

February 2006 Smoke Signals

The newsletter of the Indian Hills Radio Club

Wickliffe, Ohio 44092

Enjoying a family DXpedition is The February 13 meeting topic

A first-person report of fun in the sun

Vacationing with ham radio! For some, this is a great way to combine a family getaway with fun on the radio. We'll hear some of the interesting aspects of this from Jim McAdams, KF8VX, during our February meeting.

In his talk, "Creating your own DXpedition," Jim will share with us some of his experiences from vacations to the Caribbean island of St. Lucia (J3) and operation from a popular IOTA island off the U.S. east coast.

Jim was considered rare ("under cooked") DX when he set up Amateur Radio operations in these spots. He will tell us what it's like to be chased by a herd of hard-charging DXers who create major pileups and test the operating skills and patience of the operator.

He certainly became very popular on the radio!

Having survived these challenges, Jim will pass along some observations and hints on how you, too, can become popular on the air. All based upon his personal experiences in the real world of DXing.

The radio club meeting begins at 7:15 p.m. on Monday, February 13 in the Wickliffe Public Library. Where is that? Same place: 1713 Lincoln Road, in Wickliffe. How about bringing a friend? ■

Friday lunch bunch has moved

It's now Denny's, not Wellingtons

Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine," said some wag. And so it is with the Friday lunch bunch who have changed locales. Gone is Wellington's and in its place is Denny's at 6207 Wilson Mills. That's off the I-271 exit, and just west of Alpha drive on the right or north side of Wilson Mills.

We gather in the back room for a semi-private chat room. The menu is varied; you can have breakfast or lunch, and prices are reasonable. Join us! ■

Ham radio presentation held; Packed house sees new video

A first step in the new promotion project

The first public demonstration of Amateur Radio as part of the new Cleveland-wide effort to promote our hobby was held Saturday, January 21 at the Wickliffe Library. A highlight was the first public showing of our new video, "Amateur Radio: Wireless Window to the World."

A full house of visitors attended the event, which included several displays of ham radio equipment, books, a Morse code demonstration and an Amateur Radio listening post.

Guests were given an overview of digital modes such as packet by Ken Kane, KG8DN of Gilmour Academy, and provided with live demonstrations of HF and VHF operations by David Dennis, W8DDD, Tom Korycki, KC8QGJ, and John Esborn, K8OCK.

A take-home packet of information included ARRL literature, frequently asked questions, and a help list of volunteer club members who will serve as "Elmers."

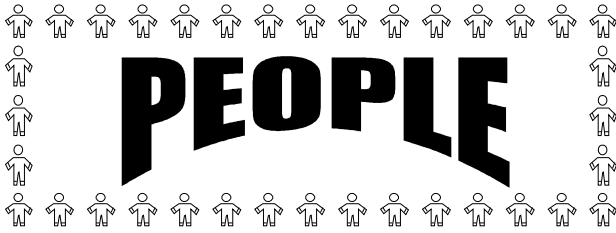
Copies of recycled radio magazines were also offered.

Club members who have volunteered to be "Elmers" or contact persons include Cathie, AB8GV; Joe, W8DOE; Jeff, WA8SAJ; Bruce, KE8TI; Dick, W8FDN; and Dee, W1HEO.

Thanks to all who helped with this special event. This is an important first step in our effort to build public awareness of ham radio in Cleveland. ■



Premiere of the new video is featured.



PEOPLE

The write stuff! The Drake AC-4 power supply is given a new life according to an article by **Jeff, WA8SAJ**, in the December 2005 issue of *Electric Radio*. Jeff does a nice job of describing upgrades to this unit, using a kit of parts, and resulting in a supply with improved filtering.

Tom, KC8QGJ, is already planning for Dayton. The main attraction at this year's megavention will be a pig roast for Tom's 40 and 160-meter friends. Not sure if Tom will do the cookin' but bet he'll enjoy munchin' ham with hams.

Dick, W8FDN, found the problem with his 160-meter antenna. It wasn't in the sky, but a defect in the wall wart (transformer) feeding his keyer.

Herb, K8AZW, still has a 25G tower section and Hallicrafters receiver for sale.

We're sorry to report the passing of the mother of **Don, K8ZGW**. Our thoughts and prayers are with Don and his family.

Welcome to our new member **Jerry Dusa, WB8ADF**, who joined the club recently. ■

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

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 Secretary: Don Ritchie, K8ZGW
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Club members show and tell During January meeting

Some neat projects were on display

Home brewing is alive! The evidence was clear during the club's recent Show 'n Tell night. Here are the highlights:

A nifty looking VHF watt meter was shown by Bruce, KE8TI. Based upon a QST article, the unit was built from surplus electronic parts, but looked like a commercial product.

Jeff, WA8SAJ, who does plenty of refurbishing of veteran gear, brought in a beautifully re-made Drake power supply that was "better than new."

The homebrew spectrum analyzer built by Joe, W8DOE, showed how homebrewing can save a bundle. His two-to-900MHz unit cost a mere \$300 vs. up to \$50,000 for a commercial model. Joe used TV tuners creatively in his analyzer, which featured a digital readout.



W8DOE & analyzer

Collecting pins from various countries is a hobby of Ed, N8THI, who showed a hat containing several that were collected during an around-the-world cruise by friend Ann Harsh of the Mentor Yacht Club. Ed enjoys maritime mobile operation, and has built boats of his own.

Al, W8NPH, showed a book that recalled his QSO with a famous author, WA6IPF, who wrote "Radio Angels."

Remember the TV show "The Munsters?"

Tom, KC8QGJ, not only recalls this creepy comedy, but had a QSO with Herman Munster, who sent his unique QSL shown here. Sorry, we didn't get the call of the real Herman; the call on the QSL is only show biz.



Les, K8LP, reported having worked a special events station, WW2LST, on the Ohio River.

Herb, K8AZW, displayed a special QSL from a French ham, F2IJ, who he worked through a pileup by speaking in French. The beautiful card showed a rather impressive chalet. ■

Meet the members K8AZW: Behind the lens

Herb Schieman, K8AZW, is a Clevelander who attended John Adams high school and Ohio University before serving in the U.S. Army Signal Corps and later starting his career as a photographer.

His introduction to Amateur Radio was helped by an Elmer, John Williams, WA8WDU, in 1978, when Herb received the call KA8AZW.

“My first ham station included a Heathkit HW101 transceiver and a homebrew dipole for 10-80 meters,” he recalls. “I also worked two meters mobile.”

His employment included work in commercial photography studios handling industrial and scientific subjects. He also was a photographer at TRW, Inc., Argo Tech Corp., and NASA.

Herb says that he’s interested in “most everything in ham radio.” He’s a member of Air Force MARS with the call AFA1DY, serves as a trustee of WA8WSO and KC8JFW and is a GMRS licensee.

His favorite bands are HF, with ten meters ranked number one. His present home station consists of an ICOM IC-735 transceiver, a pair of homebrew dipoles and a triband beam.

“A couple of my interesting radio experiences are some of the Field Days at TRW — food, fun, frolic and radio — and some special DX contacts with France.

In addition to ham radio, K8AZW enjoys photography, computers and digital imaging activities.

Herb is a member of Western Reserve Radio Association, PPA, PPO, Sonorp, ASP, Shriners, American Legion and 10-10 international in addition to the Indian Hills Radio Club.

He and his XYL Jo Ann have two children: Lisa and Sandra. They live on Beverly Hills Drive in Euclid. ■

New postal rates

U.S. domestic rates:

First class letters 39 cents first ounce, 24 cents each additional ounce. QSLs/postcards 24 cents.

To Canada & Mexico:

63 cents for one ounce, 90 cents for two. QSL cards/postcards: 55 cents.

All others: 84 cents per ounce. QSLs/postcards are 75 cents



News From The Wide World of Amateur Radio

ARRL asks BPL shutdown. A Manassas, Virginia, BPL operator has failed to resolve interference to local Amateur Radio operators and must be shut down, says ARRL to the FCC. COMTek, which operates the system over a public power grid, admits to the interference, but declined to take any action to end it.

“Suitsat” launch set. The crew of the International Space Station plans to launch a novel “Suitsat” during a space walk on Feb. 3. Suitsat consists of a Russian space suit converted into a transmit-only satellite with an FM downlink at 145.990 MHz using the call RSØRS. It will transmit voice messages, telemetry and an SSTV image on a nine-minute cycle as it orbits the earth.

Mining disaster survivor Randy McCloy, KC8VKZ, the sole survivor of the January 2 West Virginia mine disaster, was improving as we went to press. His family expressed appreciation for the outpouring of support from the Amateur Radio community and others.

Regulation by bandwidth comments are due at the FCC by Monday, Feb. 6 on the ARRL’s petition (RM-11306) to regulate the Amateur bands by bandwidth rather than by mode. The change would encourage and enable development of digital and advanced technologies.

W5ZN is new ARRL president. Joel Harrison, W5ZN, of Judsonia, Arkansas, has been elected the ARRL’s 14th president by the board of directors. He succeeds Jim Haynie, W5JBP, who chose not to run for another two-year term. Harrison said that we need to focus on doing a better job of attracting the average person on the new Main Street of today “into the magic of Amateur Radio.”

Students talk to space station. Youngsters in the U.S., Brazil and Thailand have learned about life in space via recent ham radio chats with the International Space Station. Astronaut Bill McArthur, KC5ACR, told the students that keeping fit in zero gravity was the biggest challenge, requiring “intense exercise.”

Solar cycle slowdown. The sun has been quiet of late, as we enter the low part of Solar Cycle 23. Sunspot numbers from Jan. 12-18 were 12, 0, 0, 32, 42, 36 and 50, with a mean average of 24.6. ■

The ARRL Letter

An electro-puzzle: incredible Shrinking components:

The industry has to think smaller

Homebrewing hams who are frustrated by tiny surface mount components are nothing compared to the electronics industry. Headaches galore face designers challenged by the need to automatically handle miniature components and install them.

Tiny devices have limitations. They're hard to handle and position, solder balls can easily short them, and even dust can cause shorts.

"They can go through the eye of a needle, but that's not such a good thing when it comes to their storage, transport, pick and place, and even legend markings" says Peter Gundy, of PC Engineering.

One obvious solution for the industry is to consider embedded passives instead of discrete devices. The integrated circuit has long been an attractive option, of course. But the question is: how small can parts be before they create more problems than they solve. ■

Murphy's Laws Revisited

- ▶ Everything costs more than you think, and costs more than you originally planned.
- ▶ The probability of anything happening is in inverse ratio to its desirability.
- ▶ When working on a project, if you put away a tool that you're certain you're finished with, you will need it instantly.
- ▶ Any wire cut to length will be too short.
- ▶ A transistor protected by a fast-acting fuse will protect the fuse by blowing first.
- ▶ A fail safe circuit will destroy others.
- ▶ Any error in a calculation will be in the direction of most harm.
- ▶ Any given computer program, when running, is obsolete.
- ▶ If a program is useful, it will have to be changed.
- ▶ Any given program will expand to fill all available memory.
- ▶ Profanity is the one language programmers know best.

The Wandering Photographer's Eye

A collection of candid camera moments by David, W8DDD



December 29 club dinner



Festive, fun and lots of food



Library promotional display



KE8TI's wattmeter project



Video at Jan. 21 ham radio presentation



KC8QGJ's live HF demonstration