

Meeting: Fri 24th at the MCL Cafeteria in Kettering

Feb. 2012

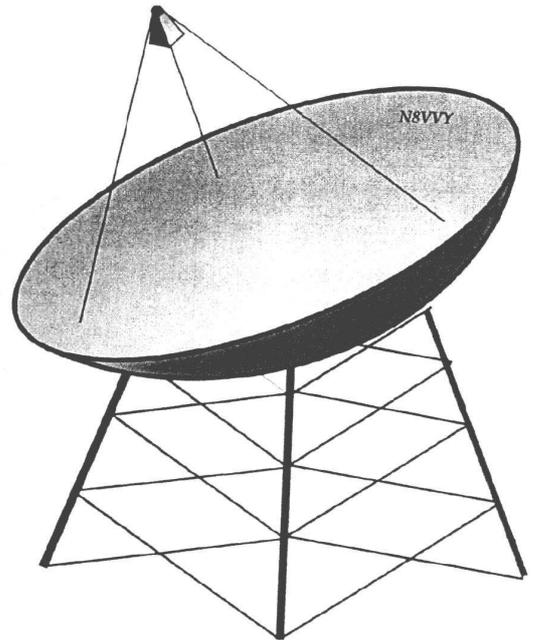
ANOMALOUS PROPAGATION

Newsletter: *The Midwest VHF/UHF Society*

Editors:

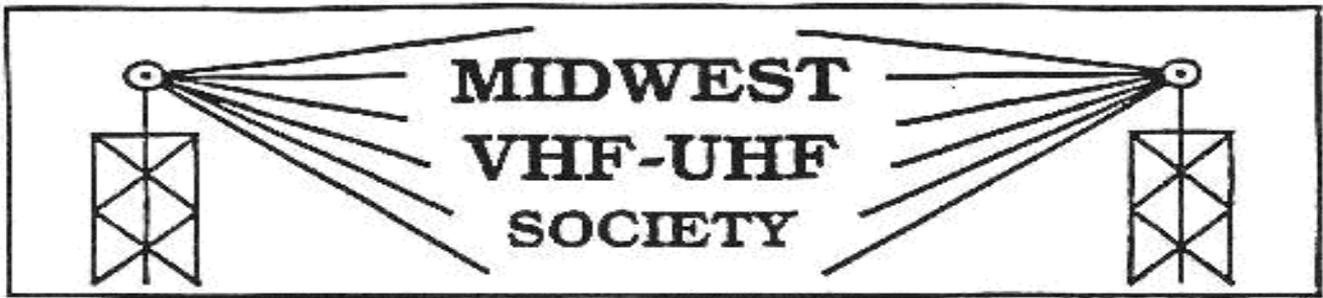
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Mtg Fri 24th of Feb. (6:30PM) MCL Cafeteria on 4485 Far Hills Av (Rt. 48) in Kettering. Going South from Dayton drive past the Town and Country Shopping Center on your left. At the next light turn right, then left into a small shopping center. MCL is at the end on the right

Contents

De N8ZM.....	3
This and That.....	4
January VHF Sweepstakes.....	5
Lightning Protection Advice and more.....	6
To the Mountain Top Part 2.....	7/8
2012 Roster	9/10

Corrections

Haste Makes Waste. Last month, on the contents page, the year (on the upper right) was given as 2011; of course, this should be **2012**
Also, two words were misspelled: **polish** and **appreciate!**

Upcoming Events

SVHF Society Conference: April 20th and 21st, Charlotte, NC.

A **Frequency Measurement Test (FMT)** is coming up on **April 19, a Thursday night this time.** No other details at this time. Watch for the announcement in QST.

Hamvention is May 18-20

The 2012 Roster is included in this issue. Take a good look at you're the data and report any corrections to Steve or Gerd, Info on the cover page! Use e-mail or a postcard!

The Editors, Steve, K8UD & Gerd, WB8IFM

OMG!

I've been wanting to use that abbreviation somewhere for sooo long now, but I haven't had a need to text it to anyone yet. Not sure I have a need to use it now, either. I just needed to get it out of my system.

I have been assured by the Hamvention Exhibits Chair that we will have the same inside booth as last year, SA332 I believe it was. The usual suspicious looking guys have volunteered to help Gerd set it up and tear it down, but there is always room for additional help. I am hoping that we will have Noise Sources for sale, as well as other VHF and microwave items to display. And of course folks will be able to renew their membership or join MVUS. And the opportunity to use it as a place to meet your VHF active friends is always there as well.

I have spoken with Mike, W8RKO, and he plans to have a 2M beacon operating from the roof of HARA, as well as the 1296 beacon from the Channel 16 Tower. Once again, thanks to the HARA management for allowing us on the roof! If anyone has time on Wednesday or Thursday before the show, Mike would probably appreciate some assistance with getting things in place.

We have the usual time slot for the VHF/Microwave Forum, but we need someone to be the Chair and line up some speakers. There is plenty of talent in this part of the hobby (OMG, is there ever!) (OMG! I found a need to use it!), so the hard part is choosing from the available talent and taking a few moments to contact a few of them to ask if they would like to speak. The deadline to get the information published on the Hamvention web site and into the program book is fast approaching, so this is a task that needs to be tackled now. Any takers?

I don't have the date handy, but coming up in April is the Spring FMT, and Mike, W8RKO, will be putting W8KSE on the air again. Does this guy ever rest!? If you want to listen in just to give a signal report, please do. But take a shot at making a measurement. With just a little bit of patience and planning, you might be surprised how well you can do. While the tests are designed to be a challenge for those with tendencies towards over-achieving, they are really intended for the average operator to use to check out his equipment and basic skills. So don't let the guys with a basement full of Helium MASER reference clocks scare you off; give it a try. You'll have fun and might learn a few things about your equipment and your skills.

Well, that's all for now. See you on Feb 24th at the MCL!

de N8ZM. (Tom, Feb 2012)

This and That 2-12

Hello. I replaced my BlackBerry with an iPhone a few weeks ago and I'm still trying to figure out many of its more sophisticated features, such as receiving phone calls. [D.L. Stewart]

A Good Sermon. The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending; and to have the two as close together as possible. [George Burns]

Law of Random Numbers - If you dial a wrong number, you never get a busy signal and someone always answers.

Electromagnetic Compatibility - is a fancy way of saying "keeping electricity and radio energy from doing things you don't want." [WR7I]

Mark Your Calendar. On Sunday, May 20th, the sun is going to turn into a ring of fire. It's an annular solar eclipse--the first one in the USA in almost 18 years. An annular eclipse occurs when the moon passes directly in front of the sun, but the lunar disk is not quite wide enough to cover the entire star. At maximum, the moon forms a "black hole" in the center of the sun. [NASA]

Insurance is all about betting against negative consequences and the insurance business model is unique in that profits depend upon goods and services Not being provided. [Dr. Jonathan Kellerman]

Bicycles. There are still three bicycles produced for every car. The numbers are 560,000 cars and 1,700,000 bicycles per week. [Poodwaddle.com]

We make it fit! It's been quite awhile that I would comment "Good Thinking" when I was "assembling" some new gadget. Nowadays very often things fits poorly or have other annoying properties, and could have been easily improved upon. I just got a bleeding fingernail pushing very hard on a rubber boot that had to be pushed over a screwed on outdoors connector. [Gerd, WB8IFM]

Arctic Exploration. For the 19th-century explorer, romantic notions often trumped sanity. Of the 1000 men who attempted to reach the North Pole before 1900, none succeeded, and 751 lost their lives. [Book: Ice Balloon by Alec Wilkinson]

Thin is in. Designing and making clothing for smaller models is cheaper, and thinner models are perceived to be more attractive by many in the "industry". [Caressa Brown]

Ape Instinct. "Because everyone else is doing it" is not a valid reason for doing anything. [Abigail van Buren]

Give Me a Brake. German scientists have figured out a way to use a wireless network to control a bicycle's braking system — eliminating the sheathed cable typically running from the handlebar to the wheel. Riders squeeze a pressure-sensitive handle grip to brake. A plastic box attaches to the handlebar, housing a transmitter. A receiver sits on the bike's fork. The receiver forwards the signal to an actuator that transforms the signal into mechanical power to activate the brake. The scientists say that while wireless networks are not completely fail-safe, the braking system could have applications in airplanes, trains, and industrial machinery. [GlobalSpec]

Law of the Alibi - If you tell the boss you were late for work because you had a flat tire, the very next morning you will have a flat tire.

Decimal Nightmare. How do you count sheep? Easy, you count the feet, then divide by four. Well, in Costa Rica the currency is such that all the prices run into the thousands. It looks intimidating. But it is easy. The unit is the colon and 500 of them make a dollar. So how do you figure? You chop off three decimals, lets say the price is 2,000, so you wind up with 2. Now you double that and, voila, you arrive a \$4. [Gerd, WB8IFM]

Three Poles. What makes the world go round and round? There is the North pole, then the South pole, and... and there is Copernicus. [Wittenberg by David Davalos]

ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes

1-21/22-2012

Call: W9SZ
Operator(s): W9SZ
Station: W9SZ

Class: Single Op Port QRP
QTH: Illinois
Operating Time (hrs): 11

Summary:
Band? QSOs? Mults

? ? 2:? 17? ? ? 9
? 222:? 7? ? ? 6
? 432:? 8? ? ? 5
? 903:? 2? ? ? 2
? 1.2:? 3? ? ? 3
? 2.3:? 1? ? ? 1
? 3.4:? 1? ? ? 1
? -----

Total:? 39? ? 27? Total Score = 2,241

Club: Society of Midwest Contesters

Comments:

I had a premonition that this was not going to be a good contest. At least it wasn't the worst one I've been in.

I got to my site, a hilltop in EN50rl, at about 1900Z and got set up. I got everything going at about 2100Z but my first QSO was at about 2130Z. I worked K2DRH up through 2304 MHz. We couldn't find each other on 3456 MHz.

My IF radio for the microwave bands has a feedthrough capacitor for the DC input power. The lead on the feedthrough broke off right where it goes into the capacitor. I took the radio apart and strung a clip lead out from the other end of the cap. The radio sat in a half-opened condition for the rest of the contest. At least it worked.

Conditions were weird on Saturday. I was able to work some people on 222 but not 432. I was able to work some people on 432 but not 222.

I went QRT at 0400Z and left the antennas set up at the site and drove 10 miles to Gibson City, IL to sleep at a motel. When I woke up I had about a quarter of an inch of snow on the car and it was snowing. I drove to the site and found the mast with the 144/222/432 beams was still standing but the mast with the 902/1296 beams had fallen down. The guy ropes were still holding the mast but the 902 beam was resting with its end down in the mud. No damage was done and I put it back up. All my antennas were covered with ice. I checked the SWR on the 144 MHz beam. It was 2.5:1, up from the 1.2:1 I measured on Saturday. Not good if you're only running 8 watts to the antenna.

I made four QSO's on Sunday. I was able to work K2DRH on 3456. Then I sat and tuned around and listened, alternating with CQ's. I didn't make another QSO for 2 1/2 hours. Either the conditions or activity was nonexistent during this time. I only heard two stations, who I'd already worked.? By that time I was cold, wet and tired, so I called it quits at 1900Z on Sunday. As I took the antennas down, it started raining/icing on me. I heard there was some aurora later, after I left. That figures.

I hope some people who operated Single-Op portable in warmer climes had a better time of it.

I ended up with about half the number of QSO's I made in the 2011 January contest and one-third the score. I was hoping W9ZIH would show up and we would be able to work on 10 GHz. I never heard him. I did hear quite a few other stations I'd like to have worked, but they never heard me. One of the things you get used to as a QRP portable. I guess now it's time to fix the broken equipment and get ready for the next one.

73, Zack W9SZ

Lightning, Grounding, and RFI/Noise Solutions And Practices For Communications Sites

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This is an 8 Page Article posted on the Internet with a lot of good points, following just a few excerpts:

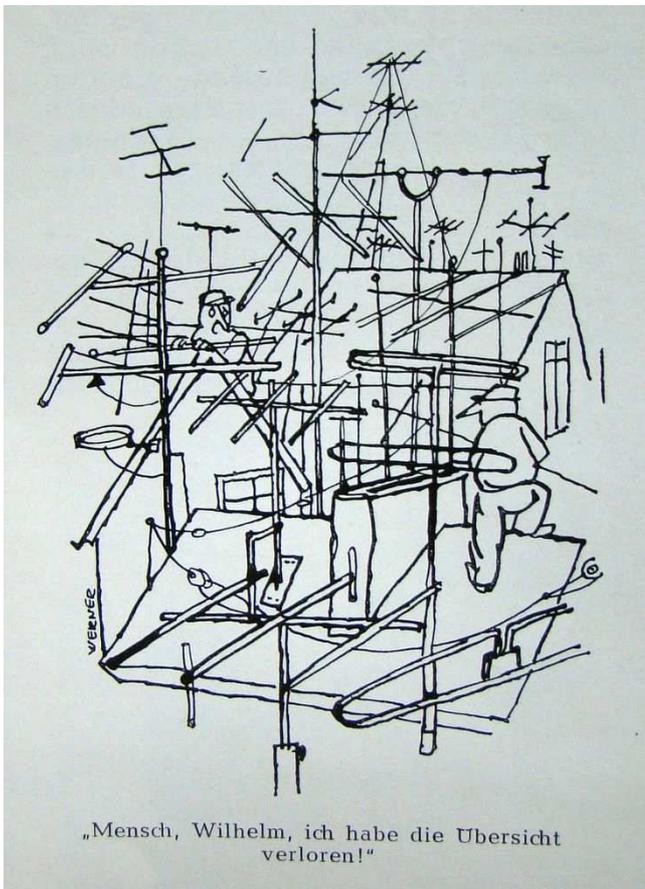
Keeping Lightning, Noise And RFI Out Of The Shack

So, if you can't get everything (or even anything) to ground potential, how do you prevent damage from occurring during a lightning strike? Well, there is a way, and that is simply to ensure that **during a lightning strike, when everything is raised above ground potential, everything in the shack rises to the same potential, and at the same time.** This is your goal. To ensure that when a strike occurs, that there are **no significant differences in potential** that can cause components in your shack to "talk to each other." If you take nothing else away from this essay, this is the principle that you should remember.

And Another Comment

Strike Energy

The reality is that much, even most of the energy in a lightning strike is in the form of radio frequency alternating current. Because of the waveform of the lightning impulse, the spectral peak in most strikes happens to occur at about 150 kilohertz and the spectral distribution slowly tails off to about 150 megahertz. The result is that a significant portion of the energy in a lightning strike will travel down the outside of the conductor through the well-known "skin effect" (this is why people who are struck by lightning are far more likely to survive if they are wet when they are hit, than if they are dry - the bulk of the energy passes through the moisture on their skin rather than through their body).



Gosh, Wilhelm, I lost track.



“How do I know which battery has lost its 'lectricity? They both feel the same.”



VOLCAN IRAZU LOS ARRAYANES

Pictures: Top, right clockwise: The top, ca 11,000 ft+, is often above or in the clouds. I counted ca 25 towers, most with quite a number of antennas on it. The big tower on the lower right is from a main TV station. We are driving towards it. The dark shadow sticking out from the top is from Keko's portable 6m-beam strapped to the roof of his vehicle.



In the cloud! Hi.



To the Mountain Top

Part two

By Gerd, WB8IFM

We arrived at the park just at the time of closing, 3:30, and there were two park rangers standing there at the gate ready to lock it up. Keko started talking to them. Although, we had tried to learn some Spanish before our trip, we couldn't understand a word. If you think some people in this country, often on radio or TV, talk fast, that is nothing compared to the Costa Ricans. One of the rangers seemed to be a superior and that was our luck, he was agreeable to Keko's argument, gave us two temporary passes, and Keko's legitimacy as maintenance technician for a transmitting facility was acknowledged. So we were on our way, but the gate was locked behind us. Keko used to have a key for the gate, but the lock had recently been changed and he hadn't gotten around applying for a new key. But he assured us, there were a number of personnel at the site and somebody was always coming or going.

We headed for the crater parking lot, that we found, as expected, quite empty. It was bitterly cold outside and the xyl and I dressed as warm as we could. Unfortunately, I had left my winter woolen hat behind, so I had to do with one of Keko's baseball caps. Then Keko gave me a 70cm HT, just in case, and left us to drive to the transmitter sites.

We made our way, at approximately 11,000' altitude, slowly towards the rim of the volcano crater. There was a large lava field to our left and a mountainside with lush vegetation on our right. On top of this slope we could see the antennas. I counted about 5. It seemed like the wind was blowing from the other side but the 200' height of the slope was protecting us. It was cold but the wind was minor.

However, as we got closer to the rim, the wind picked up and got fierce. I estimated a velocity of maybe 50 to 60 mph. It definitely convinced me to take no chances. When Keko asked later: Did you get a picture of the crater, I said yes, but I was not so sure, because when I took the picture, I was more concerned keeping my foothold than getting the crater with

its green lake into the picture. I tried to find another position along the rim but soon gave up and we made our way slowly back to the parking lot about 1/2 mile away.

I got on the HT and told Keko, we were back at the parking lot and he said, he was just about done and would be on the way shortly. Soon he appeared and we were so glad to retreat to the inside of his car, to get out of the cold. He told us there had been a power outage and a power company truck was on the way and we might find the gate open. Sure enough when we got to the gate there was a truck on the other side, but it drove away in front of our eyes, and the gate was locked. Of course, they were assuming we had a key.

Keko had checked the repeater and found that it was not working. So we had two reasons to head back to the antenna site: it would give him a chance to see what was wrong, and we could get a closer look at the site. The road to the antenna sites was not nearly as good as the road to the crater, but we were by then seasoned "cratered road" veterans. It was amazing to see the accumulation of antenna towers. Most of them had multiple antennas, verticals but also many directionals including lots of smaller dishes. Keko told us there was so much HF in the air his key entry to the car wasn't working properly. He went to check their equipment housed in a small concrete building while we were waiting in the car. Since we were pretty much at the end of the antenna farm we could get a good picture through the windshield. I took a few pictures and counted 20 antenna towers. That gives you an idea of the site. Assuming, that each tower may have 10 antennas on it and half of those maybe transmitters, you are talking 100 signals emanating from the site! It would be interesting to lug a spectrum analyzer up there and get some measurements.

Keko tried another power supply and measured the proper output voltage, but after connecting to the repeater that voltage dropped to two volts, indicating some kind of a short. Fortunately the club was keeping a few spare power supplies at the site and in a little bit all was working fine, repeater and beacon.

Now we were heading back to the gate and with each turn in the road we got more anxious. Would we be locked inside the park for the night?

Personnel at the site had told Keko, that there were several people coming and leaving. Holy cow, when we got to the gate, the gate was open and there were two cars on the way in or out. So we slipped out and everybody gave a sigh of relief. Keko's spirit was revived and we immediately took an unplanned turn into another back road which would lead us to the Atlantic side of the mountain. There Keko showed us a field where they sometimes set up a station when they want to work better into Europe and Africa. Unfortunately, clouds had moved in and visibility towards the East and NE was zero.

Soon we were back on the main road, which is kept in good condition on account of the National Park and the many tour buses that come and visit. Soon we encountered fog. We were inside the clouds that you see from the valley engulfing the mountaintop. But in no time we were penetrating the bottom of the clouds and all was sunshine again. It was getting close to sunset and the illumination was just right for good pictures. Keko, himself a good photographer, didn't mind brief stops to get a better shot, in fact, if the scene was on the driver's side, I would hand him the camera and he would take the shot.

A Columbian crew was scheduled to be active on a mountain from 6 to 7 PM and although it was only just after 5 Keko got on the air with his mobile vertical, calling CQ. It was amazing to observe his enthusiasm and persistence. There is always this chance, someone might be there to answer. At one point we heard a signal but it was "in the mud".

Soon we were back in the valley. Keko ceased calling, also he had to concentrate on the increasing traffic, and I got my last picture of a sunset with the sun trying to penetrate some clouds and a mountain range either side of the sun. It really was the last picture I took. We had to get up 4AM the next day to catch our flight back to the US.

MVUS Roster 2011

CALL	FNAME	LNAME	STREET	CITY	ST	ZIP	PHONE	DUES	N.L.	Email
WD0BWQ	David E.	Brandon	301 S. Hackett Rd.	Waterloo	IA	50701-1661	319-292-8724	5/1/2012		Brandondavide@mcksi.com
W0EKZ	Robert	Maxton	1262 E.90th Ave N.	Belle Plaine	KS	67013	316-488-3801	12/1/200		
AB0HP	Larry	Ballen	31993 Knollwood	Macon	MO	63552	660-395-4956	6/1/2009		
WB0SCD	Jim	Brude	31 Quayl Brace Ct.	Amelia	OH	45102	513-753-5183	6/1/2008		wb0scd@amsat.org
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VE3GYQ	David B	Toth	13233 Sarka Rd	Spencerville	OH	45887	419-235-6991	6/1/2010		
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WA8RJF	Anthony L	Emanuele	7156 Kory Court	Concord	OH	44077-2221	440-357-1356	12/1/201		
W8RKO	Mike	Suhar	1108 E.Rahn Rd.	Dayton	OH	45429-6110	937-433-4332	12/1/201		W8RKO@ARRL.net
KD8SI	Leo	Schaaf	2648 Aragon Av N.	Kettering	OH	45420	937-294-8425	6/1/2013		
KB8SRQ	Jon	Thuermer	1976 Burnham Ln.	Kettering	OH	45429	937-298-3199	10/1/200		
K8TKQ	Bob	Mathews	73 Landrum Rd.	Bainbridge	OH	45612		6/1/2010		k8tqk@qsl.net
KB8U	Russell	Dwarshuis	427 Barber Av	Ann Arbor	MI	48103-2721		8/1/2010		
K8UD	Steven S.	Coy	705 Watervliet Ave	Dayton	OH	45420	937-426-6085	12/1/201		k8ud@arri.net
W8ULC	Red	Dakin	4519 N Rt 123	Franklin	OH	45005	937-704-0835	12/1/201		RedW8ULC@Clearwire.net
N8UR	John	Ackerman	1380 Holly Brook Rd	Snellville	GA	30078	770-978-3332	6/1/2008		n8ur@tapr.org
N8UVM	Robert	Peoples Jr.	8300 W Bailey Rd.	Millfield	OH	45761	740-596-2364	12/1/201		N8UVM@AMSAT.org
KB8VAO	Steve	Gocala	4232 Tippecanoe Rd	Youngstown	OH	44511		6/1/2011		KB8VAO@AMSAT.org
KC8VEB	Bruce	Lerner	734 Suntree Dr	Westerville	OH	43081	614-985-4818	1/6/2014		bdl7431@sbcglobal.net
N8VES	Sam	Anderson	2143 Otello Ave	Dayton	OH	45414-4513	937-278-1029	12/1/201		N8VES@yahoo.com
WB8VSU	James	Bacher	5849 Terrace Park Dr	Dayton	OH	45429-6049	937-865-2020	6/1/2011		WB8VSU@ARRL.net
N8VZW	John	Human	4080 Danern Dr.	Beavercreek	OH	45430	937-429-0234	6/1/2008		jbhuman@fuse.net
WA8WZG	Tom	Whitted EN81OM	4641 Port Clinton E	Port Clinton	OH	43452-3805	419-732-2168	12/1/201		wa8wzg@wa8wzg.com
K8YMI	Bob	Halley	114 Red Bird Lane	Terrace Park	OH	45174		8/1/2012		
WB8YOB	Alan L	Smith	6303 King Arthur	Swartz Creek	MI	48473		2/1/2012		
N8ZM	Thomas	Holmes	1055 Wilderness Bluff	Tipp City	OH	45371	937-667-5990	6/1/2014		THolmes@woh.rr.com
KB8ZR	Mark	Tessneer	2970 Indian Ripple	Beavercreek	OH	45440-3641	937-426-1355	12/1/200		kb8zr@amsat.org
KA8ZSB	John	Hepner	9500 Huffman Rd.	Farmersville	OH	45325-9225	937-835-3149	12/1/201		HepnerJ@core.com
K9ATR	Milton	Gibson	5707 S Bridgeton Ln	South Bend	IN	46614	574-291-0886	12/1/201		MeGibso@comcast.net
K9AYA	Bill	Eaton	1600 Boyle Rd.	Hamilton	OH	45013-1066	513-893-0933	8/1/2011		bill@rp-l.com
K9EA	Dan	Michnay	9406 Notestine Rd	Ft Wayne	IN	46835-9449		3/1/2013		K9EA@arri.net
WG9F	Rod	Owen	13809 Schwippis Rd	Milan	IN	47031	812-623-3072	12/1/200		roderick.owen@ae.ge.com
W9FT	Ron	Henselman	1409 N.11th Ave	Melrose Park	IL	60160-3523	708-345-6981	12/1/201		
W9NBS	Tom	Stauffer	961 Silvercreek Dr.	Centerville	OH	45458	937-435-1870	12/1/201		
W9SNR	Jim	Mitzlaff	1727 N.Chestnut	Arlington Hgts	IL	60004-3703	847-506-0805	12/1/201		W9SNR@arri.net
W9SZ	Zack	Widup	1003 E Washington	Urbana	IL	61801	217-384-2288	6/1/2012		W9SZ.Zack@gmail.com
W9XA	Kermit	Carlson	1150 McKee	Batavia	IL	60510	630-879-0983	12/1/201		
DB6NT	Michael	Kuhne	Birkenweg 15	D-95119	GERMANY		---9288-8232	12/1/201		Michael.6nt@Kuhne-Electroni
7L3DNX	Takumi	Takeo	3-7-3-504-Simosinjo	Nakahara-ku	21	1-0042Japn	81-44-751-07	6/1/2010		naf01266@nifty.com