

CQ Chatter

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Wood County Amateur Radio Club

JANUARY 2006

P. O. Box 534, Bowling Green, OH 43402

<http://wcarc.bgsu.edu>

President/Vice President

W8PSK/K8BBK

Loren Phillips / Steve McEwen

Secretary

N8MSU

John Gruber

Treasurer

WD8JWJ

Bill Wilkins

Minutes

Wood County Amateur Radio Club

December 3, 2005, 9:00 am

Couzins' Restaurant, Grand Rapids, OH

Attending: Bill Wilkins, WD8JWJ, Paul Perry W8QZK, Jeffrey Kopcak, K8JTK, Steve McEwen, K8BBK, Rolland Creps, Esther Creps, N8OMV, Loren Phillips, W8PSK, John Pastor, N8RZP, Hoot Gibson, WB8VUL, Don Buehrer, K8OVO, Bob Boughton, N1RB, John S. Gruber, N8MSU.

While there wasn't a business meeting, we had a good breakfast and good conversation. John Pastor, K8RZP was there and was introduced to those attending.

Bill Wilkins said that he is checking the two restaurants we named as possibilities for next month's dinner meeting. Phil (Loren Phillips) listed the volunteers for the officer positions next year.

Steve McEwen mentioned that he is checking with scout leaders to see if there is interest in a ham class next year. He is also planning for an Antennas 201 class next February. It will be held at the sheriff's training room. The next breakfast will be in March. Antennas 301 is planned for next April back at the Sheriff's office.

Phil has finished the EMCOMM 2 class

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

**Next Meeting-
Banquet**

**MONDAY, January 9th
At: Charlie's Restaurant,
Perrysburg, OH**

Time: 6:00 pm-social hour

January Hamfests

Jan 14 Flushing ARC 8:00 am
St. Robert School, Flushing, MI. Contact
Clayton, KF8UI, (810) 233-7889.

e-mail: kf8ui@arrl.net

<http://arayclub.org>

Jan 15 Hazel Park ARC 8:00 am
Woodward Hts., MI, at Hazel Park High
School. Contact Sean, K8KHZ, (248) 691-
1130. e-mail: k8khz@yahoo.com

<http://www.qsl.net/w8hpl/>

Feb 5 Northern Ohio ARC 8:00 am
Gargus Hall, Lorain, OH. Contact Tom,
W8KYZ, (440) 930-9115.

e-mail: tporter161@comcast.net

<http://NOARS.net>

and has signed up for EMCOMM 3. He mentioned that he will be checking with the Sheriff's office about setting up an HF

January Contests

The full contest lineup for the month of January includes the following:

Dec 31	0000 to 2359 Z	160 m to 10 m	
Straight Key Night			CW
Jan 8-9	1800 to 2359 Z	80m to 10 m	
ARRL RTTY Roundup			all digital
Jan 8	1800 to 2359 Z	20 m to 10 m	
Kids' Day			SSB
Jan 14	0000 to 2359 Z	80 m to 10 m	
070 PSK Fest			PSK
Jan 14-15	1800 to 0600 Z	80 m to 10 m	
North American QSO Party			CW
Jan 21-22	1800 to 0600 Z	80 m to 10 m	
North American QSO Party			SSB
Jan 28-29	0000 to 2359 Z	160 m	
CQ 160 m 'test			CW

WCARC Net Check-ins

29-Nov: WB8NQW (NC), KC8EKT, K8OVO, WD8JWJ, W8PSK, N8QMV, KC8COJ/M, K8NEA (8)

06-Dec: N1LB (NC), K8BBK, WD8JWJ, W8PSK, K8OVO, KC8ZJW, WB8VUL, W8QZK, K8NEA (9)

27-Dec: N8QMV (NC), KC8CIJ, K8BBK, WB8NQW, WD8JWJ, WD8ICP, W8PSK, KD8BIN, W8QZK, K8OVO, K8NEA, KC8JMU, WB8VUL (13)

minutes-continued

antenna there for use in emergency situations.

Bob Boughton reminded everyone at-

WCARC Net Control Roster

Net meets every Tuesday at 2130

Jan. 3	WB8NQW
Jan. 10	N1RB
Jan. 17	K8OVO
Jan. 24	WD8ICP
Jan. 31	N8QMV
Feb. 7	WBNQW
Feb. 14	N1RB

tending that he is always looking for items for the newsletter. If you find anything appropriate please forward it on to him.

Steve visited the Fort Wayne hamfest. It is well lit and enclosed. He estimated that it is bigger than the TMRA hamfest.

Don Buehrer noted that 2 meters seems very quiet. Maybe we can schedule a rag chew net at a regular time during daylight hours. Maybe club members could, when they have a few spare moments, keep their radios on and respond to travelers calling on our repeater.

Steve suggested that we might wish to contact the Findlay club to see if they would like to have a joint meeting or have someone come to one of our meetings to tell us what they are doing. Phil wished everyone happy holidays. ■

Happy New Year!

The following article is adapted from a piece by the editor of the Raleigh (NC) Amateur Radio Society's *EXCITER* (thanks to WD8ICP)

NEWCOMER'S GUIDE TO AMATEUR RADIO EQUIPMENT

I recently overheard two fairly new-to-the-hobby Amateurs discussing (bemoaning) the high cost of Amateur Radio gear, specifically HF transceivers. They were discussing top brands, and top-of-the-line models. (Sorta like two teenagers with newly-earned learner's permits, bemoaning the prohibitive costs surrounding Porsche 924's...) "You really can't get much for under \$1,000," said they. "Horse-feathers!" sez I.

Many new Amateurs mistakenly assume that they have no choice but to begin with a tired old used QRP CW transceiver, a wire dipole antenna, and perhaps a used handheld rig for VHF/UHF. This may be the case if you're simply flat broke and have no way to raise cash for a decent station, but there are many possibilities if you allow your creativity, determination, and logic to prevail. And you won't have to "home-brew" your entire station (unless you want to)!

Over the past 10 years, there has been a virtual explosion in electronic technology. The technology of "yesterday" (tubes, and linear VFO's) have been replaced with ultra-sophisticated, computerized, marvels of engineering and packaging technology (for which, we pay most dearly). But let's look seriously at some of those "antiques" of the late 70's and early 80's (which are now in the \$400 - \$800 range). Did they work? Most assuredly. How well did they work? Many a DXCC and 5 band WAS earned, with untold millions of hours of enjoyment, to boot!

Unfortunately, newcomers won't find

ads for the "antiques" in today's Amateur Radio mags. All they see are the ads for the new, (multi) kilo-buck transceivers from Japan Inc. After reading some of the spec sheets on the new rigs, a newcomer to the hobby will probably think I'm off my rocker when I say most of the "features" found on the new HF rigs in the kilo-buck range are USELESS!

Just for an example, let's talk about "digital VFO's" and "memories". A "digital VFO" is in actuality, a frequency synthesizer. Synthesizers are characterized by extreme frequency stability (a very desirable trait), on the order of 20 Hz or less per hour (based on thermal changes in the crystal time base). But let's look at some of those "antiques". They, too, can boast of frequency stability. Like 100 Hz or so per hour. "But," you say, "that's FIVE TIMES WORSE than what a new rig can do!" And you're absolutely correct. But the key question is: "Will you notice 100 Hz per hour drift?" Using a tight CW filter, yes, you would--after perhaps a FULL HOUR QSO. On SSB, you'd probably want to touch the frequency knob after about 2 HOURS of rag-chewing! Yes, those older rigs sure made Amateur Radio operating rough...

"But the new rig offers 100 "memories", while some of the "antiques" don't even offer a digital display!" Yup, you're right again! But remember, unlike the VHF/UHF FM spectrum, HF is not "channelized". HF stations will be scattered randomly on the band--NEVER will you find them exactly where you programmed your memory for yesterday!. Net operation?? "Plus or Minus QRM" is often heard on many an HF net preamble. Your HF "memory" will NEVER get you

newcomer's-continued

exactly on the frequency of your favorite net. You'll always be tuning up and down the band anyway. Unless you plan to make heavy use of altostart RTTY, HF packet, or AMTOR, I doubt you'll ever need a memory on HF. Keyboard entry of frequency? Perhaps good to get you in the desired band segment, but not much more. Digital display? Impressive to look at, and perhaps nice to have. But crystal calibrators (about \$20 to build, if your "antique" doesn't already have one built in) and mechanical displays have been the frequency reference for years--and yes, the new rigs' high-tech synthesizers have to be calibrated against WWV, just like the \$20 calibrator...

Solid state finals versus tubes. No doubt about it, tubes are getting more difficult to find. But they CAN be found. "Tubes are expensive!" Yes they are--but YOU can replace them. Ever try to get 4 matched RF type transistors? Ever changed a set mounted in a heat-sink buried within the bowels of a tightly packed maze where even Japanese-sized fingers fear to go? More likely than not, the average Amateur wouldn't even ATTEMPT to replace the finals in a solid state rig (IF he could find a matched replacement set!), while changing a tube presents little, if any, problem.

Tubes have other advantages, too. They're infinitely more forgiving when it comes to that "ideal" 50 ohm resistive match we Amateurs are always seeking, but seldom attain. At 2:1 SWR, a tube will work just fine--a newer rig will probably go into a limited "foldback" to protect the transistors. Three to one?? Tubes are still perkin' along...Transistor? Forget it! One

disadvantage though: You will have to learn to peak the grid, and dip the plate. Hand-eye coordination. Watch the meter--twist the knob. Yup, those "Amateurs of olden days" sure had it rough... Speech compressor? Some DXers swear by 'em. Most rag-chewers swear AT 'em! If you need one, they exist as after-market devices for the older rigs, not to mention the "build your own" method. Suffice to say, a lot of the features on the newer rigs amount to high priced, useless frills.

What newcomers in quest of a good HF rig REALLY need to do is seek out an EXPERIENCED Amateur who has knowledge about the older rigs. Ask what kind of rig they use. Ask what they like or dislike about it. Most Amateurs are delighted to show off their shack, and give you hands-on exposure to their setups. I'd recommend any of the following, as they were the "standard of performance" in that "classic" age of 10 or more years ago. Most can be found in ham-fests or in trader publications for around \$200 - \$600. Collins KWM-2A, Drake TR4-C, & TR-7 transceivers; Collins S Line, Drake T4C, R4C (separate Receiver & transmitter). Again, these were the "Cadillacs" of 10 or so years ago. Solid, proven performers, and parts still readily available. Be cautious though--not all the rigs in this era were gems. Although some of their rigs were winners, manufacturers such as SWAN, National, EICO, et al., have had models that left a sour taste in the Amateur community. Until you're more knowledgeable about the ins and outs of specific models, stick to the "Cadillacs" like Collins & Drake.

Got a little more to spend? Icom 745 (my current HF rig), Kenwood TS-830, TS-430. \$600 - \$800 range. SOLID performers

newcomer's-continued

(even if they ARE transistorized!). Just for fun, let me play devil's advocate. Lets assume that you, Joe New Ham, just HAS to have that kilo-buck+ special. It's a steep price to pay, no argument. But the thing you have to keep in mind is that the cost of this hobby is mostly "upfront money." In the long run, Amateur Radio is NOT that expensive when you look at dollar cost versus hours of enjoyment.

Let's compare it to some other hobbies: Bowling--pretty inexpensive, eh? After you buy your equipment (about \$75 or so), you can look forward to dropping an additional \$10 or so every time you visit the lanes for a couple hours of fun. A couple times a week, over the course of a SINGLE YEAR, you've already paid MORE than that new transceiver costs! Do you enjoy going to the movies? Add this up: \$5-\$6 admission, \$2-\$5 for refreshments, that's \$7-\$11 per film, and if you go just once a week it works out to \$350-\$550 per year...add a date and double it...about an hour and a half of entertainment each week for perhaps \$1,000! And don't forget the hassles of parking, waiting in line, etc. What about golf? You pay greens fees, and you're limited to daylight and (for all but the fanatics) fair weather.

Not so with HF Amateur Radio. Twenty-four hours a day, rain or shine, you can sit down and enjoy your INVESTMENT, making new friends, learning about faraway places, and perhaps helping others in life-threatening situations. Compare your Amateur Radio hobby. Say you spend even \$5,000 on a transceiver, antenna, tower, tuner, power supply, coaxial cables, rotator, and miscellaneous accesso-

ries for the shack. Let's say the setup lasts five years (conservatively) before you want to make any major changes. Five grand works out to \$1,000 a year, or \$20 a week for unlimited hours of operating and providing a valued public service.

Even if you add more extras, like a good keyer, handheld VHF radios, club dues, magazine subscriptions, reference books, tools, license upgrade preparation tapes, packet TNCs, backup power generators, mobile gear, and a cheap computer, it's still a fairly inexpensive hobby over the long haul. No to mention the fact that you'll probably recoup 30-50% (or more) of your investment if you decide to sell your equipment used at a later date. So, for a net outlay equivalent to maybe \$10-\$25 a week, you can be a "complete Amateur."

If you're still doubtful about the hobby, seek out an experienced Amateur to consult and/or go shopping with, and go for one of the "classics" of recent time. Get on the air. It won't take you long to become hooked on HF operating. It's day and night compared to VHF repeater operation. Besides, you'll always be able to sell it at a hamfest if you ever lose interest. But if you're convinced that Amateur Radio is for YOU, then go ahead and look at those kilo-buck+ specials, visit your friendly Credit Union if necessary, and GO FOR IT!

73 de Vince Yakamavich, AA4MY ■

It's Time to Renew!!!

The first of the year brings with it a reminder to all members to renew your membership. The dues are:

renew-continued

Senior/Student	\$10.00
Regular	\$15.00
Family	\$20.00

When you renew, please take time out to fill out the renewal application form. For many of you the information is the same, but many times things like phone numbers and e-mail addresses change. The comments on what you would like to see the Club do in the upcoming year are also very important -- the Executive Committee takes this information very seriously and tries to have a Club that fits your needs. A copy of the application form is included in this newsletter. Please send completed forms and your dues for 2006 to P.O. Box 534, Bowling Green, OH 43402. ■

Prizes to be Awarded at Banquet

The Annual WCARC New Year's Banquet will be held on Monday, January 9th, this year, at Charlie's restaurant in Perysburg. Social hour begins at 6:00 pm with dinner at 6:30 pm. This event is a good opportunity for all WCARC members to get together at least once a year and to have eyeball QSOs.

As an added incentive, Co-presidents Phil and Steve have announced that several prizes will be awarded to banquet attendees. The prizes include:

- a.) MFJ 124 Atomic desk clock (value 24.95)
 - b.) 3 gift certificates, \$25.00 each, good at R & L Electronics in Hamilton, OH
 - c.) Assorted new PL259 connectors
- If you haven't been able to attend the

Brain Teasers

1. Standing Wave Ratio is:
 - a. a measure of the quality of an antenna
 - b. a measure of the quality of match to an antenna
 - c. a number that should be very high
 - d. the ratio of the wavelength to the length of the antenna
2. Reflected power is:
 - a. rf that is bounced off your antenna from other stations
 - b. power that is reflected back to your power supply
 - c. power reflected back to the transmitter because of a mismatch.
 - d. rf that is reflected off a microwave dish
3. Ohm's law:
 - a. is valid for all devices
 - b. is a good description of the characteristics of a light bulb.
 - c. is a good description of the characteristics of a metal wire
 - d. applies only to nonlinear devices.

monthly meetings of WCARC, try to get to the banquet to renew old friendships or to meet somebody you have only heard over the air.

Also, the banquet meeting includes the official installation of the WCARC officers for the next year. The slate for 2006 is:

- Co-presidents: W8PSK/K8BBK
- Secretary: WD8ICP
- Treasurer: WD8JWJ

2006 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

Regular-\$15===Family-\$20===Senior/Student-\$10

DATE _____ ARRL MEMBER? Y _____ N _____ DATE OF EXP. _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

CALL _____ CLASS _____ E-MAIL: _____

Please Circle All That Apply:

Active Bands: 160 80 75 40 30 20 17 15 12 10 6 2 220 440 higher

Modes: CW SSB PACKET RTTY FM DX MOBILE QRP AMTOR PSK31 SSTV
ATV EME SAT APRS RC

Interests: Traffic DX Contests Foxhunts Satellites Nets Antennas
Computers Emergency ARES/RACES Skywarn Classic Radios

Do You Own a Computer? Y _____ N _____ If yes, what operating system _____

Do you plan to upgrade your license? Y _____ N _____ If yes, what class? _____

What kinds of meeting programs would you like to see? _____

What type of equipment would you like to see the Club purchase? _____

Other activities you would like to see the Club offer _____

General Comments _____

SIGNATURE _____

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