

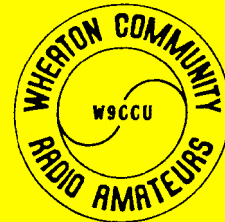
# HAMLETTER

Published Monthly

Wheaton Community Radio Amateurs

Issue 525

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## DO WE AS MEMBERS OF THE WHEATON COMMUNITY RADIO AMATEURS WANT TO PURCHASE A CLUB COMMUNICATIONS TRAILER?

The Board of Directors has asked that a person from each side of this issue write an article making the case for their point of view. We ask that the membership read each of the articles carefully and ask yourself which side has made the better argument. Then the Board asks that you come to the meeting prepared to listen and ask questions so that everyone can make an informed decision as to whether the members of WCRA desire to purchase a communication trailer for the club. We wish to thank both authors of these two articles and hope that all of your questions will be fully answered by the time we have completed the debate and are ready to vote.

### The Case for a Club Communications Trailer

Written by Wayne Kiser • 4/6/07

Balancing the need for a communications trailer and the cost to procure, build and house it is not an easy decision, especially for a club that is losing members and struggling to keep accounts in the black. You may remember that a Vehicle Definition Task Force was selected to investigate the possibilities, and they concluded a Communications Trailer was needed to fulfill the club's mission statement, and was within our financial reach. "While its true that WCRA, or any organization could perform public service or emergency communications events without a vehicle, having one enhances the club's capabilities," says Joe, N9WRO.

#### Basis Services of a Communications Trailer:

1. To provide a location as a command post for public service events such as the Wheaton 4th of July Parade, Walk-a-thon, Special Olympics, Glendale Heights Labor Day Parade, Club Hamfest and Field Day. A trailer not only contains radios and an antenna, but stores other equipment, ready for efficient setting up at the event. Some members would appreciate getting club equipment out of their homes. Since the county has offered to store the trailer without charge, this helps us keep everything

### Do we really need a vehicle?

By Bruce Plantz, K9OZ

I've been asked to present an opposing view to the question the Vehicle Definition Task Force was originally formed to answer – Do we really need a vehicle?

At last month's meeting the group presented a video to show why we needed a trailer. It was nice and entertaining, but I saw no argument for a vehicle in it.

The video showed our Field Day, a Boy Scout event we participated in, and some coverage of WCRA at the aftermath of the Plainfield tornado. The point was then made that we have to have a vehicle to continue doing these things.

We did Field Day last year without a truck. In many ways it was less of a hassle that it had been for years. We had less equipment to worry about. The custodian brought out a couple of boxes of equipment from storage and we were done. I've operated Field Day as a station captain for years. Whether or not we have a vehicle makes no difference to me. I come with my equipment. In talking to other Field Day regulars, I don't see an overwhelming outcry



# WCRA Meeting Minutes

by: Todd Carr  
KC9HKN  
WCRA  
Secretary



## WCRA Meeting Minutes for March 2, 2007

President, **Don N9NYX** called the meeting to order at 1930. Motion to accept the minutes of the last meeting by **Steve N9OA**, **Marty N9NTM** seconded, and the motion passed.

President, Don N9NYX opened the meeting with introductions. Don N9NYX announced that the board posi-

tions of Vice President and Treasurer Terms of service are ending. A nominating committee of **Peter N9HDW** and **John WT9Y** was formed. If you would like to nominate someone please contact Peter N9HDW or John WT9Y. Don N9NYX informed the membership, due to first Friday in April being Good Friday the regular club monthly meeting has been moved to April 13.

Vice President, **Bruce K9OZ** started off the evening's program of "Remote Control of Your Home Amateur Radio Station". Bruce K9OZ demonstrated how you can control your home amateur radio station across the internet using different programs like Ham Radio Deluxe, GoToMyPC, and Skype. Bruce K9OZ connected to his home amateur station during his presentation with his laptop computer and controlled his home HF station. Thanks to Bruce for his very informative presentation.

Service Awards were handed out to these past board members, **Mary KC9GAL** Secretary, Peter N9HDW President, Steve N9OA Vice President. Thanks from the membership for their service to the club.

Custodian, **Bob W9BK** had no new business to report.

Treasurer, **Ken N9HQ** had no new business to report.

Secretary, **Todd KC9HKN** we had 30 present at the March membership meeting.

Hamfest, John WT9Y welcomed back the committee members from this years Hamfest to work next years Hamfest in 2008. John WT9Y reported that reservations have been made at Pheasant Run for the 2008 Hamfest and thanked everyone again for their support at this years Hamfest.

RAB, **Doug W9NJM** reported the RAB will have a meeting in late March and the club 220 machine should be repaired in the next 2 weeks.

Hamletter, Don N9NYX asked what people thought of the new design of the hamletter front page by using an old edition of the WCRA hamletter. If you're not getting the monthly Hamletter please verify your email address with him.

Public Service, **Joe N9WRO** reported that we will need volunteers on April 22, for the Special Olympics from 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM. On May 6, for the MS Walk-a-Thon from 7:30 AM to 1:30 PM. There is also the Glendale Heights Parade later in August. If you are interested in helping out please let Joe N9WRO know.

Field Day, **Dale NJ9E** reported that more information to follow on this summers field day.

**Continued on Page 4**

## Minutes Continued

Membership, A reminder to everyone the regular 2007 membership dues are due at this time.

Web Page, **Tom N9WBW** asked that if anyone has club business such as meetings, VE test sessions, or other announcements please email him so that it can be put on the club web page.

Motion to accept reports by Steve N9OA, Joe N9WRO seconded, and the motion passed.

Old Business, Joe N9WRO and John N9MWF gave a power point presentation on why the club needs some type of club vehicle for club events such as parades, community service, emergency activities and field day and the costs involved. They took questions from the membership present at the end of their presentation.

Peter N9HDW asked for support for the 2007 Scout Camperall located at the Sandwich Fairgrounds from May 4-6. We would demonstrate amateur radio at the event to the scouts that attend. If you can help at this event please let Peter N9HDW know.

**Marty N9NTM** motioned to adjourn, **Peter KB9KZO** seconded, the motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned at 2130.

## VEHICLE DISCUSSION CONTINUED

in one place.

2. Visibility and promotion. Education is a vital part of any good growth strategy. The Communications Trailer will be deployed at Scouting events, school demonstrations and civic events. We calculate that we have enough people in the club to deploy a trailer, and staff it. "For the public, the Communications Trailer could become the focal point of the club as the truck was in the past," says Mark, W9UZ. "The trailer is a form of advertising."

3. Although not our primary goal, if we should we need to rapidly deploy personnel and equipment in the case of a catastrophic event such as a tornado or terrorism attack, a Communications Trailer would be vital. Since many of our members are trained weather spotters, a command center in the trailer would be an appreciated help in a weather event. "Having all this equipment and know-how and no way to get it to an event," says Jim Ward, W9DHX, is like stepping up to the plate without a bat. We

that we can't do Field Day without a vehicle.

The Boy Scout event is happening again in May. Peter, N9HDW, needs your help. His constraint is people to help, not a club vehicle. Don't use that event as an argument for why we need a trailer.

Public service – again, the constraint is often people, not a vehicle. While the trailer would be a benefit for some of these events, we need to look hard at how many times a year it would be used. Also, the current proposal is for a large trailer that could only be towed by a limited number of large pickups or SUVs. So the constraint becomes finding someone who can tow the vehicle. Renting a tow vehicle was mentioned, but does it make sense to spend the club's money to rent a vehicle to tow all of our stuff around to an event, when the same purpose could be served by loading several plastic crates into a car or van?

Emergency service – the task force keeps referring back to the Plainfield tornado, but the world has

Both articles are continued on page 6

# QST for April “Good News” for Hams

By Jim Ward, W9DHX

## “DX IS OUT THERE” IS THE PROMISE ON THE COVER OF THIS ISSUE

Just to make a point, the cover of this month’s issue shows a collection of three hard to reach DX locations; one off the coast of Turkey, another in East Malaysia, and finally, a team of hams putting up a mammoth tower on Cape Verde Island, off the west coast of Africa. They are out there—but will they answer?

## REMOTE CONTROL – A DETAILED REPORT

Having had a recent presentation from Program Chairman Bruce at a Club meeting, you can follow up with a look at the subject from another point of view. This month’s QST has a four-page article, well illustrated, which tells you how the author, Lou Fiore, W2LTF, runs his set-up. The article is on pages 28-31. Thanks again, Bruce, for your demonstration of remote control in action.

## FIELD DAY FUN REPORT FROM A 48-YEAR VETERAN

Tom Taormina, K5RC, claims to be both a field day and contest addict. His story on pages 50 and 51 will amuse you. Our own field day experiences have been tame by comparison that those “hi-jinx” of the author. His antics have made the front cover of QST. You’ll enjoy his story of the original “Armadillo Run” and a subsequent reunion.

## “THROW A PARTY FOR 1000 OF YOUR BEST FRIENDS” (A Ham Fest)

Taking a serious look at another great group activity – The Ham Fest- is Norm Fusario’s article on page 48. He covers 13 ideas for Ham Fests, some of which are good and others we have tried with mixed success. If you’d like to get involved in trying out new Ham Fest activities, our Ham Fest Chairman would love to talk to you.

## STEPPING UP TO THE EMERGENCY ISSUE

As the Club debates the appropriate equipment with which to respond to an emergency, the “Emergency Communications and You” article on page 52-53 should be of interest. A separate comment on the subject is covered by David Summers, the ARRL CEO. He uses his monthly column to talk about “Preparing for Major Disasters” on page 9. Dave also gives his ideas on the National Emergency Response Planning Report.

## LAP TOP OR RIG HOLDER FOR YOUR CAR

Under “New Products” you’ll find a gadget to make it easy to park your equipment safely in your car or truck. It is made by Rissler R & D and can be seen on the internet on [www.rissler-rd.com](http://www.rissler-rd.com), or on page 74 of the issue.

## OLD TIME NEWSLETTER ON DISPLAY

John Dilks, K2TQN, reaches way back in time with a story about a 1921 St. Louis Radio Club newsletter called “The Hot Wire.” He pays tribute to all the newsletter editors (Thanks Don) and reviews their many problems of finding material to keep readers awake. Amazing how things stay the same over the years!

Elections will be held during the April business meeting. Current nominations are:

Vice President:	Peter Maziuk, KB9KZO
Treasurer:	Ken Kwasniewski, N9HQ

## VEHICLE DISCUSSION CONTINUED

need some way to quickly transport and set up a command center.”

Why now is a good time to purchase a Communications Trailer?

Although the total cost the trailer suggested by the task force is \$10,000, we have a matching fund and member pledges totaling more than \$7,000. That means about \$3,000 is needed from club funds, but the \$3,000.00 is offset by \$1,000.00 from the sale of the truck, and also includes the cost of a generator which we should have with or without a vehicle. That brings the club contribution to less than \$1,000. “There will never be a better time for such a project. The new trailer that the committee has proposed,” says Dale, NJ9E, “will eliminate the high cost of operating and maintaining our past motorized vehicle. Since over 70% of the cost to purchase the trailer is already pledged to this project by fellow members of the WCRA. I believe this demonstrates a sincere commitment by those members to make this project successful”

What is our relationship to the county Office of Emergency Management?

The OEM has no control over the Communications Trailer. We have no obligations to them. But they are aware how much value there is in shared goals. So much so that they have offered to provide a secure, easily accessible place to store the trailer. Five of our members are also paid-on-call members of the OEM and five more are reserve volunteer members who know the procedures for working with first responders. Through them, and the full-time OEM staff, the trailer will be available whenever we need it, 24/7.

The decision is yours. At the May meeting a vote will be taken on whether or not to make this purchase. A discussion will take place to answer any questions you still have. Just make the right choice.

changed since 1990. A couple months ago we saw a presentation on how OEM has millions of dollars worth of trailers and equipment at their disposal to set up emergency communications. That didn't exist in 1990. We have no emergency plan or organization has a club. Is buying a trailer is going to change that? Their answer was we were going to have some letter of understanding with the OEM which would allow storage, access and automatically certify club members to use the equipment at an emergency situation. I'd like a lot more detail on that. Are we linking the club to OEM? Is that what the entire membership wants?

The video and presentation talked about how this trailer would build member recruitment.. For several years I was one to the club truck drivers. I drove it to multiple public service events. I was around it a lot at these events. I never had one person approach me and ask a question about the club or the truck. Yes, it's great to get our name out, but a banner will achieve the same thing as a trailer. We need member recruitment, but a trailer isn't going to solve that problem.

They presented a \$10,000 budget for the trailer. Several times during the presentation the need for an air conditioning unit was mentioned. That's an additional \$2,000 that isn't on their budget. Their contingency budget is \$250. How much money is the club really going to have to put into this over the long haul?

Despite the fact we're a radio club, the subject of radio equipment never came up. The equipment that was on the truck is now sitting in storage. Most of it hasn't been turned on in years. Much of it is very nice equipment – three all mode radios for two meters, 220 and 440 – and an Icom 735 HF radio.

Continued on Page 7

# OUR MEMBERS THAT CELEBRATE A BIRTHDAY IN THE MONTH OF APRIL

ARNIS

JOHN

ANN

MARTY

DON

K9OQN

WA9YZL

WM9L

N9NTM

N9NYX

If you do not see your birthday listed here in your birth month, please contact the editor with your information.

## Do we really need a vehicle? Continued

It's also all old equipment, dating from the early 90s. If I was deployed to an emergency, I'd want to have equipment I could trust, not radios that have been in storage for years. So when does the club have to buy equipment to man this vehicle? I find it odd, that as a radio club, all the emphasis on this has been on a vehicle, and none on radios and antennas.

The club membership is declining. It's not declining because we don't have a vehicle, and buying a vehicle won't reverse that trend. What makes a club are radio-based activities and repeaters. I joined this club in '98 because I heard people on the repeater talking about Field Day. I went and visited Field Day and was impressed by the operation – not by the truck, but by the people and enthusiasm. Because of the hamfest we have more resources than most clubs. Are there other places those resources could go?

I have a lot of respect for the people on the other side of this argument, and I respect the fact they are willing to put their own money into the project. I just don't think we've seen a full accounting of what this project would eventually cost the club. I also have yet to hear a compelling argument as to why we need the vehicle.

# Wheaton Community Radio Amateurs

## Membership Application

P.O. Box QSL, Wheaton, Illinois 60189

### Dues

**Full Member** \$26  
**Student/Senior Citizen** \$13  
**Associate (No License)** \$13  
**Club Badge** \$7

Family Memberships Available

### Office Use Only

Year ..... Amt Paid .....  
Check ..... Cash .....  
New ..... Renew .....  
Membership Type Full Associate

Student Sr Citizen

Family:

Full member call sign: .....

Name on Badge.....

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Call Sign \_\_\_\_\_

License Class \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apartment # \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: Home (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Business (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL Address \_\_\_\_\_

ARRL Member Yes OR No  
(Please Circle One)

Sponsor (new members only) \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT CLUB EVENTS WILL YOU VOLUNTEER YOUR SERVICES FOR?

Please circle those which you might be interested in working or serving as a Committee Member

- |                           |                         |                              |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>HAMFEST (January)</b>  | <b>FIELD DAY (June)</b> | <b>VE TESTING</b>            | <b>JULY 4TH PARADE</b>  |
| <b>PICNIC (July)</b>      | <b>CHRISTMAS PARTY</b>  | <b>TRAINING</b>              | <b>MEMBER RETENTION</b> |
| <b>ASSISTANCE (Elmer)</b> | <b>BIKE-A-THON</b>      | <b>PUBLIC SERVICE EVENTS</b> |                         |

**OTHER:** \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## APRIL CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

- 3rd: Club breakfast **every** Tuesday morning 7-9 AM, Glen Oaks Restaurant, Glen Ellyn.
- 5th: Club Brunch **1st & 3rd** Thursdays 10:30 AM at Peppercorns. Peppercorns is located at the corner of President and Geneva Road in the shopping center on the North side of Geneva. All are welcome.
- 13th: Monthly membership meeting at First Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, 615 W. Jefferson Ave. at 7:30pm. Talk-in on .39 Program for April will be the elections and the discussion of the trailer.
- 20th: DEADLINE FOR HAMLETTER SUBMISSIONS for May.
- 26th: VEC testing at the Helen Plum Library in Lombard from 6:30 till 8:30pm. Go to the club VE Testing website at [vetesting.harrykamer.com](http://vetesting.harrykamer.com) for the latest details.

Remember the Club net on 2M is held every Sunday evening at 8 PM local. Followed by the 220 net at 8:30 PM local. Tuesday at 8 PM local on 2M is the ARES net followed by the Club 440 net at 8:30 PM local.

Next WCRA General Membership Meeting - April 13th, 2007, First Presbyterian Church 615 W. Jefferson Ave., Wheaton, Illinois 7:30 PM

WCRA was founded in 1948 and continues to be involved in all facets of Amateur Radio supporting the healthy growth of the hobby through diversification and participation. Our members have always been our most important asset and we would like to see you join us for our next meeting. Our business meetings are followed by a break for conversation, coffee, soda pop, and fat pills. This is followed by an amateur radio related program. We would like to see you there to share the enthusiasm.

## HAMLETTER

Club and HamLetter Mailing Address:

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eMail: [donlin@xnet.com](mailto:donlin@xnet.com)

**First Class Mail**

