REAR OF BLDG) TERRE HAUTE, IN

21-Oct-2007 TWIN CITY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
1:00 PM (Walk-ins allowed) ARRL/VEC
DEBRA J FLIGOR (217)244-4446
UNIV OF IL FIRE SERVICE INST
11 GERTY DR CHAMPAIGN, IL 61820

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Meeting October 9

Our next meeting of the Twin City Amateur Radio Club is Tuesday, October 9 at 7:00 p.m. at the UI Fire Institute. The meeting will be a discussion/demonstration of simple portable antennas for Field Day and for other temporary uses. Mobile antennas may be included. A few of our members will discuss various types of these antennas.

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.

The Board meets the Thursday prior to the club meeting at 7:00 p.m. at the UI Fire Institute.. All members are welcome to attend.

Update on METCAD now MDICE

The local police dispatching has moved to the 800 MHz band, using digital technology. The move was planned for early summer, but a few problems caused a delay. The UI, Urbana, and County dispatch moved in late August. The Champaign Police moved to the new frequencies September 25. The Champaign dispatch is not simulcast to the old frequency. The UI/Urbana/County is still being simulcast on the old UHF frequencies. The fire departments have not moved yet. That is scheduled for around the first of next year.

September Picnic

Our September 9 meeting was a picnic with burgers and brats provided by the club. We met at Burwash Park in Savoy on a very nice Sunday afternoon in September. The meat was provided by the club and members brought dishes to share. We had around 30 attending the event. There was a transmitter hunt prior to the picnic. That began at 1 p.m. and finished prior to the picnic. A series of small local transmitter hunts were provided at the picnic for those wishing to sharpen their skills, or just to learn how to hunt. The transmitters were hidden within the confines of Burwash Park. The first person to locate the first person to locate the transmitter of the 1 p.m. hunt was Bill Cochran, W9JPN. He teamed up with Ben Fisher, K9BF, so they were scheduled to hide the next transmitter. That hunt was this past weekend.

TCARC Officers and Board Members

President Ralph Cox W9PGE	396-5111
Vice President Dr Mike Trautman	356-4302
Secretary Chris Anderson	403-1599
Treasurer Milt Forsberg K9QZI	352-5075

Board Members

Al Wolfe K9SI	688-2790
Wayne Hamilton AB9FJ	384-4310
Jeremy Lamb KC9KGJ	621-8036

VE Coordinator

Debbie Fligor N9DN	244-4446
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Website

www.w9seh.org

TCARC

PO Box 2061

Champaign, IL 61825-2061

Hamfests

There have been a few good hamfests since our September meeting. The largest one was in Peoria in mid-September. The weather was outstanding for the whole weekend, and the crowd was excellent on Saturday. The Sunday crowd was light, as usual, but there was still a lot of activity. Many of our TCARC members attended and most went home with lots of new goodies. Several of our members set up in the flea market and sold goods as well.

Two weeks later, this past weekend, the Chicago FM Club held Radio Expo in Belvidere. The fairgrounds in Grays Lake was sold and closed to make way for commercial buildings, so the hamfest changed locations, after a little over 30 years. For those of us in Central Illinois, the move made it much easier to attend. We did not have to travel around Chicago or pay tolls. The fairgrounds were much nicer than the old location. At the Belvidere location, almost every outside space had easy access to electricity and water. The restrooms were clean and the grounds were well lit overnight. Attendance was good, and looked about the same as in the past for this hamfest. Many vendors attended, mostly the same as in the past. Sales were very good for most. Camping was permitted and electricity was only \$10 for the whole weekend. The weather was outstanding. The staff was friendly and helpful. Overall, it was a very nice hamfest to attend.

Coming up this weekend is the Bedford, Indiana hamfest on Sunday October 7 at the Bedford fairgrounds. It is about a 3 hour drive, but worth the trip. This is a nice local hamfest with good attendance. Bedford is south of Bloomington, Indiana. On October 20, the Decatur, Illinois hamfest will be at the junior college on the Northwest side of Decatur. It is easy travel from our area. That one is Saturday only. November 11 finds the Litchfield ATV group holding their banquet in Litchfield. The Ft Wayne Indiana Hamfest is November 17 and 18,. It is always an outstanding hamfest, all inside at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum. Right after

Thanksgiving is the Evansville hamfest at the Vanderburgh County 4-H Fairgrounds Auditorium on the north side of Evansville. The date is November 24, Saturday only. It is mostly inside with an outside tailgate option, weather permitting.

A Fox Hunt

by Ben Fisher K9BF

Bill Cochran W9JPN and I hosted a fox hunt on Saturday September 29. I wanted the hunt to be something the new comers had not experienced and I wanted it to be relatively hard. I settled on having multiple foxes and a points system for determining the winner. Four teams consisting of Bill WB9KMD and Pat WB9PAT, Al K9SI and TJ N9PFC, Mark KC9DUU and Wayne AB9FJ, and Jeremy KC9KGJ and Kassie all gathered in the parking lot of Centennial High School in Champaign.

Bill W9JPN started transmitting from a lawn chair in Champaign's Mattis Park shortly after 10 AM. The first to find Bill and to gain 5 points was Mark and Wayne, the last to find him was Jeremy and Kassie. Larry K9LMM and I were hidden in the bottoms of Sidney's Witt Park. I started transmitting at about 10:30 and the first to find me some two hours later was Jeremy KC9KGJ followed closely by Al K9SI. Mark KC9DUU found me an hour or so later. The third fox was Larry sitting in a lawn chair hidden deep in the woods. After each hunter found Larry, they were given the frequency of another automated fox hidden in the woods of Witt Park. In all, there were a total of 6 foxes with a maximum possible score of 30 points. Jeremy KC9KGJ proved to be a wizard at portable hunting with his borrowed antenna and offset attenuator. Jeremy found all the automated foxes in short order to win the over-all hunt with a final score of 27 points. Second place went to Al with 22 points with Mark and Wayne at 21 points.

The weather for the hunt was perfect and I enjoyed entertaining the hunters with taunts of eating their chicken. My old truck was hidden in tall brush next to a stream that runs through Witt

Park. My antenna was a three element tape measure hung in a tree about 15 feet off the ground. I enjoyed listening to all the stories while eating lunch in St Joseph. It indeed proved to be a difficult hunt with the last automated fox removed from the park at about 3:30.

Get Ready for JOTA

From the ARRL News

Jamboree on the Air will celebrate its 50th year this year when it gets on the air October 19-21. Normally a 48 hour event, this year's JOTA will be 50 hours long in recognition of the anniversary. The fun begins at 2200 (local time) October 19 and ends at midnight (local time) October 21.

An on-the-air operating event sponsored by the World Scout Bureau, JOTA was founded in 1958 by Les Mitchell, G3BHK. It has grown to become the largest international Scout event. More than half a million Scouts and Guides in more than 100 countries participate in JOTA, involving as many as 10,000 Amateur Radio stations.

The event relies on the Amateur Radio community and local hams for its success. Getting Boy and Girl Scouts (including Cubs and Brownies) on the air to talk with other Scouts around the world provides a great opportunity to expose youth to Amateur Radio. Some troops and clubs team up to make a big splash with lots of activities, radios and antennas, offering a variety of modes to experience. For others, JOTA provides an opportunity to coach a smaller group of Scouts and to just have fun talking on the radio. Scouts usually enjoy communicating by speaking into a microphone, but some radio amateurs are able to provide other modes, such as slow-scan TV or amateur TV, satellites, packet radio, RTTY or even EME!

Repeater Updates

The K9BF repeater is now capable of digital audio. A Motorola digital repeater is temporarily in place that accepts APCO25 (P25) digital audio or analog audio. You will hear a buzz when it is

in digital mode. P25 is used in commercial systems such as our own METCAD, now MDICE. Some Amateurs have adopted the P25 standard for repeaters in a few locations. This mode has been around commercially for many years. At present, there are 14 repeaters in the USA and Canada in 3 states (1-CA, 2-FL, and 11-IL) using P25, according to the 2007-2008 ARRL Repeater Directory. There may be others, but if they are not listed, they most likely do not want outside users. P25 radios must be purchased in the commercial radio market. There are no Amateur P25 radios, only commercial radios programmed for the Amateur service are available. These are single band radios. The Amateur digital radios use D-Star, an Amateur digital system developed in Japan. At present, Icom is the only producer of D-Star Amateur Radios, but others plan to provide D-Star radios soon. These radios are dual and/or triple band capable. In the ARRL directory, 35 D-Star systems are listed in 12 states and provinces. D-Star has been available only for 2-3 years. The Amateur radios can be programmed easily while the commercial radios must use proprietary software and cables. Many cannot be programmed without a computer. Amateur radios can be front panel programmed or with a computer, using Amateur priced software and cables. P25 and D-Star are not compatible with each other. The big question is which system to use. At present, P25 is ok for Chicago, a couple of Florida locations, and one in California. D-Star is heavy in Alabama, and appears in 11 more states and provinces, including AZ, CA, FL, GA, IL, MO, TX, UT, VA, and BC and ON in Canada. The K9SI 444.100 repeater is testing a Motorola P25 digital capable repeater also. Some problems have surfaced which prevent a few Amateur analog radios from accessing that repeater, due to tolerance of CTCSS tones. These radios worked on the old 444.100 repeater and they work at locations across the USA, but not on the new repeater. Amateur standards may be a little lower than commercial standards, thus causing the problem. No information has been presented by the owners on the long term future of either of these systems. If you have a P25 capable scanner, you can listen to the digital transmissions on 444.525.