

Illini Net 29 Years!

The Illini Net, operating on 14.320 daily except Thursdays, celebrated 29 years of continuous operation on March 1. It all began on that date in 1976, when Earl Finder started talking with Doc Cunningham, W6RWD, who moved from CU to California. From that point, many others have joined in over the years. Earl, W9CGZ, manages the net most of the time, unless he is traveling and can't be heard well. The net has drawn lots of attention to Champaign-Urbana and has members who never have been here, but are fascinated with the net and the participants. Some have even arranged a stop while traveling through the area, just to meet Earl and other locals. Everyone is invited to participate in the net, which meets at 11:30 a.m. Champaign time. Look up or down the band a little, depending on QRM.

Operating – Practice and Courtesy

Sometimes our operating habits might need a little tweaking in order to be more courteous, responsible, and proper on our local repeaters. Following some of the simple basics we have all learned can avert confusion. In our haste to get a word in or a call out, we seem to forget some of the procedures.

Don't start talking until after you have pressed your transmit button. This will allow us to hear the whole comment, not just the last part of it. Remember, when we use CTCSS, there is also a slight delay in the opening of the squelch on many radios. This compounds the issue of missing part of a transmission. Sometimes a quick "yes" or "no" is missed completely due to either not waiting for the mic button press, or receiver delay, or both.

If you are talking to more than one person, turn the conversation over to a specific person or call. If you make a comment and just release the mic button, no one knows who is to talk next. This can result in doubles or long pauses, depending on the group. You don't have to turn it over to a call, you can just say, "over to Sam" if you want,

but please turn it over to someone! And please remember to do this when you make your final transmission to a group as you sign out.

Be careful when you try to insert a comment between transmissions of others. This usually results in a double, or 2 people talking at the same time. If you want to insert something, make a quick comment, like just your call letters, or maybe a quick word or two, then release your mic button to listen to see if anyone else is talking. We are hearing more frequent long doubles where someone wants to interject something and continues on with a long transmission without checking. The person who was supposed to be making the next comment goes ahead and talks, not aware that someone else jumped in with a transmission, and they double. We usually don't hear what either one had to say when this happens.

Try to monitor the repeaters more. Many times, calls have gone unanswered because no one is listening. It is disappointing to find out someone has been calling and no one is there. This is particularly annoying when it happens to visitors from out of town, passing through, or here for a short time. If your receiver will scan, let it scan all of our local repeaters. If you can scan all of the repeaters except the one you are using, this will be a huge help, since most receivers will be locked up on the one repeater that is active.

If we all make an effort to follow procedures more, we will have better communications and more enjoyable conversations.

Field Day 2005

Field Day is fast approaching. Slated for June 25 and 26, it is a weekend where we operate with our own emergency power and set up completely portable. If you want to help, or even be in charge, please contact Al, K9SI, as soon as you can. We will discuss plans for the weekend soon.

AES Superfest

April 1-2, 2005

Yes, spring is coming and so is the Amateur Electronics Service Superfest in Milwaukee. AES is an Amateur Radio store with over the counter and mail order sales. Each year, they hold this event, which consists of booths by many prominent manufacturers and forums provided by notable people in Amateur Radio. The 4 big amateur manufacturers will be there, along with ARRL, Alpha Delta, Ameritron, Antennex, Belden, CQ Communications, Diamond Antenna, Gordon West Radio School, High Sierra, Hygain, MFJ, Mirage, M-Squared, SGC, Timewave, and many more.

The forums are on Saturday only, starting at 9 a.m. They include Basics of Antique Radio Restoration by Jim Hillins, KA4UPW, Astronomy Basics and getting started by Kevin Burt, Radio Astronomy by Phil Anderson W9XI, R.A.I.N. (Radio Amateur Information Network) by Hap Holly, KC9RP, a review of the Yaesu FT-DX9000 by Chip Margelli, K7JA, Amateur Radio Software by Jack Hudson, W9MU, and at 2 p.m. the Gordon West Show by, yes, Gordon West, WB6NOA. Seeing Gordon's presentation is worth the trip to AES!

Superfest is free and is held in the warehouse area of the AES store. Counter sales are open during the show. Show hours are 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. Friday and 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday. Manufacturer exhibits and other displays are open Friday and Saturday. Forums are Saturday only. Prize drawings are every hour. VE testing and a Fox Hunt are scheduled for Saturday.

AES is located at 5710 W Good Hope Road in Milwaukee. This is just over 3 miles West of exit 80 on I43 on the North side of Milwaukee. The driving distance from Champaign is about 235.

For more details, please go to the website:

www.aesham.com/superfest

Hamfest Corner

During the winter season, hamfests are a little scarce, but there are a few indoor events if you look hard enough. Wheaton, IL, Collinsville, IL, and LaPorte, IN, were sites of recent ones. For those adventurous enough to travel a bit further, Florida hosted 2 hamfests a week apart. Miami was the location on the first weekend of February. A week later found the Orlando Hamfest at the fairgrounds. TCARC was well represented at Orlando by Zane, KB9LCJ, and Milt, K9QZI. Even a couple of Decatur, IL hams were spotted. The Miami event was reported to be small compared to Orlando. The Orlando hamfest was excellent. It ran Friday to Sunday, with Saturday being the big attendance day. The crowd was large as was the number of vendors. Indoor and outdoor space was available and mostly filled. Attendees were in a buying mood all weekend. It was interesting to hear the locals apologizing for the weather since outside temperatures barely made it to 70. We had to explain to them how we had to scrape snow from our windshield before heading down there. We thought the weather was great! This hamfest was well worth the drive.

With warm weather heading our way, we start to see more hamfests nearby. Check the back of the newsletter for dates. Our local ones are Arthur, IL on April 24 and Decatur on May 1.

ARRL Club Commission

You can help our club by joining the ARRL or renewing your membership through TCARC. We retain a commission of \$15 for each new ARRL member and \$2 for each renewal. Please submit your application for membership or renewal along with your check payable to TCARC for the total amount to the club at the PO Box address on this newsletter, or give it to Milt, K9QZI, Treasurer. Please allow enough processing time, preferably a month or so. Renewal notices are sent by the ARRL about 3 months prior to expiration. Processing through the club won't cost you any more, but it does provide a little extra income for the club.