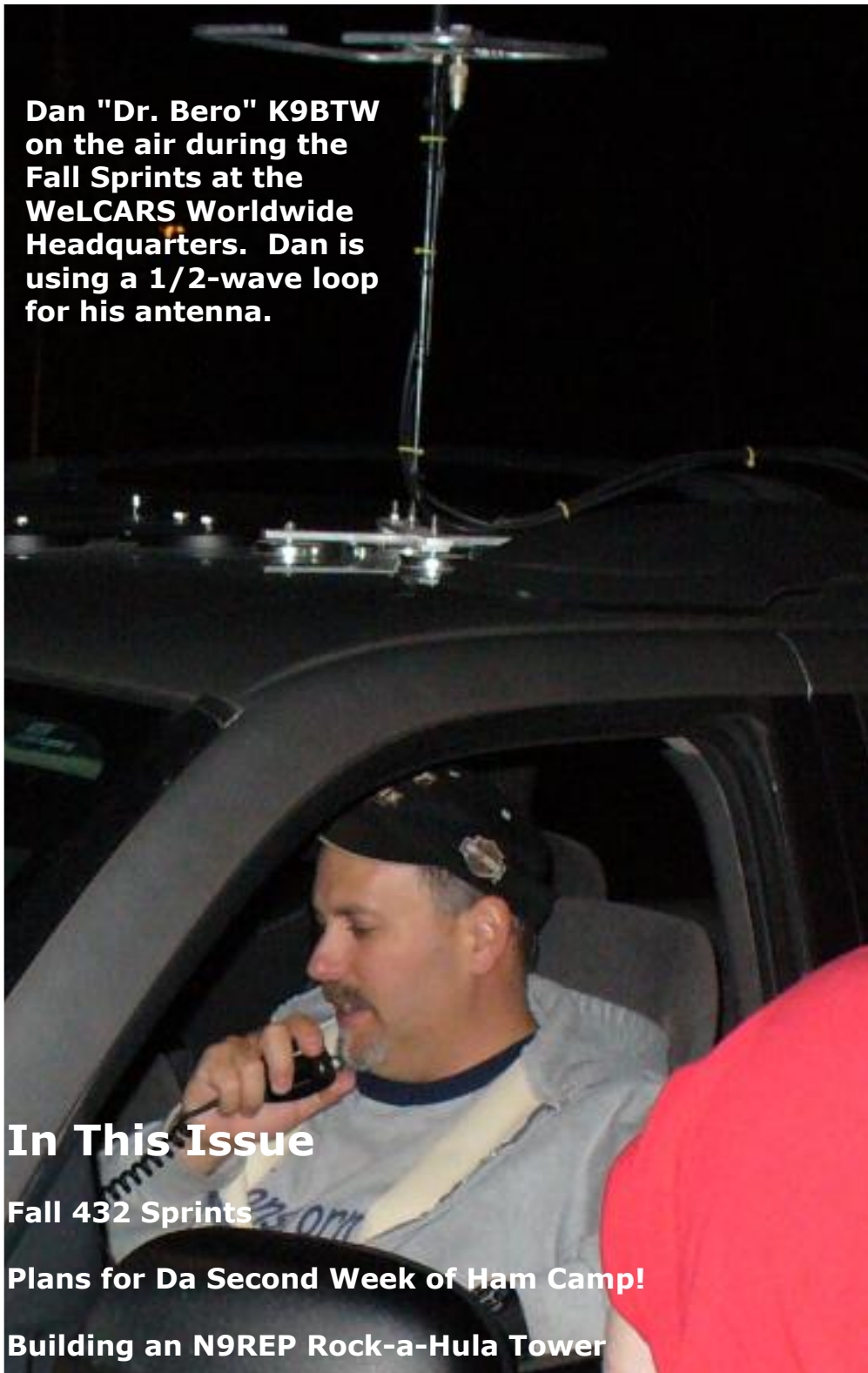


Lake County Ham Radio Journal

November 2008



Dan "Dr. Bero" K9BTW on the air during the Fall Sprints at the WeLCARS Worldwide Headquarters. Dan is using a 1/2-wave loop for his antenna.

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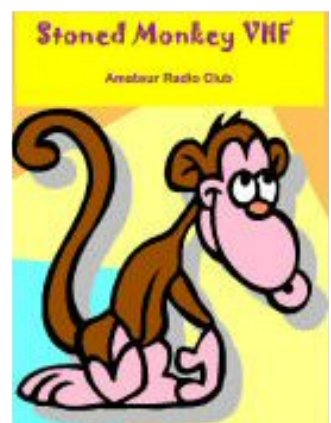
The Official
Newsletter Of

WeLCARS



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www.welcars.org



N9UHF

www.stonedmonkey.org

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Bobo the Monkey

Upcoming Events

WeLCARS Meetings and Events

General Meeting

November 7 - 7PM
Fox Lake Community Center
23 South St., Fox Lake

No November VE Session

Da 2nd Week of Ham Camp

Nov 15 8AM - Nov 16 4PM
Fox Lake Community Center

WeLCARS Holiday Party

November 19 - 7PM
R Corner Bistro
1 Nippersink Blvd., Fox Lake

Fox Lake Holiday Parade

November 29 - 9AM
Grant Community High School

Hamfests

Amateur Radio Fest 2008

November 1 - Milwaukee, WI
www.mrc91.com

37th Midwinter Swapfest

January 3 - Waukesha, WI
www.warac.com

Other Events

Lake Co RACES Meeting

November 3 - 7PM
Lake County EOC

MCWA Meeting

November 4 - 7:30PM
Nunda Township Hall

McHenry Co RACES Meeting

November 25 - 7PM
McHenry County EOC

Contest Calendar

When planning your contesting over the weekend of November 1-2, remember that Daylight Savings Time ends at 2AM on Sunday, November 2. We've taken this into account when printing the times below, at great expense by retaining 3 accountants, 14 actuaries, and a live monkey. [We even had to list Bobo on the masthead. It's best if you don't ask. - Ed.]

Radio Club of Amer QSO Pty

Nov 1 12AM - Nov 2 12AM
3.5-14 MHz Phone
www.radioclubofamerical.org

ARRL CW Sweeps

Nov 1 4PM - Nov 2 9PM
1.8-28 MHz CW
www.arrl.org/contest

Japan Int'l DX Contest

Nov 8 1AM - Nov 9 7AM
3.5-28 MHz Phone
jidx.org

Kentucky QSO Party

Nov 8 11AM - 11PM
1.8-50 MHz Phone, CW
wkdx.com/page2.html

ARRL Phone Sweeps

Nov 15 3PM - Nov 16 9PM
1.8-28 MHz Phone
www.arrl.org/contest

CQ WW CW Contest

Nov 28 6PM - Nov 29 6PM
1.8-28 MHz CW
cqww.com

Fall 432 MHz Sprints at the Worldwide HQ

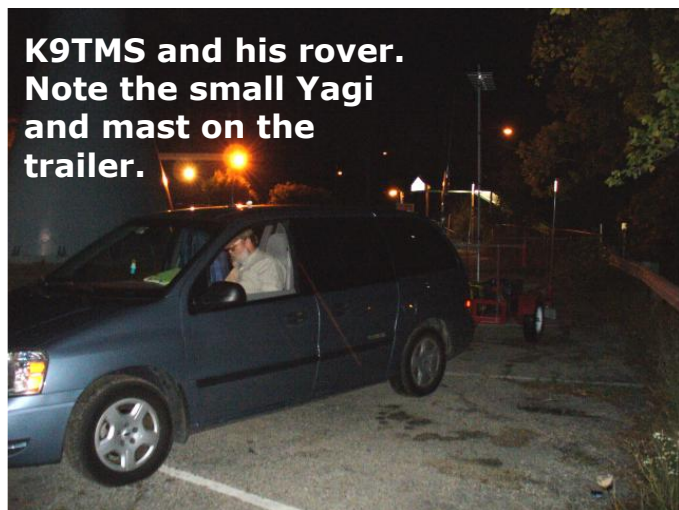
Chris Burke - N9YH

WeLCARS got together on October 8 for the Fall 432 MHz Sprint contest at the WeLCARS Worldwide Headquarters. Believe it or not, the weather for this contest was great and several of us set up in the parking lot of the WWHQ. Once again I imposed upon N9IFG's hospitality to work from the friendly confines of the War Wagon. Tom K9TMS brought his rover with an antenna mounted to a small trailer. Dan K9BTW used a halfwave loop antenna mounted to the roof of his truck that went to his IC-706.

It's definitely true that you need a lot of patience in a UHF contest, though. After tuning around and calling CQ for what seemed like an eternity, I heard K9JK working Bob K2DRH, both of them were as clear as a bell. Bob, for those that don't know, is located near the Iowa border near the Quad Cities. There

was definitely some kind of propagation enhancement at work there - Bob was loud and clear talking to John, but as they were finishing their QSO he faded away. Still, I thought I'd give it a try and pointed to beam out that way. After a few minutes of calling CQ, K2DRH came back loud and clear. I managed to get the whole exchange before his signal faded away again. Now, the fact that Bob has a killer station and I was using Joe's 110 watt amplifier didn't hurt, but that was definitely the highlight of the contest for me.

The Sprint didn't last very long - though the contest ran from 7PM to 11PM local time, there weren't very many stations on the air outside of the WWHQ parking lot. John K9JK was heard roving around, and gave us quite a few shout outs by mentioning the guys up at "WeLCARS Worldwide Headquarters" to stations that he worked. By 8:30 or so we decided to give up the ghost and call it a night. But for this VHF and above contester, hopping onto that enhanced propagation, even if it was only for a few minutes, definitely made the night worthwhile!



**K9TMS and his rover.
Note the small Yagi
and mast on the
trailer.**



**N9YH calling CQ from
the War Wagon**

Stoned Monkeys Central Division Leaders for June 2008 VHF QSO Party

In a contesting year that's had some heartbreak due to weather related cancellations, the Stoned Monkey VHF Amateur Radio Club took first place in the Central Division during the 2008 June VHF QSO Party with a score of 85,824. Hot on the Monkeys' heels was the K9SG multi-op station who took second place with a score of 84,216. Other local favorites were Mike WB8BZK who scored 54,184 to take third place in the traditional rover category and John K9JK who took third place in limited rover with a score of 9,776. Congratulations to all the Monkeys! See you in January!

ARDF Team USA Captures a World Championship Medal

from the ARRL

Ten years ago, only a few hams in North America knew that on-foot hidden transmitter hunting is an international sport with many names such as foxtailing, foxhunting, radio-orienteeing and Amateur Radio Direction Finding (ARDF). Few were aware that Eastern European countries had begun playing with ARDF decades ago; the first World Championships were in 1980. In 1988, stateside ARDF active hams in Portland, Oregon and Southern California were learning the ARDF ropes by holding on-foot foxhunting events using international rules.

Earlier this month, the Korean Amateur Radio League hosted the ARDF World Championships, and for the sixth time, Team USA made the trip. Members of the American team ranged in age from 23 to 66, representing seven states. Team members earned their positions at the 2007 USA Championships near South Lake Tahoe, California as well as the 2008 USA Championships near Bastrop, Texas.

"Overall, this was Team USA's best performance ever," Moell said. "We had four Top 10 finishes in the two days of fox-finding competition, first with 2 meter AM signals, and then with 80 meter CW signals. ARRL's team faced more than 300 of the planet's best foxtailers that represented 24 other national Amateur Radio societies." George Neal, KF6YKN, of Maspeth, New York, led Team USA, capturing a bronze medal in the category for men between ages 50 and 59 in the 2 meter foxhunt.

"This was an excellent World Championships," Neal said. "The courses were very hard, almost brutal!" Radio-orienteeers are used to running among trees in forested land, using an orienteeing map as a guide, but this year's 2 meter event on September 4 was quite different. According to Jay Hennigan, WB6RDV, of Goleta, California, the terrain of the 2400

acre site was unlike any he had ever experienced.

"The course was long and narrow, about three times as long as it was wide," Hennigan explained. "The start was in the north and the finish was in the south. On the map, it was about three-fifths woods, but that was all marked dark green, which meant you couldn't get through it unless you could find a pathway. Fortunately, there were a few trails in there to make it doable. The rest was marked yellow, which turned out to be cultivated fields and drained rice paddies. There were roads on either side, so it became a matter of running down the road until you thought you were perpendicular to a transmitter, slogging to it through the mud, punching in and then running to one of the side roads, depending on where the next fox appeared to be."

Excellent radio-orienteeers abound in Europe and Asia. Fourteen of the 25 nations at this year's World Championships took home one or more medals, but only five countries brought home gold. Three of them -- Russia, Ukraine and the Czech Republic -- dominated the medal count, capturing 71 percent of all medals and 92 percent of the golds.

Having a large team does not provide a cooperative advantage. Each competitor must work independently on championship courses. Any collusion or collaboration among team members is strictly forbidden; team scores are based only on the sum of individual performances.

For more information on ARDF, including international rules, suggestions for equipment and ideas for local events, go to Moell's Web site <<http://www.homingin.com>>. "I welcome your local event stories and photos for future ARDF Updates," he said.

WeLCARS & Stoned Monkey ARC November Sweeps Operation (aka Da 2nd Week of Ham Camp)

Tom Staley - K9TMS
WeLCARS Contest Coordinator
President, Stoned Monkey VHF ARC

Being that many of us were stormed out of Field day and the VHF contest in September there seems to be many that would like to play contest before Old Man Winter shows up. Besides it gives us something else to give awards for at the holiday dinner. And being it also falls on the opening day of the Deer Season in the Michigan, what better title than the 2nd Week of Ham Camp – all credit for that to N9YH.

We are planning a get together at the WWHQ during the ARRL November Sweepstakes Phone Contest. The date of the contest is November 15th and 16th. We will start setting up at WWHQ at about 8:00am on the 15th. The contest starts at 1500 CST on the 15th [That's 3PM to you and me. - Ed.]. The end of the contest is officially 2100 CST on the 16th however we will start tearing down the setup around 1600 on the 16th. There is a limit of a maximum of 24 hours of operating time during the 36 hour contest.

For those that haven't played in the November Sweeps a let me go over a few things here so we all understand what will and will not happen.

First and most important this contest doesn't have a "Multi-Multi" entrant category. For the Lay Ham "Multi-Multi" refers to Multiple Operators with Multiple Transmitters, this is the class we operate for Field Day as well as the VHF Contests. The Sweeps only has a "Multi-Single" category, this is Multiple Operators with a Single Transmitter. Just what we need 20 Hams all waiting for a turn at the Operating Chair. So what we have planned is a group of Single Operator stations. The catch is we can't share or re-use transmitters so this will be a BYOT or "Bring Your Own Transceiver" contest. If you don't have one you can team up with someone that does as a Multi-Single.

This concept will be confusing to many so let

me try to 'splain it here. First there will be at least 4 antennas setup: one each on 80, 40, 20, and 15 meters. For those that have the likes of Buddi-Poles and such feel free to bring them. We will allow 4 stations on the air at once; one on each of the 4 bands listed. If you have a radio and HF privileges you operate under your own call sign, keep your own log and that log will be submitted for the contest, simple so far right? For those that don't have an HF radio we encourage you to team up with someone that does as a Multi Single or use one of the Spare Radios that will be available to use under one of the 2 club call signs. We will also use those call signs for folks without HF privileges so they can have an opportunity to play. Each transmitter can only be used on the air under one callsign, there is a Family radio exception in that regard that I am not going to cover here. The rules don't say anything about power supplies, computers, or antennas though. So the idea is sit down, plug the radio in and start contesting using your radio.

We will have a variety of antennas to get us on the air with, preferably one signal per band at a time. One thing we will all have to do is share the antennas and the operating time. This contest will go hot and heavy in the contact department and a good operator can log up to 2 to 4 contacts per minute which can add up to one tired operator after a short period of time.

The log keeping on this contest is a bit out of the norm as compared to the likes of the VHF contest or Field Day that most of you are used to. The contest requires an exchange of call sign, a sequential log entry number, a letter designation as to the type station you are running called "precedence," the year you or the club was first licensed, and your

Rock-a-Hula Tower

Tom Staley - K9TMS
President - Stoned Monkey VHF ARC

Those of you reading this may wonder what the heck a Hula Tower is. Well, to start we first need to give credit where credit is justifiably due. The inventor is none other than Wendell N9REP. Having known Wendell for over a decade now, I know that like me he likes to find solutions that are both effective and simple. You could say we both subscribe to the KISS principle, which for those of you that have read the writings of Captain Richard Marcenco understand to mean Keep It Simple Stupid. With this in mind, in 2007 Wendell participated in the McHenry ESDA Field Day operation. The operation took place at ESDA Headquarters in the parking lot. So the riddle that Wendell needed to solve was how does one erect a tower with load of VHF yagis with out making holes in city owned black top? Enter the self supporting Hula Tower.



heard Wendell calling but from a decidedly higher altitude than his normal 6 foot. In looking about I found Wendell at the top of the 20 foot tower doing the Hula, minus grass skirt of course [But singing "Rock-a-Hula Baby" by Elvis, right? - Ed.]. The tower remained upright and in place even with Wendell's bump and grind at 20 foot. I was impressed to say the least. [And he thought the tower was pretty neat, too. - Ed.]

I realized this was the answer to many of the things I was looking for with regards to our microwave antenna setup. As a result I contacted Wendell and got the details of how to construct one. With a 30 foot tower supplied by Joe N9IFG I finally had the required sections and made the trip to Home Depot to acquire the lumber and hardware

to do the job.

Ok I know by now you want to know the origin of the name Hula tower. You can blame me for that. At first when Wendell told me of this creation I could not picture in my mind how this tower could remain up right with out aid of guy ropes. At the September 2007 VHF Contest, Wendell brought his creation to act as our tower for the two meter station. What I saw was a couple of sections of Rohn 25, some lumber and a lot of bolts and U-bolts. Now with 30 years as a Ham I could not believe that dimensional lumber in conjunction with a couple of tower sections would stand long on its own without support. That thinking was soon to be proved wrong. After some 20 to 30 minutes of assembly I

Basically the tower sections require no modification what-so-ever. On the bottom section a 2 x 10 x 10 (or 2 x 8 x 10 if you are only going to 20 foot with the tower. For all you non-carpenter types, 2 x 10 x 10 means a 2-by-10 that's 10 feet long.) is U-bolted onto two of the three tower legs. Wendell's original design had no supports to this main support member. In building mine I found that the tower was a bit more stable after I added 2 x 4 x 8 supports from the main board to the legs of the tower. This forms support for the tower on 2 sides. From the remaining leg there is another 2 x 8 x 5 support member U-bolted with an angled 2 x 4 x 8 support to the upper portion of the tower.

You need to construct a 4th support of a 2 x 4 x 5 and 2 x 4 x 8 set of dimensional lumber. Move the tower into an upright position before you bolt this leg into place. This 4th support should be adjusted to keep the tower at a 90° angle to the ground. The other upper supports can also be adjusted around the U-bolts to get the tower plumb. When lowering the tower it is best to remove the 4th leg and lay the tower down on that side. Essentially you wind up with something that is kind of pyramid shaped.

This is an easy and simple method of constructing a self supporting tower that can be rapidly assembled for Field use and it has the ability to support large VHF arrays. At the 2nd Week of Nerd Camp we will be using my version of this tower to support a 3 element Hamstick beam.

By the way we are currently in need of a Rohn top section to construct another of these. Let me know if you have one you can part with.



Tom's finished tower



The bottom half of the finished tower



Bottom of the tower with all supports bolted in place



Closeup of the angled 2 x 4 supports bolted to the tower leg

Parts List

Qty.	Item
4	2 x 4 x 8 foot Treated Lumber
1	2 x 4 x 5 foot Treated Lumber
1	2 x 8 x 5 foot Treated Lumber
1	2 x 10 x 10 foot Treated Lumber
11	1 1/2 x 1/4 U-Bolts
4	3/8 x 4" Bolt, washers and nuts

All of these materials were obtained from the Round Lake version of Home Depot.

Odds and Ends

WeLCARS Meetings Moving to Fridays!

That's right, our tradition of Wednesday night meetings has to, unfortunately, come to an end. The building that houses the WeLCARS Worldwide Headquarters has been given a new lease on life from the village. That's good. Unfortunately, the Fox Lake Police Explorers also meet on Wednesdays in the basement. Upstairs houses Jazzercise on Wednesday nights, which leaves us with a building a little too crowded and noisy for our normal tomfoolery. Joe N9IFG conducted an online poll, and it seems that Fridays won out as the day of choice. [We really are nerds! - Ed.]

El Presidente Joe Scores a Mess of 900 MHz Radios

Joe, the Maxwell Klinger of ham radio, has scored about 60 EF Johnson 900 MHz portable radios. We're still not exactly sure if they can be made to work on the ham bands. If it is possible we'll be able to do it by just editing the configuration file and sending it back to the radio. The monkey in the works is the guy we got the radios from lost the programming cable, so we need to figure out how to make one of those. Chris N9YH reports he has a lead on it. Or at least an educated guess. Worst case scenario is we smoke a couple radios and sell the rest on eBay.

Project Pile: Jay KC9NJZ's 900 MHz Stuff

Jay KC9NJZ brought a pile of radios he found on eBay to a meeting. Some of the stuff seems more ham capable than others, the 800 MHz Maxtracs, for example, are ill-suited to the ham bands except as possibly a 900 MHz repeater receiver. But the gems of the bunch are three Motorola class AB amplifiers for 900 MHz. That conversion involves finding a 24 volt power supply and making a new plate with connections on it. Contest Commendant Tom K9TMS is interested...

Get Ready to Rumble!

The Second Annual WeLCARS Holiday Party, "Awards" Ceremony, and Junta Coup (aka elections) Spectacular is just around the corner! The date is Wednesday, November 19 at 7PM at the R Corner Bistro on Grand Ave. in Fox Lake, just a couple blocks from the Worldwide Headquarters. Send your award nominations to Chris N9YH at chris@n9yh.com. Don't use the group - these are supposed to be surprises!

Joe N9IFG will be handling the nominations for our officer elections, aka the yearly Junta Coup. The following positions will be up for grabs:

President	Vice-President	Treasurer
Secretary	Program Chair	Contest Chair
Youth Training Chair		

or any other position you think we can't live without. Send your nominations to Joe at joeserocki@gmail.com or in person at a meeting. The final deadline is the holiday party, where we'll have the elections.



Nominations for "Game Warden" can be sent to Bubba WD8KHE