

The Hertzian Herald



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ON the AIR with **K8MLH**



I attended the Findlay Hamfest on September 11th. The Great Lakes Division Convention was also held during and at the Hamfest. As the newly appointed Emergency Coordinator for the Monroe County Amateur Radio Public Service Corps (ARPC) I thoroughly enjoyed listening to Dale, W8EFK as he did a presentation on Emergency Communications (EmComm) and several additional presentations. I also had an opportunity to meet with some of the ARES folks from surrounding counties and learned some of what they are doing in their respective areas. We will be working on rebuilding the MCRPSC and getting our members credentialed and trained to support our served agencies in times of emergencies or just to provide communications during one of their events. Watch for more on this in the coming months.

In last month's HH article, I reported that the "next (and last for the 2011 season) Foxhunt will be Saturday, October 22nd." I was a little ahead of myself in that I skipped right over the September 24th hunt. Paul, W8PI had a crafty lair in Bolles Harbor in the driveway of a relative under a carport - great hiding place. Dale, W8EFK and Mike, N8KUF found the fox in the shortest distance followed by Fred, KA8EBI, Brenda, KB8KQC and John N8RWI. Third place was yours truly and a newcomer to the sport, Ben, KD8QVG. Ben will be going into the military and leaving for boot camp. We wish him well.

With that said, now I can honestly say, "Our next (and last for the 2011 season) Foxhunt will be Saturday, October 22nd." Come out and join us at the American Red Cross on N. Dixie Highway and I-75 at 0900 hours local time. The Hunt will last until all hunters have found the Fox or 3 hours, whichever is shortest. If you don't have the necessary equipment to hunt yourself, come along and we will pair you up with someone who does. It will be a fun time for all and allow us to practice these techniques which have a practical application to our hobby. If you do participate in the hunts, consider bringing a friend.

On Saturday, October 2nd, we participated in the ARRL Simulated Emergency Test (SET). This was a very limited test for our group. We had 4 primary focus areas for this test:

- Following the directions of the NCS
- Operating on emergency power
- Establishing a liaison with SEMTN to pass traffic from and to the State EOC
- Performing a turnover as NCS

We held an After Action Review (AAR) on Thursday, October 6th as part of the ARES meeting held at the American Red Cross. We captured a number of actions that we will be working on to improve our ability to support our served agencies (and to perform better at next year's SET). I personally learned a lot as far as our capabilities and limitations, scenario development and getting the whole group more involved in the SET. Mark your calendars now for next year's SET - October 6, 2012. I want to thank those who participated in the SET - I have a certificate for each person that checked in to the various nets that were established. If you have not gotten your certificate yet, I have it so please see me. Also thank you to those who came to the AAR and offered ideas for improvement.

We will see you at the meeting Thursday night. 73 Mike Hall - K8MLH MCRCA 2011 President

Club Officers

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MCRCA Minutes:

September 15, 2011

Meeting called to order at 7:34 pm, by Mike K8MLH
Pledge of Allegiance

Introductions: One new member and upgrade: Terry Kolton N8NYP upgraded to Extra

PROGRAM: SWR video by K8MLH part 2

BREAK

DOOR PRIZE DRAWING: Paul W8PI, Mike N8KUF
50/50: Bill WB8JAI donated winnings to club

MINUTES: Motion by Keith K8YKD, supported by Martin KB8TMJ, to approve as written in the Herald. Approved.

TREASURER REPORT: Motion by Paul W8PI, supported by Rita WB8FBG, to approve the treasurer's report as passed out to the membership. Approved.

DX REPORT: By Tom KG8P, chasing ZK2 today in the Pacific, VK9OL on 10m. The majority of DX contacts are CW which is very popular for DX. East Timor coming on soon.

FUTURE PROGRAMS: The DVD on SWR to finish next month. Kraig N8KJF offered to do a club program on transmission line "J" Factor.

HERTZIAN HERALD: Please send your stories and articles to Fred KA8EBI.

CLASSES: Toledo, Extra class in Sandusky 7 weeks on Saturdays. (editor's note: class was full when I checked) Tech class: Starts October 27, and last class and test November 5th. "Challenger" learning center for kids now learning CW. Open visit for hams to be announced.

TESTING: Next session October 15th.

FOX HUNT: Saturday, September 24th 9am Red Cross. Last hunt was won by Paul W8PI who will be the fox for the September hunt. Come out and team up with someone.

ARPSC: S.E.T. October 1st, 0900, details to follow. We will play with Washtenaw County. Listen to the 72 repeater.

Next ARPSC meeting will be October 6th, 1900 EDT at the Red Cross Bldg. You are encouraged to check into the Monday night nets on 146.72 to keep up to date on the latest information.

RRRA: Dale announced, "system, nominal operation". Phone was converted to digital cellular service to replace more costly land line service.

OLD BUSINESS: Rita WB8FBG will be heading up the Boy Scout's JOTA October 15th at St. Mary's Park. Set up starts at 0800, expecting 20 Scouts, to work for Merit Badges.

Membership - Patrick K8OCL is working on drafting letters to invite new members to the club. He's also working on fliers for distribution.

70th anniversary party - Need to select a location and date in November.

NEW BUSINESS: Publish Board meeting minutes in Herald.

ANOUNCEMENTS: Announced that Dale WA8EFK would no longer be Section Manager, but will be serving as ARRL Great Lakes Vice-Director.

ADJOURNED: 8:44 pm.

Committees

Classes

Rita Baker WB8FBG

Club Station

Rita Baker WB8FBG

DX Net

Olimpio Varsogea WB8SEZ

Field Day

Jeff Breitner KA8NCR

Finance

Paul Trouten W8PI (chair)
Fred VanDaele KA8EBI
Dale Williams WA8EFK

HamFest

Fred VanDaele KA8EBI

Hertzian Herald

Fred VanDaele KA8EBI

Historian

Nick Peth AF8CS

Public Relations

Jeff Breitner KA8NCR

Scholarship

Fred VanDaele KA8EBI

School Liaison

Eric Worstell KC8QAH

Programs

open

Membership

open

Planning

open

Property Custodian

open

MCRCA Board Meeting August 17, 2011

Attendance:

Mike K8MLH Wes KC8SKP Brenda KB8KQC Fred KA8EBI Paul W8PI Rita WB8FBG

It was agreed that periodic board meetings would not be necessary.

We received quite a list of suggestions for programs for future club meetings, and will try to find people to present some of these in the future.

Rita WB8FBG volunteered to coordinate the radio set-up for the Boy Scouts with JOTA October 15, 2011.

Patrick K8OCL volunteered to do the new recruitment letters. Three letters one for non-members, one for old members, and one for newly licensed amateurs.

Being the club has numerous activities during the year it was decided that we should make up a club activities book with details of who leads (or has led) each, and what is involved in each activity. Any volunteers?

It was brought up that the Elmer list on the club web site needs to be updated since some people on the list haven't been to a meeting in a long time.

The club's 70th anniversary is this year and it was decided to have some kind of celebration in November. A committee is being formed to help plan this event. If you would like to help out please contact a board member. Current committee members: Paul W8PI, Dale WA8EFK, Fred KA8EFK, and Brenda KB8KQC. Paul suggested a dinner at LaRoy's hall on Telegraph Road.

US Amateurs Now 700,000 Strong!

As the third quarter of 2011 came to a close, ARRL VEC Manager Maria Somma, AB1FM, began calculating the number of licensed Amateur Radio operators in the US, as well as the number of new licensees. "At the end of September, I saw that the number of hams in the US was high," she said. "When I started comparing that number with other years, I found that it was an all-time high." For the first time, there are more than 700,000 radio amateurs in the US.

"When looking at the three current license classes — Technician, General and Amateur Extra — these numbers are impressive," Somma explained. "The number of Technicians peaked in March 2011 at 342,572, while in September 2011, we saw both Generals and Extras peak at 159,861 and 125,661, respectively. As new Technicians earn their Amateur Radio licenses, and current Technician licensees move on to General and Generals upgrade to Extra, this can cause up-and-down fluctuations for these totals."

Somma said these high numbers mean that hams are upgrading and renewing in larger numbers and staying interested in hobby: "These are compelling statistics and I am thrilled to see the highest number of amateur radio licensees ever! When I began working at the ARRL back in the mid 1980s, there were approximately 450,000 amateurs in the US. Our VEC program conducted an average of 55 sessions a week. Today, we administer approximately 150 exam sessions each week, and our total number of licensees across all three license classes continues to grow each year."

In the past 40 years, the number of Amateur Radio operators in the US has grown at a remarkable rate:

- December 1971: 285,000
- December 1981: 433,000
- December 1991: 494,000
- December 2001: 683,000
- September 2011: 700,221

"As technology changes and advances, it is especially vital to keep up or be at the forefront," Somma said. "I believe that Amateur Radio has done just that! The measurable results are our indisputable license numbers. It amazes me after all these years how important and relevant Amateur Radio remains. I am proud to be one of the 700,221 licensees and to see this historic and important milestone." (From ARRL web site. Thanks to Tom KG8P for this article)

It's Back to School Time...for Ham Radio, too!

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

As I write this, it's about 85 degrees, and I'm sitting on the patio of a cottage overlooking Elk Lake in northern Michigan. This idyllic spot is about as far away from school as you can get. And yet, in less than a month, kids will be back in school, and if kids are going to be back in school, why not ham radio operators?

The fall is a good time to begin teaching a new group of Technicians. I favor the "Tech in a Day" or "Ham Cram" type of class. This type of class focuses on teaching students the answers to questions on the test rather than the material itself.

There's a lot of controversy about this, and many decry this method of teaching, but I think the best way to learn about ham radio is by actually doing it, and you can't do if you don't have a license. Besides, how much more instruction will students actually get in a more traditional eight-week or ten-week course, maybe 16 hours? Will those 16 hours make that much of a difference?

For the sake of argument, let's say that you've decided to offer a one-day Tech class. Now what? Well, the first thing you have to do is to find a place to teach it. Possible sites include your local public library, a township hall, a community college, perhaps even your church.

Now that you have the place, you need to find some students. Your local emergency-management group would be a good place to start. Also, make sure a notice gets published in your amateur radio club's newsletter. Chances are most of the subscribers already have licenses, but they may have friends or relatives who would be interested. Also, make sure the class gets listed in the upcoming events section of local newspapers or magazines.

Once people start signing up, you should suggest that they either purchase a study guide or download my free study guide (www.kb6nu.com/tech-manual). Because I use my study guide when teaching the class, I always advise them to get a copy, but if you'll be using other materials, then your advice may differ.

I counsel the students to read through my study guide a few times and take some online practice tests before coming to class. That will make them familiar with the material, especially areas they may be weak in or have questions about. By bringing those questions to class, we can address those areas in a little more depth, which will, hopefully, give them the help they need to pass the test.

The class itself is six hours long, running from 9am to 3pm, at which time we give them the test. This is not a lot of time for the amount of material I have to cover, so I move along at a pretty brisk pace. I concentrate on giving them the answers, but with enough context to that it all makes sense.

OK, let's say your class was wildly successful, and you now have a group of newly-minted Techs. What do you do now?

Well, you might consider offering some short sessions on what ham radio operators do—Ham Radio 101, so to speak. The topics could include how to choose your first radio, the basics of FM repeater and net operation, and building your first antenna (say a 2m ground plane). They'll be more enthusiastic about these classes now that they actually have a license.

It might also be a good idea to schedule a General Class license course for sometime shortly after the Tech class. This will encourage them to upgrade while they are enthusiastic about the hobby.

I hope that this has encouraged you to offer some ham radio courses of your own. If you have any questions, feel free to e-mail me at cwgeek@kb6nu.com or phone me at 734-930-6564. Good luck, and let me know how your classes turn out.

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When not preparing for his next ham radio class, Dan publishes the "No-Nonsense" study guides for the Technician and General Class license exams. Free versions and print version are available from his website at www.kb6nu.com/tech-manual. E-book versions are available for the Kindle and devices that run the Kindle app on Amazon.Com and for the Nook on BarnesandNoble.Com.

Lightning Strike

If you're like me, the only time you think about lightning and amateur radio is when you stumble across an article in QST.

You've seen them; they're wedged between the lab test equipment I'll never own and the antenna farm that I can't afford!

On July 5th, lightening and amateur radio became a lot more "personal" for me. First, let me digress a bit. Some of you may know that my business is wind energy. I manage a group of companies that provide technology or service for wind turbines. As a result, over the last few years, I've learned a lot about lightning.

Here's some trivia for you. Each year about 15% of all wind turbines get struck by lightning. Some get hit regularly! If Mother Nature isn't throwing lightning against the turbine, the turbine is often making its own lightning! Long fiberglass and carbon fiber blades spinning through very dry air (either in the desert or during the winter in the rest of the country) creates huge volumes of static electricity on the blades.

Once it reaches a certain point, BANG! you get a static discharge of lightning.

OK, back to my story. On July 5th, I was about to turn off the light and go to sleep. Outside was a summer rain and thunder storm. So what's so weird about this, huh? We'll at about 930pm, there was a huge thunder crash and a flash that must have lit up most of North Carolina, or at least it seemed that way.

Well, this "event" was enough to get me out of bed to "check my radios. I make a point of unplugging my radios and disconnecting the antennas when I'm not using them. After checking, I was proud of myself. The antennas were disconnected and the radios were unplugged.

The fun started on July 6th. I sat down in my home office and was ready to re-engage the workplace after the holiday. Oops. What? No internet. Oh well, that happens when you live out in the country like I do. No problem, I'll just call the cable company.....hmmmm. No telephone!

Well, I'll use my cellphone. Nope. Too far out in the country without the wonder of the AT&T microcell. No worries. I'll just drive to town and get a better signal. After all, I'm leaving for a road trip in a few hours so I'll make a quick call from town, come home, pack my bags and off I go! The cable can be fixed while I'm gone.

When I got home from placing the service call, I happened to look out the window. Hmmmm, what's that grey thing in the flower bed? It must be something that blew across the yard in the storm. I'd better go pick it up before it blows further.

I went outside and the "excitement" began. It turns out the "grey thing" was, in fact, the sprinkler system control box from the side of my house. As I picked it up and turned toward the house, the scene really set me back. The sprinkler control was blown off the wall. I picked up the piece that landed 30 feet away! It looked like someone had set off a bomb inside the sprinkler box. Wires were burned, plastic was melted, and pieces of electronic circuit boards were spread across my yard.

A closer look showed a small crater in front of my office window. Wow, I thought, this was quite a lightning strike. It turns out that the lightning hit the ground and entered the sprinkler system through the control wires that are buried with the pipes. As it traveled to the control box, it jumped to the cable TV line. Also along the way, it crossed three of my antenna cables.

(cont'd next page)



So, I now understood the sprinkler box. And, the lack of internet and phone had an explanation. But, I was yet to understand the radio damage. After all, I had a plane to catch. When I got back from my trip, I sat down to work a few special event stations. Odd, the power supply won't turn on. Weird, the radio won't turn on. Strange, the amplifier won't turn on. It seems that the lightning jumped to the antenna cables. While the radios were disconnected, the antennas were still connected to the amplifier!

At the end of the day, the result was a Yaesu FT1000MP that was toast. A Yaesu Quadra Amplifier that was cooked. Two dipoles that now had melted baluns. A vertical with a melted coil system. And, a Yaesu rotor for the beam that was smoked! As a small consolation, Mother Nature didn't seem to hit the beam itself. Important note: I had all the radio gear grounded to an 8 foot copper rod.

Nothing motivates the do-it-yourselfer more than a problem. So, I went to work on making sure that when I put the station back together, it would be as well-grounded as possible.

Attached is my solution. I bought a sprinkler control box from my local Lowes. I took out the GFCI outlet and replaced the components with what you see in the photos. You'll note that the box now contains its own ground system. Each coax cable enters the box and passes through a MFJ lightning arrestor. Each arrestor is grounded to a steel bus bar and the bar is connected to an 8' copper ground rod.

At the radio (sorry, no pictures), the radio, amplifier, power supply, meters, speakers and everything but my logbook are grounded to a copper bus bar on the radio table and then to a separate ground rod.



While I don't want to tempt Mother Nature again, I'm as ready as I can get.

Here are a few things to think about:

1. Lightning is completely unpredictable. Scientists don't really know why it happens, why it hits where it does, or why it travels where it does. Believe me; my business is spending a small fortune with the best lightning consultants in the world.
2. Lightning is very high voltage stuff. If you have your equipment grounded with a 12 gauge wire, it's probably better than nothing, but not much better. Amperage present in lightning can melt your 12 gauge wire in a split second.
3. Don't forget the power lines. Power strips and surge protectors aren't the same thing. Good surge protectors aren't cheap but they are effective.
4. Be careful in picking your surge protector if you plan to route your cable/satellite, phone and/or internet through it. Some surge protectors won't pass high frequencies very well and your signals could suffer.
5. It's a good idea to put a lock on your protector box. Mine came with an included lock. Remember your RF has some high voltages present and RF burns are no fun. Keep your connections secure.
6. Don't cut corners. Every antenna cable is a path to your house and then through your electrical system to everything else in your house. Lightning is an unpredictable phenomenon that will find the path you missed.

Good luck and good DX
Rob Giebel KJ3C

(Thanks to Rita WB8FBG for this contribution to the Herald.)

DX Net, Tues. 8:30pm
Olimpio Varsogea
WB8SEZ



The editors of 425 DX News
Mauro and Valeria Pregliasco
(I1JQJ and IK1ADH) are the
first Italian inductees into
the CQ DX Hall of Fame
(May 07)

till 24/09	OZ0AV: Laeso Island (EU-088)	till 31/12	HG200LST: special event callsign
till 24/09	TK/F5RBB and TK/F4FRL: Corsica	till 31/12	IA7MM: special event station
till 24/09	TM33LDX: special event callsign (France) 1063	till 31/12	IIIITA, II5ITA, II0ITA: special callsigns 1022
till 25/09	9U7T: Burundi	till 31/12	III1TO: special callsign
till 25/09	LX8M: Luxembourg	till 31/12	II4LXV: special event callsign
till 25/09	PA11WSF: special callsign	till 31/12	PD04ISLE: Tiengemeten Island (EU-146) 1043
till 26/09	4W6A: Atauro Island (OC-232)	till 31/12	PI30ETL: special event callsign
till 26/09	7P8EME: Lesotho	till 31/12	RI1ANC: Vostok Station, Antarctica
till 26/09	OX/OK1IEC, OX/OK1JK, OX/OK1JST, OX/ OK1VVT: Greenland 1061	till 20/09/12	YT16ARDF and YU16ARDF: special callsigns 1062
till 26/09	OX4OK: Greenland	till 20/09/12	YT16IARU and YU16IARU: special callsigns 1062
till 27/09	9H3IP: Malta (EU-023)	23/09-24/09	TP50CE: special callsign (France)
till 27/09	T88UE and T8XX: Palau (OC-009)	24/09	IL3A: Lido Island (EU-131)
till 28/09	5C2B/p, 5C2J/p, 5C2L/p: Herne Island (AF-068) 1059	24/09-30/09	FP/G3ZAY, FP/G4EAG, FP/M0BLF: Miquelon (NA-032) 1064
till 28/09	5C2P/p and 5C2SG/p: Herne Island (AF-068) 1059	24/09-30/09	FP/M0TOC, FP/M0VFC, FP/M1BXF: Miquelon (NA-032) 1064
till 30/09	IO4UI: special callsign	24/09-01/10	OZ/DG0OGM, OZ/DK1AW, OZ/DL3ARK: Helnaes Isl (EU-172) 1063
till 30/09	K3GV/VY2: Prince Edward Island (NA-029) 1059	24/09-01/10	OZ/DL4AMK and OZ/DL5ASE: Helnaes Isl (EU-172) 1063
till 30/09	SV9/WB2GAI/p: Crete (EU-015)	25/09-30/09	K9YNF/1: Peaks Island (NA-137)
till 30/09	W2WTC: 9/11 memorial station	25/09-10/10	SV5/LA4GY: Rhodes (EU-001)
till 30/09	W6HGF/KH0: Saipan (NA-086)	27/09-07/10	3D2R: Rotuma Island (OC-060)
till September	P29CW: Papua New Guinea (OC-034)	27/09-30/09	YJ0ABP and YJ0ANR: Efate (OC- 035), Vanuatu 1063
till September	ZD9GI: Gough Island (AF-030)	28/09-29/09	MM0RAI/p: Rockall (EU-189)
till 01/10	TK/DF6ZY: Corsica (EU-014)	28/09-26/10	T32C: Kiritimati (OC-024), Eastern Kiribati 1064
till 02/10	IR2LV: special event callsign	30/09-02/10	4K3K, 4J0K and 4J0SFR: Nagorno- Karabakh 1064
till 03/10	7Q7CE: Malawi	30/09-03/10	DJ4EL/p: Helgoland-Duene (EU- 127) 1064
till 04/10	W1UE/6Y5 and 6Y6U: Jamaica (NA- 097) 1063	30/09-06/10	PA/DL2VFR: Ameland Island (EU- 038) 1064
till 11/10	OJ0X: Market Reef (EU-053)	30/09-01/10	PG6MILL: "De Valk" windmill
till 15/10	JG8NQJ/JD1: Minami Torishima (OC-073) 1056	30/09-02/10	TM5Q: Quemenes Island (EU-065)
till 15/10	PZ5LP: Surinam	30/09-12/10	YJ0VK: Efate (OC-035), Vanuatu September SU/HA3JB: Egypt
till 19/10	CE2/CX1EK: Chile	01/10-08/10	MS0WRC: Isle of Tiree (EU-008)
till 25/10	5B50J: special callsign (Cyprus)	03/10-08/10	V63DX and V63T: Pohnpei (OC-010)
till 31/10	CF, CI, CH, CG: special prefixes (Canada) 1060	04/10-26/10	FR/DJ7RJ: Reunion Island (AF- 016) 1064
till 31/10	ZL4RUGBY: special callsign	05/10-08/10	DK0RZ: Hallig Hooge (EU-042)
till 31/10	ZL6RWC: special event station	08/10-21/10	H40KJ: Pigeon Island (OC-065), Temotu Province 1060
till 06/11	HF36POL: special event station	09/10-10/10	IZ4AMS/p: Tinetto Island (EU- 083) 1064
till 21/11	9A20V: special callsign	10/10-05/11	V47JA: St. Kitts (NA-104)
till 23/11	7Q7HB: Malawi	12/10-15/10	YJ0ABP and YJ0ANR: Efate (OC- 035), Vanuatu 1063
till 30/11	8J1MORSE: special callsign		
till 30/11	R300ML: special station		
till 30/11	T5/TA1AMC: Somalia		
till November	9Q6CC: Democratic Republic of the Congo 1017		
till 31/12	BP100: special callsign		
till 31/12	BV100: special callsign		
till 31/12	CW5RV: special callsign		
till 31/12	GB65ISWL: special callsign		
till 31/12	HB60LU: special event callsign (Switzerland) 1029		
till 31/12	HG15IPA: special callsign		

Amateur Radio Examinations Monroe, MI

Monroe County Radio Communications Association Amateur Radio examinations are held the 3rd Saturday of every even numbered month at:

American Red Cross Chapter Bldg.
1645 North Dixie Highway
Monroe, MI 48161

Walk-ins are always welcome.

2011 Schedule:

February 19	April 16
June 18	August 20
October 15	December 17

TESTING BEGINS PROMPTLY AT 9:00 AM

Applicants are expected to have all forms filled out and be ready to take tests at that time. Coffee and doughnuts are available at 8:30 AM. For more information or to make reservations, call Paul Trouten - W8PI at 734-854-2224

Join us at the next meeting

October 20th at 7:30 pm
American Red Cross Chapter Bldg.
1645 North Dixie Highway
Monroe, MI 48162

Local Nets

ARPSC Net - Every Monday evening on '72-Monroe (146.72 Mhz) starting at 9:00 pm.

DX Net - Every Tuesday evening on '72-Monroe starting at 8:30 pm.