



# HAMLETTER

Published Monthly

Wheaton Community Radio Amateurs

Issue 581

Founded 1948 February 2012



## RON HENSEL, K9ZE, FORMER WCRA HAM- LETTER EDITOR, SILENT KEY

Members of the Club of the 20th Century will remember Ron Hensel for his contribution to the 50th Anniversary Events and his production of the Club's newsletter. His passing from a heart attack was on January 7th, 2012, at his home at Ossian, in Northeast Indiana.

Ron's talents as a writer and editor were well known to all club members; his annual "April Fool" articles about miraculous antennas and other imaginary equipment livened up the pages. Less known but equally important were his skills as an operator, fascination with sports cars, his service in the U. S. Navy as a nuclear engineer, and his successful career as the author of many books.

Remembered also, is Ron's wife of 37 years, Susan, AA9MO, who served two terms as WCRA President, also an accomplished ham operator.

Ron was born in Huntington, Indiana, and moved Hammond in 1946, He attended Hammond High School and was a member of the National Honor Society and National Science Seminar. He continued his education at Indiana University at Bloomington, where he was a member of TKE fraternity. Following college in 1965, Ron joined the U. S. Navy as a nuclear engineer.

In addition to Susan, Ron is survived by a son, Chris Brian (Christine) Hensel of Hobart, IN.; a daughter, Wendy Hensel of Chicago; a step daughter, Amy Ford of Highland, IN.; two granddaughters, Chelsea Hensel of the USAF, currently stationed in San Antonio, TX., and Cayla Hensel, of Michigan City, IN; and numerous Aunts and Uncles.

The following are meeting dates for the WCRA club:

Feb 3

Mar 2

Apr 13

May 4

June 2

July 13

Aug Member appreciation dinner

Sep 7

Oct 5

Nov 2

Dec Christmas Party

**WCRA Staff**  
**Elected Officers**

**President** Steve, N9OA  
**Vice President** Joseph, KC9UHE  
**Secretary** Kevin, AB9RN  
**Treasurer** Ken, N9HQ  
**Custodian** Bruce, KA0DSF

**Volunteer Committee Chairs**

**Club Call Trustee** Tom, N9CBA  
**Christmas Party** Ruth, KA9RZG  
**Club Awards** John, N9MWF  
**Elmer/Know-Code** Charlie, WB9SG  
**Field Day** Dale, NJ9E  
**Hamfest** John, WT9Y  
**Refreshments** John, WT9Y  
**Membership** Tom, N9WBW  
**Public Service** Steve, N9OA  
**VHF/HF Awards** John, N9MWF  
**Webmaster** Tom, N9WBW

**Amateur License Staff**

**Training Classes** Charlie, WB9SGD  
**Volunteer Exam.** Harry, K9HK

**WCRA Repeater Administrative Board (RAB)**

**Chairman** Don, N9NYX  
**Secretary** George, KA3HSW  
**Member** Rich, N9DKO  
**Member**

**WCRA Radio Nets**

Sunday 8:00 pm 145.310/(-600) Net Control: Rotates

**WCRA Repeaters**

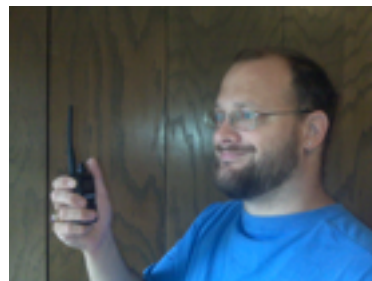
145.310/ 144.710 103.5(1A) or 107.2(1B) PL Encode/Decode  
 224.140/222.540 Carrier Access  
 444.475/449.475 114.8 Hz(2A) PL Encode/ Decode  
 145.390/144.790 103.5(1A) PL Encode/Decode

**HAMLETTER**

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50th Anniversary  
 Issue done by Ron,  
 K9ZE



# From the President's Gavel

by Steve, N9OA WCRA President

Hamfest! Boy, was it a great hamfest. John WT9Y did a fabulous job leading his committee (Bob W9BK, Doug, Mary, Kurt, Tom, Peter, Ken, Rich, Joe) Early results show that we made money thanks to Rich selling advance tickets, Ken selling day of, and Mary (with Joe's help) wrangling volunteers. THANK YOU ONE AND ALL FOR YOUR HELP! Joe N9WRO took the CSU out for a spin and showcased it well while making for a good talk in station. Peter had informative forums. At one forum, when Dick Isely W9GIG (ARRL region director) mentioned QST in a digital edition being in the pipeline, I promptly gave Kermit Carlson W9XA (Vice Director) a check and application to rejoin the league. That was a moment....

I look forward to seeing you all at the meeting.  
 73,  
 Steve  
 Da Prez



# WCRA Meeting Minutes

Kevin, AB9RN  
WCRA  
Secretary



## Wheaton Community Radio Amateurs Agenda for the Regular Club Meeting for November January 6, 2012

First Presbyterian Church, Jefferson and Ellis, Wheaton, IL

### CALL TO ORDER

Called to order 7:32pm

Approval of Agenda

Presiding Officer Approved

### INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS AND GUESTS AND OPENING REMARKS

Introductions Entire Assembly N9oa, kc9uhe, aa0bsf, ab9rn, n9hq, colin, mason, ne9et, ka9hel, nv9r, n9liw, wa9vaa, ka9rvs, nj9e, n9bt, aj9e, w9bk, n9hdw, wt9y, w9dhx, wa9fts, n9cba, aj9m, nv9r, w9bk, n9bt, k9ilf, n9dko, kb9rco, n9mwf

Opening Remarks Any Board Member none

Tonight's program John, WT9Y

Program Committee

hamfest

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING

Motioned by jim w9dhx, seconded by n9dko.

Approval Presiding Officer Motioned carried.

### OFFICER REPORTS

President	Steve, N9OA	None
Vice President	Joseph, KC9UHE,	Joe appreciates the appointment, and welcomes feedback and questions.
Secretary	Kevin, AB9RN	No update
Treasurer	Ken, N9HQ	Renewals are needed.
•	Bank Account balances	Balances were given.
Property Custodian	Bruce, KA0DSF	No update



Kurt collecting Prizes during Hamfest.

### STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Public Service	Steve, N9OA	No update
CSU	John, N9MWF	Looking to have a work party on the afternoon of the jan 15 to clean-up the csu for the fest.
Hamfest	John, WT9Y	Updates coming up after the break
Club Awards	John, N9MWF	None
Field Day	Dale, NJ9E	There is a vacancy for leading this effort
Christmas Party	Dale, NJ9E	This past party went very well. Looking for a new place next year.
Hamletter	Don, N9NYX	No update
RAB	Don, N9NYX	No update
Website	Tom, N9WBW	No update
Training	Charlie, WB9SGD	No update
Program	Joe, KC9UHE	Joe is looking for topics
Public Relations	Mark, W9UZ	No update
Membership	Tom, N9WBW	Motion to accept Mike Schulz W9MJS by N9DKO, W9DHX sec-

ended motioned carried

VE Program 5 took tests, 2 got their tech and 2 upgraded, along with testing at the fest. Notable is that Nathan WA9SYW upgraded to extra class with a perfect score and his new call is KQ9V.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Three Fires Council Scoutarama Those interested let Peter know

NEW BUSINESS No new biz

### ANCHORS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENTS FROM MEMBERSHIP/GUESTS

Jim asked noted that we have a tech class study guide for anyone who likes to barrow it. See the property custodian.

ADJOURNMENT Adjourned at 7:49pm

## WCRA MID-WINTER HAMFEST SHOW SCORES BIG HIT WITH MID-AMERICA

Shoppers and Forum Audiences both had good words to say about the 2012 edition of the WCRA Mid-Winter Hamfest. Tables overflowed with merchandise and three timely Forum programs were presented and the ARRL and other area organizations were standing by with literature and answers for visitors.

Getting ready for those visitors began months ago, as Chairman John Faber, WT9Y, gathered his committee members and set the goals for 2012. The real rush began 24 hours before the doors were open and the set up began—table to set up, equipment in place. By noon on Saturday the Vendors start to come in to fill the tables.



Switch to 4 a.m. Sunday morning and the volunteer WCRA members are rolling out of bed to arrive at the Kane Count Fair Grounds, They'll give last minute assistance in set up and to prepare for the "Early Bird" Shoppers to line up at the front door and "Last Minute" Vendors to arrive at the back door.

It's 8 a.m.! The door is open and the shoppers look for those bargains. Part of the crowd rushes to put their Prize ticket in the Golden Barrel. Others race to the Big Equipment seller's tables. The word is out that Ron A Hensel's (K9ZE-SK) entire shack is for sale, so that is an attractive target for shoppers. (See article on Ron's history with the WCRA elsewhere in this issue.)

By 8:30 there's a line starting to build for the prize barrel with Charlie Matthews, WB9SGD,(left) claiming he's going to get a winner –and he does at the door prize level, an ARRL Handbook. His friend at the right in the photo on Page X is Jerry Chapman, N9GUZ.



At 9 a.m., the first door prize drawing is called and the stage area gets jammed with prize collectors and more hams racing to get their stubs in for the next four drawings.

It is “Forum Time” at 9:30, and a pair of hams from the Chicago Marathon are ready to tell their story and seek volunteers for the 2012 version of the world class running event. Shoppers were ready to rest their boots after an hour and a half of furious shopping.

Two more Forums followed. “Town Hall” started at 10:30 with a Dick Isely, W9GIG, ARRL



Tribute Board to Ron A. Hensel, K9ZE

Central Director, heading the bill of ARRL speakers. The audience was interested in “What is ARRL doing for me?” The third Forum was a treat for those wanting to know more about Echolink; Dick Illman, AH6EZ, explained how Hams can improve their Shack using internet connectivity.



Charlie, WB9SGD, drops in a winner- yes he did win a door prize.



VE Examining Team (l. to r.) Don Webster, K9MUF; George Reichert, W9GWR; George Greene, NE9ET; Jamie Gallina, AE9JG; and Harry Kamer, K9HK, Team Coordinator.

Adjoining the “Town Hall” on the second floor of the Kane County Exposition Center the VE License Testing Team was at work. Twelve elements were passed; three new hams, and nine upgrades. The 2012 Testing Schedule has been posted to the Home Page.

Below on the main floor entrance area food service was available, as well as an exhibit space for other Radio Clubs and a Q&A Desk for the ARRL. Back on the main auditorium area, a new feature this year was a WCRA Club Member Sale Table. Member George Henry was the big seller this year, moving four out of the five items he brought. A marine radio did not sell, All the serious sailors must have been at the McCormick Place boat show. Other members sold out their bargain items in short order. The table is planned to repeat next year for sellers of under five items.



Someone likes a Hamfest.

As the last of the over 60 door prizes were drawn, the shoppers started to dwindle, and Vendors began to repack their slow moving items. Even though the



Grand Prize winner did NOT have to be present to win, there was a crowd at the stage ready to accept the Lucky Cash envelope.



Prize Barrel being filled up

As the winner's name was called—no one stepped forward. The winner had left for his home in Sterling, Illinois. It was Greg Nicol, KB9NGT. It was a great day for the prize winners, satisfied shoppers and smiling Vendors. Thanks to Chairman John and all the WCRA workers that made it happen.



Kurt Reads prize Kurt Readds prize Winner of Grand Prize Winner of Grand Prize



Boy Scout



That is the Forum 2 leader, Dick Isely, W9GIG.



ARRL Table with Dick, W9GIG and Bill, W9WPO



Time Out for a Diaper Change.



Dick Illman, AH6EZ, preparing his presentation on Echolink for the HamFest Forum



John Nebel, N9MYC, left, Bill Zapel, W9WPO, center, and Kermit Carlson, W9XA, right, at the ARRL Booth just before the ARRL Town Hall Forum.

Selling Ron Henzel's equipment at the Club table.



Hal, AC3Q depositing his winning ticket, he hopes.



# QST-Feb.'12—50th Anniversary Radio in Space

By Jim Ward, W9DHX

## **“OSCAR ONE” DOMINATES THE COVER OF THIS MONTHS QST**

On the inside pages 80 and 81 is the story of the 50 years of amateur satellites and a pictures of the Thor-Agena Rockets being launched off the pad in Florida. The year was 1961 and the beginning of a fascinating period of ham radio history. OSCAR is an acronym for Orbiting Satellite Carrying Amateur Radio. ARRL Headquarters has a duplicate of the OSCAR I silver box.

## **SOLAR IDEAS FOR AMATEUR APPLICATIONS**

With rising electricity costs, SOLAR energy may be the way to save money on power to run your shack and your home. Solar Panels can be used to save energy, to charge a battery, provide steady power for small appliances. Author Dave Gauger, W9CJS of Rolling Meadows, didn't set out to “go green” to save money; he did it for the fun and challenge but found it saved money in the process. Another bonus was to be able to communicate in the event of a power loss. Check pages 38-40.

## **ANOTHER ANNIVERSARY—THE 75TH – THE FIRST DXCC AWARD**

It is the world's most preeminent DXing Award. ARRL is presenting the “Diamond Challenge”. They want DXers to work at least 100 of the 231 entities that were on the on the original 1937 DXCC list! Dave Patton, NN1N, is the author. The article is on page 84. For your efforts, you'll receive a handsome Diamond Challenge Award certificate.

## **NEW EQUIPMENT TESTING THIS MONTH**

Power you want? The Elecraft KPA HF/6 has “fully featured amplifier looks and works great on your desk or at your DX location. It's 160-6 meter 500 watt capability, auto band switching and PIN diode switching integrate well with all transceivers.” Author Phil Salas, AD5X, did the review Others looked at and tested were four 25 amp switch mode power supplies: the Jetstream JT30M, the Powerwerx SS-30DV, the QJE DX PS30SWII and the Ten-Tec model 941.

## **“LAST MAIN STANDING” , ABC TV TUESDAY NIGHT HIT, HAS HAM RADIO ON AIR**

Tim Allen, star of numerous SitComs, is the lead man in this current comedy hit. The page 85 story by QST News Editor Khrystyne Keane, K1SFA, tells all about how it came about, including how the “call sign” was obtained. Interesting reading about our notable hobby.

A large thank you to Jim, W9DHX, for his work in suppling the pictures for this issue of the HamLetter and two articles, his QST review and the Hamfest summary.



*This is a plea to become involved and not let the Illinois Legislature mandate that we cannot use our radios while mobile.*

Ladies and Gentlemen, we all have probably, to some degree, realized that this was coming. The horrific Missouri school bus crash of recent times resulting from a teen texting while driving led to a great cry to 'ban distracted driving!' I get it, I really do. Driving down the road while reading from a tiny little screen, typing on a midget-sized keyboard, and/or searching for iPod tunes cannot lead to safe drivers. We've all seen the results.

Still, these activities are not, for the most part, what hams do when operating from their vehicles. We turn on a rig, dial up a frequency or a memory channel and talk into a microphone. There is no distraction, at least not in the same sense as texting-while-driving causes. The National Safety Council has no evidence indicating that the use of amateur radio gear (in general) has statistically demonstrated any driving hazard or risk.

The NSC notwithstanding, the Illinois Legislature, and, more particularly, the House of Representatives, is set to begin consideration of two proposed pieces of legislation designed to prohibit DISTRACTED DRIVING. I put that in CAPS because that's what the intent of the legislation is purported to be. These two bills, HB3970 and HB3972, prohibit using all manner of electronic devices while one is driving unless said device is hands-free and/or voice-activated. Certain classes of operation are exempted from these bills including 'persons driving emergency vehicles,' someone reporting an emergency situation, or when the operator of the vehicle has the vehicle's transmission in neutral or park and on the shoulder of the roadway.

If this legislation passes as it is proposed, the use of amateur radio gear while driving will be outlawed in Illinois.

Stop and read that last sentence again.

It matters little if you are Democrat, Republican, Tea Party, independent, or apolitical - these bills are absolutely Draconian in nature. You're a SKYWARN volunteer you say? Sure. You can operate your radio after you get off the road and when you have the vehicle's transmission in park or neutral - but, not until. Are you thinking about becoming a Rover-class participant in an ARRL or CQ-sponsored VHF contest or, or, perhaps, hand out a few of the more rare counties during the Illinois QSO Party? Not if you're driving and in motion, you're not! How about chasing DX while you're on your daily 1 hour commute into Chicago? Nope. Can't call your buddies on the local repeater while you're driving, either.

We, the ARRL team here in Illinois, will weigh in with the legislature via our Stage Government Liaison, Charlie Richey, K9DUE. We are, however, to borrow a term, little more than spurious noise, to the Illinois Legislature. We aren't lobbyists. If we are to continue to enjoy the freedom to pursue our avocation, to enjoy the privileges our federal licenses grant to us, then, we Illinois hams, both individually and collectively, are going to have to get off our duffs and get involved.

Please take this message to your clubs...take it to your local VHF (or HF) nets...put the info out far and wide - from Rockford to Cairo, Quincy to Rosiclare. Contact YOUR STATE REPRESENTATIVE, YOUR SENATOR, AND, THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE and let them know your feelings about this. If nobody opposes this legislation, like so many other 'well-intended' measures, this heavy-handed and ill-conceived attempt at legislating common sense will pass into Illinois law. Then it will be law enforcement officers that decide whether

or not what you're using in your car to communicate is legal according to their interpretation of the Illinois Vehicle Code. Not many law enforcement officers know the difference between a Sprint P2T telephone and a D-Star HT.

I urge you to take the time to follow the links, below, read the text of these proposed laws, and make yourself heard - while there's still time to make a difference.

<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/97/HB/PDF/09700HB39701v.pdf>

<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/97/HB/PDF/09700HB39721v.pdf>

73, Brad, W9FX

ARRL Illinois Section Emergency

Coordinator



The flood gates are about to open at 8:00 AM for the WCRA Mid-Winter Hamfest.

Rob Orr, K9RST, from the Chicago Ham Radio Support Group for the Chicago Marathon, and his associate, Don Whiteman, KK9H, were Forum speakers.



# OUR MEMBERS THAT CELEBRATE A BIRTHDAY IN THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY



BRUCE

K9OZ

JOHN

W4FID

If you do not see your birthday listed here in your birth month, please contact the editor with your information.

IT IS TIME TO RENEW YOUR DUES IF YOU  
HAVE NOT DONE SO. PLEASE SEE THE APPLI-  
CATION THAT IS NEAR THE BACK OF THIS  
MONTH'S HAMLETTER. REMEMBER THAT  
ONLY PAID UP MEMBERS MAY VOTE.





# APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

## Wheaton Community Radio Amateurs

P. O. Box QSL • Wheaton, IL 60187-5139 • Phone/Fax (630) 604-0157

wcra@w9ccu.org • www.w9ccu.org

### DUES

- Full Member \$26
- Student/Sr. Citizen \$13
- Associate (No License) \$13
- Family member of \_\_\_\_\_ \$39/household  
(Call)

Club Badge \$7 Name on badge \_\_\_\_\_

### OFFICE USE ONLY

Year \_\_\_\_\_

Cash \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Ck # \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ ARS Callsign \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ APT \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone : Home \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ ARRL Member?  Yes  No

Signature / Date \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor's signature / Call (new members only) \_\_\_\_\_

**ONLY MEMBERS PAYING ON THE  
OFFICIAL MEMBERSHIP LIST AT THE  
TIME OF APPLICATION ARE ELIGIBLE  
FOR SERVICE.**

Please indicate events where you would like to assist or serve on the committee

- Hamfest (January)     Special Olympics (April)     MS Walk (May)
- Field Day (June)     4th of July Parade     Christmas Party

Please indicate additional areas where you would like to assist the club

- Website     Newsletter     Elmering     VE Testing     Member Retention

Other \_\_\_\_\_

## FEBRUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

- 2nd: Club Brunch **1st & 3rd** Thursdays 10:30 AM at Peppercorns. Peppercorns is located at the corner of President and Geneva Road in the shopping center on the North side of Geneva. All are welcome.
- 3rd: Monthly membership meeting at First Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, 615 W. Jefferson Ave. at 7:30pm. Talk-in on 145..31. Program for February is TBA.
- 20th: DEADLINE FOR HAMLETTER SUBMISSIONS for March.
- 23rd: VEC testing at the Helen Plum Library in Lombard from 6:30 till 8:30pm. Go to the club VE Testing website at [vetesting.harrykamer.com](http://vetesting.harrykamer.com) for the latest details. **No testing on December.**

Remember the Club net on 2M is held every Sunday evening at 8 PM local on 145.31 (-) unless it isn't.

Next WCRA General Membership Meeting Feb 3rd, 2012, First Presbyterian Church 615 W. Jefferson Ave., Wheaton, Illinois 7:30 PM

WCRA was founded in 1948 and continues to be involved in all facets of Amateur Radio supporting the healthy growth of the hobby through diversification and participation. Our members have always been our most important asset and we would like to see you join us for our next meeting. Our business meetings are followed by a break for conversation, coffee, soda pop, and fat pills. This is followed by an amateur radio related program. We would like to see you there to share the enthusiasm.

## HAMLETTER

Club and HamLetter Mailing Address:

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**First Class Mail**