

# CQ Chatter

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Wood County Amateur Radio Club

APRIL 2000

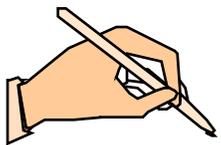
<http://bravais.bgsu.edu/~boughton/wcarc.html>

President-AA8XS, John Lager  
Secretary-N8QMV, Esther Creps

Vice President-WB8NQW, Bob Willman  
Treasurer-N1RB, Bob Boughton

## A Note from the Editor

Help Wanted!!! The coming of spring means that the hamfest season is back with us. The Toledo hamfest signals the beginning of a long trail of events. The Dayton Hamvention will be held on May 19th, 20th, and 21st this year. Long before that, everybody in WCARC needs to contribute something toward making this year's Hamarama a success. The biggest hamfest in Wood County will be held on July 9th this year



The set-up committee needs help in setting up on Saturday and in tearing down on Sunday. But, long before those dates arrive, we need volunteers to help sell tickets, to contact vendors, to help develop the mailing list, and last but not least, to get the mailings ready.

The healthy existence of our Club depends on us holding a successful Hamarama. The expenses associated with keeping the repeaters going, keeping the Club's equipment insured, and providing for routine maintenance are not covered by the dues we all pay. The Club has one shot at fund raising, and that is the main event in July. All members should feel obliged to contribute something to the effort. Most of the contributions are necessarily in the form of labor. Many different contributions combine to produce the final result -- a successful Hamarama.

If you would like to contribute to the effort, simply contact President John Lager, AA8XS, or any of the other officers listed above on the masthead.

**WCARC Weekly Net:  
Tuesdays at 2130  
147.18 & 444.475 MHz**

**Club Meeting:  
Monday, April 10th  
Location: Fairgrounds  
Time: 7:30 pm  
Social Hour: 7:00 pm**

## *RadioHead: The Future of Homebrew*

By John Hansen, W2FS

--*excerpted from the ARRL Web Extra*

It's time to consider life after CW. No, this is not an article about how wonderful it is that the FCC has reduced the Amateur Radio code speed requirement. Nor is it an article about how awful it is that the FCC has reduced the code speed requirements. If you wish to argue either side of this question, please leave me out of it (pleeeeee, no e-mail on this subject!). I'm certain I've heard every argument that has ever been made on both sides and I really don't want to hear any more.

Instead, consider the following: Most would agree that there is a fair chance that the International Radio Regulations will be revised within the next decade to no longer require that knowledge of Morse be a requirement for amateur licensing below 30 MHz. Furthermore, I think most would also agree that if that happens, there is a fair chance that the FCC will eliminate CW testing altogether. But even if this doesn't happen, the importance of CW as an operating mode is likely to decline over this period.

Yes, I know that CW education is currently

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## April Contests

The full contest line-up for the month of April includes the following:

<b>Mar. 25-26</b>	0000 to 2359 Z	160 to 10 m
<b>CQ WPX Contest</b>		<b>SSB</b>
<b>Apr. 1-2</b>	1500 to 2359 Z	160 to 10 m
<b>Polish DX Contest</b>		<b>all modes</b>
<b>Apr. 7-9</b>	1400 to 0200 Z	80 to 10m
<b>YLRL DX-YL/NA-YL Contest</b>		<b>CW</b>
<b>Apr. 8-9</b>	2300 to 2300 Z	20 to 10m
<b>Japan Int'l DX Contest</b>		<b>CW</b>
<b>Apr. 8-9</b>	1800 to 1800 Z	80 to 10m
<b>Spanish DX Contest</b>		<b>all modes</b>
<b>Apr. 15-16</b>	1800 to 1800 Z	160 to 10m
<b>Holyland DX Contest</b>		<b>all modes</b>
<b>Apr. 18-20</b>	1800 to 0200 Z	160 to 2m
<b>Michigan QSO Party (0300 to 1100 off)</b>		<b>all modes</b>
<b>Apr. 18</b>	1500 to 1859 Z	80 to 20m
<b>European Spring Sprint</b>		<b>CW</b>
<b>Apr. 18-19</b>	1200 to 1200 Z	160 to 10m
<b>Yugoslavia DX Contest</b>		<b>CW</b>
<b>Apr. 20-22</b>	1400 to 0200 Z	80 to 10m
<b>YLRL DX-YL/NA-YL Contest</b>		<b>SSB</b>
<b>Apr. 22-24</b>	2300 to 0400 Z	6m
<b>Six Meter Sprint</b>		<b>phone</b>
<b>Apr. 29-30</b>	0000 to 2359 Z	80 to 10m
<b>County Hunters Contest</b>		<b>SSB</b>
<b>Apr. 29-30</b>	1300 to 1300 Z	160 to 10m
<b>Helvetia (Switzerland) DX</b>		<b>all modes</b>
<b>Apr. 29-30</b>	1700 to 1700 Z	HF-VHF-UHF
<b>Nebraska QSO Party</b>		<b>all modes</b>
<b>Apr. 29-30</b>	1800 to 1800 Z	HF-VHF-UHF
<b>Ontario QSO Party</b>		<b>all modes</b>
<b>Apr. 29-30</b>	1800 to 2400 Z	80 to 10m
<b>Florida QSO Party (0400 to 1400 off)</b>		<b>all modes</b>

## WCARC

### Net Control Roster

Net meets every Tuesday at 2130

<b>Mar 28</b>	<b>WD8ICP</b>
<b>Apr 4</b>	<b>N1RB</b>
<b>Apr 11</b>	<b>N8QMV</b>
<b>Apr 18</b>	<b>AA8XS</b>
<b>Apr 25</b>	<b>KG8FH</b>
<b>May 2</b>	<b>WD8ICP</b>
<b>May 9</b>	<b>N1RB</b>

seeing a resurgence, but this is happening because many who have not wanted to learn the code now see vistas of HF spectrum opening up before them if they can simply obtain the minimum 5 WPM requirement. It is doubtful that many of these folks are hitting the code tapes because they actually want to operate CW. If that were the case, they'd have taken up CW much earlier.

Frankly, most CW operators will tell you that CW at 5 WPM is about as interesting as watching paint dry. It's not until you get to 15 WPM (some would argue much faster) that things really get interesting. So it is doubtful that large numbers of the newly minted 5 WPM generals and extras are going to continue with CW long enough to appreciate the joy of a 15 WPM QSO. Some will, sure, but most will not.

Suppose interest in CW does decline. What are the implications for those of us that believe that one of the most wonderful things about Amateur Radio is the ability to build home made equipment? As far as I know, Amateur Radio is the only radio communications service where operators are allowed to operate transmitters that they have constructed themselves. However, the simplest homebrew transmitter designs are those intended for use on CW. You can build a crystal-controlled CW transmitter and use it to work real DX for less than \$20 (see the March issue of QST for an example.) As CW declines in importance, shouldn't we be thinking about developing easily reproducible, relatively simple designs for other modes?

Many of you may be thinking that if CW dies,

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## Hamfest Calendar

**Mar. 26 Lake County ARA** 8am - 2pm  
Madison H.S., North Ridge Rd., Madison, OH  
Contact Roxanne, (440) 257-0024.

**Apr/ 16 SE Mich ARA** 8am - 2pm  
Grosse Pointe North HS, 707 Vernier Rd., Grosse  
Pointe, MI. Contact Donald, WA8IZV, (810) 294-  
1567.

so will home construction, because CW is the only mode for which it is possible to build relatively simple equipment. Perhaps, but I suspect the same argument was made about spark in the early part of this century. In those days, it was possible to build a spark transmitter with parts lifted from an automobile salvage yard. When spark was outlawed, many must have moaned about the relative difficulty of building CW transmitters in comparison with the ease of generating a spark. Yet home construction did not die as a result.

So what are the options for home constructors other than CW? The most obvious alternative is SSB, of course, since that is probably the most popular mode on the HF bands. No, you don't need high power to make useful SSB contacts. One of the popular ham magazines last year had a feature about a guy who obtained the Worked All States award from his bicycle using one of the MFJ 12 W SSB radios.

It is a true that you can't build an SSB transmitter for under \$20, as you can with CW, but you might be surprised at how inexpensive it actually is. For example, you can build a Small Wonders Labs monoband QRP SSB transceiver for \$100--\$160 including the enclosure and accessories (see <http://www.smallwonderlabs.com> ). Think about that for a minute. No, it's not under \$20, but this is a transceiver, not a transmitter. I have not built or operated this unit, but I have seen one, and it looks very nice (I've used one, and it's a pretty slick little unit--Ed). I'm hoping to find the time to build one this summer. Not cheap enough for you? Dan's Small Parts and Kits offers a monoband "Centennial SSB Transceiver Kit" for u n d e r \$ 7 5 ( <http://www.fix.net/dans.html#dan's38> ). I've not seen or built this unit either, but it looks to me like it might be worth taking a flyer.

Make no mistake, constructing and aligning a QRP SSB transceiver is going to be more involved and complicated than building a simple CW transmitter. However, both of the above units are built on a single PC board, and construction consists mostly of stuffing the board with parts. This should not be an unreasonably difficult task.

There are, however, other modes besides SSB. It seems to me, for example, that it should not be conceptually much more difficult to build a RTTY transmitter than it is to build a CW transmitter. Instead of having a single oscillator, you would need two of them, one for the mark tone and one for the space tone. You might have to pay some special attention to the keying waveform to make sure that key clicks didn't occur at the relatively high keying speed, but shouldn't it be possible to homebrew a transmitter of this type?

What about AM? Now making contacts with low power AM really is a challenge, but it seems to me that especially for clubs that want to have some fun with local communication using home-built equipment, this ought to be feasible.

If you've had experience with inexpensive homebuilt HF gear for modes other than CW, please drop me a line and tell me about it. Pictures would be great! If I collect enough information, I'll put together a guide to inexpensive sources for a future column. ■

## Dayton Hamvention Coming Soon!

The Dayton Hamvention is known as the world's biggest and best hamfest. This year it will be held on May 19, 20 and 21st. In past years the total attendance has been well over 30,000. The gigantic flea market is perhaps the most extensive of its kind. If you can't find that special replacement part there, you probably won't find it anywhere. The main exhibition halls house booths sponsored by all of the major manufacturers of amateur equipment. Especially impressive are the antenna companies' setups. There are towers, beams, verticals, etc., covering everything from hf to microwaves.

Three days is a fairly long period to devote to a hobby, but many amateurs find their way to Dayton for most of the duration. There are forums on various technical, policy, and operating facets of the hobby. One of them might be of interest to you. For further information check out: [www.hamvention.org](http://www.hamvention.org). ■

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