

Club of Radio Hams in Starke County

Newsletter
December 2007

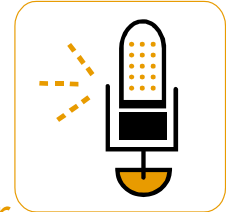
Web address: www.w9joz.org E-mail: w9joz@w9joz.org

Special Interest Articles

Christmas Dinner

Next Club meeting

Christmas Dinner is December 1st at 5:00 p.m. central time.



Testing will be in December

The Christmas Dinner is at the King's Buffet in Plymouth. Time is 5:00 pm our time.

This is in the Kmart parking lot next to Blockbuster Video.

We will be in the little room to the right as you come in. Just tell them you are there for

the party in the backroom.

The cost for 2 people is around \$20.00.

There is even more meat and American dishes to eat for those that don't like Chinese. Like me.

There will not be a meeting this month as we consider the Dinner our meeting.

VE Testing will be December 11 or 12th depending on what night we get the room at the Library.

Watch web site and listen to the nets to find out more.

Individual Highlights

For Sale / Other info	2
Hamfests / Weather	2
Computer programs	2
Weather Notices	3
Repeater use	4
That First Antenna	5

January 17th Club Meeting

The Club meeting will be held at the Knox Library for a change to support our members in Knox.

Initial planning for a Fox hunt to be held in April/May.

105 Unique Designs about "ham radio"!

<http://www.cafepress.com/cp/search/poe/?i=750808?&q=ham+radio>

January Meeting to be held in Knox at the public Library.



[Types of Coax Cable and Line Loss Calculator](#)



"The true meaning of life is to plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to sit."

For Sale Items / Other News

K9CIV has been having a lot of luck selling off his gear.

If you have some, list it on our web site as well as the other places to sell items. Ours is being read as I had a person from Australia contact me about an item.

If you missed the Fort Wayne hamfest you missed the forum featuring Tony, W9AL. He spoke on



He was also a runner-up for Indiana Ham of the Year.

Like they said all four of the individuals deserved to be Ham of the Year, but they could only choose one.

Hamfests / Weather Information

The next hamfest for die-hard hamfesters is not until February 23, 2008.

Cabin Fever Hamfest
LaPorte Amateur Radio Club
<http://www.k9jsi.org>

LaPorte, IN Civic Auditorium

WEATHER ALERT

Tony, W9AL, provided this link to the Indiana Weather Newsletter:

<http://www.crh.noaa.gov/images/iwx/publications/2006insvrwxnewsletter.pdf>

Basic spotter training sessions are held every year, usually during February and March.

Watch for more news on next class.

From the Internet programs to help out.

<http://www.dxatlas.com/>
This site has several programs for the ham.

World Time on your Computer

See the time all over the world on this powerful desktop world clock -

see the time for almost any area of the world.

http://kybtec.de/wbx01/ssh01/Home/HomeX01.aspx?adv=gog01&adv=tst32&wavy=adv&diff=c_us_01_aq04_t02&kw=ham_radio&qclid=CNSeuPz3Y8CFRslWAodqm5y7w

Looking for an easy logging program check out XMlog It is FREE and he updates it often.

www.xmlog.com

All the articles this month come from various places.

From W9AL

Well it's that time of year again so here is some Winter Definitions From the National Weather Service

Winter Storm Watch – Issued when the potential exists for 6 inches or more of snow in 12 hours, or 8 inches or more of snow in 24 hours. Also issued for potential of a quarter inch or more of freezing rain, or significant mixed precipitation.

Heavy Snow Warning – Issued when 6 inches or more of snow is likely in 12 hours, or 8 inches or more of snow in 24 hours.

Ice Storm Warning – Issued when a quarter inch or more of ice accumulation is likely.

Heavy Sleet Warning – Issued when a half inch or more of sleet accumulation is likely.

Winter Storm Warning – Issued when a combination of snow, blowing snow, sleet, and/or freezing rain is likely to exceed warning criteria.

Blizzard Warning – Sustained winds or frequent gusts of 35 mph or greater causing visibility to be reduced to a one quarter mile or less in blowing snow for a period of 3 or more hours. Blizzards may or may not be accompanied by falling snow.

Snow Advisory – Issued when 4 to 5 inches of snow are likely in a 12 hour period, or 6 to 7 inches over a 24 hour period.

Snow and Blowing Snow Advisory – Issued when 4 to 5 inches of snow are likely in 12 hours, or 6 to 7 inches over a 24 hour period and significant blowing snow.

Freezing Rain Advisory – Issued when freezing rain is likely and expected to accumulate to less than a quarter inch.

Sleet Advisory – Issued when sleet is likely and expected to accumulate to less than a half inch.

Winter Weather Advisory – Issued when a combination of snow, sleet, and/or freezing rain is likely to have an impact, but is not expected to reach warning criteria.

Wind Chill Warning – Issued for the potential of wind chills of -30F or colder in the presence of a 10mph or greater wind speed.

Wind Chill Advisory – Issued for the potential of wind chills of -20F to -29F in the presence of a 10mph or greater wind speed.

Freezing Rain – Falls as **liquid rain** and **freezes upon contact** with surfaces such as sidewalks, roads, and trees.

Sleet – Falls as a frozen droplet of rain (ice pellets).

From time to time we all need a refresher and if you helping out a newcomer, pass this along. Author unknown.

Repeater Operating Practices

- Monitor the repeater first, to make sure it is not in use by other operators, before making your call.
- Please do not kerchunk the repeater to see if it's operational. Instead, identify your station by saying W9xxx monitoring. This lets everyone know you're around.
- Identify legally; you must identify with your call sign at the end of your conversation, as well as at 10-minute intervals during the communications. You do not have to identify after each transmission.
- Wait for the repeater beep before keying up. This delay time (approximately 1.5 seconds) allows for other stations who may have emergency traffic the chance to break in.
- Don't hog the repeater. Many people monitor the RACES repeater, or use it as a calling channel, and then move off to another repeater or to a simplex frequency. Talk for a few minutes, then give someone else the opportunity to use the repeater. In addition, common courtesy prevails in the morning and afternoon drive times, when the repeater is particularly busy. Share the repeater.
- Don't break into a conversation unless you have something worthwhile to add. Interrupting is no more polite on the air than it is in person.
- Use plain language on the repeater. It reduces confusion, and works just as well as Q signals and 10-codes. Remember, the repeater can be heard for at least 40 miles + in all directions. Many people listen to it. If there's something you don't want everyone to hear, don't broadcast it on the repeater. Common sense prevails. Think! Be a "professional" amateur radio operator.
- Above all, emergency communications have absolute priority over all other radio transmission. If someone needs assistance, help them out. If you can't help, don't interrupt, but do monitor the frequency.
- Remember, even if you can hear the repeater, it doesn't mean it can hear you. If you're in a bad or distant location, your signal may not be clear enough to understand. Portable radios have limited range and power, and don't have the coverage that a home or car radio has.

Break Tags

- "Answer" - To be used when you have the definitive answer to a question currently being discussed on the air.
- "Question" - To be used when the answer of a question can't wait; for example; when the mayor is standing next to you and requesting you to get information using your radio.
- "Info" - To be used when information needs to be transmitted rapidly, but is not related to what is being said on the air. For example, if an event that net control needs to know about is going to happen in the next few seconds or if waiting for the end of an exchange will negate the value of the information.
- "Priority" - To be used to report an important, but not a life threatening situation such as a fender bender that just happened.
- "Medical" - To be used to report a minor medical incident that affects the operator in some way; for example, having to leave his/her post for a few minutes to walk someone with a minor cut over to a med tent.
- "Emergency" - this is only to be used to report an ongoing life, property, threatening or damaging incident.
- "Your Call Sign" - This is an indication that the operator has traffic which can wait, and does not require the cessation of the ongoing exchange. This tag is an expectation to be put on hold and in queue for transmission.

Articles for Amateur Radio Newsletters aimed at new hams

written by [Gerry Crenshaw](#), WD4BIS, Rowlett, Texas



NHP #2: That First Antenna

An antenna for your station is probably your best investment after you have purchased a radio. But how do you choose an antenna. What are these letters after the gain number? What's the difference between dBd and dBi? What's the difference between a beam and an Omni directional antenna? Should you buy or build an antenna?

Choosing an Antenna

Your first consideration for an antenna is space. Take a good look at the area you plan to put that first antenna and have a good idea of large an antenna you can accommodate. Look for power lines or other obstructions prior to picking an antenna. For those of us in urban areas, you need to be aware of antenna restrictions or height restrictions. For those of us in the Garland area, the restriction is 35 foot. As I interpret this ordinance, that's from the ground to the top of the antenna.

Antenna Gain

It is not simply enough to buy the antenna with the highest gain number, but an understanding of how manufactures define gain in an antenna is important. There are two references used by most manufactures when defining antenna gain: dBd and dBi. Gain referenced to a dipole is listed as dBd. Gain referenced to an isotropic source is listed as dBi. Of the two, gain listed as dBd is generally the better antenna. What is an isotropic source you might ask? If you pick an imaginary point in space and from that point all of your power is transmitted, that is an isotropic source. Gain referenced to this point is dBi. When gain figures are listed as dBd, they are using a 1/4 wave dipole cut for the center frequency of the band of interest as the reference. Be careful when looking at a catalog. I was looking through a Cushcraft catalog as I was writing this and some antennas are listed dBd and some are listed dBi on the same page.

Beam Antennas Vs Omni-Directional Antennas

The Omni directional antenna puts your signal into the air in all directions with about the same signal strength. The beam antenna forces the signal to travel in a single direction. A good choice for that first antenna would be an Omni-directional. They are usually not too large, easy to construct, easy to mount and give good coverage. This type of antenna will get you on the air quickly and easily.

The beam type of antenna has some hidden pitfalls. Yes they have more gain but are larger, harder to mount, come in boxes with a hundred loose parts and you will need some kind of rotator to get the best use out of a beam. Remember that a beam or Yagi antenna is very directional by design; you will need some kind of steering device to get the best use out of this kind of antenna. If you can't reach your local repeater with an Omni, then go to a beam.

For those of us who want to use packet radio, an Omni is a good choice here. With an Omni, other stations can Digipeat (Digital Repeat) through you. If you have a beam up and the station wanting to Digipeat through you is to the back or side of your antenna, it might make for poor re-transmission of the data.

Buying or Building That First Antenna

Antennas are mostly just wire. For a first construction project, this is what most of us attempt first. Dimensions and detailed construction drawings for antennas such as 1/4 Wave Ground Planes, Dipoles or a Verticals can be found in almost any Amateur Radio Publication.

Building an antenna is usually a rewarding experience. Making that first contact on an antenna you built makes all the cutting, measuring, drilling and soldering worthwhile. There are several beam antennas that can be built such as a Quad-Yagi, which can be built for a few dollars out of lumber and wire that have excellent performance. Larger beam antennas as found in ARRL handbooks require specific sizes of aluminum tubing and the dimensions are usually very specific, down to the 64th of an inch, and should be attempted only after some experience has been acquired building other antennas.

That first antenna is going to be the benchmark that you reference all other antennas you might try. Remember that if you hear the other station you can probably talk to them. Mount the antenna with care and please be careful. Something else to remember is that although an antenna is a thing of beauty to us it might not be to your neighbors. Think about starting off small and working up to something else larger after they have gotten used to the idea of having an Amateur Radio Operator in the neighborhood.

73

Until next month happy hamming!

John
W3ML