

Static



The Starved Rock Radio Club newsletter for June 2009

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EOC drafts nearly complete

Architect Bob Johnson presented emergency operations center plans he said were 75% complete to the LaSalle County Board's Courthouse & Jail Committee May 22. The plans include a 50 foot tall aluminum Glen Martin Engineering radio tower on the building's south side. About 75% of the \$1.3 million project will be paid for by a Homeland Security grant.

The economy has turned the construction sector into a buyer's market. Johnson says several local and a few non-local contractors have called him to ask about bidding. He expects the completed bid package to be available June 5. He'll hold a pre-bid meeting with county officials June 18. The bid opening is planned for July 2. The County Board could then discuss and possibly award the contract at a July 9 meeting.

Hamfest is coming

The Starved Rock Radio Club's Hamfest is Sunday, June 7 at the Bureau County Fairgrounds in Princeton. It'll run from 8am to 3pm. Tickets are \$7. Ham license tests will be given at 9:30am and 11am.

It's anyone's guess how the economy will affect Hamfest. Gasoline prices are expected to remain significantly lower than they've been during some recent Hamfests. But unemployment is significantly higher. Will the lower cost of getting there be irrelevant because people don't have extra money to spend anyway? Or will the desire for equipment and the need for a bargain spur a big turnout?

Field Day's coming too

Starved Rock Radio Club has reserved space at LaSalle County's Shabbona Park for Field Day again this year. It runs from 1pm Saturday, June 27 to 1pm Sunday, June 28. The club won't get the front section of the park like last year, which those attending preferred.

Field Day Coordinator Joe Tokarz KB9EZZ says ham equipment will be set up in a 1000' radius. He wants everyone who visits to bring three other people so visitor points really add up in the ARRL's contest tally. There's also the usual invitation to new hams, inactive hams, elected officials, and kids to come.

Hams participate in nuclear plant drill

Exelon Nuclear employee Joe Tokarz KB9EZZ reports successful amateur radio involvement in a nuclear plant safety drill at LaSalle Station May 20. He says hams were able to get a NARS (National Accident Reporting System) message through faster than emergency responders with sophisticated electronic equipment. "The technology got in the way," he says. A Grundy County crew copied the message by taking it from an amateur radio operator.

The safety drill was more than a tabletop exercise but less than an all out physical performance. It lasted just four hours, rather than the days or weeks a real incident might take. LaSalle County Sheriff Tom Templeton says it tested the response to a terrorist incident at LaSalle Station. People listening with scanners heard communiqués about fires and evacuations tagged with *this is a drill*.

The main reason for a drill is to identify weaknesses outside the context of a real emergency and overcome them in time for the real thing. Joe's improvement recommendation is that all hams practice operating net control.

On Thursday, May 21, just one day after the drill, an unrelated shutdown happened on LaSalle Station's Unit One reactor. Exelon Nuclear Communications Manager Adam Slahor says a lightning protection device failed, triggering a protective shutdown. After a weekend of inspections and maintenance, the nuclear reactor restarted the following Monday.

Storm spotter recruiting leads to Eagle Scout rank

Morgan Johnson, the Boy Scout who put on Stormapalooza at Ottawa's Reddick Library February 28, earned the rank of Eagle Scout for it. Stormapalooza was a free presentation involving a National Weather Service meteorologist trying to interest the public in becoming weather spotters. As of press time, the Court of Honor during which Johnson gets his Eagle Scout patch and certificate hasn't been scheduled. His mother, Laurie Bradach W9CAV, hopes it will be soon.

Amateurs to have role in Scouting day

Amateur radio will be a feature on Founders Day at the Ottawa Scouting Museum. Ham radio will be demonstrated for scouts Saturday, June 13 from 8am to 2pm.

Weekly ARES breakfast moves

On May 2, the Saturday morning Ottawa ARES breakfast group started meeting in Ottawa Regional Hospital Meeting Room 4 instead of at Burger King. Meeting coordinator Joe Tokarz KB9EZZ says Burger King got crowded after Hardees closed and the regular Hardees crowd looked for somewhere else to eat. Meetings start at 8am. Joe says the hospital location offers free coffee and free wifi access.

Club antenna work delayed

Pat Ryan KC6VVT and Adam Rabe W9ZHB hoped to do some antenna work at the clubhouse Saturday, May 16. But strong winds made that too dangerous. Pat is trying to reschedule the antenna party. The 2-meter repeater for W9MKS has had far less range than what was enjoyed before one of the antennas came down during an ice storm back in December.

Communications mural unveiled

Ottawa's Brush With History mural covering the history of communications in the city was unveiled on a rainy Memorial Day. It's on the front of the WCMY-WRXX radio building. Dan Parker and Bunny Morse, popular talk show hosts of some years past on WCMY, are featured. A close look will show TV antennas propped above houses on the horizon recalling the days before cable TV when an antenna's usefulness outweighed aesthetic concerns. There's also a telegrapher tapping a key like the kind made by the Caton Telegraph Instrument Shop in Ottawa in the mid 1800s. The project's artist was Tim Trumbo of Ottawa. Here are some pictures taken Sunday, May 17 as the mural was going up.



SRRC meeting minutes as provided by Secretary Tom Chromzack, K9ML:

Starved Rock Radio Club May 4, 2009 Meeting

Meeting starts at 7:04pm with 23 members present.

Minutes of last meeting passed to group.

Tom, K9ML reads Treasurer's Report due to absence of Mark, K9ZQ.

Treasurer's Report approved. Rich, N9OUW motion/ John, AA9VT second, Ayes carry!

Minutes approved. Cecil, KB9LNK motion/ Gary, WK9G second, Ayes carry!

Eldon, KB9PZA asks group to postpone committee reports so he can discuss the repeater antenna and CD rollover. The club's CD rollover is May 18. Mark will take out the money needed for the hamfest at that time. Eldon would like to take additional money for the purchase of a new antenna. The elements from the damaged antenna are so bad that it would make more sense to replace the antenna. Gary motions not to renew CD until after the hamfest. Cecil seconds the motion. Ayes carry. Gary motions to replace damaged antenna with a new antenna. Rich seconds the motion. Ayes carry.

Pat, KC6VVT outlines plan to swap antennas on May 16. Adam, W9ZHB will be in area with his boom truck that Saturday morning. He will stop by club and we can move APRS antenna to side of repeater tower and put Pat's 4-bay antenna on VHF tower.

Activities: Tom mentions Sandwich Hamfest. Not much hamfest action is happening until June. Arietids Meteor Shower is May 9 through 16. Tom will post contest schedule later.

Equipment: Cecil mentions that there is an electronic and computer equipment collection on May 16 at LaSalle County Government Center. We should collect all the dead laptops and junk electronics at the club, load them in a vehicle and drop them off at the collection. Eldon mentions that Frank, KF9NZ still has club equipment. He asks Tom to send a letter to Frank nicely asking him to return those items.

Eldon asks Joe, KB9EZZ about a TNC that may be at LSC EOC. Joe says he will check on it, but do we have the serial numbers of the TNC so he can verify the items.

Buildings & Grounds: Cecil gets the lawn trimmed.

Repeater: Got that covered earlier. Kurt, KB9RKU got controller under control. He made up a new list of codes to access controller functions. Now have LT5 instead of LTZ. Group discusses testing hard-line.

Repeater Monitor: Rich says "What!"

No one brought food to meeting.

Hamfest: Jim, KC9FGU mentions he has checks for tables to give to Mark. Sound Guy penciled in and need to find out when ARRL goodies will arrive. Gary would to have a flyer at hamfest with club history and membership form on B-side. Get Pass sorted out.

FD & Training: Joe outlines FD plans. We need to work on logging computer link ups. Get together at next meeting to work out mess. Joe has training exercise on May 20. Cannot say what it is yet.

Old Business: We have got that done, yes, yes!

New Business: Rick, KO5HKO could not schedule a Membership Committee meeting last month so it will wait until after hamfest. Tom will contact ARRL about goodies and registering CE and VE sessions. He will get press release out. Rick will do some PIO duties, too.

Cecil makes motion to adjourn with Gary second.

Meeting ends at 8:31pm.

Recorded By Tom Chromzack, K9ML