

February 2007

Smoke Signals

The Indian Hills Radio Club

www.hac.org/ihr

Wickliffe, Ohio 44092

Ohio OO Coordinator is guest Speaker February 12th

You'll hear how ARRL volunteers help us

Our special guest speaker Monday, February 12th will be Richard Swain, KK8O, the ARRL's Official Observer Coordinator for Ohio.

Note that our speaker's program will be first on the agenda, starting shortly after with gather at 7:15 p.m. The business meeting will follow the coffee break.

A veteran Official Observer, Swain was first appointed in 1976 while stationed in Upper Michigan. He has served as the Ohio Official Observer Coordinator since 2004.

Rick plans to give us an overview of the ARRL OO/FCC Auxiliary Program including how to become certified, and what OOs do and don't do. A question and answer period will follow.

Because of the wide interest in this topic, we ask members to invite a guest to hear this program.

Among the current matters being discussed by the club are membership, recruiting, and possible future activities to promote Amateur Radio to the public. The FCC's decision to drop the Morse code testing requirement could present an opportunity for radio hams to invite those who have been unable or unwilling to learn Morse to reconsider getting a license.

The club meeting will be held, as usual, at the Wickliffe Public Library, 1713 Lincoln Road, Wickliffe.

Remember, this meeting is open to all radio Amateurs, so spread the word. ■

Indian Hills Radio Club Net
Thursday Evenings
8:00 PM local time
146.430 MHz simplex

Morse code is dropped Effective February 23

Will there be a rush to higher class licenses?

It's now official: the FCC's elimination of Morse code testing for an Amateur Radio license becomes effective Friday, February 23rd. The date was established by the publication of the FCC's order in the Federal Register.

On that date, applicants for a General or Extra Class Amateur Radio license will no longer have to demonstrate proficiency in Morse code. They'll just have to pass a written examination.

Here is the official FCC statement concerning its action:

"The overall effect of this action is to further the public interest by encouraging individuals who are interested in communications technology or who are able to contribute to the advancement of the radio art, to become Amateur Radio operators; and eliminating a requirement that is now unnecessary and may discourage Amateur Radio Service licensees from advancing their skills in the communications and technical phases of Amateur Radio."

For Technicians, the new rules mean that whether or not a person has passed a Morse exam they will have CW privileges on 80, 40 and 15 meters plus CW, RTTY, data and SSB privileges on 10 meters.

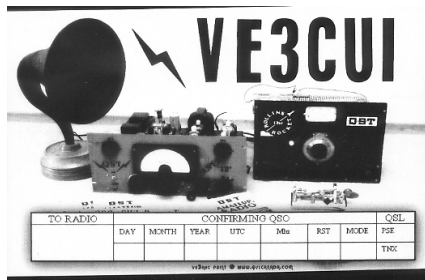
While the ARRL had petitioned the FCC to maintain a five word-per-minute Morse requirement for Extra class candidates, that was not adopted by the Commission.

Considerable discussion and debate surrounded the FCC action, notably the issue of retaining Morse code and the impact it might have on the quality of licensees. The FCC said that it saw no connection between retaining the Morse code exam and the "quality" of Amateur Radio licensees or their operating practices. ■

Homebrewing classic radios; A passion with VE3CUI

An interesting encounter on 160

One of the first contacts made on 160 meters by W1HEO happened to be with Edward Swynar, VE3CUI, of Newcastle, Ontario. An exchange of QSLs also brought photographs of the VE3CUI



shack that clearly showed a variety of major homebrew projects.

As you can see on the QSL at left, Ed also recre-

ates some classic antique rigs of the distant past. Shown, left to right, are a 1929 12-tube Superhetrodyne receiver, and a 1923 P-P Colpitts transmitter with 2x203A tubes. All rigs were built by VE3CUI between 2003 and 2005.

A pair of color photos sent by VE3CUI also document additional handiwork. An amplifier with a pair of 813 tubes was shown, with full metering, controls for tune, load, and pi tank coil plus inputs. a Heathkit monitorscope, homebrew antenna tuner, antenna switches and several other items that we couldn't quite identify.

An amazing display of ingenuity and construction talent from a ham who clearly knows his equipment inside and out. ■

Smoke Signals is the official publication of The Indian Hills Radio Club.

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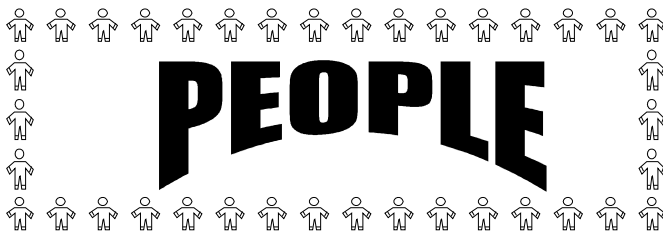
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Three-alarm lunch: The regular Friday lunch crowd has been meeting at 11:30 each week at the Firehouse Grille & Pub which is located 2768 Stark Drive just off route 6 and west of S.O.M. Center (route 91). The easiest way to find the Firehouse is to take a left off route 6 just past Fazio's and you'll find it on the right, just a few feet south of route six. Food is good, plus there are adult beverages. Compared to Denny's, well, there's no comparison. So join the gang and then you can help discuss a multitude of issues and solve the problems of the world. Even ham radio!

Joe's construction zone: Progress has been made by **Joe Gutoskey, W8DOE**, on his major project of restoring a Central Electronics 20A transmitter. Joe says that he's made one rig out of two by "borrowing" parts from one to complete the other. We await a trial contact.

Luck be a lady! The recent nasty, snowy winter weather has been something to escape from. So it was that **Frank Oblak, KB8WHY**, escaped to a much warmer Las Vegas recently, where the casinos, at least, offered a warmer environment. Did he return as a winner or something less exciting? You'll have to ask him!

A sunny solar outlook? These days, DXers are most concerned about solar cycles. Mostly about the current cycle. Is it done? If so, is the new cycle starting? This query is posed by **Dick Scott, W8FDN**, as he mulls over this question. The new cycle brings more sunspots, which equals more DX on the HF bands. We can only hope that the DX future begins now. (See page four.)

Home improvement? Who among us hasn't struggled to program ham gear or home appliances? Well, **Gus Mirsalis, W8RPT**, reports that he's trying to understand programming instructions for home automation modules and a controller. We wish him luck, and ask for a report of his anticipated success or frustration.

Our "Shrining" light: Among the many activities that keep **Don Ritchie, K8ZGW**, busy these days is his activity in the Al Koran Shrine, where he serves as President of the past master's club, director of the radio unit, and Webmaster for Al Koran.org.

Another look back at The club's ancient past

Remember: photos don't lie!

As we recall those early days of the club's youth, and chuckle over dusty photos from a much earlier time, let's remember that regardless of the cast of characters, the club has survived 50-plus years. Amazing isn't it?

We were given a stack of historical, oops, historical photos from Fritz, K8WLF, by way of Jeff, WA8SAJ, and share one of them now. Your task, should you care to accept it, is to identify these carefree youth.



These three members are:

- A. The three stooges
- B. The three musketeers
- C. The three parolees
- D. The Nairobi Trio
- E. All of the above

A hint: two out of the three amigos are still active in our radio club. ■

Announcements

Toledo Hamfest: The Toledo Mobile Radio Association will hold its hamfest Sunday, March 18th from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Lucas County Recreation Center, 2901 Key St., Maumee, OH. This is an indoor hamfest, with free parking at the recreation center near the hamfest. Tickets are \$6.00, tables are \$20.00 (floor) or \$25.00 (wall). Table application forms are online at: <www.tmrahamradio.org> Send ticket requests to: TMRA, P.O. Box 9673, Toledo, OH 43697-0673.



News From The Wide World of Amateur Radio

Ham license statistics: A look at the latest figures for the Amateur Radio Service as of January 1, 2007, reveals a total U.S. ham radio population of 655,833. Of this number, there are 322,966 Technicians and 108,205 Extras. Gone are 866 Advanced, 704 Generals and 683 Novice-class licensees. These numbers are from K3UD as reported on the Amateur Radio Newslines.

Emergency committee report: The ARRL Board has accepted a post Katrina report by the National Emergency Response Planning Committee that included several suggestions for Amateur Radio. Among them: enhance training in message handling, develop a course on use of Winlink 2000 for e-mail, develop a major disaster coordinator function to help during large-scale emergencies and improve coordination with national served agencies.

President notes hams: President Bush has written to the ARRL, expressing "greetings to all those celebrating 100 years of voices over the airwaves. I appreciate all who work in radio and I am grateful to the Amateur Radio operators who provide emergency communications that help make our country safer and more secure."

BPL bill in Congress: U.S. Rep. Mike Ross, WD5DVR (D-AR), has introduced a bill in the 110th Congress calling on the FCC to study the interference potential of broadband over powerline (BPL) technology and report its findings back to Congress.

Hams help in ice storm: ARES and other volunteers in Oklahoma provided emergency communications during a major ice storm that struck January 12. Some hams went door-to-door checking on older residents.

Historic wireless transmission: A Christmas Eve CW transmission from the SAQ Alexanderson alternator in Grimeton, Sweden, drew numerous reports. SAQ's 200 kW signal on 17.2 kHz was barely readable in North America. The event marked the 100th anniversary of Reginald Fessenden's historic voice broadcast from Brant Rock, Mass., on Christmas Eve 1906. Jay Rusgrove, W1VD, in Connecticut, copied the signal, giving it a 349 to 449 report. The Alexanderson high-frequency alternator was developed during the Swedish engineer's association with RCA. ■



Jest A Moment!

The Lighter Side of The News
Collected By Dick Scott, W8FDN
And Joe Paquin, W2TTW

Who reads newspapers?

1. The Wall Street Journal is read by people who run the country.
2. The New York Times is read by people who think they should run the country.
3. The Washington Post is read by people who think they run the country.
4. The Boston Globe is read by people whose parents used to run the country and did a far superior job of it, thank you very much.
5. The Los Angeles Times is read by people who wouldn't mind running the country if they could find the time and wouldn't have to leave Southern California in order to do it.
6. The Miami Herald is read by people who are running another country but need the baseball scores.
7. The National Enquirer is read by people trapped in line at the grocery store.

For punsters only

- * I wondered why the baseball was getting bigger. Then it hit me.
- * To write with a broken pencil is pointless.
- * The roundest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference.
- * Fish in schools sometimes take debate.
- * A thief who stole a calendar got twelve months.
- * When the smog lifts in Los Angeles, U C L A.
- * The dead batteries were given out free of charge.
- * If you take a laptop computer for a run, you could jog your memory.
- * A dentist and a manicurist fought tooth and nail.
- * A backward poet writes inverse.
- * A chicken crossing the road: poultry in motion.
- * You're stuck with debt if you can't budge it.
- * In a democracy it's your vote that counts; in feudalism, it's your Count that votes.
- * A calendar's days are numbered.
- * A boiled egg is hard to beat.
- * A grenade fell onto a kitchen floor in France; the result: Linoleum Blownapart.
- * When you've seen one shopping center you've seen a mall.
- * Acupuncture: a jab well done. ■



Chewing the Rag:
Odds and Ends From Here ,
There and On the Air.
Editorial by W1HEO

Lowering the Morse barrier

Now that the FCC has "killed" Morse, we have an opportunity to spread the word and extend an invitation to those who have avoided Amateur Radio because of it. The issue isn't whether or not the Commission has helped to "dumb down" our radio service, but that for some people, the dropping of Morse removes a large, if psychological, barrier to entering our ranks. We need to find these folks and point out that now is a good time reconsider getting a ham license.

So, who do you know in this category? How about getting in touch and tell them the news, if they haven't already heard it?

Then, what's the next step? Could you be an Elmer or mentor? Is there a radio class somewhere? Could they pick up a license manual and study on their own?

Each of these questions are typical of those being examined by many radio clubs. Maybe our club should as well.

Sunny predictions?

For those who follow the progress of solar cycles and the inevitable flock of predictions, there's no lack of opinions. We may or may not be at the bottom of the current cycle. We may or may not be at the beginning of the next. The next cycle may or may not be a record. Who knows?

A fellow QCWA member recently sent us an article from the TV Techcheck newsletter of the National Association of Broadcasters. The headline read: NASA scientists predict unusually high sunspot activity.

Just the type of prediction we want to hear!

According to this story, NASA scientists have discovered that solar cycle 24 — due to peak in 2010 or 2011 — is going to be one of the most intense cycles since record keeping began almost 400 years ago.

They base their opinion on historical records of geomagnetic storms. The scientists looked at the historical records of geomagnetic activity over 150 years and found that the amount of activity can predict what the solar cycle is going to be like six to eight years in the future. This provides a 94% correlation coefficient. (Whatever that is!)

"We don't know why this works," say the scientists, "but it does work."

Let's hope that the white coats are right. Imagine a super solar cycle like the 1950s, when 10 meters was open around the clock! Time to keep our fingers crossed. ■