

Parma Radio Club Newsletter

October 2000

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This is Your Newsletter Too

This is Monday night, and I would normally be putting the finishing touches on the newsletter. But, as I sit at the keyboard writing another one of these lame lead articles, I realize that I don't have enough material to even fill two pages. I don't have a clue where the other four pages will come from. I'll bet that most of you have never thought about where the material for the newsletter comes from. As long as the newsletter arrives in your mail box, you're happy.

Think about when you were in school and how you moaned and groaned when the teacher gave you an assignment to write a 100-word essay. That's about one paragraph. This newsletter typically is about four thousand words, or about 40 of those 100 word paragraphs. Can you imagine how I moan and groan at this time of the month? As much as I beg and plead for the members to contribute something to the newsletter, I receive very little. There are some of you that help out once in a while and I'm very grateful for that, but it's always from the same few people and very sporadic.

Whenever I bring up this subject at a meeting, someone comments, "if publishing the newsletter is that much of a burden, why not stop publishing it. Do we really need it?" PRC members maintain their membership for a variety of reasons. Some enjoy the talks and demos at the meetings. Some go out on Field Day and others check into our nets. A significant number enjoy reading the newsletter and would be very disappointed if we discontinued it. If I were to announce right now that this was the last PRC newsletter and there would be no more, our membership would drop dramatically. We can't afford to not have a newsletter. . . .

. . . . It's now Wednesday night, and another miracle has happened. I have enough to fill all six pages. I had to go out on the Internet to find some stuff. I

Meetings are held the first and third Mondays each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Busch Community Room, 7501 Ridge Road in Parma.

Oct 2	Program: to be announced
Oct 16	Program: to be announced
Nov 6	Program: to be announced

W8PRC

[www.qsl.net / prc](http://www.qsl.net/prc)

shouldn't have to do that. It would be much better to have articles from all of you. It would be nice to read about what interests you rather than always what interests the Interim Editor (Still waiting for a new editor). We'd love to hear about that new rig, or what your building or experimenting with, or what DX you're working, or maybe you can pass on some of your knowledge and experience. This is your newsletter too.

Gene Mayler, K8EE ■

Club News

2001 Elections Soon

It's that time of the year again to be thinking about who you want to be officers for next year. This year's election meeting will be on November 20. All nominations will be made from the floor. Make sure that the person you intend to nominate is willing to run.

Gene Mayler, K8EE

Antenna SIG

The antenna SIG (special interest group) has been reactivated to build a bottom fed 2m half wave vertical similar to the "Ringless Ringo" described in last month's issue of the newsletter. The antenna, made of #12 solid wire and PVC pipe, will again prove that it is easy to build your own antennas and not spend a lot of money. If you are interested in building one of these plastic antennas, contact Herm Pekrul (W8UNI).

Gene Mayler, K8EE

SS Multi-op Station SIG

We plan to set up a multi-op station for the ARRL November Sweepstakes contest again. It will depend on whether we will be able to get permission to use last year's site. If you are interested in contesting, here is another opportunity for you to operate a station that will have a good signal. There will be an extra class control operator present at all times, so even if you do not yet have an H.F. license, you may still operate. If you are interested in taking part, contact Gene Mayler (K8EE).

Gene Mayler, K8EE ■

Elected Officers

President: Gene Mayler, K8EE
Vice President: Jim Tiegiser, K8JT
Secretary: Dave Cole, KC8CUL
Treasurer: Barry Wittine, KC8IOO

Appointed Officials

Club Licenses: Jim Tiegiser, K8JT
Gene Mayler, K8EE
Programs: Ed Kochevar, KB8CQ
Sunshine: Henry Kearns, WA8ROK

Newsletter

Interim Editor: Gene Mayler, K8EE
Publishing Assistant: Bob Kalina, N8IXU
Contributors this month: Gene Mayler, K8EE
Jim Tiegiser, K8JT

Membership

Dues are \$15.00 per year, including a subscription to the Parma Radio Club Newsletter. Make checks payable to the Parma Radio Club, Inc., 6283 Dellrose Dr., Parma Hts., OH 44130.

New Life for Old Caps

During our weekly sked a few weeks back, Roger (K3TM) and I were trying to figure out how to power up some old oscilloscopes that he had acquired without damaging the filter capacitors. One possible way is to use a variac to bring the voltage up slowly. The problem with that is that if the equipment uses a tube rectifier, the filament will not heat enough to conduct when the voltage is low.

As is usually the case, someone was monitoring our discussion and broke in with a solution to our dilemma. Bill (W9JPN) suggested breaking the leads to the plates of the rectifier tube and inserting 50K resistors. This limits the current to allow a leaky electrolytic capacitor to reform itself safely. Bill claims that he has been able to restore what appeared to be completely bad capacitors this way.

Putting the resistors in the rectifier plate leads may not be the only way. Depending on the circuit, insert the resistor anywhere it will limit the current to the filter capacitor. It's also a good idea to disconnect the load from the output of the filter. Simply pulling all of the tubes may accomplish this, but not always. You'll need to study the circuit to be sure.

Old tube equipment many times uses multiple capacitors enclosed in a single can. It's virtually impossible to find exact replacements, so restoring the old capacitors this way may be a way out.

Gene Mayler, K8EE ■

Better Access to K8EE

I have just installed a 220 MHz port to provide connectivity to the local Netrom network. This will greatly improve the accessibility to the K8EE NOS BBS. Here are the local Netrom nodes that will now have access.

CLE1:WB8CQR-1	Warrensville Hts.	145.01
CLE5:WB8CQR-5	Warrensville Hts.	145.05
CLEW:W8IZ-2	N. Olmsted	145.73
CL9600:N8KJT-4	N. Royalton	145.645* 441.075
CLE220:WB8CQR-10	Warrensville Hts.	223.70
NOLM:KG8QC-4	N. Olmsted	145.03 145.05 446.485*

* 9600 bps

Simply connect to any of these nodes, and then connect to K8EE:PARMA. No node hopping is necessary. The network can figure out the route on its own.

NBRY KA node in Newbury on 145.07 MHz also has access to K8EE. Here, you will have to node hop by first connecting to NBRY. Then X connect to CLE220 and then connect to PARMA:K8EE. NBRY is very high profile and has very wide coverage in northeast Ohio. I do not have a direct radio path to NBRY yet, but I hope that will change with a better antenna. Then the CLE220 node hop will not be necessary.

For those running TCP/IP, the CLEX cross band digi can be used to route IP packets from 145.01 MHz to k8ee.ampr.org on 223.70 MHz. If I can improve the radio path to NBRY, the NBRYX cross band digi can be used in the same way from 145.05 MHz.

The new 220 MHz port greatly improves K8EE's connectivity in northeast Ohio. There will be network paths to Akron, Canton, Elyria, Newbury, Stow and Wayne County as well as the Cleveland area and its suburbs.

Gene Mayler, K8EE ■

Nets

28.460 MHz USB, Thursday, 9 p.m.
146.46 MHz FM simplex, Tuesday, 9 p.m.

Another Rainout for Cleveland Hamfest

If you are a duck, you probably enjoyed the Cleveland Hamfest. Otherwise, it was another disappointing year. Early in the morning, it looked like we would be spared the rain, but the inevitable happened. After twenty-six years, the HAC (Hamfest Association of Cleveland) must know that it is almost a certainty that it will rain on the day of any hamfest that it is held in the month of September. They keep saying that they can't change the date. So did Dayton, but they finally did what they insisted they could not do. Now that the Dayton Hamvention is in May, they don't have as many weather problems. Cleveland needs to make that same decision. If not, the attendance will continue to decline.

Cleveland is a major city that is centrally located with a large ham population. There just doesn't seem to be much excuse for us having a small town hamfest here. If a small city like Dayton can have the largest hamfest in the world, why can't Cleveland have a bigger one. Wouldn't it be great

Calender

Contests

10-10 Day Sprint, Oct 10

FISTS Fall Sprint, Oct 14

10-10 International Fall Contest, CW, Oct 17

10-10 Int. Fall Contest, CW, Oct 28-29

CQWW DX contest, SSB, Oct 28-29

ARRL November Sweepstakes, CW, Nov 4-6

Hamfests

Medina, October 8, National Guard Armory, talk in 147.03+

VE Exams

Akron, Oct 31, Ron Lieving, (330) 724-5981

Elyria, Oct 15, contact Charles Hall, (440) 327-3822

Independence, Nov 12, contact Gary Dewey, (216) 642-1399

Medina, Oct 8, Fred Helwig, (440) 236-3477

Stow, Oct 10, Steve Greathouse, (330) 724-2247

Wickeliffe, Oct 7, Scott Farnham, (440) 256-0320

to fill the IX Center. It's certainly possible. It's just a matter of thinking big.

I've often thought that if the clubs ran the hamfest and shared in the profits, there would be more incentive to make it successful. It would get more people involved, working harder. I'm sure that some formula can be devised for the clubs to fairly share the spoils. Having said that, the HAC members should be commended for unselfishly spending their time and energy to put on the hamfest and then give away the profits to others.

There is one more thing that has become a great source of irritation to many hams. So many of the hamfests are trying to become computer shows. I guess they think that they can make more money that way. However, I hear over and over again people say that they I don't go to the

hamfests any more because it's all computers. They're exaggerating a bit of course, but a lot of the hamfests are dominated by computers. Some hams have computers and do like to buy and sell computer gear at hamfests, but we must remember that we are really hams first and computer hobbyists second. It would certainly help perception of the computer haters for the HAC to drop the words "and Computer Show" from their promotions.

Even though the outdoor flea market was rained out, I still enjoy having "eye balls" with old friends that I don't see very often. That to me is as much fun as the buying and selling. So, the hamfest wasn't a total disappointment to me. I will continue to attend each year and hope that it gets better.

Gene Mayler, K8EE ■

Why Learn and Use CW?

by Bill Weinhardt W9PPG

What in the world can I say about operating CW? These were my thoughts upon learning that I was supposed to write a column about CW operation for this newsletter. It occurred to me perhaps putting down my thoughts as to why I choose to operate the ham bands using this obsolete method might be interesting.

Is CW obsolete? It certainly is. Army, Navy, and Air Force MARS no longer have CW nets for message traffic. This is handled by more efficient digital communication techniques. Ships at sea and marine shore stations no longer maintain a CW watch on 500khz (The international distress frequency). Ship message traffic is pretty much all handled through satellites with digital communications. I have been told the military no longer requires CW training for their radio operators.

"If you insist on operating CW, why don' you hook up one of your computers to your radio equipment and let the computer do the mundane work of copying and sending CW?" Some have suggested this.

These things went through my mind as I wondered what I could say in a column about operating CW. So why do I operate CW? My number one answer is that I am hooked on it, I suppose in the same way that someone who likes to ice fish is hooked on that. Why get all bundled up and go out in the miserable cold and try to catch a fish when it could be done on a nice warm day or better yet buy a fish in a store and not have any of the bother?

Another reason that I enjoy operating CW is that it keeps the human element in ham radio. CW requires some amount of skill that a person must develop. Much the same as one

who enjoys carpentry and building furniture develops the skills to do so even though it would be easier and quicker to buy the furniture assembled and finished. I guess there is a certain amount of pride in one knowing that he or she has developed the skill to do something fairly well, but there is the ever present challenge of knowing that you could be even better.

Then there is another reason. I live in town and after we moved here 5 years ago, I didn' t get aroundo putting up a very elaborate antenna system. While the tower and beam are one of the projects I intend to get to sometime, I still use a rather simple wire antenna that was meant to be sort of well temporary. On top of that, I don' t use a lot of power. My transceiver puts out 100 watts on a good day and I don' t own an amplifier. I' ve had allthe parts to build one for over 20 years and still haven' t gotten around to it...well you ge the picture. Operating SSB on the crowded HF bands with these constraints can be challenging and even frustrating to say the least (particularly on 75, 40, and 20 meters).

On CW, I can get on the air and either call or answer a CQ, make an interesting contact or two with someone anywhere in the world, and not be insulted because of my less than 50 over S9 signal or be told to get off of someone' s "private" frequency. CW operators tend to be more polite and considerate than many of the operators in the voice segments. After spending the day at work dealing with people problems and problem people I would rather not do that on the ham bands.

Then there is my final reason for operating CW. I have a short QSO with my father every morning before I leave for

work. He lives about 100 miles from Bluffton and is nearly 89 years old now. We have kept this daily sked for several years. His hearing is very bad so he has trouble understanding what I am saying on SSB. The pure CW tones are much easier for him to detect.

Dad' s memory is not what it used to be and keeps getting worse but he can still send and receive CW pretty darn good. In fact I think the brain work involved in sending and

receiving CW has kept his mind sharper than it would be otherwise. (A clinical study of the therapeutic value of this kind of mental activity among those developing memory problems might show some interesting results.) Until we can get him moved to Bluffton, we will continue these daily schedules.

This sums up why I operate CW almost exclusively. To me it is fun. ■

History of Ten-Ten International

Jim Michaels (SK), W6PGM

Seldom does the story of an organization' s founding outlive the memory of those who founded it. The members who come after search diligently among the mitten and potsherds of notes and fragmentary minutes for their beginnings, often in vain.

So is it rapidly becoming with the 10-10 International Net. To those who could have recorded it, the work of founding and organizing was only their day to day activities- the thoughts and impulses of which motivated their acts were normal, familiar processes which needed no recording.

So we grope for much of the story of our beginning. This much is certain: that when the list of founders was set up the name of Irv Hunter, K6PWO, of Glendora, CA stands preeminent. The 10-10 International Net is the projection of his thoughts; the 10-10 spirit is the reflection of his enthusiasm; the growth of 10-10 is the fruition of his labors.

Around this man with his idea, there gathered a group who saw hope for ten meter activity with this innovation....and so it was born, but the nursing period was still ahead. To put a date on our history, we must go back to a spring day in March of 1962.

Ten meters had been roaring during the fifties. Then came the sixties and with it a bad case of the doldrums. Lack of good propagation, and the resulting lack of interest, caused many amateurs to abandon ten meters for greener pastures. This mass exodus from the band was cause for concern on the part of a lot of ten meter enthusiasts, for fear that this lack of activity might cause the FCC to consider reassigning this portion of the radio frequency spectrum to some other service. Sometime in 1961, Irv Hunter, K6PWO, started talking about forming an amateur radio organization to promote activity and every day use of the ten meter band. In March of 1962 word got around that a meeting would take place at the San Dimas Canyon Park, near Irv' s homer

Glendora, for the purpose of forming such an organization. A picnic lunch was held on a Saturday and several hams from that local area attended....and thus the seed was planted.

It was decided by this small group of stalwarts that the net would meet every day of the week except Sunday at "10:00 am local time...or 1800 UTC. (Aha, ' see you on Ten at Ten'a natural'). So the name quickly became "10-10 Net". The frequency of 28.800 MHz was chosen as the primary daytime net frequency.

Certificates were ordered for members and the caption read Ten-Ten Net of Southern California. Although "10-10" appears on the latest corporation papers, no one seems to know just where the often used "10- X" originated. The original certificate included crossed flags at the top, USA and California, and with the exception of the crossed flags, caption and later the world map, the certificate has remained essentially the same for all these years.

As with most organizations, we experienced our share of growing pains. Originally the 10-10 Net was organized for the purpose of activating ten meters. The By-laws and preamble stated that we were a "traffic net". The 10-10 net was far from satisfying the ARRL standards for a traffic net, so a major decision was made by the officers and members. We became more of a social net with the prime purpose of maintaining activity on the 10 meter band.

Each sun spot cycle brought both high level activity and low level activity depending upon the period of each cycle. During the good part of each cycle, 10-10 continued to grow and soon became International. "Southern California~ was dropped from the name and the official name became The 10-10 International Net, Inc. and was incorporated in the State of California. ■

So Long, Heathkit

By: Frank Beacham, Radio World, 1992

When I saw the story on the front page of the New York Times, my heart sank. It was like reading of the death of an old friend. There was the headline: "Plug is Pulled on Heathkits, Ending a Do-it-Yourself Era."

After 45 years, the Heath Company is closing out not just a line of assemble-your-own electronic kits, but a nostalgic era of American life. It seems the age of the computer and the integrated circuit has spelled doom for us "kitchen table" engineers.

The electronic kit business, a Heath official said, ran head on into the "instant gratification society." Declining interest in kit building and increased costs finally killed the line of products that introduced a generation of Americans to the miracle of electronics.

I've lost track of how many Heathkits I've built over the years. The first, I think, was a simple radio. The last, about a decade ago, was a Hi-Fi amplifier. I always went for the small stuff, never having the nerve to tackle that big, imposing color TV kit in the catalog.

Building a Heathkit meant staking out a piece of family turf, usually the kitchen table, and commandeering every available muffin pan and small dish to hold the dozens of resistors, capacitors, screws and washers that came with every kit. Then there was the cord to the soldering pencil -- always too short -- which my little brother continually tripped over, causing burn marks on the linoleum floor, or, sometimes, his skin.

"When will you finish that thing and clean up this mess?" my annoyed mother usually asked about the third day into a Heathkit project. Those estimated completion dates I gave were always delayed well into the future.

The great excitement of building a Heathkit for me was the moment of truth when I plugged it in and first turned the power switch on. I always backed away from the kit, fully expecting it to blow up in my face at the moment the surge of electricity hit those parts. But, you know, those kits always worked the first time. The fire and smoke never came. In fact, I don't remember a Heathkit ever failing for any reason throughout the years I owned them.

Few things have been as well written in technical literature as a Heathkit manual. That's one piece of American technical ingenuity the Japanese have never come close to duplicating. Heathkit really meant it when they said: "We won't let you fail."

Once you mastered Soldering 101, it took a lot to go wrong. Step by step, check by check, the Heathkit builder

was led meticulously through that sea of parts. Failure to successfully build a Heathkit usually revealed flaws in the kit builder's patience and temperament, rather than the kit itself.

My favorite kits had tubes and very basic parts. Electronic circuits seemed comprehensible back then, even to a novice, and the warm glow of the tubes brought far greater satisfaction than those plain black "solid state" parts which invaded the kits in later years.

When I called the Heath Company in Benton Harbor, Michigan to ask about the demise of the Heathkit, I was referred to the public relations office at Zenith Data Systems, Heath's corporate parent. I was told there was a news release about the sad event and William E. Johnson, Heath's president, was too busy to take press inquiries. Heath now wants to emphasize the sale of its line of home improvement and educational products, a spokeswoman said.

But as much as today's Heath Company may want to downplay this historic transition, the kit was the basis for the company former barnstormer Ed Heath began in 1926. The first Heath products were airplane kits. But after Mr. Heath died in a crash on a test flight, the company was reorganized and moved into the electronic kit business. The first Heathkit was a five-inch oscilloscope, introduced in 1947 at a price of \$39.95.

The day after my call to Heath headquarters, a copy of the new Heath catalog arrived via overnight delivery. Inside was a smattering of kits still available. Among those were a DC power supply, a mini burglar alarm, an infrared motion sensor and an electronic "fish caller." The remnants of a glorious past are now reduced to slim pickings.

But I think I'll order a couple of those remaining kits and stash them away. Maybe a few years down the road I'll pull one out and introduce the right kid to a simple pleasure of my generation. Yes, the times, they are a-changin,' but hopefully we won't lose the rich experience of taking a nondescript bag of electronic parts and using our brains, skill and patience to construct and create something very special.

Goodbye Heathkit. Thanks for the memories. ■