

The

FLASH

The Official Newsletter of the Mad River Radio Club

June - July 1999

Volume 29 Issue 1

From the 'Big Fish'

By Tim Mitchell, K9TM
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MRRC CALENDAR

June - July 1999

ARRL June VHF QSO Party

June 12-13, 1999

ARRL Field Day/MRRC Meeting Cleveland, OH (see info in newsletter)

June 26-27, 1999

IARU HF Championship

July 10-11, 1999

CQWW VHF Contest

July 10-11, 1999

Advance Notice:

Ohio QSO Party (sponsored by MRRC)

August 28, 1999

A few words from the new MRRC Big Fish. I guess I should say thanks for rail-roading me into the office of president. I am very excited about the upcoming contest season. The summer offers us a chance to recharge our batteries, make station improvements and partake in what I consider more casual contests (Field Day and IARU).

I would like to welcome our new members and thank those who have continued their membership. There are many exciting things currently happening in the club. Earlier this year was the first MRRC sponsored Michigan QSO Party. This month the second MRRC Field Day is to take place and it is growing. Later this summer the first MRRC sponsored Ohio QSO Party will be held.

Summer also gives us a chance to pat ourselves on the back as the results of last years contest season are published. MRRC members faired well in last years SS CW, SS SSB and ARRL 160 contests. Top-ten honors were earned by several MRRC single-op and MRRC multi-op efforts.

Along with the exciting things happening in the club, there is much work to be done. We are always looking for people to help out. If you would like to help out with any of the club activities, I encourage you to get involved. If you are not already on the reflector, this is a good way to keep up with what is going on in the club.

Earlier I mentioned Field Day. This year Field Day is also going to have a club meeting as part of the weekend festivities. If you get a chance, stop out to the Field Day site.

To wrap things up, I would like to thank Jeff for his service to the club in two tours of duty as Big Fish. We'll see how I do...

DON'T FORGET!

THIS MEANS YOU!

We need YOUR contributions for the next MRRC Flash - start working NOW on an article!

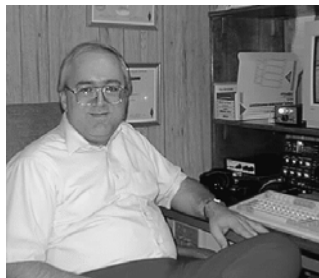
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August 1, 1999

73 de Tim, K9TM

The Editor's Keyboard

By Dave Pruett, K8CC
k8cc@ix.netcom.com



Well, another Dayton Hamvention weekend has come and gone. This year's event seemed quite different to me in that we (that's **Ken**, **W8MJ** and I) took a much more low-key approach. We stayed in a different hotel this year. We attended no forums. We managed to cover the entire fleamarket. I spent lots of money (well, some things never change).

Again this year there are a lot of unsung MRRC heroes who took time out from their Hamvention weekend to make things happen for the club. **Ted**, **K8AQM** was the main guy who brought the MRRC Suite In The Sun to reality. **Goose**, **W8AV** and **Don**, **K8MFO** made sure we had adequate supplies of soft drinks on hand at the suite. **Hank**, **K8DD** made sure many of us MRRCers had a bed to sleep in with his block of rooms at the Days Inn South. Hank also acquired the ARRL flag we flew at the suite, along with the MRRC flag obtained by **Tim**, **K9TM**. Finally, **Mark**, **NU8Z** came over the weekend before Dayton and helped prepare the pre-Dayton *FLASH* and potential member letters for mailing. Thanks to all for their assistance and hard work.

I thought the Suite in The Sun turned out pretty well. A number of members donated items to sell which offset much of the cost, and I thought it was a great place to sit down for a few moments, and to use as a "base of operations" for fleamarketing. I would vote we do it again next year. What do you think?

MRRC sent out 112 letters to amateurs in MI/OH who submitted scores in the 1998 SS, introducing them to the club and inviting them to the suite and club meeting. A few people made it to the meeting, and its been reported that a number came by the suite. Since Dayton, I've received a number of e-mails from people who have since joined MRRC. I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome them to our club, with the hope that they will enjoy and benefit from membership. Please don't be afraid to speak up, ask questions, and make suggestions. MRRC is an organization which is continually evolving to meet the changing expectations of its membership. We value your input and involvement.

Finally, take note of the Field Day details elsewhere in this newsletter. Due to factors beyond our control, we had to move the K8MAD operation from Findlay to the traditional K8MR site on the east side of Cleveland. If you can make it, try to drop by and make a few QSOs for the club.

73, de **Dave**, **K8CC**

Treasurer's Report

By Tim O'Sullivan, KE8OC
ke8oc@mediaone.net



Lots of items as we wrap up some things leftover from before Dayton. We in good shape to start 1999-2000.

<u>Balance from 5/99</u>	\$656.74
<u>Income</u>	
Dues	\$468.00
Suite donations	\$36.00
Soft drink income	\$26.00
Badge income	\$10.00
Suite sales	\$115.00
<u>Expenses</u>	
Plaques	\$50.00
Badge blanks	\$45.20
Suite soft drinks	\$87.00
Suite site	\$240.00
ARRL & MRRC flags	\$129.98
Checking Acct Maintenance	\$8.00
Printing (FLASH & letters)	\$134.00
<u>Balance 5/99</u>	\$617.56

Respectfully Submitted,
Tim O'Sullivan, KE8OC

MRRC Assumes Lead Role In Ohio QSO Party

Following in the success of our club's involvement with the renewed Michigan QSO Party, MRRC has also taken a lead role in the organization of the Ohio QSO Party. MRRC member **Jeff Clarke**, **KU8E** initiated contact with the Buckeye Belles and teh Cuyahoga ARA (the current sponsors), proposing a common Ohio Qso Party modeled along the lines of the MQP, and run during a time of year with good weather to encourage mobile entries.

Both clubs have accepted the MRRC proposal. The last weekend in August has been settled on as the new OQP date. The MQP rules have been modified for OQP and published on the MRRC web site, and in addition sent to QST for publication. **Dave**, **K8CC** has prepared OQP contest templates and multiplier files for the NA Logging Program.

Plans for OQP are starting to fall into place, but Jeff is going to need help (particularly with a new baby in the house). Volunteers are needed in the following areas: awards director, local club liasons, log checking, and OQP web site support. If you have any of these skills, and would like to help Jeff manage the OQP, please contact him at ku8e@msn.com, or via landline at (614) 895-9840.

Collected Wisdom on Headphones/Headsets

By Fred Hopengarten, K1VR
k1vr@juno.com

Here is a compilation of the wisdom of the reflector on the subject of headphones and headsets. I haven't organized the messages into threads, sorry. Nonetheless, I hope you find this useful, as the question comes up now and again.

de John, W0UN:

One of my favorite interests in radio is looking for some competitive advantage for contesting in the area of equipment and accessories. One recent interest is a headset incorporating a microphone from Radio Shack. It is called the Optimus PRO-50MX. It looks a lot like the Heil Pro as far as the type of boom for the mic and the size of the ear pads, etc. It differs from the Heil in two areas (well three if you count price). The headphones are more hi-fi in their frequency response, whereas the Heils are more communications. This allows more hiss to get through from the radio, probably adding some fatigue--but I have incorporated a hiss filter in my system so it is a moot point for me. On the bottom end it covers more bass frequencies. I like a very low note on CW so this is an advantage. And I guess I like my headphones' frequency response to be capable of being tailored by me with external filters rather than having a pre-tailored, limited-response style.

Same goes for the microphone. I like the Heil HC-4 element for its sound but it's probably preferable to have a flatter mic element and then tailor the exact response with an external EQ. The mic in the Radio Shack is much flatter in frequency response - allowing me to EQ it whatever way I want. Good news is that the headset is normally \$50 and is on sale at Radio Shack for only \$40 (which is 1/3 that of the Heil Pro). A real clue about who makes the unit is the "KOSS" molded into the 1/8" phone connectors. They sound good on the radio as well as on the stereo. Radio Shack part # 33-1135.

de Dave, K6LL:

Here's a great \$29.95 headset recipe:
Ingredients:

Your favorite headphones. (Cost = 0)

A 1-foot piece of number 14 solid copper wire. (Cost = 0)

One U.S. penny. (Cost = .01)

One Heil HC-4 mic element. (Cost = 29.95)

Tightly wrap a few inches of the wire around the headband of your favorite headphones. Solder the penny to the free end of the wire. Glue the HC-4 to the penny. Placing the headphones over your ears, bend the wire so the HC-4 is positioned in the vicinity of your lips. If you tend to spit while talking, put some cheesecloth over the little hole in the HC-4. An alternative to the cheesecloth is to regard the little hole in the HC-4 as a drain hole and point it down toward the floor. This has the added advantage that any heavy breathing or excessive snorting through your nose will not trip the vox.

de Jim, N6TJ/ZD8Z:

I've read occasionally about some trying to find a better headset. Let me please tell you what I've been using for the past 10 years. (Also it may be of interest to know that my friends W6YA, CT1BOH, and OH2BH, when they saw what I was using had to have some too).

The headphones are FOSTEX Model T20, available at many stereo/music stores. I've also seen them used in recording studios. I like them because they're quite comfortable, and I have no trouble wearing them for 48-hours straight, as required. Price is about \$80. A machinist friend made me a small threaded stud that I simply epoxy to the side of the earpiece. I then attach the Heil boom mike (HC-4 cartridge, of course), and away you go. At ZD8 I operate in a room so noisy it's impossible to carry-on a conversation without shouting, yet the T20's do a pretty good job in shutting out the noise. If any of you try these phones, I'd be interested in knowing your reaction.

de Bill, AA4NU:

I noticed that the Heil Prosets used here seemed rather "breathy" when trying to set the audio/VOX properly.

Solution : Stop by your local Radio Shack

and pickup a Part Number 33-378 (\$ 3.99 US) and slide it over the Heil's flexible boom. Made quite a bit of difference here at AA4NU and probably helps the mike element to NOT get full of spit/food/??? It's plenty long and does not need tape/tie wrap/etc to hold it in place

de George, AA3JU:

I recently purchased at Radio Shack a lightweight boom headset that was designed for computer users. It terminates with a 1/8" mono for the mike and a 1/8" stereo for the headset. The mods I made to it were to cut off the headset jack and put on a 1/4" mono plug, as I hate adapters and my rigs are all mono (no dual watch at AA3JU). I also wire wrapped the cables to the top of the headset as originally they came down in a Y underneath my chin (I hate that).

They are marked Optimus 70 and I found them in the computer section selling for \$39. They seem to work very well with no complaints on the receive side. I don't think they are quite as well made as the Heil, being all plastic, but are still only 1/2 the price.

de Ken, N4UK:

The Azden HS-03 Boom Mic/Headset falls somewhere in between the Heil proset and the bigger Heil unit. It covers your ears but doesn't swallow them up. They are VERY comfortable. In the 3 years I have owned them they have not torn or broken.(and I have dropped and yanked on them many times) The headset comes supplied with a 1/4 inch phono plug for receive audio and a 1/8th inch plug for Mic audio. They also throw in an 8 pin mic plug. All you have to do is make an adapter with the 8 pin plug wired for your particular rig and an 1/8th inch phono JACK on the other end. I also wired in an RCA phono jack for PTT/ footswitch. I believe this scheme follows the Heil scheme as far as using the 1/8th inch phono plug for Mic audio.

A caveat! I replaced the mic element with the Heil DX element on both units. I already owned 2 Heil elements from the old Heil lightweight units I owned years ago.(YUCK!) If you already have the elements then you are in fine shape. If you don't then you'll spend 30 bucks more for a Heil element. The Azden

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Headphones (Continued)

(Continued from page 3)

element is ok but it is equivalent to the Heil standard element. I like the extra punch of the Heil DX element. But 80.00 dollars total is still 50 bucks cheaper! Changing out the element is a piece of cake!

de Fred, KIVR:

If you prefer an occlusive earpiece, the AKG K240 is popular among some YCCC types. If you prefer open cell foam, non-occlusive earpieces, the Heil standard headset (BM-10) is fine -- just be prepared to replace the sounder (the round part with the transducer which actually produces sound) every four or five years, when it begins to sound tinny.

de Bob, WG9L:

I also have a BM-10 headset for my Yaesu FT-1000 and I think the audio stinks. I was using a pair of JVC digital stereo headphones before moving to the Heil a few months ago. I just wanted the ease of the boom arm being able to swing up and out of the way while operating CW. My JVC headset was great, however the original boom arm clip (small greyish/blue clip) broke very early on when I first got it (it was a VERY cheapo part).

Now with the "better" headset, I find the audio often sounds slightly distorted and as if there was something loose on one of the speakers' cones. VERY hard to isolate the offending crud sound. In a single word about the Heil headset... "Disappointed" Considering the fact that Bob Heil was a pioneer in the professional sound reinforcement industry (Large scale concert sound systems - pioneered quad sound audio for "The Who's, quadrophenia tour) It seems strange that he is putting out such a cruddy sounding product.

If more people would try headsets other than Heil, I'm sure they would find something MUCH better sounding. The only problem to this story is the boom arm mic. The HC-4 and HC-5 are good sounding mic elements and seem to match the modern rigs quite well. The cost of those elements are quite high - I

don't understand why.

de Tim, K3LR:

Does anyone know of a good source for microphone covers for the Heil ProSets? They would be very similar to the microphone covers you see on the boom mic sets that CBS commentators use during the NCAA basketball coverage. The covers solve the "SSSSsing" problem due to the plastic mic holder. From my experience, with the cover the sound as good as the old style boom mics, without the cover they are tinny.

de Ty, K3MM:

I picked up a couple of mike socks made by Prosoft Plus called "Majestic 1000" at Dayton last year. They're at 800-673-4563 and www.datawise.net/~prosoft. Cant really say how well they work because I forgot I had them!

de Ric, KVIW:

Went to Radio Shack today. Picked up their 33-378 Acoustic Foam Microphone Windscreen. It fits easily over the ProSet Mic. Is a bit long, but can be trimmed easily and held on with an elastic band. Works very well to eliminate the SSSsing when it's directly in front of your mouth. And at \$3.99, you can't go wrong. Will be good for field day also !!

de Rod, N5HV:

I have recently purchased the KOSS made Optimus PRO-50MX Stereo Headphones with boom microphone from Radio Shack while still on sale for the price of \$29.95, I believe.

I was shocked to find that, to my decadent ears, the 10- 22,000 Hertz response of the KOSS made PRO-50MX was vastly superior in my being able to hear clearly all of the speech I listened to on SSB on 20, 40, and 80 meters. This was in comparison to my Heil headset with boom mic that I won at the DX Banquet two years ago as a door prize.

Up until now, I had been quite pleased with the Heil headset. I thought perhaps my hearing was simply going the way of all life as time progresses....fading away. But...when I put on the Optimus PRO-50MX set I was astounded to hear the difference. I had long thought that the ultimate clarity of sound assisted intelligence transfer and now I am sure.

I tried several times, with both headsets plugged in simultaneously (one is a 1/8" plug and the other is a 1/4" plug, so that they fit the 1/8" and 1/4" phone jacks on my FT-1000MP at the same time). I pulled one out and reintroduced it while listening to the opposite headset several times and with each headset until I was satisfied that there was no detectable difference, whatever, in the volume or frequency response (which, incidentally sure does make it nice for two people to listen at one time while trying to decipher some badly QRMed station trying to ID for you:).

With both sets plugged in and going from one to the other on the same conversation, there was no doubt as to whether or not I could hear more clearly and distinctly the spoken words. The high frequency response was better giving sibilants more emphasis, while the low frequency response seemed to give better depth to the spoken words. All in all, I was highly impressed.

The KOSS PRO-50MX Stereo Headphones with Boom Microphone has a very good microphone element in it but it can't match the Heil Dream Machine HC-4, or (in my opinion) HC-5 but there would be those that would argue the point on the HC-5 element, I'm sure.

THE BIG PAYOFF is that the rectangular clamshells that fit around the HC-4 and HC-5 Heil mic element ALSO FITS EXACTLY ON THE BOOM OF THE PRO-50MX!!!!!!

All that is necessary to turn these into a superior contesting and DXing headset with boom microphone is to order the clamshell plastic boom end that fits on the Heil boom mics along with the Heil mic element (your choice....either the HC-4 or HC5) and assemble it... and you have a very fine set.

One word of caution: read closely the instructions that come with the Heil mic element about not exceeding a 1 second heating time of the two pads where small wire connects to the element.... Also, attach a 3/4" extension of that small wire to the mic element and then solder the other end of the extension to the wires

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Headphones (Continued)

(Continued from page 4)

supplied in the PRO-50MX boom. Otherwise it won't quite reach and you run the risk of damaging the mic element while trying to attach the fine wires to it.

de Jim, KH2D:

If you have the original Heil light weight headset with the blue foam pads, Radio Shack has (or use to anyway) some black ones that fit right on. Four in a pack, RS No. 33-374A.

de JP, W2XX:

I *love* the Yaesu YH-77 headphones... I too found them tight when they came out of the box, but with some conscientious bending of the metal headband, they can be adjusted to fit comfortably for a full 48.

de Bob, WG9L:

I also have an FT-1000D and I had Heil cans. They SUCK! I went to my local Circuit City store and bought a pair of KLH headphones, for around \$40.00 When I got home and plugged them in to the 1000D, I was astonished at the quality of sound I was getting. I then did an A/B test and within the week, I had cannibalized my Heil headset and removed the boom arm mic and adapted it to my

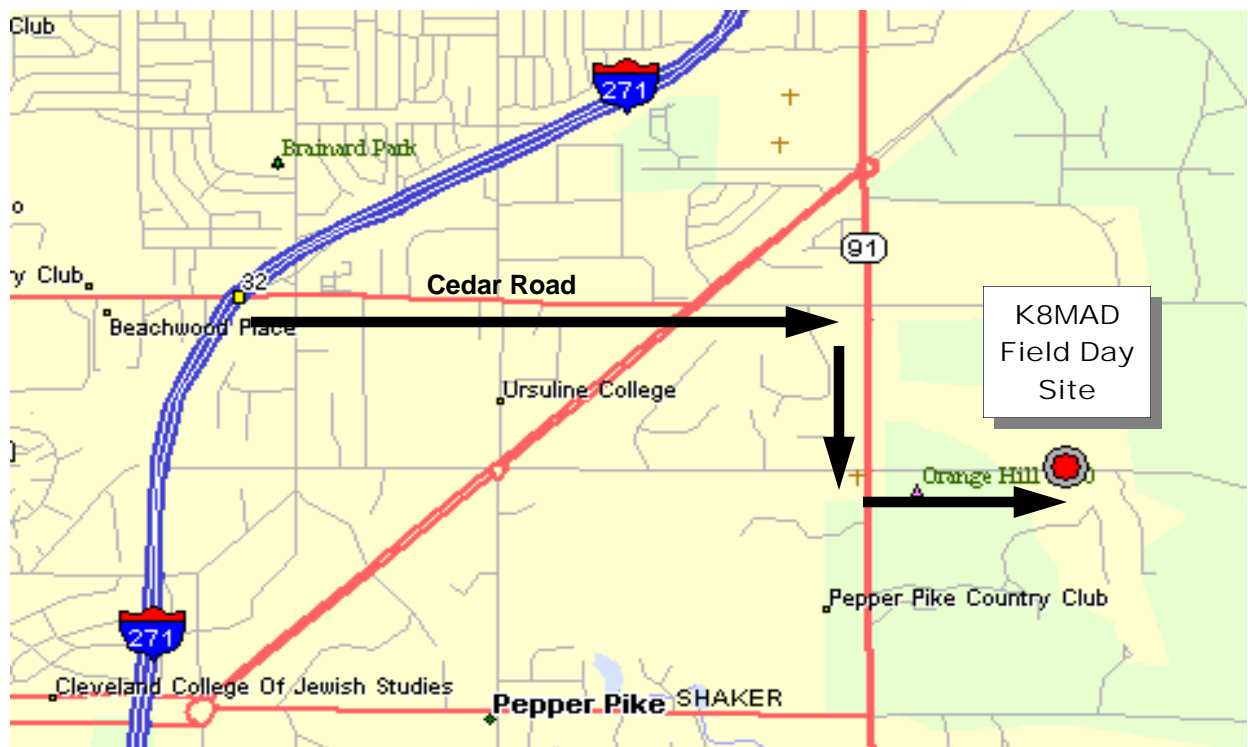
new KLH cans. It looks kind of ugly, but it's fairly comfortable and has the Heil mic on it and it sounds GREAT!

K8MAD - MRRC Field Day 1999

The Mad River Radio Club 1999 Field Day will be held at the Case Western Reserve Squire Valleyvue Farm near Cleveland, OH. The club will be operating class 2A, with two HF positions (80/20/10 & 40/15) plus a VHF position (50/144). At press time, committed ops are Dave-K8CC, Jim-K8MR, Tim-K9TM, Jeff-KU8E and Goose-W8AV, but walk-ins are welcome.

Field Day is also an official MRRC meeting, attendance at which is counted towards the two meetings required to meet ARRL rules for submitting scores in the Affiliated Club competitions. Stop on out to the site and make half of your two meeting requirement for the 1999-2000 contest season.

Directions (see map below): On the east side of Cleveland, take I-271 to the Cedar Road exit. Go east on Cedar Road to SOM Center (also called Route 91). Turn right (south) on SOM Center to Fairmount Blvd. Turn left (east) on Fairmount and go about a mile to the farm entrance which is on the left. The address is 37125 Fairmount Blvd.



CLUB RESOURCES PAGE

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The Mad River Radio Club is an ARRL-affiliated club of amateur radio contesting enthusiasts. The club area is centered on Findlay, OH, and serves the surrounding states. Membership in the MRRC is open to anyone.

The *FLASH* is the official newsletter of the Mad River Radio Club, and is published six times per year in even-numbered months. Submissions of material for the *FLASH* are welcome, and may be sent to the editor at the postal or e-mail addresses shown above. The *FLASH* may be reprinted in whole or in part, provided proper credit is given.

CLUB DUES are \$12 per year, payable May 1st with a grace period thru July 31st. Members of the same family living at the same address may elect to receive a single copy of the *FLASH* for one set of dues. Full time students are eligible for dues at half of the regular rate. Dues are paid to the club treasurer KE8OC at the address shown above. Please make checks out to **Tim O'Sullivan**, not MRRC.

The **CLUB ROSTER** appears in the September/October issue of the *FLASH* every year..

MRRC NET Monday evenings at 8:30 PM Eastern time on 3825 KHz ± QRM.

Come join in with other MRRC members on-line with the free **MRRC INTERNET REFLECTOR**. To join, send an e-mail to MRRC-REQUEST@contesting.com. The body of the e-mail should say *subscribe mrrc yourcall*. You'll receive an e-mail confirmation in a few hours.

The **MRRC Web Page** with club information, pictures, etc. is at <http://www.qsl.net/mrrc>.

CONTEST SCORES are sent to the club scorekeeper Jim Stahl, K8MR at the postal or e-mail addresses shown above.

MRRC MEMBER BADGES can be ordered for \$10 through Buck Switzer, N8CQA at n8cqa@tir.com.



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