



May 2007

Smoke Signals

The Indian Hills Radio Club

www.hac.org/ihrcc

Wickliffe, Ohio 44092

Let's go digital at our May 14 meeting

Guest speaker KB1LCS helps us

Analog modes are increasingly being challenged by digital alternatives, as our modern world tells us. So too is Amateur Radio, as computer-generated communications become more common.

In answer to requests, we've invited Matt Welch, KB1LCS, to give us an overview of the digital Automatic Position Reporting System (APRS).

Matt recently returned to Painesville after service in the Navy and very active roles in radio clubs in Virginia and Connecticut. His wide ham radio interests include emergency preparedness and digital soundcard modes.

The 2007 ARRL Field Day is another event that will be discussed at the meeting. A small group of hams is planning a modest effort at the Lake Farmpark that will primarily be to showcase Amateur Radio to the public and area officials. Fun is the key word, so join us and enjoy!

A membership drive is getting underway, with plans for a post-card mailing to area hams. A supply of labels has been received from ARRL to help us in this effort. Do try to welcome newcomers and make them feel welcome.

The club meeting starts at 7:15 p.m. Monday, May 14th at the Wickliffe Public Library, 1713 Lincoln Road. ■



Dropping Morse code still an issue Being discussed at the FCC

Many hams refuse to let it go

The FCC invited opposition comments to two petitions for reconsideration filed in the wake of the Commission's recent decision to eliminate the Morse code examination element to obtain an Amateur Radio license.

One petition called on the FCC to reinstate the five word-per-minute code requirement for Amateur Extra class license exams. Anthony Gordon, KG6EQM, said in his petition that Morse should be kept as a hedge against national security events and emergency communication requirements. "Even if the consensus view or technological trend is in the opposite direction at the present time," he added.

Gordon characterized Morse code proficiency, as a "core competency" of the Amateur Radio service.

Meanwhile, a second petition, from Russell Ward, W4NI, argued that the FCC "improperly deleted and suppressed comments received by the e-mail system of the FCC." He charged that the Commission was discriminating against radio Amateurs. The result was that the ruling on Morse code was "flawed," said Ward, because the FCC didn't have the advantage of all comments members of the public may have attempted in vain to post. ■

Indian Hills Radio Club Net

Thursday Evenings

8:00 p.m. local time

146.430 simplex

People

New members: We welcome two new members of the radio club: **Bryant Bonano, KD8EXX**, and **Matt Welch, KB1LCS**. Bryant says that his current operating includes two meters and 20 meters. Matt is very interested in emergency communications and offers his help to anyone interested.

Restoration complete! The latest project by **Joe Gutoskey, W8DOE**, is completion of his Central Electronics 20A transmitter. He also has a Johnson Ranger II on the air, and plans to restore a Heathkit DX100 transmitter.

Free aluminum! According to **Ed Meglic, N8THI**, he has some spare aluminum rods and tubing that he offers "for the asking." Ed's telephone number is (216) 481-4368.

Solar cycling: **Dick Scott, W8FDN**, wishes that the propagation "experts" would determine when or if we've reached the bottom of the current solar cycle. "Nobody seems to have hit it yet," he says. Meanwhile, **Jim Arcaro, WD8PFK**, chimes in with the observation that "Solar warming is the cause." ■

Indian Hills Radio Club Information

President: "Dee" Logan, W1HEO
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Secretary: Don Ritchie, K8ZGW
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Website: <<http://www.hac.org/ihrcl>>

Club meetings: Second Monday of each month, except July & August at the Wickliffe Public Library, 1713 Lincoln Road.

Dues are \$10.00 per year.



News Notes of Local Interest

New ARES net forming

Matt Welch, KB1LCS, announces the formation of a new Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) net in the Lake County area. The net will meet on the first and third Monday of each month at 7:30 local time on the 147.165 repeater. Tone access of PL110.9 is needed. Matt will be net control.

Field Day planning underway

Our radio club will participate in the ARRL Field Day the weekend of June 23-24rd. The location will be the Lake Metroparks Farmpark on route six east of route 306 in Kirkland.

Plans are to conduct an informal, fun FD, and use the site to invite the public to learn about ham radio.

If you have items that could be loaned, such as tents, rigs, power supplies, chairs, antennas etc., please let us know. Also, we'd like to invite all members to come out and help in some way. Contact any of the club officers: W1HEO, K8ZGW, W8DDD and let us know how you can help.

Our goal is to have fun without emphasizing the score over all other considerations.

Breeze Shooters hamfest

Sunday, June 3 is the 53rd Breeze Shooters hamfest to be held at the Butler Farm show grounds located at Pennsylvania route 68 between I-79 and PA route 8 in Butler, PA. Hours are 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Admission is \$5.00 with flea market tables also \$5.00. Indoor tables are \$20.00. Main prizes include a TS-2000, IC-7000, TS-570DG, FT-897 and IC-208H. Website is <<http://www.breezeshooters.net>> and e-mail is <hamfest2007@breezeshooters.com>

Friday lunch bunch, anyone?

For those who would enjoy having lunch out with other hams on Friday, make a note that the spot is the Firehouse Grill & Pub. Gather at 11:30 and order from a menu of delicious eats, soups, burgers, sandwiches, wraps and adult beverages. The Firehouse is located just off route 6 west of route 91 on 2768 Stark Drive (behind the Wright Place). ■



News From the Wide World of Amateur Radio

Regulation by bandwidth plan has been withdrawn by the ARRL from the FCC due to “widespread misconceptions” surrounding its petition. The 2005 petition had asked the Commission to establish a regulatory regime to segment bands by necessary bandwidth rather than by mode. The ARRL board will discuss resubmitting a proposal with a better explanation of its scope. The plan is a way to facilitate the transition from analog to digital modes.

Ham applications surge: Since Morse code was dropped as a requirement for a ham license, the ARRL reports a continuing strong increase in the volume of license applications from VE teams. A 35-percent increase has been noted in new applications, with upgrades up by 150 percent over last year’s level.

Hams at hurricane conference: Amateur Radio had a seat at the 29th annual National Hurricane Conference in New Orleans recently. Ham radio’s role in severe weather situations was featured, with more than 2500 government, industry, military and volunteers attending the meeting.

Solar cycle prediction: A solar cycle 24 prediction panel that included NASA, NOAA and other agencies has announced that it appears that the minimum between cycles may not occur until next year. The bottom is expected in March 2008, with prediction accuracy at plus or minus six months.

Pirates on 17 meters: Intruder watchers report that a clandestine broadcaster and jamming station again are competing on 18.160 MHz. Although the band is a worldwide Amateur Radio allocation, stations including “Sound of Hope” in Taiwan, and a “Fire Dragon” jammer broadcasting music from Hainan, China have been monitored. Signals have been heard in the U.S., Europe, Africa and the U.K.

Repeaters QRM radar: The ARRL is working with the military to deal with interference to radar by 70 cm ham radio repeaters on both coasts. Ham radio is secondary to military users from 420-450 MHz. The ARRL lab is attempting to find a way to keep the repeaters on the air without further radio interference. ■

The ARRL Letter

Postage rates are going up

Remember the five cent ham radio stamp?

The U.S. Postal Service is raising its rates again effective May 14, 2007. So the cost of sending a QSL or domestic postcard will be increased to 26 cents from the current 24 cents. First class letters will cost 41 cents for the first ounce instead of the current 39 cents.

Large envelopes will be 80 cents for the first ounce and packages will cost \$1.13 for the first ounce.

A big change is charging based upon the size of the package, since bigger sizes require more effort to handle. The USPS says its new pricing system encourages you to ship with boxes that are just big enough for their contents.

The Amateur Radio stamp was issued December 15, 1964 to honor the 50th anniversary of the American Radio Relay League. The five-cent stamp was the first-class letter rate that year. ■



The Elmer Corps is formed

Twenty volunteers are ready to help

The ham radio promotion project has established a new group of volunteer “Elmers” to agree to serve as goodwill ambassadors and first contacts on behalf of Amateur Radio.

The Elmer Corps is designed to supply the important link between persons who express an interest in our hobby and sources of help. Radio clubs have been encouraged to provide at least one member who can represent them in contacts with the public.

Elmer Corps volunteers from the Indian Hills Radio Club include: Jeff, WA8SAJ; David, W8DDD; Joe, W8DOE; “Dee,” W1HEO; Les, K8LP; and Dick, W8FDN.

Names of Elmer Corps members are posted on the Promotion Project website <www.neoham.org> and is being updated by web administrator, Don, K8ZGW. A printed list will be produced and be available for distribution to the public during various events such as Field Day.

Each Elmer has received a manual containing basic suggestions for handling calls, lists of information sources, radio clubs, VE testing locales, radio magazines and web sites.

Thanks to those who have joined the Corps! ■



Jest a Minute
Humor collected
By our Readers

Van Gogh's Family Tree

- His dizzy aunt.....Verti Gogh
 The brother who ate prunes.....Gotta Gogh
 The grandfather from Yugoslavia.....U Gogh
 The cousin from Illinois.....Chica Gogh
 His magician uncle.....Where diddy Gogh
 His Mexican cousin.....A mee Gogh
 The constipated uncle..... Can't Gogh
 The ballroom dancing aunt.....Tang Gogh
 The bird lover uncle..... Flamin Gogh
 The fruit-loving cousin..... Man Gogh
 His nephew psychoanalyst..... E Gogh
 The little bouncy nephew.....Poe Gogh
 The sister who loved disco..... Go Gogh

And there ya Gogh!

You know you're living in 2007 when:

1. You accidentally enter your password in the microwave.
2. You haven't played solitaire with real cards in years.
3. Your reason for not staying in touch with friends and family is that they don't have e-mail addresses.
4. Every commercial on television has a Web site at the bottom of the screen.
5. You get up in the morning and go on line before getting your coffee.
6. You tune your new PC-controlled transceiver with a mouse, not a knob.
7. You start tilting your head sideways to smile.
8. You're reading this and laughing.
10. You're too busy to notice there was no #9 on this list.
11. Your new radio is software driven.

You know you're a ham if:

1. You'd rather help a buddy with an antenna than cut the grass.
2. Your watch is set to UTC.
3. You ever tapped out "Hi" in Morse code with your car horn to another ham.
4. You go into a Radio Shack store and the clerk asks you where something is.
5. You drive through a neighborhood looking for ham antennas. ■



The Open Mike:
Editorial by
W1HEO

The growing season

There's an old Chinese proverb that reminds us to "Be not afraid of growing slowly; be afraid only of standing still." Certainly sage words that apply to radio clubs as well as other things. As I wind up a year as President, it seems to me that we need a growth tonic. Spring's the time to do this.

As you read this, we've mailed postcards to area Amateurs inviting them to visit our club meetings. This is only a small first step toward growing our club. Presenting visitors with an enjoyable experience is a critical second step.

So let's resolve to greet every newcomer with a smile, a handshake, and a warm welcome to Indian Hills. Fellowship is the most frequently mentioned reason for joining radio clubs, along with finding "helping hams" who will help us get more enjoyment out of Amateur Radio.

Doing a variety of things will also help make the club attractive to others. Field Day coming up is a fun way to activate our program offerings and we invite you to participate in some way. Successful clubs are *active* clubs. That's a proven growth tonic we need to use more often.

Carrying the load

For many of us with a full slate of things to do, multitasking can often become a heavy burden. With the right coping skills and the ability to sort out priorities, we can handle the load. But without a break, things can get dicey.

In my case, I've been heavily involved in this radio club, writing newsletters for Indian Hills and QCWA, handling the Ham Radio Promotion Project and operating a small consulting business. This multitasking often gets difficult. Since we enjoy travel, our challenge is to find ways to get things done, even when away from home for weeks.

I appreciate those members who have been willing to help in some way, however due to my numerous commitments, I will not be able to continue as your President beyond this term. Thanks for the confidence that you have shown me, and I trust that you will find someone who will lead this club to a bright future. ■