

The LARC Repeater



A publication of the
Livonia Amateur Radio Club

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER:

From the LARC Board Members, we would like to take this opportunity to wish all the members and their families a Very Merry Christmas, and a Safe, Happy and Healthy New Year.

The LARC Christmas Party was a big hit. John and Judy Dellinger were our Host and Hostess for the event this year. Wow what a job they did, in opening up their house to all of us. Thank you so much.

The food was excellent. All the wives really out did themselves and some of the men did also. The desserts were so plentiful, that you didn't know what to take first. So sorry that Stuart and Dawn could not make the party, they were at home very sick and were missed by all.

Where did the year go? I guess when you stay busy; the time does go by really fast. Let's see what we did this year. No Swap but wait until 2008. We did have a really good Field Day, and the Hot Dog and Corn Roast showed a big turnout. Our Special Events Station had a good turn out and the weather did cooperate. LARC Nite Out everyone had a really good time, and the food was good.

TECHNICAL SECTION:

A Spark Becomes a Flame

My first experience with ham radio was when at the age of ten my father bought me an inexpensive, but amazingly effective, short wave radio kit as a Christmas present. This little kit was able to hear short wave radio from all over the world. Especially interesting to me were the ham radio operators talking to each other. In those days, AM was the primary voice mode and a little inexpensive short wave radio could define the voice communication between hams without a beat frequency oscillator.

My father had a friend, K8HTS now a SK, who invited me over to see and hear his ham radio. I guess I was about 11 at the time. My father and I drove to his house which was way out in the mountains of West Virginia. His shack was behind his house and was truly a little shack outside, but inside was the largest collection of radio stuff I have ever seen still to this day. My eyes must have been as big as baseballs as I stared at all of the lights, switches, and meters that were on each piece of radio gear. I knew immediately that this was for me. "But, how do you become a ham?" I asked. "Tests," he said. Well, not being inclined to tests, I decided that I would just stick to sports for my hobby.

At age 18 I was introduced to Dan, W4TXB who is today W8KMX, who noticed my interest in ham radio. Dan offered to "Elmer" me into the hobby. Again, the word "tests" came up and caused me to stumble for a while. I fought the pressure Dan was placing on me, but Dan was not to have any excuses from me and began his mentoring which included allowing me to talk with hams on his Heathkit Mohawk and Marauder, two gigantic pieces of equipment. He knew that this would rekindle my desire to become a ham, and it did.

One day I went to Dan's house and he showed me a Johnson Viking Challenger transmitter and a National NC188 receiver which he said he would give to me IF I would get the novice license. This began a lengthy period of trying to learn Morse code which I found to be a little bit challenging. I hated it! It took me months to learn the alphabet with Dan pushing me all the way. I started avoiding Dan because I knew that he would hammer the code thing at me again. It just wasn't worth it, I decided.

One day I did go back to Dan's shack and he reminded me of the rig sitting in the corner waiting for a user. "I have an offer for that stuff," he said. "Want it or not?" Dan was becoming very impatient!

It sure looked pretty sitting there, and I did want it and I wanted to become a ham radio operator. Within a week I went back to Dan's house and he pulled out a practice key and he began "practicing" the code with me. It was just practice, he said. He would send and then I would send. I was not surprised that I could send pretty good, but copying the code was something else. Dan sent code to me for an hour or so, and I got to where I was copying random letters and numbers without missing any. Suddenly, he pointed his finger at me and yelled, "You just passed the 5 word per minute novice code test. Now, here is the written part of the test; take it while I wait for you." I was in shock and began shaking as I took, and passed, the novice written test.

Six weeks later, a letter from the FCC came in the mail and my new novice ham radio operator call sign was WN4CPK. Dan gave me the rig and I took it home and began listening to 40 meter CW on the novice band. I could copy absolutely zero; it was mumbo jumbo. I called CQ a couple of times and no one came back to me. I was convinced my homebrew 40 meter inverted vee was not working. Dan came by and asked me how it was going. I had to admit that I was not doing very well. "No one hears me," I said. "They hear you and they are answering you," he said. "I have been listening." He sat down at my station and called CQ at about 3 words per minute. Immediately, he began writing down call letters, the ham's name, QTH and RST. Then he began rag chewing with the station. All of a sudden he got up, told me to sit down, and then he promptly left. I was thrown right in the middle of a QSO and had no idea what to do. I did have the ham's name and QTH, so I just asked a few questions and threw it back to him. He responded, "Hi, John. Dan told me to expect you." I was once again set up by Dan! But, this time I decided that I was actually going to become a ham, and I did. The 10 months of being a novice was the best time of my ham career. I learned more about ham radio than I have since. It was not easy, but it was well worth it. Though I have not been active all the time since then, ham radio has been and always will be my favorite pass time. It is a wonderful hobby with something new to learn and try every day. I must mention my Dad again because without his recognition of my interest in ham radio, I might never have developed the initial contact with hams. My Dad was not a ham, but was delighted and proud when I became one. Now, some 41 years later, I am trying to Elmer my 12 year old grandson into ham radio. It is difficult because he is captivated by video games and iPod like creatures that entertain him. My hope is to be as good of an Elmer as Dan was. I have begun by buying him a 40 meter receiver kit. **I hear ya, Dan.**

73

John

WA8ZFD

BUDGET BASEMENT:

For Sale: New in the Box 17 inch Computer Monitor asking \$20.00 never been used. Sharon KA8SRC 734-427-3934 Call anytime if not home, please leave a message.

If you would like to have your Call Sign embroidered on a Shirt or Jacket, see Ivan Love and he can have it done for you at the cost of 10.00 dollars.

While sorting out a box of electric light bulbs, I came across a small carton containing a 6146B / 8298A vacuum tube. It appears to be new. I do not have any equipment that uses vacuum tubes. So, I am offering this tube to anyone who has or may have in the future, a use for it. The tube is free to a good home.....Ivan N8AMT. Call me on the LARC repeater or at 734-464-0683.

I removed the pin fastener from the back of my LARC name badge and replaced it with a magnetic fastener. The major advantage for me is that the magnetic fastener allows me to wear the name badge without poking holes in my shirts.

I tested the magnets on multiple layers of shirts and they work just fine. I even tried them on a winter coat and they worked fine.

I ordered several extra magnets in the event that someone in LARC wants to replace their pin fastener. The cost of the magnetic fasteners is \$3, which is the same price that I paid.

I'll bring the magnets to the November meeting so if you are interested in replacing your pin fastener, please let me know.

If there is more interest in the magnets than what I've purchased, I will be happy to keep a list and submit another order.

Tom
N8LY

I make personalized address labels, simple business cards or QSL cards. There are 30 address labels to a sheet, 10 business cards to a sheet or 4 QSL cards to a sheet. The charge is \$1.00 a sheet (mix or match) with a 3 sheet minimum (\$3.00). I have many graphics to choose from. Contact Doris (KD8DXJ) at 734-941-5043 or Dorimae492@yahoo.com for more information.

SPECIAL EVENTS: LARC SWAP N SHOP FEBRUARY 17, 2008 We Need All The Help From The Members, As We Can Get. Please come out and make this SWAP a success.

THINGS OF INTEREST:

Meeting Rooms for next year

January 21, 2008 Room A****

February 25, 2008 Room B Election of Officers

March 24, 2008 Room A

April 28, 2008 Room A

May 19, 2008 Room A****

June 23, 2008 Room A

No Meetings July and August but the Board Does Meet. Hot Dog and Corn Roast In August.

September 22, 2008 Room B

October 27, 2008 Room A

November 24, 2008 Room A

December there is no meeting, that is because of our LARC Christmas Party.

****** The meeting is one week earlier than usual; January is early because of the Library's Book Sale. May is earlier, because of Memorial Day. Please make a note of these meeting rooms.**

OLD IRCS

U.S. operators that have old International Reply Coupons (IRC's) issued in the US can redeem them, but it needs to be done quickly. Unfortunately by the time you read this the IRC's issued prior to 2002 (the old small ones) will no longer be accepted as they had to be redeemed by October 10. However, the US stamped IRC's with an expiration date of December 31, 2006 can also be redeemed for 1 penny less than the issue price and must be submitted to the post office by September 1, 2008. All non-US stamped IRC's issued prior to December 31, 2006 are non-redeemable. This information can be found in the US Postal Bulletin 22215, dated September 13, 2007, on pages 28 and 57.

Web Sites That You Might Find Of Interest:

Local Hams in your Neighborhood

<http://www.vanityhg.com/maps/enterzip.html>

National Weather Service Detroit

<http://www.orh.noaa.gov/dtx>

Logging Programs

<http://www.n3fjp.com>

R A D A R

<http://www.qsl.net/wr8dar>

Antennas

<http://www.pi4cc.nl/link/bc.htm>

<http://www.cebik.com/radio.html>

Contests and DX

<http://cpcug.org/user/wfeidt/>

International Call Look-Up

http://www.book.com/cgi-bin/do_hamcallexe

Mega Converter Web Page

<http://www.megaconverter.com/mega2>

Aurora Activity Map

<http://sec.noaa.gov/pmap>

Swap N' Shop

Hazel Park Swap January 20, 2008

Hazel Park High School

23400 Hughes

Hazel Park, MI

8:00 a.m. till 12:00 Noon

Tickets \$5.00

**Our next meeting is January 21, 2008 Livonia Library @7:30 P.M.
Meeting room A.**