



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, has remained an ARRL affiliated club since 1934, and was designated a Special Service Club in 2004..

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:  
Robert Cockream AB9EE  
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Eldon Akers KB9PZA
- Static Editor:  
Dirk Wolgast W9QA

# The Old Man

By Dan Metzger, K8JWR  
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The guy they called The Old Man? Sure, I knew him. Well, it wasn't actually me - it was my buddy, Al. I think his family knew him from way back. However it was, three or four times during our sophomore and junior years of high school Al called me to say that he had been invited to The Old Man's shack because he "wanted to talk" - and would I like to come along.

The Old Man's shack was a two-car garage, partitioned into operating room, workshop, and storage area in about the proportions of 1-to-2-to-3. His rig consisted of three six-foot relay racks full of what appeared to be home-brew exciters, amplifiers, modulators, and power supplies. The rig was dark and silent, and he never turned it on while we were there. In fact, I never heard him on the air, and later, when I got home and looked up his call in the Call Book, it wasn't there.

His receiver, a Collins 75A-2, was always on, with cw signals mumbling softly in the background. Once, while The Old Man was

rummaging in a junk box, I reached for the tuning knob to get the feel of this paragon of receivers, and he put me in my place with a curt, "Please don't monkey with the receiver."

Well, The Old Man had said he wanted to talk, and talk he did - for nearly two hours. He regaled us with stories of how the Radio Inspector had threatened to confiscate his spark transmitter one Friday back in '24 because he was interfering with Great Lakes shipping traffic, and by the next Monday he had his first vacuum tube rig on the air. He told of being an engineer at a local radio station in the '30s and climbing a 200-foot tower in the wintery darkness to make an antenna repair in time for Amos and Andy. We heard how he was in the South Pacific during World War II, training island natives who didn't know a word of English to copy code by rote memory: dot-dash, write an A; dash-dot-dot-dot, write B; and so on. His eyes sparkled as the names of hams and radio men he had known rolled off his tongue

by the dozen, and he seemed to expect that we should know these people as well as we knew our classmates in school.

Finally, he wound down and said, "Well, this is boring to you. Now, how would you boys like some radio parts, on the square?"

Al managed to say, "Sure!" but I could only hope that The Old Man read the wide grin that broke out on my face as a "Yes!" That first visit he gave me a power supply for my VFO. (I had just gotten my general.) It used a type 80 rectifier, so it must have been from the early '30s or late '20s. I had ridden my bike over, and it was a real struggle to keep that bulky thing under my left arm while managing the bike with my right.

By the second visit Al was driving, and we made sure the trunk was cleared out before we came. Good thing, too, because that time he gave me an old Hallcrafters AM transmitter; it must have been three feet wide and weighed over a hundred

# Club Calendar

## February

2/7/2005 February Member Meeting Leonore  
 2/12/2005 Hamfest Committee Meeting Leonore  
 2/19/2005 ARRL Int'l DX CW contest  
 2/26/2005 CQWW 160M Phone Contest  
 2/26/2005 Hamfest Committee Meeting Leonore

## March

3/5/2005 ARRL Int'l DX Phone Contest  
 3/7/2005 March Member Meeting Leonore  
 3/12/2005 Hamfest Committee Meeting Leonore  
 3/13/2005 Sterling-Rock Falls Hamfest Sterling Il  
 3/26/2005 CQWW WPX Phone Contest  
 3/26/2005 Hamfest Committee Meeting Leonore  
 3/26/2005 VE Testing & Tech Session Leonore

## April

4/4/2005 April Member Meeting Leonore  
 4/16/2005 Hamfest Committee Meeting Leonore  
 4/16/2005 North Shore Hamfest Grayslake Il  
 4/23/2005 Lewis & Clark Hamfest Godfrey Il  
 4/24/2005 Moultrie ARC Hamfest Arthur Il  
 4/30/2005 Hamfest Committee Meeting Leonore

## May

5/1/2005 DeKalb Hamfest Sandwich Il  
 5/2/2005 May Member Meeting Leonore  
 5/14/2005 Habitat for Humanity Run  
 5/14/2005 Hamfest Committee Meeting Leonore  
 5/28/2005 CQWW WPX CW Contest  
 5/28/2005 Hamfest Committee Meeting Leonore

## June

6/3/2005 Hamfest Setup? Princeton  
 6/4/2005 Hamfest/VE Testing Princeton  
 6/4/2005 SVRC Hamfest Springfield Il  
 6/5/2005 Hamfest/Convention Princeton  
 6/11/2005 ARRL VHF QSO Party  
 6/12/2005 Six Meter Club Hamfest Wheaton Il  
 6/13/2005 June Member Meeting Leonore  
 6/25/2005 Field Day TBA  
 6/26/2005 Field Day TBA

## July

7/9/2005 IARU HF World Championship  
 7/10/2005 Fox River R.L. Hamfest Aurora Il  
 7/11/2005 July Member Meeting Leonore  
 7/16/2005 CQWW VHF Contest  
 7/17/2005 KARS Hamfest Peotone Il  
 7/23/2005 Board of Dir Budget Meeting Leonore  
 7/30/2005 VE Testing & Tech Session Leonore

## August

8/1/2005 August Member Meeting Leonore  
 8/6/2005 ARRL UHF Contest  
 8/13/2005 Western Il Hamfest Quincy Il  
 8/14/2005 Hamfesters Hamfest Peotone Il  
 8/20/2005 ARRL 10 Ghz contest  
 8/21/2005 BARS Hamfest Joliet Il

## September

9/10/2005 ARRL VHF QSO Party  
 9/12/2005 September Member Meeting Leonore  
 9/16/2005 Peoria Superfest Peoria Il  
 9/16/2005 W9DXCC Convention Elk Grove Vill  
 9/17/2005 Radio Expo CFMC Grayslake Il  
 9/24/2005 VE Testing & Tech Session Leonore  
 9/25/2005 CQWW RTTY Contest

## October

10/3/2005 October Member Meeting Leonore  
 10/15/2005 Jamboree On The Air TBA  
 10/29/2005 CQWW DX Phone Contest

## November

11/5/2005 ARRL CW Sweepstakes  
 11/7/2005 November Member Meeting Leonore  
 11/19/2005 ARRL Phone sweepstakes  
 11/26/2005 CQWW DX CW Contest  
 11/26/2005 VE Testing & Tech Session Leonore

## December

12/2/2005 ARRL 160 M Contest  
 12/5/2005 December Member Meeting Leonore  
 12/10/2005 ARRL 10 M Contest  
 1/1/2006 ARRL Straight Key Night

# January Meeting Notes

Frank Carraro, KF9NZ - SRRRC Secretary

President Steve arrived wearing a black shirt and a white tie. He explained that the black shirt was in memory of the thousands who died in the earthquake and tsunami in Asia, while the tie was a sign of hope for the future of those who survived. He read a short statement and remembered the four local hams who died in the past year

The accident that occurred to the clubhouse when a truck struck the eave was discussed. There was no serious damage to the building.

The Building and Grounds Committee talked about anti-climbing measures for the tower.

The Yeasu VHF-UHF radio was taken to AES for repair by Matt KB9VZH.

The Field Day report considered where we might take Field Day if the County closes the parks.

The Repeater Maintenance report explained the current status of the antenna configuration and the arrangement of the power supply.

The Hamfest Committee reported that 150 vendor letters were mailed. It was emphasized that we need members to sign up early and often for work positions since we are taking on more than we have had previously. We will need a PA system for the convention. There will be two Committee meetings each month until June. The dates are Jan 15 and 29, Feb 12 and 26, Mar 12 and 26, Apr 16 and 30, and May 14 and 28. All will be at 1:00 PM. The use of an overhead and computer screen projector was discussed. Steve wants a banner with the club name to hang at the site. Kurt will negotiate next years fairground contract, and we will have the flyers and tickets for the 2006 hamfest printed.

Information from our insurance carrier

about how we might save on insurance rates was not much help. The only item considered was an increase in the deductible, and the saving was insignificant. We will look further into using ARRL or a different insurance carrier.

The Board of directors will meet on January 29th at 11:00 AM to compile the annual club calendar. Members are asked to submit items that may be of interest on the calendar.

The President made the following appointments of Committee Chairs: activities - KB9RKU, Building & Grounds - KB9PZA & KB9LNLK, Equipment -KB9RKU, Field Day - KB9EZZ, Training - KB9EZZ, FOOD - KB9JKW, Membership - N9MRG & K9ZQ, Net Control - N9PLM, Repeater Monitor - N9OUW, Repeater Maintenance - KF9NZ & KB9LNLK.

## The Old Man, continued from page 1

pounds. On other visits we came away with antenna tuners, microphones, transmitting tubes, and 500-watt power transformers.

He mentioned that the transformer secondary was 900 volts rms, and when I asked him what "rms" meant, The Old Man practically exploded: "How can you do anything in radio if you don't know what rms means?" So he sat me right down and explained it to me, and even though I was still a little shaky on the details I told him that I

understood it perfectly, Yes Sir!

Well, that's about all. We were supposed to see The Old Man again one Saturday in late May, but Al got a call on Friday that they'd taken him to the hospital, and a few days later we heard that he'd died. What with school and me starting my first job about then, I never did find out what happened to his garage full of stuff and that untouchable 75A-2.

Say, look - I've got to be getting home. The kid across the street is into computers, and I told him that if he'd come over after supper I'd give him my

old PC, and a modem and some other junk. It's funny - that kid comes over and gets me talking, and he don't leave for maybe two, three hours. I was telling him about my first computer, an Apple II - and I don't think he'd ever heard the name of Steve Wozniak before. And he didn't know what TTL levels were! Now, how's he going to do anything in computers if he doesn't know what TTL levels are?

# Repeater Status Report

## Frank Carraro, KF9NZ



At the January meeting I reported essentially as follows:

The repeater is now working on two antennas. The big, main antenna on the top of the tower is the 2 Meter send and receive antenna, with the cavity filters in use. The UHF antenna just below this receives the transmissions from the remote receive site at K9PHW's QTH. There are only two receivers in use. The repeater is putting about 65 watts into the antenna, with the cavities turning about 50 watts into heat to help keep the clubhouse warm. We have tried just about every antenna configuration imaginable, and this one is the most stable, and works well. Other configurations either made it an alligator or a rabbit, or were not stable.

I have been in touch with the Illinois Repeater Association. First, because every December we get a coordination confirmation form to confirm we are still here and working. I corrected some details of our system now that we have our tower up at 90 feet, and we are OK to go on this. Secondly, I have inquired about the K8IE repeater up in Hampshire, which is "close spaced", meaning it is closer than the normal 120 mile radius which is normal for 2 M repeaters. We have some restrictions in our coordination due to this. I have not heard K8IE in some time, so I did a little research. It seems that K8IE has not returned the annual confirmation to the IRA in THREE

YEARS! IRA rules state that this is grounds for de-coordination, meaning that repeater loses the right to use 147.12/72, and we gain the right to increase our power or antenna height etc. The last note I had from IRA said they are looking in to the K8IE operation to see if it is alive or not. I don't know what more they need since the time in the IRA rule is long exceeded, but at any rate, it looks good to expect we will lose this burr under our repeater saddle that has been there for many years.

Also the power system for the repeater has been rearranged and is working well now. The big Astron supply that we were using was causing noise - hum - and we replaced the supply with the spare. The supply turned out to have big problems, and the batteries that were supposed to be our standby were dead. It seems the "modification" that was made to enable the Astron to keep the batteries charged didn't work so well. The supply was all messed up inside, and KB9LNK repaired it. We have installed a LARGE diode (40A rating) between the battery and the supply. The supply voltage is adjusted to 13.7 Volts, and the battery is being charged by a trickle charger which keeps it at 13.5 V. The 0.2 V reverse biases the diode so it does not charge the battery, but if the supply croaks or the AC goes off, the battery forward biases the diode and the repeater keeps on cooking. The drop across the diode is less than 1V when the full load

(repeater transmitting) is on. Arrangements will be made to keep the spare battery on trickle charge.

Another matter concerns our use of the UHF link frequencies which we hold coordination for. We are currently using only one of them, but have three still coordinated. We should either fish or cut bait. I recommend we get the other two links up and going. Even if the sites are not the greatest in the world, we should make use of the frequencies. I would like to see us acquire one or two dual band mobiles such as the Alinco DR 605 which work as cross-band repeaters without any other equipment. (Well, antenna and power supply of course).

So, to begin the new year, our repeater is working well, and the members can enjoy the fruits of our labor to acquire and erect a very nice tower. The whole project was a great example of how amateur radio gets things done on a low budget.

## 2005 Severe Weather Spotter Training

Date	Time	Location	Host	Contact
2/9	700 PM	Schaumburg Police Dept, 1000 W. Schaumburg Rd	Schaumburg Radio Club	
2/12	TBA	TBA in Wheaton	DuPage Radio Club	
2/17	800 AM	ITT Tech, 7040 High Grove Blvd, Burr Ridge	Burr Ridge Police Dept	630-323-8181
2/17	700 PM	Amboy Community Center, Amboy	Amboy ESDA	815-857-2475
2/22	630 PM	Grundy County Admin Bldg. 1320 Union St, Morris	Grundy County EMA	815-941-3200
2/23	900 AM	West Dundee Fire Station, 100 Carrington Drive, W. Dundee	Kane County OEM	630-208-8911
2/23	630 PM	Lemont Village Hall 418 Main St., Lemont	Lemont EMA & Cook County Sheriff's EMA	Please RSVP 630-257-1550 by 2/10/05
2/24	630 PM	Calumet City Library 600 Manistee St., Calumet City	Calumet City ESDA & Cook County Sheriff's EMA	708-865-4766
2/26	Noon-4PM	Plainfield Central High School, Auditorium, 611 W. Fort Beggs Drive, Plainfield	Plainfield and Will County EMA***with WGN TV's Tom Skilling***	***Anyone attending must obtain free tickets in advance by calling 815-439-4803***
2/28	700 PM	Ottawa High School, 211 E. Main St., Ottawa	LaSalle County EMA	815-433-5622
3/2	100 PM	Melrose Park Senior Center, 900 N. 25 <sup>th</sup> Ave., Melrose Park	Melrose Park ESPS & Cook County Sheriff's EMA	708-865-4766
3/2	700 PM	Melrose Park Senior Center, 900 N. 25 <sup>th</sup> Ave., Melrose Park	Melrose Park ESPS & Cook County Sheriff's EMA	708-865-4766
3/3	700 PM	North Newton High School, Enos	Newton County EMA	219-275-4357
3/7	700 PM	Illinois Valley Community College, Room C316, Oglesby	LaSalle County EMA	815-433-5622
3/8	700 PM	Palatine EOC, 200 Wood St., Palatine	Palatine & Cook County Sheriff's EMA	708-865-4766
3/12	800 AM – 400 PM	***Advanced Spotter Training Wheaton College, Edmund Chapel	DuPage County OHSEM ***There is a fee and you must register in advance***	630-682-7925
3/14	1000 AM	Will County Admin Bldg, County Board Rm, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, 302 N. Chicago St., Joliet	Will County OEM	815-740-8351
3/14	700 PM	TBA	Will County OEM	815-740-8351
3/15	200 PM	Evanston Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Rd., Evanston	Evanston and Cook County Sheriff's EMA	708-865-4766
3/15	600 PM	Evanston Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Rd., Evanston	Evanston and Cook County Sheriff's EMA	708-865-4766
3/16	700 PM	State Police District Chicago – CMS North Bldg., LGI Room, 9511 W. Harrison St., Des Plaines	Maine Twp, Des Plaines & Cook County Sher- iff's EMA	708-865-4766
3/17	200 PM	Lake County EOC, 1303 N. Milwaukee, Libertyville	Lake County EMA	847-377-7100
3/17	700 PM	Lake County EOC, 1303 N. Milwaukee, Libertyville	Lake County EMA	847-377-7100
3/19	900 AM - 1230 PM	Rockford Airport, Public Safety Building	Boone, Lee and Dekalb County EMA and WIFR, WREX and WTVO	815-987-5990
3/21	700 PM	Addison Police Dept, 3 Friendship Plaza, Training Room, Addison	Addison and DuPage County OEM	630-693-7905
3/22	700 PM	Fire Station across from courthouse, Rensselaer	Jasper County EMA	219-866-9423
3/23	700 PM	Aurora City Council Chambers, 44 E. Downer Pl.	Aurora EMA	630-801-6512
3/24	700 PM	Pontiac Safety Building 413 N. Mill St., Pontiac	Livingston County Mutual Aid Asc'n	815-842-3225
3/28	700 PM	Warrenville Fire Dept., 3S 472 Batavia Road, Warrenville	Warrenville and DuPage County EMA	630-682-7925
3/30	700 PM	Crescent City Community Center, Crescent City	Iroquois County EMA	815-867-6667
3/31	700 PM	McHenry College, Auditorium, Route 14, Crystal Lake	McHenry County EMA	815-338-6400
4/5	700 PM	Fowler Theater, Fowler	Benton County EMA	219-474-5987
4/6	700 PM	Crown Point Civic Center, 101 East St. Crown Point, IN	Lake County IN EMA	(219) 755-3549
4/7	700 PM	Northern Illinois University – location TBA	NIU AMS	
4/15	700 PM	TBA	Tri-Town Radio Club	

## STARVED ROCK RADIO CLUB INC. MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM ED 6/2004

COMPLETE FORM AND MAIL TO:

SRRC

PO BOX 198

LEONORE IL 61332

With dues and fees as follows:

1 YEAR DUES..(calendar yr)..\$20.00

NEW MEMBER INITIATION FEE...\$5.00

ADD FAMILY MEMBERS (all)....\$5.00

PART YEAR DUES PRORATED 20/12

(\*=REQUIRED FIELD)

APPLICATION TYPE\* \_\_\_\_New Member, \_\_\_\_Renewal, \_\_\_\_ Previous Member

NAME \* \_\_\_\_\_ CALL SIGN \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \* \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF BIRTH \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP \* \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ARRL MEMBER? \* \_\_\_\_\_ LIC CLASS \_\_\_\_\_

NEWSLETTER ("STATIC") via e-mail or U.S. Mail? EMAIL \_\_\_\_ U.S. \_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

LIST OTHER HAM FAMILY MEMBERS LIVING AT SAME ADDRESS:

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NOTICE: Dues for each member must be accompanied by this form.

Funds received by the Club without this form are considered donations. Complete rules of the Club (Constitution and by-laws) can be found in the Club internet site, (see [www.qsl.net/w9mks](http://www.qsl.net/w9mks)) and I agree to abide by them.

SIGNED \* \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

CLUB USE: Form recd by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Payment: \_\_\_\_\_

Recorded by: \_\_\_\_\_ Treasurer \_\_\_\_\_ Secretary \_\_\_\_\_

# CHAPTER 17 – A Communication Failure

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.

My new friend was Bill Merritt. We both lived in the same direction from school, so we walked or rode our bicycles part of the way home together. We always talked about radios and the radio equipment we each had. We planned that some day we would become partners in a radio repair business.

One day Bill invited me to stop by his house on the way home from school to see his radio apparatus. He had some basic test equipment that I didn't have, but I had more crystal sets and battery sets than he had. He came to my house on the following Saturday and I showed him all of my radios, my antenna wires and my ground wire running to a clamp on a water pipe in the basement. I was proud of my wires.

I knew where all of the local radio amateurs lived, and when the weather warmed up in the spring of 1942 Bill and I spent some time on the weekends riding our bicycles around town looking at their antennas. Most of them had fallen into disrepair by then because they were not being used. I was always fascinated by radio antennas, and how they could make a person's voice go out through the air to be picked up by another antenna connected to a receiver.

As we looked at various antennas we decided that we should build some kind of radios that we could use to communicate with each other between our houses, which were about a mile apart. Of course, such communication would

be strictly illegal, because neither of us had radio licenses. But we didn't care about that. After all, what could they do to us? We were just kids. But nevertheless, I secretly worried that some day an FCC man might burst into my house with his machine gun and shoot the microphone out of my hand.

Bill had a book that showed how to build a transceiver for use on the 5 meter and 2 1/2 meter amateur bands. The term "transceiver" meant that the same circuitry would be used for both transmitting and receiving. I had not heard of these bands before, because 10 meters was the highest frequency band that Charlie Burt had told me about. 5 meters and 2 1/2 meters were the two bands next higher in frequency than 10 meters. Special circuits and procedures were necessary to make commonly available radio tubes operate at these higher frequencies. Construction was simple, however, and only one tube was required. It was switched to operate as a "modulated oscillator" when transmitting, and as a "superregenerative detector" when receiving. The plans called for a type "76" tube, and I had two of them and some of the other necessary parts in my boxes of equipment obtained by dismantling Cyril Girard's old radios.

I was familiar with regenerative receivers from working with them previously. "Superregenerative" receivers were similar, in that they produced oscillations, but they were used mainly at the higher frequencies. They made a loud hiss in the earphones, which diminished when a radio station was tuned in. Bill and I worked on our transceivers and eventually got them to "hiss" properly when receiving. The important test was to see if they would transmit. We switched mine to "transmit" and laid a loud ticking clock on top of the microphone in order to have something to listen for in the receiver of Bill's set. Then we got on our bicycles and pedaled as fast as we could to Bill's

house. We listened, but heard no ticks. We tried the clock on Bill's transceiver and listened on mine. Still no ticks. Finally we gave up. We never could get either of the transceivers to transmit. Mine was relegated to a closet shelf, and I don't know what happened to Bill's. Maybe it was for the best that they wouldn't work. We might have been arrested by the FCC for illegal operation and put in jail for the rest of our lives.

Our enthusiasm for radios was not dampened by the failure of the transceiver project, and after several months of accumulating more radio parts and test equipment we opened a radio repair shop in Bill's basement. I had a toy printing press which we used to print business cards. Also, my toy cash register was pressed into service in anticipation of needing a place to keep all the money we expected to earn. I don't remember the cash register ever getting full, but we did learn a lot about radio circuits while working on our customers' radios.

**THE STARVED ROCK RADIO CLUB**

Post Office Box 198  
Leonore, Illinois 61337

General Email: w9mks@qsl.net  
Email for *Static* submissions: w9qa@arrl.net



**Next Meeting: February 7, 2005**