



The Starved Rock Radio Club (SRRRC) meets on the first Monday of every month, unless otherwise scheduled, at 7:00 p. m. at the SRRRC clubhouse in Leonore, Illinois. Club nets are held on the SRRRC repeater (W9MKS) every Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m. The W9MKS repeater is located at the SRRRC clubhouse in Leonore, Illinois, and it operates on a frequency of 147.120 MHz (+103.5 PL). The Starved Rock Radio Club was organized in September of 1933, and has remained an ARRL affiliated club since 1934.

The mission of the Starved Rock Radio Club has continually been to give faithful, co-operative service and assistance for the betterment of amateur radio, in the promotion of interest in amateur radio communications, for the advancement of the radio art, for the use of amateur radio for public service and welfare, and for the maintenance of fraternalism and the promotion of good fellowship along with a high standard of conduct. Visit us on the web at [www.qsl.net/w9mks](http://www.qsl.net/w9mks)

**Officers**

- President:  
Steve Michalski KB9UPS
- Vice President:  
Kurt Clausen KB9RKU
- Secretary:  
Frank Carraro KF9NZ
- Treasurer:  
Francis Kmetz WB9VLW
- Directors:  
Nick G. Sotiriou KB9PUT  
Mark Gebhardt K9ZQ  
Eldon Akers KB9PZA
- Static Editor:  
Dirk Wolgast W9QA

## Vortex Storm Chaser

Product Review by W9QA

Severe weather season is here, and it's time to make sure your weather spotting "jump kit" is ready. Mine has a new addition this year: a Vortex "Storm Chaser" anemometer to measure wind speed. I've wanted to get a simple anemometer for some time, and the only portable variety I had seen until now were the Kestrel hand held units, if you don't count the very inexpensive unit that Radio Shack sells. Radio Shack's anemometer only records wind speed up to 30 mph, and that just isn't high enough to do the job right. While attending the Advanced Weather Spotter Seminar hosted by DuPage County Office of Emergency Management this



month, one of the presenters, Chris Novy, talked briefly about anemometers, and remarked that when he used a hand held unit while seated in the car, rainwater would run down his arm and into his lap. Now, I don't know about you, but I think

that staying warm, dry and relatively comfortable while storm spotting is a good thing.

Chris mentioned a company called Inspeed, and their line of instruments. I

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## Nuclear Station Drill

by LaSalle County EC KF9NZ

On March 10, 2004, a federally mandated drill was held for the Exelon LaSalle Nuclear Generating Station. These drills are held biannually as required by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and are monitored by both the NRC and FEMA. The LaSalle County ARES has partici-

pated in this drill the last four times, but this year we had two new matters. First, a new Emergency Manager was appointed effective at the first of this year, and we had to establish a relationship with him from scratch. Mr. Mike Jobst was appointed by the County Board to replace

the long term E.M., Mr. Emerson Tidd. Mike was very receptive to our offer to take part in this drill, and we quickly smoothed out the worst of the rough spots and got a good working relationship going before the March date. Nuclear worker training was

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## The Editor's Shack

Things are about to become busy around here, and if last year's severe weather season is any indication of how things are going to go we have our work cut out for us as spotters. Hopefully, that is the only role we'll have to play, but we all know how fast conditions can change. So, take a moment to make sure your radios are in good shape, you have spare batteries for portables and flashlights, and your jump kits are fully stocked in the car.

If you haven't been to a spotter class, or are in need of a refresher, get to one. There are only a couple dates left for the basic class in April. Earlier in

March, I attended the advanced spotter seminar class offered in Wheaton. This was a great chance to learn new things, and relearn what I had already been taught. Several of the same speakers will be in attendance at the Fermilab Severe Weather Seminar on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. You owe it to yourself to check that out or try to get to the Wheaton seminar next year.

Our own Jim Morris was featured in an article weather radios in the Times-Press this month. I tried to get permission to reprint that article here, but haven't received it yet. You should be able to check it out online, and maybe I'll have it for the next edition.

Frank Carraro sent me a file containing the club's roster. How do you folks feel about that roster being printed in Static, or at least being distributed as a separate paper or file with Static? Let me know about that. Also Frank needs to know from the following members if they are also members of ARRL: KC9BQO, KB9UIU, KC9CIO, KC9EGB, W9CWP, and KC9CVQ. This is an important piece of information – since we are an ARRL-affiliated club, we need to report those statistics to them. Please call or e-mail Frank with that data.

73, W9QA

## From the President's Desk

Steve Michalski, KB9UPS, SRRRC President

Hello again everyone.

"Communication" is the word that fits my comments this month, as it's the one thing we didn't seem to have much of lately. I want to first apologize to Dirk/W9QA, the best Static "editor" I have seen in a long time, for all the misunderstandings of late. Dirk is the editor and will make all changes and/or delegate anyone else to make any said changes to Static. Under Dirk's supervision Static has never looked more professional; thank you Dirk.

This year's tasks are fast unfolding for the SRRRC. Our tower project is coming out of its planning stage and looking like it will make an early "in service" appearance. Please everyone who can help, contact Kurt with times you can be available for workdays.

The LaSalle Station Nuclear drill was an overall success this month. I want to thank all who participated. We now



Steve Michalski KB9UPS

K9JKW photo

criticism of our "on air" spotting activities, although I have not been able to authenticate or confirm the source of the comments. I will listen for this in the future.

have asked one of the ARISS, (Amateur Radio On The International Space Station) mentors, Charlie Sufana, AJ9N to come and speak to our group, at the April meeting, about amateur radio and getting kids and schools involved with our wonderful hobby and the space program technology. Please make Charlie feel welcome - I'm sure we will enjoy his presentation.

have new ideas as how to better ourselves for future exercises and can apply this information to our storm spotting efforts as well. As for storm spotting, I have been made aware of some

# March Meeting Notes

**Frank Carraro, KF9NZ - SRRRC Secretary**

The problems with misinformation appearing in STATIC were discussed. An incorrect date for the Sterling hamfest and – more importantly - the incorrect statement that WB9VLW was resigning from the position of Treasurer appeared in the February edition. It was emphasized that neither of these errors was the fault of the Editor. Your Secretary (me) stated that he had reported the item of Francis' resignation on the basis of conversation with Club Members at the March 6th session, which was reported to him as a change from what had been said at the March 1 business meeting. (Got that?) That was my error. The other thing with the hamfest date was apparently a typo by someone.

A closely related problem with all of this was the manner in which one

member attempted to correct the errors. KB9PZA edited the text of the original STATIC and resent it. In spite of his good intentions, it was NOT the way to do it, and he was strongly instructed by the President not to edit someone else's work. Eldon apologized to the membership for a lack of judgment. Case closed.

President Steve reported that he has arranged for AJ9N, Charlie Sufana, to come and talk to us about the International Space Station school contacts. As everyone should be aware, we are on the list to host one of these at Streator Northlawn School - hopefully sometime this Spring or Summer(?) We will also have some of the teachers who will be involved present too. All Members are encouraged to invite scout groups or other youngsters that

are interested in space science and the like to come and hear about the ISS from someone who has the information. We are to try to limit the Club Business as much as possible. As Secretary, I am requesting Committee Chairmen to prepare written reports for the minutes.

The by-law permitting the Initiation fee to be remitted for persons who take and pass a VE exam at a club session was passed. See our website for exact wording of the by-law.

Members were requested to consider taking part in the Peru March of Dimes walk in April, and the Habitat for Humanity fundraiser in Ottawa May 8th

DE KF9NZ SEC'Y.



## Activities Calendar

By Nick Sortiriou KB9PUT

### April 1 7:00 PM

Severe Weather Spotter Training  
McHenry Community College  
Auditorium  
Crystal Lake, IL  
815-338-6400

### April 2 2:00PM – 7:00PM

April 3 8:30AM – 3:00PM  
AES Superfest  
5710 West Good Hope Road  
Milwaukee, WI 53223  
Phone: 414-358-4088

### April 3 1:00 PM & 7:00 PM

24th Annual Fermilab Tornado and  
Severe Storm Seminar  
Ramsey Auditorium, Fermi National  
Accelerator Laboratory, Batavia, IL

### April 21 7:00PM

Severe Weather Spotter Training  
Crown Point Civic Center  
100 E Clark St  
Crown Point, IN  
219-755-3549

### April 24 7:00AM – 12:00PM

Lewis & Clark RC Hamfest  
Lewis & Clark Community College  
US Rt. 67, Godfrey, IL  
618-254-9465

### April 25

SRRRC 1<sup>st</sup> Annual "Used Radio and  
Electronics Swapmeet"  
At the clubhouse in Leonore, IL  
Check at the April meeting and on the  
reflector for more details

### April 25 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM

AARO Hamfest  
Galva High School  
Galva, IL  
309-856-7111

# CHAPTER 12 – The First Battery Radio

Excerpted from *Voices in the Air—The Fascination of Radio* © Robert Bonebrake

Reprinted with permission of the author, Robert Bonebrake, W9GCQ. This 174-page book is available at the Streatorland Historical Society Museum or from Francis Kmetz, WB9VLW, at \$12.95 each. The club has a copy at the clubhouse, which can be checked out. It is enjoyable reading.

Except for the tube and batteries I had to buy, the parts for my first battery set came from the old radios I had previously dismantled. I needed a variable condenser, a tube socket for the 01A, and two other parts called a "grid leak" and a "grid condenser".

I built the radio on a board with a piece of masonite attached to it for a front panel. The instructions said to varnish or shellac the board so that people who didn't appreciate the technicalities of radios would be impressed by the "finished appearance". I didn't suppose many people would be coming to see my radio, and I didn't want to wait for two coats of varnish or shellac to dry, so my radio never had the finished appearance called for.

I mounted all the parts on the board and wired them up in accordance with the instructions. Then I connected my earphones and the antenna and ground wires. The first step in testing the radio was to connect the "A" battery to see if the filament in the 01A tube would light up. Holding my breath, I connected the wires and watched the tube. The filament began to glow! It was the nicest glow I ever saw. The next step was to connect the "B" battery. It was all very exciting. As I connected the wires I heard a "pop" in the earphones;

a good sign, I thought, but I wasn't hearing any music or voices yet. Then I noticed that the variable condenser was turned all the way to one end of its travel, so I began turning it in the other direction. As I did, I began hearing faint voices. I turned it farther and the voices got louder; much louder! Louder voices than I ever heard coming from any of my crystal sets. My first battery set was working! I could still hear only the same four radio stations from Chicago, and still could not completely separate them, but the greater volume was more than worth my efforts.

My spare time during the next week or so was spent listening to the battery radio. It was so loud that I could hear it even when I pulled the earphones away from my ear. I told Bill Hill how loud it was. He said that if I would put the earphones in the bottom of a big bowl, the sound would be even louder. I asked my mother if I could borrow the big mixing bowl she used when she was coloring margarine. (In those days it was illegal to sell yellow margarine, so if we wanted our margarine to look like butter we had to color it ourselves by mixing it with yellow dye that came with it.)

My mother said I could use the mixing bowl if I would promise to give it back the next time she bought margarine. I put my earphones in the bowl and, sure enough, the sound was louder, but not as loud as from our Atwater Kent or the radio Cyril Girard gave me. I had to put my head in the bowl along with the earphones in order to hear really well, but at least I didn't need to have them on

my head. I spent a lot of time with my head in the mixing bowl during the next few days, listening to my favorite radio programs. Tom Mix's voice sounded like it was coming from the bottom of the well at the old T-M Bar ranch.

One day while not having my head in the bowl, my mother bought margarine and took the bowl away. I decided that the bowl idea wasn't really very good anyway, and that I should look for other ways to improve my radio reception. I still wasn't hearing Charlie Burt or any other shortwave stations, and that was one of my objectives in building a battery set in the first place.

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checked them out on the web when I got home that night and ended up ordering one. The company was started in 2001 to develop a speedometer for sailboats and windsurfers, but other uses were discovered along the way. There are several versions of the anemometer available allowing different mounting schemes. Basically, the unit consists of a bicycle speedometer, which, instead of counting revolutions of a magnet attached to the bicycle wheel is coupled to a pickup unit sporting the familiar-looking 3-cup wind speed sensor. I opted for the "Storm Chaser" model, which has the speed sensor mounted to a bracket with a couple of magnets to stick to a car roof. The sensor has a ten-foot (25 foot optional) cable connected to the bike speedometer with a 1/8th inch plug.

Inspeed has online ordering ability, and accepts credit cards as well as Paypal, so ordering was easy. The unit was delivered to my door in less than a week. I had it out of the packaging and on the car for a test run in minutes. The wind was calm, so I had to simulate some wind by going for a test drive. The bicycle speedometer matched what I was reading on the car's speedometer, so the Vortex is fairly accurate. And yes, I have verified the accuracy of my car's speedometer. (I won't go into any details of how that was made possible, but at least I can say that I am not able to provide written proof of the experiment) Inspeed claims the magnet mount will should hold in at least 100 mph winds and has been tested to 80 mph. Since I couldn't find a 25 mph wind to assist me, I can only attest that the unit didn't budge when driven at highway speeds.

The price of the Storm Chaser is \$69.00 plus shipping, which is comparable to the low-end Kestrel 1000. Since the unit is mounted to the vehicle, you can have a constant source of measurement, you don't have to face into the wind to take a reading, and you'll stay dry. I think the Vortex is a winner. Check them out on the web at [www.inspeed.com](http://www.inspeed.com).

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scheduled for the ham operators at an evening hour.

The second new item was the close cooperation between LaSalle County ARES and Grundy County ARES, Bob Cockcream AB9EE E.C. The NRC defines an area 10 miles in radius from the nuclear station as the "Emergency Planning Zone." LaSalle Station is less than two miles from the Grundy County line, so their County E.O.C. is activated along with the LaSalle County E.O.C. In the past drills there was no amateur radio participation in Grundy County, but AB9EE has organized Grundy hams in the past two years, and LaSalle hams participated in last year's drill for Dresden Nuclear Station in Grundy County. I was able to get the favor returned, and more, by Bob's folks.

Nineteen hams took part in the operation. We were able to staff both County E.O.C.'s, as well as those of eight villages and townships located in the E.P.Z. Primary record communications between these centers is by means of dial-up facsimile. Amateur radio is in "stand-by" status, but we do NOT just "stand by." Copies of the "Nuclear Accident Reporting System" forms are transmitted by the hams and the addressees are asked to compare the received texts. In the past, fax machines have jammed or otherwise

## For Sale

### Shakespeare Fiberglass Antennas

#1 – one-piece VHF (2 meter) repeater antenna. 21' tall, 10db gain, no traps or coils. Perfect shape, with manual. Local sale, buyer to make own arrangements for pickup. Asking \$100

#2 – HF vertical (80-40-20-15-10 meters) antenna. 23' tall. Antenna breaks down into two sections, 14' and 9'. This antenna has a molded base,

failed, and we became "primary". This year the only problem with the fax machines was an incorrect phone number for one of them, and a ham message was handled to correct that little problem.

We used both voice (2 meter FM – both simplex and through two different repeaters) and 2 meter 1200 baud packet. Outlying E.O.C.'s which we were able to equip with portable packet stations that had printers were able to provide hard copy to the local center staff. The voice-only locations copied the message information on to a blank form. There were problems, but that's what drills are for! The drill is held during normal daytime work hours. This one began about 9:30 AM and concluded about 2:00 PM. At least five of the hams who participated took time off from work, or took a vacation day to help out. That's dedication!

Here is a listing of the LaSalle County hams: KB9EZZ, (Deputy EC), KB9UPS, KA9VAU, N9MRG, KB9RKU, KB9VFX, KC9FGU, KC9DLA, KB9TMA and K9PHW. Grundy hams on deck were AB9EE, WD9JHP, KC9ENE, KC9CQL, K9NYX, KA9HRO, and last but for sure not least, Jim Lutz, N9OCP, the E.M. of Grundy County. We're going to start working on our E.M to get his license too!

which permits it to be bolted to a cement pad for installation. The antenna has no traps or coil, and requires the use of an antenna tuner. The antenna has never been used, and is in perfect condition. It comes with instructions in the original shipping container. Asking \$100.

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