

----- The Official Journal of the Mad River Radio Club -----

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BIG FISHING AROUND

de John Tymensky, N8CXX

What happened to early spring? Some little animal said we were going to have one. If I can find this critter, I'm going to let him fix my antennas. Ol' Man winter sure did the number on my station. The only good days to work on it are during the week. Is it really worth putting this stuff up? YOU BET!!!

ARRL DX CW - Yes Bunky, 'CXX was on the air - 20m single-band, it's the only system that is still functional. John, K8JM did the honors while the owner spent his time on the tower keeping the system operational. What about the rest of you Mad River types? Where were you all at??? 'AZ, 'CC, 'FN, 'TUP (ZD) all turned in healthy CW efforts.

What happened in the phone 'test? Only a few scores were turned in. We finished in second place last year, four million behind first. What do we have to do to get the rest of us fired up?

DAYTON - That time of year is coming upon us quickly. Have you got your room reserved? Dave has some words elsewhere in here about the suite.

Dayton also means elections. Now is the time to review the last years performance of your present elected officers. Have they done enough dirty deeds to remain? If not, look around you and see who else might be capable of leading.

SWEEPSTAKES - I had a brief conversation with Billy Lunt, KR1R, (ARRL Contest Manager) as to any possible rule changes regarding multi-operations. At this time the ARRL has not considered any changes - S/O and M/S will be the only classes.

Well, it's time to get back to work. Take care and see you on the Monday Night Net, or at Dayton.

'CXX

The FLASH is the newsletter of the MAD RIVER RADIO CLUB, an ARRL affiliated club serving contesters in IN, KY, MI, OH, PA and WV. The FLASH may be reprinted in whole or in part provided proper credit is given. Mail all inquiries or submissions to K8CC at the address on the masthead. Join the Mad River Net on 3825 KHz at 8:30 PM Eastern Time on Mondays.

DAYTON SUITE ACTIVITIES REPORT - by Dave Pruett, K8CC

As of the beginning of February, the club has received confirmation of our reservation for Suite 1201 at the Dayton Stouffer's Hotel for the Friday and Saturday nights of the Dayton Hamvention. This is the same suite that the club has occupied for the past two years, which should help more people find us. Some club members have commented that this suite is rather small as compared to those hosted by KCDX, Dixie DXers, etc. However, it is more cost effective for a club our size, which contributed greatly to MRRC actually meeting expenses last year for the first time.

K8CC will be responsible for the general operation of the suite. This will include coordination of preparations prior to the 8:00 opening, making arrangements to pay the room bill, and Sunday morning pre-checkout clean up. I will also see to it that we have a supply of napkins, paper towels, trash bags, etc.

Several club members have accepted the tasks of beverage supply. They are as follows:

1. Beer - Goose, W8LLD will arrange for the beer. Randy, W8FN has agreed to return the equipment to the distributor on Monday morning.
2. Hard Liquor - John, N8CXX will handle the hard liquor supply.
3. Soft Drinks - Bill, N8ET will provide the soft drink supplies.

Finally, we will have club members run the suite, which mainly consists of tending the bar and passing out beverages. The suite will be open from 8:00 PM until 2:00 AM both nights, so six teams of two people each have volunteered for two hour shifts. The schedule is as follows:

FRIDAY

8 PM - 10 PM: N8CXX, N8BTU
10 PM - 12 AM: WM4T, W8FN
12 AM - 2 AM: K8AZ, W8KIC

SATURDAY

8 PM - 10 PM: W8UA, KE8OC
10 PM - 12 PM: K8AQM, WD9INF
12 AM - 2 AM: K8CC, KK4QA

NEW FLASH EDITOR

Beginning with the first issue after Dayton, the Mad River Radio Club 'Flash' will be edited by Ted Rachwal, K8AQM. Ted has been a staunch supporter of the club since joining MRRC a couple of years ago and we are sure he will do a fine job editing the newsletter. In addition to bringing a wealth of W8 contesting experience to the task, being a teacher he has a ready supply of workers to help address and stamp the issues as they go to press! We welcome Ted on board.

Send all articles, submissions, etc. to:

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1600 Wolf Creek Highway
Adrian, MI 49221
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MAD RIVER RADIO CLUB DAYTON CALENDAR

FRIDAY:

ANTENNA FORUM (2:00 PM - 5:00 PM)

Moderator: Tim Duffy, K3LR

MRRRC CONTEST HOSPITALITY SUITE (8:00 PM - 2:00 AM)

Stouffer's Dayton Plaza Hotel. suite 1201. All contesters invited.

SATURDAY:

DX FORUM (9:00 AM - 12:00 AM)

Moderator: Steve Miller, WD8IXE

MRRRC MEETING (4:00 PM - 4:30 PM)

The annual Dayton MRRRC Meeting will be held in the grandstands of the Hara Arena, immediately above the Cushcraft exhibit. The meeting will be from 12:00 until 12:45 PM Saturday. Election of officers and general business, plus attendance will ensure making the next MRRRC roster as well as meeting 50% of the requirements for ARRL contest participation for MRRRC.

MRRRC DINNER (5:00 PM - 7:00 PM)

The Mad River Radio Club will be hosting an informal dinner at the Old Hickory Restaurant, 4029 N. Main Street in Dayton. (Note: The restaurant is on the right side of the street (west) as you travel from the Hamvention to downtown.) Our guests will be Al Slater, G3FXB, Dennis Andrews, G3MXJ, Chris Page, G4BUE and Ivor Greenwood, G10AIJ. This will be an excellent chance for us to meet four very active contesters from England, while in return they can get to know some of the MRRRC gang. All Mad River members and friends are invited. However, although we have made reservations for 50 people, due to the Hamvention congestion the restaurant will only hold the tables until 5:30 PM - PLEASE BE PROMPT!

MRRRC CONTEST HOSPITALITY SUITE (8:00 PM - 2:00 AM)

Stouffer's Dayton Plaza Hotel. suite 1201. All contesters invited.

Note to MRRRC Members:

Pete and Mary Michaelis, N8ATR and N8DMM respectively, will have two spaces at the Dayton Fleamarket. In addition to their use for selling Michaelis items, there will be a table for club members who have items to sell without the expense or commitment to a private space (after all, some of us come to Dayton to do other things...). Pete and Mary will be staffing the spaces more or less full time, although they would appreciate some MRRRC part-timers to come and give them an occasional break. The spaces are numbers 535 and 536. If you have something to sell, mark it appropriately with the asking price and bring it to the club table.

PACKET REPORT - by Jim Stahl, K8MR

Somewhere in the midst of acquiring my January 3 hangover, I remember having been volunteered to accept the new post of MRRC Packet Coordinator. So I proceed on to outline where and how we should be going.

The object is to provide quick, reliable links among the club, for both contest spotting and general keeping in touch. The second function could be largely accomplished with the existing and growing general packet network on 145.01 and elsewhere. Effective operation for contests, however, requires a separate network, free from BBSs, NETROM nodes, and all the general QRM. 144.95 has been picked as the MRRC frequency, which is also the frequency used by the East Coast contest clubs.

Establishing our system will come in three stages. First, a critical mass of packet-equipped members must occur. Second, reliable RF links between the centers of activity must be established. Third, multi-user software such as conference nodes or PacketCluster must be put into operation.

Good progress is being made in the first area. About half of those at the Christmas Party have packet, and I know of several more who have added it since then. Does having packet require 24-hour-a-day operation? No, although the bigger your VHF signal or the more unique your location, the more you can help the club with full time activity.

The widely separated nature of MRRC will provide a RF challenge, although we are no strangers to the world of generating big signals. (HOW BIG does it have to be, Doc? - ed.) Significant packet stations/digis are up or in the planning at K8CC in MI, K8AZ in Cleveland, and K3TUP in Erie, PA. We still need paths to Columbus and southern Ohio, perhaps via Findlay.

A point to keep in mind when checking paths: VHF signals, just like HF, are quite variable. Fortunately, there is a simple way to observe path quality. A packet beacon, at regular intervals, monitored at the far end with a time notation (MONSTAMP in AEA-ese) provides an automatic check. For example, I have been beaconing via K8AZ and K8CC every half hour. If Michigan sees me much less than that, the path will probably not work during a contest (cf. Murphy's Law). Also, they establish the use of the frequency to minimize the chances of finding on a contest weekend that it's become the favorite frequency of the Old Fart's Rag Chew Net.

List of MRRC packet stations, with forwarding BBSs:

City	@ BBS	MRRC member
Pittsburgh, PA	W2X0	K5ZD
Sharon, PA	WB8LVP	K3LR, WB3KKX, K3LA
Erie, PA	KB3X	K3TUP, KJ3L
Cleveland, OH	KB8CI	K8AZ, K8MR, K8NZ, KQ8M, NBATR
Columbus, OH	W8CQK	K8ND, K3JT, W8LT, AD8I
Cincinnati, OH	KI4UN	WM4T
Lexington, KY	KF4NB	N4TY
Findlay, OH	N8ET	N8ET, KS8S
Detroit, MI	W800H	K8CC, W8UA, N8BV, KN8S, K8JM, KE8OC

DETROIT PACKET APPENDUM - by Dave Pruett, K8CC

Much has happened to change the face of packet activity in the Detroit metro area since the Christmas Party. Many members of the Southeast Michigan DX Association (SEMDXA) found packet TNCs under their Christmas trees. The K8NLD-1 SEMDXA BBS was put on the air on 144.95 from a 200' police station tower for a BIG signal in the metro area. As of this writing, there are at least eight to ten SEMDXers QRV on packet and the BBS has been upgraded to the latest AK1A PacketCluster software. Using PacketCluster has been very successful and a lot of fun. Up to 26 users can connect simultaneously, with DX spots, WWV info, regular messages and user-to-user conversations all occurring at the same time. So far, the only contest it has been QRV for was the 1988 CQ WPX SSB, but the first real test will undoubtedly be the 1988 CQWW SSB contest in October.

However, a frequency conflict has now been encountered. First of all, 144.95 has been allocated in Michigan for use of TCP/IP, which is some sort of unique packet protocol. It is felt that stations using this protocol have caused the crash of the K8NLD-1 BBS on more than one occasion. Second, a group of space cadets near 'NLD-1 insist on using 144.94 as a FM simplex frequency, causing severe receiver problems for the BBS. As a result, K8NLD has met with the Michigan frequency coordinator and is moving his BBS to 144.97. He has been given official recognition as a user of that frequency, which will give him some clout with the FCC in resolving any frequency conflicts such as with the gang on 144.94.

So where does that leave the Detroit MRRC packeteers? The K8NLD-1 BBS on 144.97 will be a useful resource for multiplier spotting during the contests, but will require Detroit MRRC members to QSY from 144.95 to access it. Long distance message transfers are best left to established packet networks, accessible through the W800H BBS on 145.01/.05. Local MRRC contacts could probably continue on 144.95, for I am not aware that we have had any problems with either TCP/IP nor the FMers on 144.94.

But that leaves the question of how Detroit will fit into the larger MRRC packet plans, specifically for contest spotting links. In late 1987 and early 1988, K8CC had been running experiments with K8AZ on the east side of Cleveland to see if two well-equipped stations could maintain a packet path on 144.95 between the two metro areas. Initial attempts met with some success, and it is my belief that with some RF improvements at both 'AZ and 'CC, this path could be reliable. One possibility is that long-time MRRC member Dan, W8CAR has moved back to Sandusky, near the lake and at an appropriate midpoint between Detroit and Cleveland. Utilizing W8CAR as a mid-point digipeater would likely make this path 100% solid.

A utopian packet scenario would be to have MRRC BBSs running Packet Cluster in each of our major metropolitan areas, linked together as nodes of one big network. However, the reality may be that the distances between cities are too great, and the local activity too low to support this. For now, K8NLD-1 is the game in Detroit, for the hardware is committed and in place, and SEMDXA is active and supports it. If Detroit is to be part of a larger MRRC packet network, links with Cleveland and probably Findlay will be necessary, requiring interested stations in those areas. Perhaps this summer....

de K8CC

CQ WW 160 METER CW CONTEST RUMORS - by Ted Rachwal, K8AQM

Without a doubt, one of the best 160 contests in quite some time found Mad River well represented. The conditions for the CW portion were absolutely great Friday night and even better Saturday night! There were stateside stations wall-to-wall, and two or three deep under them was lots of DX.

Perhaps due to some ridiculous challenge from those Indiana contest types, an usually large turnout of Mad River ops was evident. The following are the scores turned in to the Monday Night MRRC Net in the weeks succeeding the contest. In no way is this a final listing nor complete, so please send your log in and give Mad River the credit.

Single-Operator

Multi-Operator

Call	Score	QSOs	Mults	Call	Score	QSOs	Mults
K3TUP	182845	665	98	K8CC	203000	802	90
W8FN	69008	329	76	K8AQM	101762	582	73
KU8E	67311	401	81	K8AZ	42752	334	64
W8LT	34524	215	63				
K8MR	51646	342	62				
W8UA	45480	308	60				
WD8IXE	40000	250	69				
WD9INF	36186	???	??				
W8IQ	34300	308	49				
K8NZ	28800	240	60				
N8CXX	??????	175	37				
N8ATR	9234	123	37				
WB3KKX	7296	102	34				
N8BTU	11960	89	26				
K3LR	2000	44	20				
NE8T	1414	43	14				

CQ WW 160 METER SSB CONTEST RUMORS - by Ken Rogner, WD9INF

The 1988 CQ 160m SSB test saw many MRRC stations working hard to add to the club score and hopefully beat out those Indiana guys! We at WD9INF enjoyed a little challenge/competition from the K8AQM station signing KE8FX. The two meter link between the two stations kept both crews aware of DX and multipliers. However, condx were less than ideal, especially Saturday night. While we worked some DX, we never worked Europe although we heard one station.

Single-Operator

Multi-Operator

Call	Score	QSOs	Mults	Call	Score	QSOs	Mults
N8ATR	??????	450	55	WD9INF	92820	720	60
K8MR	20943	252	39	KE8FX	78691	630	57
K8NZ	14118	171	39	K3TUP	??????		
W8LT	??????	107	32				
NE8T	8128	103	32				
N8BTU	??????	66	28				

NEW LIFE FOR OLD TOWERS

By Jim Stahl, K8MR

In moving to my new QTH, I decided on upgrading my tower in terms of capacity if not (at least immediately) in terms of height. My Rohn 25G would be put aside in favor of 45G. Most conveniently, W8KIC offered to let me store his supply of 45G, vertically if so desired. This tower was acquired ten years ago in a club group buy. It was used tower then, and the many years of weather dictated some sort of preventative maintenance before erection.

On the suggestion of Bob, KW8N, I decided to go the re-galvanizing route. Bob had a quantity of 25G re-galvanized at a local shop, Art Galvanizing Works, and seemed pleased with the work. Preparation on my part consisted of sanding off the grossest rust. The tower is soaked in an acid bath to remove the rust and old galvanizing material, then hot dipped in zinc. The job took two days.

The tower is not ready for erection as picked up. A long afternoon was needed to file or grind areas where excess zinc had accumulated. On the outside surfaces (top of the section) a flat file was used. The inside surfaces (bottom of section) took more effort, primarily using an electric drill with a cone shaped grinding wheel attachment. Some bolt holes also needed cleaning out. All this effort was worthwhile, as the tower went up quite smoothly.

The price was \$50 per one hundred pounds, which equates to \$36/section for 45G or \$20/section for 25G. The biggest inconvenience was borrowing a van to haul the tower, as Art doesn't have pickup or delivery.

It appears from the regional business Yellow Pages that most large cities here in the rust belt have facilities that do this sort of work (listed under "Galvanizing"). Although a full evaluation will take years, it appears to be almost as good as new. Here's hoping for another 20 years!

MAD RIVER ODD 'n ENDS

The next issue of the 'Flash' will contain a new MRRRC roster, based on information obtained at the Dayton meeting. This will be your only chance this year to have your roster listing updated. Also, remember that you must be a paid member to make the roster and dues come due as of the Dayton meeting. Hope to CU there!

Also at the Dayton meeting, we will attempt to establish meeting sites for official MRRRC meetings for the balance of 1988. The club would like to plan six meetings this year - we currently have gatherings planned for Michigan (summer), Findlay Hamfest (September) and the K8MR Christmas Party/ MRRRC meeting in December. That leaves two more - interested groups or individuals should indicate their interest at the Dayton meeting.

MRRRC shirts and jackets are still available. Jeff Clarke, KU8E informs us that he can still place orders for these items. Get in touch with Jeff either at Dayton or at his roster address.

FROM THE EDITOR
By Dave Pruett, K8CC

As I am about to hand over the editorial reins of the MRRC 'FLASH' into the capable hands of K8AQM, this will be my last chance for a while to say whatever I want within the pages of this noble rag. Not many members realize the amount of work that goes into the producing this newsletter, which is unfortunately why they have been few and far between this past year. Ted will have a big task ahead of him in the coming months - it is very important that we support him and send him stuff for upcoming issues.

Dayton is always the changing of the guard for our club, the end of a old year, and the beginning of the new. As I view 1987 in retrospect, it seems that the club is stronger, the meetings and camaraderie as great as ever. And yet, our club scores are mediocre. From a Medium Club gavel, we tumbled to a distant fourth in the SS club competition. Our CQ 160m challenge with the Indianapolis fellas will turn out to be a tossup instead of the rout it should have been...and all I can ask is WHY???

Dayton is traditionally the high point of the ham radio year for MRRC. with plenty of opportunities (see page 3) for club camaraderie and carrying on. The club meeting is usually an afterthought, particularly when we are compelled (as we are this year) to have it in the arena stands. However, the meeting IS important - officers get elected, meeting sites are chosen, dues are due and the roster is taken. This is where the plans are made which shape our club for the coming year. I know Dayton is a busy time, but make it a point to get to the meeting. But even before the meeting, think about the things you would like to see MRRC do in 1988/89. The officers are here to serve the members, not the other way around, and your ideas count.

It has been pointed out to me that browbeating people to get on and make points for the club accomplishes nothing. A successful club generates successful scores. Contesting is meant to be fun (yeah, really!) and the real purpose of the club should be to help the members have fun contesting. This should be the main goal for Mad River as a club in 1988/89 - to help one another achieve new successes and enjoyment in contesting. Let's get started...

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