



# FEEDBACK

March 2015

### Your Story:

Do you have a story, humorous or otherwise about amateur radio? If so, please contact the newsletter editor (wr8g@arrl.net) and get it published in FEEDBACK.

If you would like to place a classified ad to sell or purchase amateur radio related items, please contact the editor.

### Board of Directors

#### President

Gary Williams, N8QC  
n8qc@arrl.net

#### Vice President

Stephanie Halbert, W8AEZ  
w8aez@arrl.net

#### Secretary

Brian Marsh, W8BDM  
brianmarsh@yahoo.com

#### Treasurer

John Davidson, W8JRD  
w8jrd@arrl.net

#### Member At Large

Diane Wilkins, KD8WXA  
turtlelakediane@yahoo.com

### Inside this issue:

Meeting Minutes	2
Treasurer's report	5
Hamfests	3
Club Repeaters	3
Upcoming events and local nets	6

## Crossroads Hamfest 2015

Well, the 2015 hamfest has come and gone. Attendance was up from last year, and there were many positive comments. The few negative comments had to do with things that we can easily fix for next year. On behalf of the Hamfest Committee, I would like to extend thanks to the many people that made this year's hamfest a success. First and foremost are all of the volunteers without whom nothing would have gotten done. Also I would like to thank the staff of Wings Stadium for making this such a pleasant experience. I would also like to thank the officers and members of the SMART club for allowing us the use of their repeater. Finally, I would like to thank all of the Hams and others interested in Amateur Radio for make the Crossroads Hamfest such a strong tradition that it continues to be viable in the internet age. For myself, I'm going to relax for a few days before starting the prep for the 2016 hamfest.

Tom, WR8G (Photo provided by Jan, K1ND Taken by Jay, WB8SQJ)



## Michigan Crossroads Hamfest Debuts in New Venue

On Saturday March 14<sup>th</sup> a new era dawned for the Southern Michigan Amateur Radio Society's annual Hamfest and Swap.

Formerly held at several locations in and around Battle Creek and Marshall, the 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Michigan Crossroads Hamfest opened in a new location in Kalamazoo. With much more space and parking facilities than any other venue in the

(Continued on page 2)

*(Continued from page 1)*

past, the Wings Stadium Annex hosted the gathering for the first time. With 2000 paved and plowed parking spaces, no attendee had to worry about getting stuck in a mud bog or having to walk a quarter mile from a retail store lot to attend.

With the larger floor space, wider aisles were presented to attendees who could browse the vendor tables without bumping into everyone else. Bright lighting and smooth concrete flooring made for a pleasant morning for all. The preliminary results show that we sold more tickets this year than last, which isn't too surprising considering last year's weather. Still, for a first year location, all involved were pleased and encouraged.

Comments heard from vendors as well as regular Hamfest patrons were all positive, especially regarding the wider aisles and the parking.

Many thanks are extended to the club members who helped with all of the positions that had to be filled. The setup and teardown teams did a wonderful job and we had the ticket sales and VE session needs well covered.

More thanks are extended to the trustees of the Kalamazoo "double 0" repeater for letting us utilize it for talk-in.

Finally, we are very grateful for the help and support of the management and facilities staff at Wing's Stadium for their response to all of our requests, especially Ms. Emilie Daubenspeck who provided quick and positive solutions to any problems we faced.

Next year's event has already been booked at the Annex! We will be gathering on March 19<sup>th</sup> in 2016 in order to coincide with the Maumee/Toledo Hamfest. SEE YOU THERE!

By Jay, N8ARR

## Make your own dipoles with these center insulators

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

One of the things that always gets my goat is the price some companies charge for dipole antennas. It's not that they're charging an outrageously large sum of money, and I certainly don't begrudge them making a profit for

their efforts. It's just that if hams would just buy their own wire and parts, they would not only save money over the long run, but be encouraged to experiment with antennas. That's what I started doing about ten years ago, and I've been very happy with the results.

One of the first things that I did was to purchase ten Budwig HQ-1 center insulators and ten HQ-2 end insulators (<http://www.budwig.com/antenna-connector-insulators.html>). I've made a bunch of antennas with these insulators, including several 40m/20m inverted vees for portable use (such as Field Day and special events), a 17m dipole, and a 10m loop antenna. These insulators are very well-made, and can easily be reused, too.

Universal Radio sells the set (<http://universal-radio.com/catalog/antsup/1782.html>) for \$18.50. I just placed another order for ten HQ-1s and 20 HQ-2s (the minimum number that you can purchase to get a quantity discount). The price, including shipping, is \$143.

There are a bunch of other center insulators on the market, including:

- \* The Alpha Delta Delta-C antenna hardware kit (<http://universal-radio.com/catalog/antsup/0297.html>) consists of a Delta-C Center Insulator, antenna connecting hardware, 1 SEP Arc-Plug™ static protector (installed in Delta-C) and 2 Delta-CIN end insulators. This is a little heavier-duty than the Budwig insulators, but it costs more, too (\$30 at Universal Radio). Unless you're going to be running a kW, I don't see the need to spend nearly twice as much money on these insulators.</li>

- \* The TEN-TEC ACRO-BAT Antenna Connector & Hanger (<http://www.tentec.com/products/ACRO%252dBAT-Antenna-Connector-%26-Hanger.html>) is an interesting product. Unlike the Budwig and Alpha-Delta insulators, this product does not have an SO-239. Instead, this insulator clamps over the coax and antenna wire, and in doing so, provides strain relief. I haven't tried this one, but it seems like a nice design. The cost is \$10, directly from TEN-TEC or from Universal Radio.

- \* The Unadilla W2AU ANsulator (<http://universal-radio.com/catalog/antsup/0913.html>) is made from PCV tubing and include eyelets for terminating the antenna

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Hamfests

03/21/2015: Wisconsin State Convention (AES Milwaukee Superfest 2015)

Milwaukee, WI

Type: ARRL Convention

Amateur Electronics Supply

<http://www.aesham.com/aes-superfest>

03/28/2015: 32nd Annual Columbus ARC 2015 Hamfest

Columbus, IN

Columbus Amateur Radio Club

<http://carcnet.net>

03/28/2015: MOVARC HamFest

Gallipolis, OH

Mid-Ohio Valley ARC

<https://sites.google.com/site/midohiovalleyarc/>

04/04/2015: Portsmouth Radio Club Hamfest

Portsmouth, OH

Portsmouth Radio Club

04/11/2015: Cuyahoga Falls ARC's 61st Annual Hamfest

Cuyahoga Falls, OH

Cuyahoga Falls Amateur Radio Club

<http://www.cfarc.org/hamfest.php>

04/11/2015: Madison Hamfest

Stoughton, WI

Madison Area Repeater Association

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

04/18/2015: North Central Indiana Hamfest

Peru, IN

Kokomo ARC, Cass County ARC, Grant County ARC, & Miami County ARC

<http://nci-hamfest.net>

04/25/2015: Jackson County ARC Hamfest

Jackson, OH

Jackson County Amateur Radio Club

<http://jacksoncountyarc.org/page3.html>

04/26/2015: Athens Hamfest

Athens, OH

Athens County Amateur Radio Association

<http://ac-ara.org/>

05/02/2015: Cadillac Hamfest

Cadillac, MI

Wexaukee Amateur Radio Club

<http://www.wexaukeearc.org/>

05/02/2015: JACKSON COUNTY ARC HAMFEST

Ripley, WV

Jackson County Amateur Radio Club

05/02/2015: Ozaukee Radio Club Hamfest

Cedarburg, WI

Ozaukee Radio Club

<http://www.ozaukeeradioclub.org>

05/03/2015: THE DEKALB HAMFEST

Sandwich, IL

Kishwaukee Amateur Radio Club

<http://www.karc-club.org>

05/15/2015: Dayton Hamvention

Dayton, OH

Dayton Amateur Radio Association

<http://www.hamvention.org>

06/06/2015: Fulton County ARC Hamfest

Tedrow, OH

Fulton County Amateur Radio Club

<http://k8bxq.org>

### S.M.A.R.S. W8DF Club Repeaters

Southern Michigan Amateur Radio Society

2 Meter Repeater 146.660 MHz -600KHz offset, PL 94.8

2 Meter Digital/DStar 146.79/19 (-600KHz Offset)

70cm Repeater 443.950 MHz

+5MHz offset, PL 94.8

1.25 Meter Repeater 224.240 MHz

-1.6MHz offset

70cm and 1.25 meter repeaters are linked.

Also available via echolink.

W8DF-5 144.39Mhz Digipeater/Igate

Find it on [www.aprs.fi](http://www.aprs.fi)

### Other Area Repeaters:

**Skywarn/ARES/RACES (WX8BTL)**

2 Meter: 147.12, +600KHz offset, PL 186.2

70cm: 442.350, +5MHz offset, PL 94.8



(Continued from page 2)

wire and for supporting the insulator in the middle. For \$15, I think I'd rather have the Budwig insulator. Also, you should be able to make one of these insulators for less than 15 bucks.

\* The Hy-Gain C-1C Center Insulator (<http://www.hy-gain.com/Product.php?productid=C-1C>) has a screw for tightening down the antenna wire, so you don't have to do any soldering, but overall, I don't think I like the looks of this model. And, at 30 bucks, it seems kind of pricey.

\* The W8AMZ Dipole Antenna Starter Kit ([http://www.w8amz.com/W8AMZ\\_ACC\\_Page.html](http://www.w8amz.com/W8AMZ_ACC_Page.html)) comes a center insulator made from PVC pipe, similar to the Unadilla W2AU ANsulator and two end insulators. It costs \$18.

If none of these strikes your fancy, you can always make your own. WP4AOH has some very good instructions on how to do this using PVC pipe and fasteners that you can find at your local hardware store (<http://wp4aoh.blogspot.com/2012/07/dipole-antenna-center-insulator.html>).

Whatever route you take, I encourage you to keep several on hand and enough antenna wire and coax to complete the antenna. You never know when the urge will strike you to build an antenna, and if you don't have the parts you've missed an opportunity to do some experimenting.

=====

When not checking his stock of antenna parts, you'll find KB6NU working on updates to his "No Nonsense" study guides, blogging about amateur radio at [www.kb6nu.com](http://www.kb6nu.com), or working 30m CW.

### Board Meeting 3/03/2015

Attendees: Steph W8AEZ, Jay N8ARR, Gary N8QC, Brian W8BDM, Tom WR8G

Officers absent: John W8JRD, Diane KD8WXA, Don W8RVT

Called to order at 1700.

Treasurer's report was passed around.

Hamfest 2015 (March 14<sup>th</sup> at Wins Stadium Annex) – Tom reported that 120 tables have been sold, along with 72

tickets. Setup starts at 3pm on Friday (March 13<sup>th</sup>) for those that can help.

VE session – March 7<sup>th</sup>, and on March 14<sup>th</sup> (10am) at the Hamfest.

Repeater – Regarding the Yaesu DR-1 digital/FM repeaters, the first one(2m) is on order and the second one's (70cm) application is being worked on.

Other business – Science Fair at Kellogg Elementary School was a success. Students enjoyed a lot and Brian Marsh extended a "thank you" to the club and those that helped make it a success.

Meeting adjourned at 1732.

Respectfully submitted  
Brian Marsh, W8BDM

### Meeting Minutes 2/19/2015

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Introductions

Officers present – Gary N8QC, Stephanie W8AEZ, John W8JRD, Jay N8ARR (acting secretary). Board members absent; Brian W8BDM, Diane KD8WXA. 18 members in attendance total.

Secretary's report was accepted.

Treasurer's report was accepted.

Committee reports:

Hamfest 2015 – We are running quite a bit behind in the expected table sales, though the listing just showed up in the March issue of QST. Tom will send emails to vendors we have emails for to try to generate new reservations. Jay has a meeting with Rob Underwood at Wings on February 24<sup>th</sup> to discuss matters. Doc and Tom have also been invited. A list of volunteers has been collected and we should have a good turnout for setup at least. Setup will begin at 2:00 on Friday.

SKYWARN – Training will be on Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup> beginning at 10:00 a.m. at the Lakeview Middle School.

Field Day 2015 – Don W8RVT reports that the Kenwood TS-400 that was in Louie's estate has been checked out and works very well. It shows no signs of smoke damage

(Continued on page 5)

and has the automatic tuner installed. It will be used to replace the iCom 718 so that all stations will be operating the same radio.

VE session – The next session will be held on February 26<sup>th</sup> in the Babcock Room at the Maple Methodist Church. Another HIAD session will be held on March 7<sup>th</sup> at the Dept. of Public Works building on Kendall St. One more session will be held at the Hamfest on March 14<sup>th</sup>.

Repeater – The offer of an FM and digital repeater from Yaesu to clubs for \$500 has been discussed by the board and all are in agreement that one should be purchased if the funds could be spared. One thought was to wait until the Hamfest was over to see if funds were available. To speed things along an anonymous donor has contributed the \$500 to the club. A question was raised to investigate whether any club could purchase two such repeaters. Inquiries will be made.

Old Business: See listing regarding the TS-400 under Field Day.

New Business: See the listing under Repeater.

The Science Fair at the Kellogg Elementary School on 40<sup>th</sup> St., Richland, will be held on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February. A few volunteers will be on site to promote Amateur Radio.

Setup will be from 12:20 to 2:30 with the Fair commencing at 2:30 and running until 5:30.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jay Jarrett N8ARR, acting secretary

(Date corrected by the editor—WR8G)

**Calhoun County SKYWARN  
Club meeting 02/17/15.**

Called to order at 1830. Ken KC8QNQ presiding. 17 others in attendance.

Budget has \$686.23, same as last month. No activity in the last month.

Hamfest - A table for the SKYWARN club has been approved as a donation from SMARS to the SKYWARN club. Jim and Rick, Donna and Jim, and Uncle Dave volunteered to man the table. Doc will write an article for the Shopper.

State Park Radio Day committee – Larry Camp could not

**Income and Expense Statement**

2/1/2015 Through 2/28/2015 (Accrual Basis)

Category Description	2/1/2015- 2/28/2015
<b>INCOME</b>	
Hamfest Inc	
Electric	40.00
Tables	320.00
Tickets	130.00
TOTAL Hamfest Inc	490.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>490.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Meetings	
Refreshments	12.97
Rent	210.00
VE Rent	75.00
TOTAL Meetings	297.97
Utilities	
Internet	30.00
Telephone	36.42
TOTAL Utilities	66.42
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>364.39</b>
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>125.61</b>

attend this month and probably won't be available next month. We need to get going on this in order to get agreements from the state.

HIAD – Battle Creek City is planning a March 7<sup>th</sup> HIAD to be held at the Public Works building on Kendall. A date for the SKYWARN supported HIAD will be determined at the next meeting

SKYWARN training – February 28<sup>th</sup> at Lakeview Middle School beginning at 10:00 a.m.

5<sup>th</sup> District Digital – D-Star radios have been installed in all of the hospitals and there was a request for 3 to 4 D-Star repeaters, but some sort of miscommunication occurred and nothing was done in the time allotted for the funding of the repeaters and they weren't ordered. The District Board has placed the money back in the budget. Three tower locations have been identified: Paw Paw, Coldwater and either Jones or Sumnerville. Most of these are Michigan State Police towers. Sumnerville has

(Continued on page 6)

# SOUTHERN MICHIGAN AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY FEEDBACK

*(Continued from page 5)*

a larger coverage area and will probably be chosen. The Coldwater tower is 400' tall and the others are 300' tall. There is still a lot of work to do.

Tour of NWS in Grand Rapids – It was decided to try for May 9<sup>th</sup> for a trip north. About 10 people indicated an interest and more information will be coming later.

Meeting adjourned at 1920.

Respectfully submitted, Jay N8ARR.

## Amateur Radio Class

Have you, a family member, or a friend been thinking of getting an Amateur Radio license? Come and learn the basics about this fascinating hobby in a warm and welcoming small-class environment! Beginning this Monday, March 16th at 6:00 pm and continuing for the next few weeks, your hosts and instructors Terry Tassos N8LN, and Mike K8QN, will lead you through the various aspects of Amateur Radio and prepare you for taking the Technician Class exam at the conclusion of the course. For more information, please contact Terry at [n8ln@arrl.net](mailto:n8ln@arrl.net).

### Club Meeting

3rd Thursday of every month  
Maple United Methodist  
Church  
342 Capital Avenue NE  
Battle Creek, MI 49017

### SKYWARN Coffee

1st Saturday of every month  
Immediately after Siren Test  
Coney Island, N.E. Capital  
Battle Creek, MI

### BLB Luncheon

2nd Thursday of every  
month  
Coney Island, N.E. Capital  
Battle Creek, MI

### SMARS Breakfast

2nd Saturday of every month  
Coney Island, N.E. Capital  
Battle Creek, MI

### SMARS NETS

Before Lunch Bunch  
Monday—Friday 11:30 AM, 146.66

Sunday Evening 8:00 PM, 146.66  
Monday 7:00 PM, 147.12 (Skywarn)  
Monday 8:00 PM, 224.24 / 443.95  
Wednesday 7:00 PM, 224.24 / 443.95  
Wednesday 8:00 PM, 28.365  
Saturday 8:00 PM, 224.24 / 443.95

## Upcoming events:

**Club meeting: March 19th @ 7:00 PM**

**Siren test: April 4th @ 1:00 PM**

**SKYWARN Coffee: after siren test**

**SMARS Breakfast: April 11th @ 8:30 AM**

**BLB Lunch: April 9th @ 11:30 AM**