

Ham Gab

Next meeting: April 12th

April 2013

PO Box 102 Bedford Park, IL 60499-0102 www.hamfesters.org

Special Interest Articles
Humble Radio Beginnings
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April Birthdays
Dennis N9BIA
Thomas KA9BVQ
Rita KC9CDL
Dave KB9EPL
Robert KA9GTX
Mike W9GYC
Norm N9IRO
Patrick KB9KRT
Michael W9MCS
Bruce KB9USV
Bob WF9V
George N9VOK
James KM9Y

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Scapstone@aol.com

Note: The April meeting will be on April 12th, not April 5th! This is due to elections in Crestwood.



The April 12th meeting will be a
Basic Weather Spotting course. The
presentation will be given by our
very own Dave N9KPD and is in
conjunction with the Romeoville
National Weather Service. See
Don's column below for complete
details. Volunteers are needed for
early set up and guests are
welcome. It will be one of the few
spotting classes in the area so you
won't want to miss it.



Volunteers needed! We need volunteers for the Hamfest. We don't want to wait until the last minute as has happened in previous years. Sign up now so Don won't have to wear that T-Shirt until August.

Cet Your Tickets!

WE WILL HAVE TWO, NOT ONE, BUT TWO WEATHER RADIOS AS DOOR PRIZES AT THE NEXT MEETING. SEE PICTURE TO THE RIGHT. THE WINNER COULD BE YOU!



THE PRESIDENTS BEAT

DONALD POINTER KC9EQQ
APRIL 2013

Dave Bukowski N9KPD. Who is this guy? He is a member of the Oak Forest Emergency Management Agency. A proud one at that. He is a devoted participant at the Renaissance Fair held near Bristol Wisconsin every Summer. He is the son of a man whom I have great respect for in the guise of my friend Al N9ZD.

Hamfesters Amateur Radio Club is indeed proud to call both Dave and Al fellow members of this wonderful, wonderful organization. Recently, Al gave a great program on the U505 Submarine. Several days later after that program, Al developed some serious cardiac issues and spent some time in the hospital and just recently went home after receiving the necessary care to get his health back on track. And from what I understand he is doing well. When you have the chance, drop him a line or a card and let him know you are thinking about him. On behalf of Nora, the board, our fellow members and myself, we wish Al a speedy recovery and surely will keep him in our prayers for such a recovery to go well.

So, now back to Dave, Dave will be our guest speaker at our April 12th meeting presenting his Basic Weather Spotting course for the first time to our club in cooperation with the Romeoville office of the National Weather Service. This program is anxiously anticipated by many as we are the first Ham Radio club to present this program in our area in perhaps a very long time. The program is expected to run about three hours and will start at 7:30 sharp. Doors will open at 6:30pm, so get an early seat. I need volunteers at 5pm to help with room set up and other duties. Who can I count on out there in Radio land to give Nora and I a hand? Remember-This program is on April 12th, **NOT** the Fifth, due to local elections. You also will need to make sure you sign in, so that certificates for attendance to this class can be dispensed. Dave will have more info on that evening regarding the certificates. Come out and show your support for his program. This subject could not be more topical considering we are about to enter severe weather season and I encourage everyone to attend. Thank you David for doing this for our members. We so appreciate your commitment!

Back on the beat:

March 1st was our White Elephant sale and everyone looked like they enjoyed themselves and found some great buys to take home too. I want to especially thank Pete K9OWQ for his Intro presentation on the upcoming SS Badger trip across the Lake Michigan. Originally the trip was scheduled for June 1st,



but the event will now be held in September. Pete will be our guest speaker for the evening at our May program and he will have a more in depth presentation about this great trip for Ham operators to participate in and I look forward to his talk!

Special thanks to: The 75 plus people who showed up at our March meeting!! Our numbers show that Hamfesters is the place to be these days to fellowship with some of the nicest Ham Radio folks around-you!! Double thanks to all of you who arrived early to help set the room up too.

Last note: Easter is around the corner at this writing, so let us give thanks for all whom are or ever were in our lives who made a positive difference in our lives. I know Nora and I do, especially when it comes to you our dear friends in Hamfesters. May your Easter be like the forthcoming Spring- full of renewal, rejuvenation and appreciation of relationships with those whom you love and care for. Happy Easter to you and your loved ones. Enjoy the day!

73"s to all of you and I look forward to seeing you at the April 12th meeting. Don't forget- arrive early!

General meeting minutes – Patti, KC9LYE

W9AA Hamfesters Amateur Radio Club Meeting March 1, 2013 @ 7:30PM

Please note: There was no Feb. board meeting, due to weather. Our next club meeting will be April 12th at 7:30PM.

Roll: Don KC9EQQ, Jim KB9CYL, Ed WA9EOL, Patti KC9LYE, Rich N9UNQ.

There were a grand total of 70 people at tonight's meeting, including 9 visitors.

Welcome everyone!

Health & Welfare: Report by Dave N9KPD, his Dad is Al N9ZD. All had surgery for heart blockage. He's doing great, and should be home in a few days.

President's Report: By Don KC9EQQ, I'm wearing this yellow t-shirt to promote our August 4th hamfest.

Programs: Tonight our annual White Elephant sale & Pete K9OWQ, spoke about a trip in Sept. 2013 on the S.S.Badger ham radio on Lake Michigan.

Pete will tell us more at the May meeting.

The April 12th program will be Dave's (N9KPD) Weather Spotting class.

Website News: Brian W9HLQ, & Grandville "Gene" W9PNG, our club's roster is in real time. There's now a monthly group email sent concerning Hamgab.

Minutes: The Feb. club minutes were approved by Steve W9KXT, 2nd by Bob N9JYX.

Treasurer's Report: By Ed WA9EOL, Hamfesters tickets & flyers are available, get yours now. Hamfest is August 4th, 2013. Report approved by Kurt WB9FMC, 2nd by Rich N9UNQ.

Field Day: By Jim KB9CYL, FD is

June 22-23, 2013. The ARRL insurance is paid.

Hamfest: On Saturday Aug. 3rd at the Will County Fairgrounds in Peotone, IL there will be a cook out for vendors, & setup staff. The hamfest is August 4th at the same location.

New Business: Gregg AB9MZ, showed us a device called a "Flipper USB" it will be available @ Walmart, & Bestbuy. Steve K9KXT, will repeat his program "Hams who Fly" at another club on March 12th.

Thank You's: Jim KB9CYL's, daughter Colleen, & his granddaughter Caylee who sold Girl Scout cookies here tonight.

Eric KC9OOM, & Steve KC9OOL, for their work on the HamGab, even when items arrive at the last minute. **Adjournment:** 8:20PM, Bob N9KWG, 2nd by Bob N9JYX.

There was no raffle tonight, because of the white elephant sale.

Ed Andrew, KB9KV passed away in Naples, Florida on March 8, 2013. He was a long time member and former Board member of Hamfesters and truly a celebrity of the Ham community. He and the company he worked for, Andrew Corporation provided a Field Day site. Who can forget K9MS's Sterba Curtain on the Andrew site. Hamfesters has lost some great guys recently. Ed's services will be held in Naples.



Obituary:

http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/naplesnews/obituary.aspx?n=edward-john-andrew&pid=163588529&fhid=10463#fbLoggedOut;



CQ Field Day de Jim Riley KB9CYL

It looks like Spring is going to be a little late this year. It's the middle of March as I write this and it's cold and damp outside. Last year at this time it was 80 degrees. What does that bode for Field Day? I have no idea. What I do know is that your Field Day team will be out there no matter what the weather.

Where's "out there"? Altman Park in Worth at 115th and Oketo, that's where. The time to be "out there" is 0800 Saturday morning 22 June with as many people as possible to get set up. Your reward will be an outstanding meal prepared for you by our FD luncheon chef, Mike Serapin W9MCS.

Who's "out there"? Just the best Field Day group anywhere, that's who. And you are hereby invited to join us. I just got off the phone with Al Bukowski N9ZD, half our 20-meter digital team. Despite his recent health setback, he plans to be there. That leaves *you* no excuse.

Operations run from Saturday at 1300Z thru Sunday at 1800Z. That's 1 p.m thru 1 p.m. for the UTC-challenged.

Remember, there's Field Day and Hamfesters Field Day. Experience the difference.

Hamfest Update – April 2013 Kerry AA9SB

Yes: we're going back officially to two days and to 2 rooms for the 2013 event and at the same price thanks to Ed, WA9EOL. I've been urging this all along and I'm glad we're going to be doing it.

Our 2012 Hamfest flyers are hot off the presses from our printer. If you're going to a hamfest, be sure to bring them with you and drop them off at their club table -- and pass them out. And get your tickets, also, -- either from our hamfest ticket sales coordinator Jim, or from our ticket sellers -- and sell them! Get the word out. We're going to be going all out to make this hamfest a success. And get your tickets, also, -- either from Jim, or from the ticket sellers -- and sell!

We'll have more updates at the April meeting and in the May HAMGAB.

Hamfest Ticket Sales de Jim Riley KB9CYL

We started selling advance hamfest tickets at the while elephant sale last month. The best way I can describe how they're going is "underwhelming." Two tickets were sold and 48 are still out in circulation. That's not quite enough to help make this year's fest a success.

I will have plenty more with me at the April meeting. Please take a pack of ten or twenty and start pushing our fest. It's what keeps the club going.

My Humble Radio Beginnings Ed Stroh – K9EGS

My interest in radio/electronics started in 1965 when I received an Allied Knight Kit walkie talkie and a Craftsman soldering gun for Christmas. (I still have the Craftsman soldering gun which works as good as the day I got it). I believe the walkie talkie was the model C-555 transceiver. Once I soldered that kit together and turned it on for the first time, the radio bug had bitten me, I was hooked. I strung up a 50 foot length of bell wire from my bedroom window to a nearby telephone pole to use as antenna. I assumed that if I put up that wire that it would increase my range far beyond that of the small whip antenna that was built in on the walkie talkie. I don't remember talking to many people on that little walkie talkie, but I do remember hearing CB'ers quite a bit. The selectivity on that unit was so wide that I could hear many different channels on the CB band even though the unit only had a crystal in it for CB channel 14.

Later that next year I built an Allied Radio Knight Kit Crystal Radio set. The crystal radio was fascinating to me since it worked without any electrical power, no battery needed. All you needed to hook up to it was a decent ground connection and some sort of an antenna wire and you could tune the AM radio band to listen to your favorite rock station through headphones.

About a year later we moved and I met a new friend who was interested in CB radio. He received an Allied Knight Kit Safari 1 CB transceiver for his birthday. Him and I worked on that kit together and soon had it on the air. That prompted me to want my own CB radio so my dad bought me a used International Executive Model 100-D CB radio. I thought that was great to be able to talk to other CB'ers as far away as 20 miles. Back then, in the middle 1960's, CB was quite different than what it is today. There were a lot more gentlemen on the air in those days. We used to use our FCC assigned call signs when making a contact, observed proper radio etiquette and always made sure that we got off the air once we "shot the five". "Shooting the five" meant that we talked for the FCC allotted five minutes per contact and then got off the air giving someone else a chance to use the channel. Back then CB was kind of similar to ham radio in some ways. That all changed once the 70's came around and all the "good buddies" got on the air. In my opinion, the 70's were the beginning of the downfall of CB radio.

The next Christmas (1967) my dad bought me another Allied Knight Kit. This one was the Star Roamer shortwave receiver. Once I finished soldering all the resistors, capacitors, tube

sockets, etc. and put it all together, I plugged it in the wall socket and powered it up with much anticipation. I could not believe it. It worked perfectly as



soon as I turned it on. I was really hooked on radio now after hearing stations from all over the world. Can you imagine being able to listen to Radio Moscow, Radio Peking or HCJB in Quito, Ecuador from your south suburban Chicago apartment bedroom? This was great! I soon discovered that I could write reception reports for hearing these stations and send the reports to these far away places in order to receive a QSL card from them. Sending in those reception reports and receiving those fancy QSL cards from those exotic station locations became an interesting and rewarding extension of the shortwave radio listening hobby.

A few years later I traded my Knight Kit Star Roamer to a friend for a used Hallicrafters SX-110 communications receiver. This was a much more selective and sensitive receiver than the Star Roamer was. My country totals continued to grow.

The next thing I knew it was 1972 and I was married. That pretty much was the end of my shortwave DXing, at least for a little while. By 1976 I was back in the hobby again and this time Santa brought me my dream receiver, the Drake model SPR-4 communications receiver. That was the greatest thing since sliced bread, or at least I thought so. It had a frequency readout accurate to within +- one kHz. That was a major improvement over the Hallicrafters SX-110 with which I had to guess what frequency I was listening to. Usually I did not know what frequency I was on until the announcer said what it was.

After having 2 children we moved in to our first house in 1978. One of my priorities was to build a "shack" in the basement and put up some major antennas. I installed a Mosley SWV-7 vertical antenna, a Mosley SWL-7 horizontal antenna, as well as a home brew inverted L long wire. We have since moved on to our second house and I have built 2 new "shacks" since we moved here. I also upgraded to a Drake R8B receiver in 1999. Shortly after that my country totals pretty much leveled off and stopped growing. I verified about 107 countries. You see, for the most part, I was only reporting to shortwave stations that broadcasted

in English. That puts a limit on how many countries that you can verify.

Fast forward now to the year 2009. This is the rather unusual story of how I finally got down to business and got my Ham license. One day I was watching an episode of the Andy Griffith Show. There was a scene where Sheriff Andy Taylor and Deputy Barney Fife were in the sheriff's office. On the table next to Andy's desk I could see their police radio. Actually it was not a police radio at all. It was an Eico model 720, 80-10 meter band amateur radio CW transmitter. The average viewer would not even notice that, but I did. It brought back memories to when I was in high school and used to go over to a friend's house that had a novice class ham license. He used the Eico 720 transmitter along with a Drake R4A receiver. It used to amaze me that he could make CW contacts with people all over the world. After seeing that Andy Griffith episode and remembering my friend's Eico transmitter, I decided that it was about time that I got my ham license. I have always wanted to be a licensed ham for many years but just never got around to it. At this point of my life I had more time to devote to studying for the license test since I was now retired. I also had more time to devote to the ham activity once I got my license. So I diligently studied for the Technician and General tests and passed them both on the same day in June 2009. My first call sign was KC9QAT but I immediately applied for my present vanity call sign, K9EGS, which contains my initials. Within a week after getting licensed I looked up the Tri-Town Amateur Radio Club on the Internet. I knew a little about them from a co-worker who was a Tri-Town member many years ago. My first encounter with Tri-Town was to participate in Field Day 2009 at the "Bunker." (Thank you so much Todd Schumann for inviting me!) That day was also my first time transmitting on the air since receiving my license because at that point I still did not have a transceiver of my own yet. I really appreciate those Tri-Town guys who helped me get through that very first contact on the air. It was a bit awkward since I was not familiar with all the contest lingo and procedures. I think that I made about 10 contacts that day to help boost the club station total just a little bit.

After Field Day at the Bunker I was really energized about Amateur Radio. I had receivers that I have been listening to hams on for many years, but now I needed a transmitter. So my first step was to attend the Hamfesters Hamfest in Peotone, Illinois in the summer of 2009. That is where I met an elderly ham who seemed to be starting to wind down his ham career a little bit by selling off some of his gear. I was a bit skeptical at first to buy a used radio from someone that I had just met. But after talking to him for a while I felt that he was not the type of person who was out to make a fast buck at my expense. I hemmed and hawed for

a bit and then finally asked him what the lowest price was that he would be willing to accept for the transceiver that he was selling. He started out asking \$850 for the Yaesu FT-920 transceiver and eventually went down to \$600. I think that I made a good deal. When I got back home that day I checked around a bit on the Internet and found the Yaesu FT-920 transceiver selling for around \$800 on average. So I was satisfied with the price that I paid and I was satisfied with the unit's performance after putting it on the air. When I was at the Peotone Hamfest I also bought an Alpha Delta DX-CC 80-10 meter dipole antenna from one of the vendors there. I did a lot of prior research on commercially available antenna prices, sizes and performance. This one seemed to fit my needs just fine since I live on a typical somewhat small suburban lot and had a limited ham gear budget.

I have enjoyed being a member of Tri-Town for the last couple years and look forward to participating in the club for many years to come. I have even renewed an old acquaintance since joining the club. I recently ran into Mark Thompson at one of the meetings. Mark and I attended the same high school and had some of the same electronics class teachers. Running into Mark was a pleasant surprise since I had not seen him since high school in the 1960s. I have also just recently become a member of Hamfesters at the February 2013 meeting. I have been to a few Hamfesters meetings in the past and figured that it was about time that I joined the club. I am looking forward to getting to know many of the members.

I have achieved a few accomplishments already in my short ham career. I have attained the ARRL WAS 80 meter phone, WAS 40 meter phone, DXCC and WAC awards. I have verified all 50 states for the WAS 20 meter award but have not yet had a card checker verify my QSL cards in order to get the WAS certificate, but that is just a formality. I have also attained the CQ DX Award for verifying 100 countries/entities.

I hope that my ramblings have at least been somewhat interesting to you. It has always been interesting to me to read about how other people got their start in radio.

If you are interested in traveling down memory lane and want to see some of the old Allied Knight Kits, you can surf to: http://www.nostalgickitscentral.com/allied/products/knight_radio.html

There is a list of the kits as well as photos of many of them too.

73s Ed Stroh - K9EGS Thornton, IL.

Hamfesters VE Testing: By Al Bukowski N9ZD

Hamfesters Radio club VE's administered FCC Amateur Radio exams March 9, 2013 at the Oak Forest City Hall 15440 S. Central Ave. Oak Forest, ILL 60452. We had two candidates

that took the Technician Exam, however only one passed. Congratulations to the candidate and hope to hear him on the air soon. I want to thank Tim AA9BV for stepping in and coordinating the test session in my absence. The other VE's who

helped administering and grading the exams were, Ron WB9JYZ, Bob N9JYX, Gen KB9RNM, and Ron N9STU.

If you or a friend are planning on taking an Amateur Radio examination, please note that Hamfesters conducts FCC authorized tests for Technician, General, and Extra class licenses every month on the 2nd Saturday at Oak Forest City Hall 15440 S. Central Ave. Oak Forest, II 60452. Oak Forest City Hall Doors open at 9:00 AM. We begin testing at 9:15 AM Sharp. Enter through the main entrance and then go to the left to the Chamber Room or look for the Amateur Radio testing exam signs. We do ask that you park your car in the main parking lot between the Fire Department and the Police Department and not directly in front of the Main doors to City Hall.

Hamfesters Radio club VE's administered FCC Amateur Radio Our next test session will be held on Saturday April 13, 2013.

Very important: Please remember to bring the following items with you to any exam session:
The appropriate fee (currently \$15) for the test.
Please bring your picture ID, the original and a copy of your Amateur Radio license (if licensed), a pen, pencil, and calculator if you would like to use one (all memories must be cleared). It is very important to have your Social Security Number, or if you have been issued an FRN (Federal Registration Number), please use that in place of your SSN because without either

If you have any Questions regarding our test session or Questions about upgrading, please contact me - via email at: N9ZD@ARRL.net.

your SSN or FRN, the FCC will not process your application. If

you are upgrading, it is essential to bring your CSCE and a

copy showing proof of recent passed exam if not already

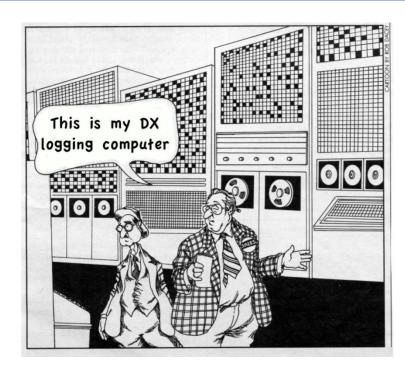
Again - The test fee is still \$15.00 (cash only -- no credit cards or checks).

73's AL - N9ZD

processed by the FCC.

Our very own Al N9ZD had bypass surgery shortly before the March meeting. Let's all wish Al a speedy recovery.







HamGab April 2013 Wet Noodle Antenna Company files for bankruptcy

April 1, 2013

By: K5PO, on the scene

WELLSBURG, Mo.; January 10, 2013 - Solar cycle 24, one of the weakest solar cycles of modern history, is forcing a stalwart of amateur radio antenna manufacturing history to shutter its doors Monday. The Wet Noodle Antenna Company was started by John Blixton, Sr. in nearby Menton, Mo., in March of 1957 at the height of solar cycle 19. John Blixton, who ran the day-to-day operations of the company until 1996, speaks fondly of the solar maximum. "We used to work DX all hours of the day," says the senior Blixton. "I could work Europe on 10 meters at midnight!" John, an avid amateur radio operator since he was licensed at 14, said he felt compelled to contribute to the hobby he loved.

"DX was so easy to work back in cycle 19, you didn't need much of an antenna at all!" quips Blixton. "So I figured, I'd start a company that made antennas perfectly suited for



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these conditions." Blixton set out to make some of the least effective antennas in the industry. With cheap prices, poor radiation patterns, and non-existent gain, his antennas were selling like hotcakes. By the summer of 1969, it seemed everyone used a Wet Noodle antenna at their station. "We became the benchmark of what an antenna could be," says the wistful Blixton. "We'd have folks tell us all the time 'I loaded up a Wet Noodle and worked DX!" Lately, Wet Noodle's sales haven't exactly pegged the S meter. "Weak solar conditions have led amateur radio operators to buy antennas with gain and directionality, and ours were never built for that," tells Macy Blixton, the youngest son of the senior Blixton, who took over operations of the Wet Noodle company from his father in 1996. "We tried to make better antennas when solar conditions went bad," said Macy. "But we frankly had no idea how. Our proprietary semolina construction never held up when we tried more advanced antenna designs."

(Courtesy of "The Noise Blankers" www.noiseblankers.com)

Rare Tube of Antenna Grease Only \$250

- It was developed by the Department of Defense for the armed services in the 1960s.
- It was used mainly in the field on handheld units, tripling their range.
- It is a closely guarded secret by technicians and hams. When the FCC found some amateur radio supply outlets had purchased a sizable quantity of the RF grease through US Army and Navy surplus auctions, the FCC outlawed the sale of that in the US.
- The RF grease works by making your signal slide off of your antenna faster with less friction. Because of this you get less RF friction (hysteresis). The results are lower SWR readings and increased power handling, The faster moving RF signal builds up a tremendous RF inertia resulting in a higher DB gain on your signal. This is like a slingshot effect throwing a faster and larger signal (typically 3.8 to 4.7 dB gain) and four times the power handling capability. Modulation and SSB benefit and whopping six dB gain over an untreated isotropic dipole antenna.
- The grease lasts for about six months and then just wipe off any old grease and put some new on.
- This is probably the best kept secret in amateur radio!
- The guys at the antenna shootouts won't tell you about this amazing secret.
- Triple the RF output of a 200 W box to 600 ERP (effective radiated power)
- This RF grease also carries a very cool side effect if you feed over 100 W into a treated antenna you'll see a cool purplish pink halo glowing around your antenna. This glow pulses with your modulation or CW keying (it is not cool for military this is why they stopped using it).



For now all I have is one 16 ounce tube.

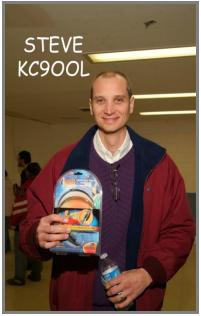
\$250 firm. Contact Alphred E. Numunn. 303-555-1212



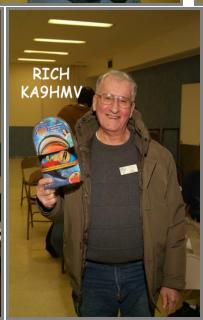




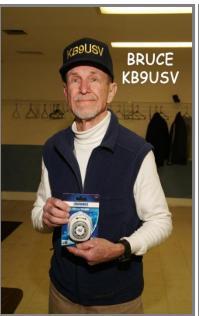




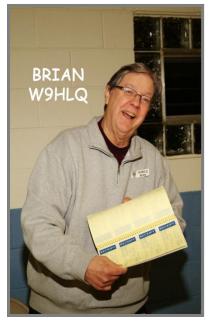


















































































































Hamfesters Amateur Radio Club PO Box 102 Bedford Park, IL 60499-0102 www.Hamfesters.org

Hamfesters Radio Club



Club meetings are held on the first Friday of every month at the Crestwood Civic Center, 14025 Kostner Ave. in Crestwood, IL.

Meetings begin at 7:30 PM. September meetings may vary if our meeting date conflicts with the Crestwood Flower show.

Board Meetings: 7:30 PM on the 4th Monday of each month at the Crestwood Civic Center VE TESTING: Every 2nd Saturday of the Month at the Oak Forest City Hall, 15440 S. Central Ave. Testing begins at 9:00 AM but we ask that you arrive 10 minutes early. Exam fee is now \$15.00. Al N9ZD VE Team Chairman

Special Activities

Hamfesters Big Peotone Hamfest: Our 79th annual Hamfest coming August 4, 2013-Will County Fairgrounds, Peotone, IL. Kerry AA9SB Hamfest Chairman.

Field Day: Join the W9AA crew for one of the best Field Days ever on June 22 & June 23 2013 at 115th and Oketo Avenue, Worth, IL. Jim KB9CYL Field Day Chairman WAHM: Worked all Hamfester Members-

wahm: Worked all Hamfester Memberswork 10 Current members for a beautiful award certificate. Matt KC9JXC Awards



Nets/Contact Info

10 METER NET: Every Sunday Evening at 8:00 PM on 28.410. Bob W9TOE is Net Control

2 METER NET: Every Monday Evening at 9:00 PM on 146.430. Joe KA9KBU & Tom KA9ZXN are Net Control

W9AA Mailbox: 145.650 24 hours a day. Bruno K9QKB is Sysop. ILOAK:Node on 145.650

WEB SITE: www.hamfesters.org Brian W9HLQ is Webmaster

Club's address: Hamfesters Radio Club P.O. Box 102 BEDFORD PARK, IL 60499 Patti KC9LYE Secretary

Deadline for Submitting to the Hamgab is the fifteenth of the month.