

EKKO labels acknowledged radio reception

In the early days of radio there were people who searched out and listened to radio stations from as far away as possible. These hobbyists, called DXers, who would record times, programs and content, and then send away to the station for verification that they indeed had heard the station.

The stations were pleased to receive the reports. They could tell the station management how far the signal was getting out, the quality of reception, and something about the quantity and quality of the listeners.

In 1924, the EKKO Company of Chicago, Illinois came up with the idea of creating stamps for the radio stations to use as an acknowledgment that would both encourage reporting and make the acknowledgment process easier.

The company also came out with an official album containing spaces for the engraved "Verified Reception Stamps" that were produced for 650 North American broadcast stations.

The album sold for \$1.75 in the United States and \$2.50 in Canada. Pictured are two pages from a collector's album substitute. The collector had 116

stamps. The great majority are the "U.S. Eagle between radio towers" version, but there were also "Beaver gnawing on a tree" stamps used by Canadian stations. There were a smattering of stations that did not want to purchase the stamps and created their own seals like the one in the upper right.

It didn't trouble the EKKO company if a station chose not to use its stamps. Anyone

could purchase the stamps direct from EKKO at 10 cents apiece, and the company was happy to sell the stamps showing the call letters of participating and non-participating stations.

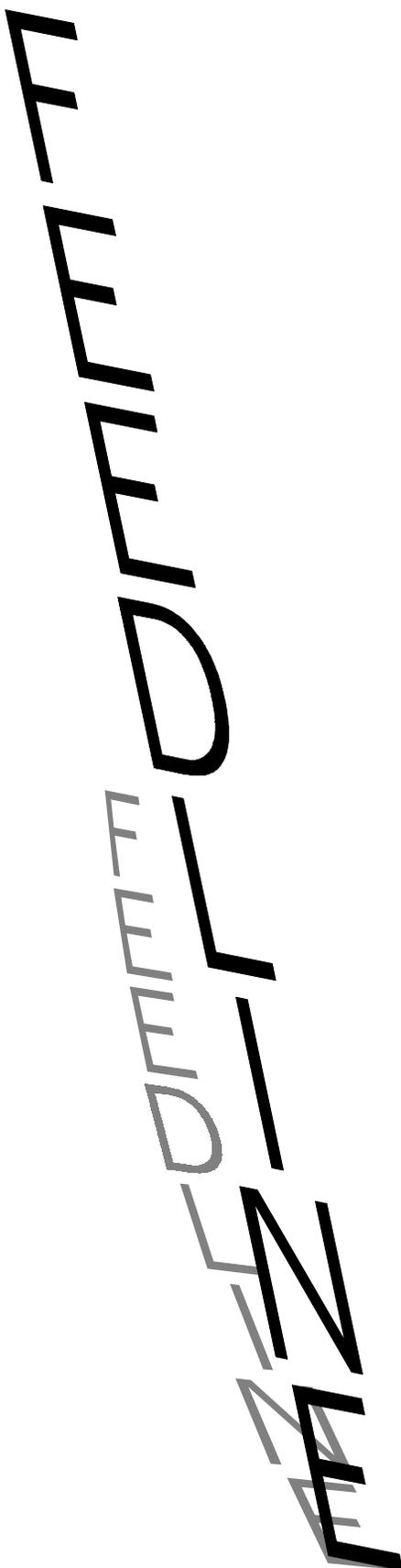
Eventually more than 700 different EKKO stamps were produced during the 15 odd years the system operated, and there exists at least two complete collections.

The stamps themselves don't seem to be that scarce, unless of course you are trying to find a specific station. What is extremely scarce is the stamp used on acknowledgment cards or letters.

These two pages from a collectors homemade EKKO stamp collection show examples of US Eagle stamps (bottom), Canadian beaver stamps (upper left), and a privately printed verification label (upper right).

Did you collect EKKO stamps? We sometimes minimize activities from yesteryear because we just don't think anyone would be interested. How wrong! These activities are part and parcel of our radio culture. Set your memory scanner on rewind and see if you have any stories to share with the club

from Linn's Stamp News, September 13, 1993



Feedline

Feedline is a member-supported publication of the Cary Amateur Radio Club and is published monthly. Deadline for submissions is the second Thursday of the month.

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Cary Amateur Radio Club

The Cary Amateur Radio Club meets on the fourth Thursday of the month, **7:00 p.m.** in the lower level of the Christian Life Center of White Plains United Methodist Church. The June, November, and December meetings are held off-site. Call for location of those meetings.

Next Meeting: March 28, 1996.

1996 Officers

KB9MS	Bob Lukaszewski	833-0199
	President	
N9CGD	Tom Doligalski	481-1236
	Vice-President	
K4IWW	Will Harper	467-0224
	Treasurer	

Letters

Editor,

This note is in response to April FEEDLINE's article *Necessity Spools Mother of Invention*.

The reason the loss went down was that the twin wires were acting as "open wire" feedlines. If the currents are equal and opposite, then the losses are practically ZERO.

However, if the currents are in the same direction, the fields built up around the wires induce an almost equal *but opposite* voltage in the other wire. Thus, the current flow

Resistance Tutorial

When asked why he prefers to tee the ball high, Jack Niclaus replied, "Through years of experience, I have found that air offers less resistance than dirt."

The Fan Antenna

by Ralph Krilliams, N3VT

The fan antenna looks like a lady's fan. Marconi used giant fan antennas in some of his experiments early this century. The fan also saw Radio Amateur use on 200 meters as early as 1922.

The fan puts lots of conducting material high in the air, a big advantage at low frequencies, where any antenna must be substantially shorter than one-quarter wavelength. A fan's numerous conductors high above the ground provide high capacitance *to space*, raising efficiency higher than other antennas of similar height. Another type of antenna, the umbrella works even better, but it requires a more complex support structure.

Current ham practice does not include operations on wavelengths longer than 160 meters. But on 160 meters, where a quarter wavelength is 130 feet, a much shorter fan would be effective.

To build a 160-meter fan antenna, you would stretch a horizontal cable between two tall objects about 40 feet apart to support ten or so fan conductors, each about 45 feet long. You bring those fan

conductors together at their lower ends, and connect them to the loading coil the system requires to achieve resonance. Low-frequency antennas take a lot of wire, in this case nearly a tenth mile in the air, and as much again for the ground radials or counterpoise.

The fan antenna produces vertical polarization. That's fine for DXing, but if your intent is local work, a horizontal wire, even though quite low in wavelengths, works better. Fan antennas seem to have lost their appeal except to radio historians. Why that is so is a mystery. They are simple, easy to construct, and they work. And the need for two supports isn't a problem if you have tall trees in your yard.

from the December '94 Peconic ARC (Peconic, N.Y.) *Peconic Amateur Radio Club Newsletter*, Ralph Grover, NS2S, Editor Via the ARNS

Ground it right

by Ernest Pappas, KB2SKK

Grounding is not just a matter of connecting your transceiver to a water pipe. To be safe, you must ground almost every piece of equipment you own. You must use the right materials and you must do the job the right way.

The National Electrical Code (NEC) states the general rule that YOU MUST ground all non-current-carrying metal parts of fixed, portable and mobile equipment. That includes housings and support structures. (NEC §250-155).

Focusing on amateur installations, the code specifies grounding conductors be copper, copper-clad aluminum, aluminum, or similar corrosion-resistant materials. The code demands a *workmanlike* installation, and it covers such items as insulation, support, and mechanical protection. (NEC §810 [c])

For example, "the grounding conductor shall be connected to an accessible and approved grounding electrode or system. The size of the protective grounding conductor for transmitting stations shall not be smaller than #10 AWG."

Many amateurs don't realize that all exposed, electrically dead metal parts including antenna masts should be grounded to the same

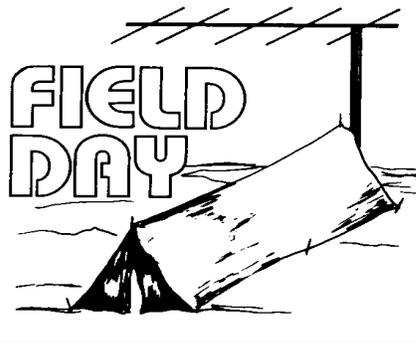
electrode that grounds the electrical system of the building because only *single-point grounding* can ensure that all elements of the grounding system are at the same electrical potential.

And if you install a coaxial cable running underground to your tower, be sure to also install a counterpoise of #6 AWG wire, which need not be insulated, running a few inches above the coax in the ground. Connect it to ground rods at both its tower and shack ends.

In a lightning strike, a properly installed grounding system can save your radio equipment, your house, or even your life.

from the December '94 Peconic APC (Peconic, N.Y.) *Peconic Amateur Radio Club Newsletter*, Ralph Grover, NS2S, Editor. Via the ARNS

ONLY 100 DAYS LEFT UNTIL...



The Art of Junk

For those in the know,
the Triangle is a perpetual swapfest.

In March, local ham's thought's turn to auctions, scrounging and bargains. For those who find dumpster-diving repulsive, this article will lead you to the bounty without the bother.

Planning for this month's auction, I realized that there a several other venues around town where a ham can satisfy cravings for the thrill of treasure hunting and the excitement of bidding. These are the surplus warehouses filled with the flotsam of corporate and government activities. Surfing the aisles of these boneyards carries all the risk of a hamfest or club auction: the risk of losing the item to a competitor; the risk that you might actually win what you bid on; the risk it wasn't worth the gas to drive it home.

I know of four warehouses that are open to the public. If you know of others, write up the details and send it to Feedline's editor. We will update this list as we learn of other haggling hotspots. So grab your handcart and jump into the back of the pickup truck as we begin our tour of junk-heaven.

My favorite is the NC State Surplus Warehouse. Located on Route 54 just east of I40, it is easily reachable at lunchtime from many work sites. Hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Monday thru Friday. The warehouse is closed during bid-opening, Tuesday from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Once inside, take note of the table on the right as you enter the lobby. It should be full of thick binders. I'll tell you why this is important later on. For now, just follow the arrows to the warehouse. As you enter thru a set of double doors, notice the items along the wall to your left. Don't bother looking at these items, they are on their way in or out. They are either waiting to be labeled for the next auction or have been won are waiting to be picked up by their lucky owners. Relax and cruise around awhile. Coded auction dates and lot numbers should be on all the items. These numbers are important only if you intend to bid on something.

Near the double door you used to enter the warehouse there will be a desk with bid sheets and a bulletin board with a list of the vehicles parked outside and their mileage

readings. Bid sheets are easy to complete - except for the amount to bid! This is where those books in the lobby come in handy - they contain past winning bid sheets.

Let's say you have your heart set on that 185 pound, grey, steel desk - *ya just gotta have it*. Check the tag and see what week it will be auctioned, and get the appropriate bid sheet. First make sure it is not part of a *lot* - a group of usually similar items grouped under one item number. Now check the books in the lobby to see what past bids were required to walk away with *Desk, grey, steel*. Again, make sure that the winning bid was for only one desk. It would be pretty sad if you submitted a winning bid of \$85 for a desk just because you didn't notice that the previous \$85 winning bid was for three of them!

Remember that other people are looking at the same winning bid info, so if you want a dental chair, (Hey, what you do in the privacy of your own home is none of my business.), and last month's winning bid was \$95, you should bid a buck or two more, maybe \$97.05. (Or \$300 if *ya gotta have it!*)

If you're in the market for a cherry picker, a flat-bottomed boat, or a highway patrol cruiser you'll have to go outside and cruise the parking lot. I slow down anytime I pass the warehouse just to see if there are any prison buses available this month.

If you are successful in your bidding, you will have fifteen days to pick up your treasures. You must pay with a cashier's check, certified check or money order. If you don't show up, you are banned from participating for 6 months, unless, (there's always an unless...), you submit one of those forms of payment with your new bid for the amount of the bid.

Let's accelerate onto I40 and head out to the City of Medicine for our next two stops. Duke University runs a surplus warehouse at 117 South Buchanan Boulevard just off the intersection of West Main and Buchanan.

Duke's facility is run like a store. Items are priced, but some haggling is allowed. They do reduce the prices on items if they remain on the shelf too long. If you don't

like this week's price for *Glassware, laboratory, assorted*, come back next week and see if everyone else resisted the temptation. After several price reductions, orphaned items are sent to the compactor. The store takes cash, Visa, MC and checks.

Grab some lunch and then head over to the City of Durham's surplus warehouse on Highway 55 (Austin Ave) near Gilbert Street. They have everything from dump trucks to barricades. I have inside info that they soon will be receiving several hundred low-band radios, (Motorola flavor) that can be converted for amateur use. Make them and offer and they'll get back to you if its accepted.

We now motor south to Carolina Power and Light's warehouse on Mechanical Boulevard. This facility has just about anything used in their normal course of business, from office equipment to project surplus. Head south on 70/401 and bear left (70) at the split. Go about 1/4 mile to the next light which is Mechanical Boulevard and turn left. Continue for about 1.5 miles to Gate B. Go to the second floor of the second building and check in with Judson Barrett.

CP+L disposes of its surplus twice a year at large auctions held at the State Fair Grounds. These auctions are held to insure fair access to the most desirable materials like trucks, cars, and vans. There are some items however that may be of interest to us that CP+L would be willing to part with between auctions as long as we can agree on a price.

If someone wants to volunteer to check out CP+L's warehouse just before FEEDLINE goes to press, we could post any interesting items to gauge interest by our members. Items could include wire, tower sections, radios, equipment racks etc. We would make a group buy and then split the loot after we get it out of the gate.

Hope you enjoyed our tour of the area's warehouses and you find the information useful. Happy hunting!

KM4LB

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If you are interested in participating in a group purchase of components for the new CMOS III keyer, contact KM4LB. As soon as we know how many hams are interested we can negotiate a discount with our suppliers.

Our New Look

More Space...Less Wrinkled
More Space...Less Wrinkled
More Space...Less Wrinkled

After numerous reports of *FEEDLINE* arriving in "body bags," courtesy of the USPS's sorting machines, a decision was made to convert from staples to envelopes.

Discussions with the Post Office indicated that staples were not the only contributors to the crunching. The orientation of the label required the Feedline to traverse the chutes and gates of the sorting equipment with the open edges facing down and to the right, the worst possible combination.

Rather than reformat Feedline, other options were considered and, since we are already paying first-class postage, envelopes offered the most benefits. Hamfest tickets can be mailed to members, or bulletins can be added at the last minute.

The change also frees up another half page for piercing editorials, cutting edge technical reports, and pointless gossip. We here at *FEEDLINE* central hope you enjoy the benefits this change will bring.

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Many improvements to *FEEDLINE* are directly attributable to our subscription to the *Amateur Radio News Service*, a newsletter for amateur radio newsletter editors.

You may have noticed that many articles are attributed to this publication with the tag *Via the ARNS*. They bring a measure of variety and information to our members that would not be possible if it were up to our staff to search for articles every month.

I mention this because the ARNS is experiencing some financial difficulties, and, despite belt tightening and prepaid dues by subscribers, their *outgo* still exceeds their income.

At the March meeting, I intend to pass the hat in the name of the ARNS. After the donations are counted, I will make a motion that the club round up our donation to an amount that will reflect well on our members and club. If you cannot attend the auction, please contact one of the club officers and express your support of ARNS.

Yes, I have shamelessly, yea, deviously, calculated this plea to be made on annual auction night, when I can be sure that everyone has just visited the ATM. TNX

Meeting Notice



The March Q&A session, scheduled to begin at 7:00 p.m. will be canceled, and the business meeting will be held in its place. This program change will help get the auction started early.

CARC Minutes, Feb '96

Meeting called to order at 7:36 p.m., by Pres., Bob, KB9MS. Introductions.

Treasurer's Report - Will, K4IWW, reported: Savings: \$2,903.05; Checking: \$561.64; Cash: \$5; Total: \$3,469.69. Dues still being received (\$9/yr.). CARC caps still available (\$4). We need to get a mailing out for The Mid-Summer SWAPFEST. Swapfest '96 is Saturday, July 20. Mark it on your calendar please! Will, K4IWW, will designate which counties get pulled out of the database for the mailing. Jay, WB8BMV, will do the extracting. Herb, N4UE, will sort the data by zip codes and print the labels. A folding, labelling, stacking, bagging, etc., party will be coming. The more hands, the lighter the load!!!

Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) - Reed, AB4W, newly elected NC Section Manager, commented that numerous accomplishments were noted over the winter. If we are to respond to emergencies - blizzards, ice storms, etc., then the preparations must be done. Both operating skills AND equipment are involved in being ready. The guys and gals around Winston-Salem got some great publicity, while helping out. It never hurts to let the public know what we can do.

Old Business

The flyers have been made for the SWAPFEST. We must have a mailing! WB8BMV and N4UE will handle. Reed, AB4W, will supply a list of clubs. We plan to send complimentary ticket to nearby clubs.

New Business

A budget for the SWAPFEST prizes was set.. Mike, AC4TG, will put together the prize list. Field Day is coming! June 22-23. Everyone should mark that weekend on their calendars. Pres., Bob, KB9MS, and V-Pres., Tom, N9CGD, will make a search for another site that may upgrade the fine McGregor Park site.

Steve Kastelberg, AB4SL, gave a great program on the life and times of a DX'er. Of course, DX'ers need a one-two punch. They have to work 'em first, then they have to confirm 'em! Foreign laws play both a vital and interesting part of the game. Thanks, Steve.

Next Meeting: Thursday, Mar. 28. AUCTION!
DUES! AUCTION! DUES! AUCTION!
DUES! AUCTION! DUES! n4ue

Cycle 22 isn't over

by Glenn Williams, AF8C

The Royal Observatory of Belgium, the world's official sunspot keeper, has revised its predicted timing of the end of Cycle 22 and the start of Cycle 23. The observatory has rescheduled the transition for May '96, and stated that propagation will begin its upturn in September '97.

That means Cycle 23 should reach its peak years in 1999. On average, from the middle of the low-activity point, which signals the end of one cycle and the beginning of the next, it takes three years for solar flux to peak. Flux then typically stays relatively flat near the peak value for two years, before declining for six years.

So expect HF propagation to get even more rotten before it improves.

from the June-July '95 West Park Radiops (Cleveland, Ohio) W8VM
Log-AF8C Editor - Via the ARNS.

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I have traveled the length and breadth of this country and talked to the best people, and I can assure you that data processing is a fad that won't last out the year.

(editor in charge of business books for Prentice Hall, 1957)

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Choosing a radio club

Top Ten things to look for in a radio club:

Economical: dues should be less than \$10.
It placed first on FD for two consecutive years.
Never has had a contested election.
Holds its swapfest on the hottest day of the year.
Does not own any towers that have to be climbed in bad weather.
Has not held an "executive session" in the last 25 years.
Holds Robert's Rules of Order in contempt: with a passion.
Meets on Thursday: real hams don't watch *FRIENDS*.
Holds meetings on church property: all food consumed is free of calories, fat, and guilt.
Considers neckties an evil, second only to Robert's Rules.
Guarantees with full faith and trust anything you purchase at its annual auction is worth every penny you paid.

Send KM4LB your ideas for a top ten item on why someone should join CARC. ex:

TWO WORDS: _____

This list will be printed on the next post card program notice to non-members.

KM4LB

