



DELARA



Delaware Amateur Radio Association Newsletter

August 2010

Volume 29, Number 8

DELARA Meetings

- 3rd Wednesday of every month
- Tri-Twp. Fire Dept.
- 7:30 PM

DELARA On the Air

- Monday evening net
- 145.17 repeater
- 8 PM Call K8ES
- Volunteer for Net Control!

DELARA Officers

- President:
Tim Trombley K8TAT
- Vice President:
Joe Papworth K8MP
- Sec/Treas:
Ken Bird W8SMK

In This Issue

- Camo Ham!
- The Band's Open

The Calendar.

- Aug 18 DELARA

This Month's Meeting:

The August meeting will feature a visit by the ARRL's Ohio Section Manager, Frank Piper, KI8GW. Come and listen to Frank's perspective on League and Section happenings.



The Prez Sez:

Tim K8TAT



WOW! Almost half way thru August, and before you know it summer will be over, so I hope everyone has their summer projects completed or near completion because before we know it fall will be here, which means grass mowing will be over soon and leaf raking will begin for others.

I really haven't done any outside radio projects this summer, but I helped out with an Eagle Scout project over the past month with Nathan (my son) which seemed to have more planning hours involved than actual manual working hours, but that's the nature of the beast. His project was done over at the Ohio Wildlife Center on Cook Rd. in Powell. It involved construction of (2) decomposition bins, completely enclosed and protected from the non-caged wildlife critters wandering about the place.

They had one, which was not that big and with 3 sides and no front or lids to protect the critters from what was put in there. The project was to design, plan and construct these per what was wanted.

Nathan worked on the design concept first, with some input from the wildlife personnel, info from the internet and help from dad. After the sketches were completed I finalized the sketches into a working drawing on AutoCad, so he could get the design plan approved. Part of the planning was to solicit a donation or 2 from businesses, also from whomever wanted to donate and needed a tax deduction. If you need one, donations will be gladly accepted because what he didn't get through donations mom and dad have footed the bill for now.

Next the materials were bought. Some were salvaged from a building dumpster and our barn, and were recycled into new use on these bins.

Then the construction began over 2 weekends. Nathan and scout volunteers constructed the bins. First the roof panels, and then the main frame, which has (6) 4x4 posts, 2x6 & 2x4 framing, all covering a chicken wire mesh attached to the post. The roof panels are hinged to allow access, and sliding front door panels were added for access and security of its contents.

Now the bins are constructed, and Wildlife personnel sign off on the project is near. I would say that this project has opened our eyes to what it means to be part of the over all Eagle Scout project experience.

Well that's it for now, see you all at the meeting
73,
Tim - K8TAT



Howdy, from Joe's Place...

"A Band-Opening is a Terrible Thing to Waste"

Those who frequent six and ten meters know that 2010 has been a great sporadic E-skip season. If you fall into that category, you can skip to the next article. If you don't, read on...

I can't speak experientially about six meters but I believe sporadic-E openings there are fairly similar in timing, distance, and direction to ten. From what I have read, sporadic-E propagation is the result of random areas of high ionization in the E-layer of the ionosphere. Scientists refer to these areas as "clouds." They also say that a very strong "cloud" can support propagation up to 250 Mhz. There appears to be no relationship between a good E-skip season and the eleven-year solar cycle. (A feature of sporadic-E that I wish more HF ops would pick up on)

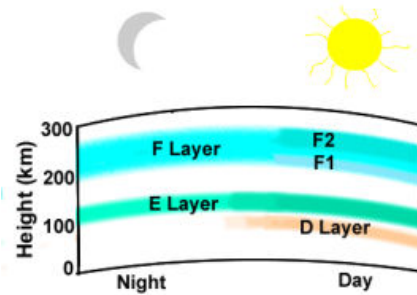
As you might presume from its name, Sporadic-E is not a highly predictable means of radio wave propagation. It can change quickly. Paths can open and close within a few minutes. However, my experience is that they usually last long enough to have a decent rag chew and sometimes for hours.

The most likely time of year for reliable sporadic-E is a month or two before and after the summer solstice. (Hmmm...Does "Reliable Sporadic-E" qualify as an oxymoron?) Anyway, a summer peak is understandable, since the sun's rays are at their strongest at that time. But interestingly, a second peak, shorter and weaker, occurs around the winter solstice.

Before continuing, I should give a quick refresher on the "layers" of the ionosphere. As you can see in the graphic, the E-layer is rather low in the atmosphere. Typical single-hop distances are similar to what you might see on 40 meters during the day. However, multiple sporadic-E hops often combine to allow propagation over much greater distances.

The much higher F1 and F2 layers enable signals to propagate much farther but are not part of this discussion. However, if Cycle 24 ever gets off the ground (no pun intended), they could be a hot topic for a future article on 10-meter propagation.

I'm now wishing I had written this two months ago so you could have taken advantage of the E-skip season. It's not over, but it's certainly on the decline.



If you want to get in on the action, a good way to see if the band is open is to listen for the beacons between 28.200 and 28.300. (The six-meter guys in the club can tell you where to look for the beacons on that band).

Beacons are automated stations that Hams put on the air, usually at their home QTH. The beacon will give its call, usually its location, and sometimes its power and antenna. Most run QRP to a vertical, so if you can hear them, you know there is a good opening. NOTE: The beacons use slow CW, so you'll have to be able to copy code to get the info.

Many times, I could not hear any SSB or CW QSO's taking place but a quick check for beacons told me the band was open. After I had copied the beacon's location, I knew where to point my yagi for the best chances of scaring up a QSO.

Over the summer, I could hear beacons just about every day. The frustrating part was that not many "real people" took advantage of the band opening. (Maybe I should have pressed "0" to speak to an operator)

Even some very experienced Hams are unaware of the sporadic-E propagation. One morning, I could hear 10-meter beacons from Minnesota and Manitoba, amongst others from that general direction. I persuaded one of my 40-meter CW pals (He lives in north-west Iowa) to QSY to 10 to give it a try. We had 599 signals at both ends. Because sun spots have been about non-existent, he thought it was some sort of miraculous propagation. I told him it was no miracle and suggested that he should check 10 more often.

FYI: There is one local 10-meter beacon that I'm aware of. It's on 28.207 and the proprietor is W8NGA. It runs 5 watts to a vertical and is usually 559 at my place with the yagi aimed south.

Well, I guess that's about it for this month. Don't forget The Ohio QSO Party is on August 28th, noon to midnight. Make some contacts and help Delara win another plaque. Check <http://www.ohqp.org/> or feel free to ask me for the details.

Hope to see you all in September, at Joe's Place.

Operating events

- ARRL Rookie Roundup
1800z 8/15 – 2359z 8/15
- North American QSO Party
1800z 8/21 – 0600z 8/22
- **OHIO QSO PARTY**
1600z 8/28 – 0400z 8/29
(Noon – Midnight local)
- **OHIO STATE PARKS ON THE AIR**
1600z 9/11 – 2400z 9/11
(Noon – 8PM local)

Contribute!

We need your articles, comments and ads!

Newsletter@k8es.org

Contact Us

clubinfo@k8es.org

elmer@k8es.org

<http://www.k8es.org>



ARES Happenings

Don KB8SIA

Have you gone wireless this year? I guess the whole concept got started a few years from what I read somewhere. The news went something like this...

After having dug to a depth of 10 feet last year, New York scientists found traces of a copper-wire system dating back 100 years, and they came to the conclusion that their ancestors already had a telephone network more than 100 years ago. Not to be outdone by New Yorkers, in the weeks that followed, California scientists dug to a depth of 20 feet, and shortly after, headlines in the LA Times newspaper read: 'California archaeologists have found traces of 200 year old copper-wire system and have concluded that their ancestors already had an advanced high-tech communications network a hundred years earlier than the New Yorkers.' One week later, 'The Redneck Rebel Gazette' in Alabama, reported the following: After digging as deep as 30 feet in a corn field, Bubba Ray Compton, a self-taught archaeologist, reported that he found absolutely nothing. Bubba has therefore concluded that 300 ago, Alabama had already gone wireless. It sounds like a joke has been played to the media.

Well....Today 8-4-2010 was a severe weather day for the Delaware area. Stan, N8BHL, arriving much earlier than me opened the ARES radio at the EOC and checked into the weather service net on 146.760. There was a lot of activity in Delaware County tied to the severe weather we experienced today. Extra personal were called in to handle the number of calls coming into the 911 center.

We introduced another log in addition to the regular sign in log. It is a separate notebook labeled ARES SKYWARN LOG and is to be used anytime our severe weather volunteers are in session at the EOC. To those volunteers please use it. Instructions are on the first page of the note book thanks to Gary's, K8EHB, effort. Thanks much Gary. Great work.

The ARES / OHIO SECTION conference will be held on October 16, 2010 at the Educational Service Center in Columbus, Ohio from 8:45 AM to 4:15 PM. It is a conference that I will be attending and if any DELARA or ARES member wishes to ride along give me a call or e mail me. I'll be able to accommodate 4 persons.

Don't forget to keep the date of October 14th open. It will be our first ARES meeting of the new season at the American Red Cross facility 380 Hills Miller Rd. Delaware We are always interested in increasing our membership so if you feel your need to put something back into the community this can be your chance to do so. We are a no dues organization and hold our meetings semi-monthly starting in February. If you have any questions please contact us at n8ys@arrl.net or kb8sia@juno.com

One more item before closing....Don't forget to sign up for the 25th **Annual All Horse Parade** on Sunday September 12, 2010. Call Linda, **N8FES** at 740-363-7078 to get on the roster.

That is it from this keyboard this month. Talk at you next month. Have a great summer.

20 / 10 Years Ago in DELARA

August, 1990: [Sorry, file was not readable.]

August, 2000: Dale, W8KTQ, followed up the successful tour of the FAA tower with radio information for listening, including a list of air traffic frequencies and their use.



Don't forget the Third Annual Ohio State Parks On The Air Contest to be held on **Saturday, September 11, 2010**, from the hours of noon to eight p.m. EDT (1600Z to 2400Z).

For hams throughout the State of Ohio this contest presents an opportunity to visit and enjoy the amenities offered by the seventy-four beautiful State Parks here in Ohio. You can spend the day or even spend the weekend at the park of your choice. No matter whether you are camping or staying at one of the outstanding lodges or resorts you will find that the parks are one of Ohio's greatest assets.

Find out more about the parks and all that they have to offer at <http://tinyurl.com/5ucyxg>. For information on the DELARA efforts, contact N9AUG.



Bob's Traveling Treasure Trove

Bob W8ERD

Alas, Bob will be away for the August meeting- but he has packed a box of magic for us just the same! Be in attendance at the gathering, and see if your heart's desired item is delivered.

The Horse Parade

Sunday, September 12, 2010 marks the date of the 25th All Horse Parade. As in the past years, it will be held at 3:00 and along the same route. The committee has been hard at work to make this an awesome celebration. Let me know if you are interested in participating by calling me at 740-363-7078, Please leave a message if you get my answering machine. Thanks, Linda N8FES [See special event note pg 8](#)

ARES Weather Coverage

When it's going to hit the fan ARES members will be ready - and will be helping the county stay at the ready. Don, KB8SIA, and EMA Director Brian Galligher, KD8OAD, have agreed that scheduled ARES members will report to the county Emergency Operations Center when it appears likely that severe weather will affect Delaware County. The ARES members will check into the 146.76 Severe Weather Net, and keep EMA and Delcomm (911 Center) appraised of the storm's direct threat to the county. That also puts us in position to be 'manned and ready' should further ARES communications be needed involving all ARES members.

On tap are operators Don, KB8SIA, Stan, N8BHL, Gary, K8EHB, Vicki, W8VES, Joe, K8MP, Craig, W8CR, and Larry, KD8FYI.

We encourage ALL amateurs: listen to the .76 weather net and check in with your severe weather reports! Your information is valuable. Further ARES activity could take place on the 145.29 repeater, so be prepared on the chance we're needed.





This is the story of building an Amateur Radio emergency and public service communications station out of an aging travel Trailer. Work on Canned Ham continues, with Chief Engineer Tim, K8TBN, doing an excellent job. Good thing 'cause I don't have the skills!



We have installed the operating counter; air conditioning and carpet are ready. During a 'road trip' KE8EMR and W8RXX supplied cabinets and 144/440 base station antennas! I'm still looking for some 1/4-wave 2 meter permanent mount antennas. We're a work in progress- hoping to be ready for the radio activity in the parks September 11. Stay tuned!

But we're not the only operators to be engaged in the sport of old travel trailers!! Those of you at Field Day will remember with awe and appreciation... "CAMO HAM"

Whiskey Eight Camo Radio or A Fool and his Money Equals Yard Junk or Canned Ham Causes Indigestion

The quest

Ever since that fateful meeting of DELARA back in April where Larry, N9AUG, volunteered me to be a station manager for upcoming Field Day, I was a bit apprehensive (and overwhelmed). "So much to do.," "I've never done this before.," "Where do I start?" "AAAAAHHHHHH!!!!!!". Time to panic!

Calm down, deep breaths...

I guess the first thing to do was to compile a list of equipment and supplies: radio, headphones, generator, laptop, Red Bull, Snickers, shelter, etc.

"Radio and headphones? Check".

"Generator? Check".

"Laptop? Check",

"Munchies and go-go juice? Check"

"Shelter?" (silence). "SHELTER????!!!", (still more silence) "Popup camper, tent, leaky tarp and a card table? Anything?" Nutt'n. I'm hosed.

I asked a neighbor if I could borrow his camper. "I'll take care of it, honest. Just a bunch of sweaty guys with heavy fire prone radios and maybe some mud on the floor mixed with potato chips and spilled coffee".

Not sure why he turned me down.

I did have access to a tent but I really didn't want to go down that path unless that was my last option. Just the thought of my precious Yaesu FT1000MP MKV lying upside down in a mud puddle after the obligatory thunderstorm that always seems to accompany our Field Days blows through. And, I wanted air conditioning, if at all possible.

I started scoping out Craig's List (catchy name) for used campers. Looking for a cheap popup that won't take up much yard space should do the trick. For some reason the words "cheap" and "popup camper" don't coexist readily. There are plenty of large campers listed: no title, rotting tires, floor removed (not flooring, the floor - you can see the driveway!) in my price range. Pass. Down to 30 days until "CQ Field Day, Kilo Eight Echo Sierra". I guess a tent it is.

The used camper and ham radio gods must have taken pity on me. Driving down a side road, taking a shortcut to Kroger's, I saw it. My heart went pitter-patter, shortness of breath, light headed (I really have to get my cardio checked): the camper of my dreams!

Unfortunately, my wife, Julie was riding with me. I tried not to stare too hard and snap my neck around (similar auto-response one experiences when spotting a bikini clad hottie sunbathing). I nonchalantly commented, "That camper would be perfect for Field Day". Expecting the typical "You have got to be %@#%&* kidding me?!" response, I braced the steering wheel fearing the worse. She replied "You want to stop and take a look?"



Nearly swerved off the road. Didn't expect that one. "Who are you and where is my wife?" I'll never figure women out. I guess that's why I love her.

Anyway, I digress. I did eventually stop back and took a closer look. Seemed pretty solid, smells like old cigarettes and mice urine. Surprise! It's full of Winston butts and Mickey poop. Frankly, pretty nasty, but solid. Being a 1964 vintage, it's in pretty good shape. No obvious signs of leaks (FACT: all campers leak. Just a matter of where and how much damage done).

The Camo paint job was my style. It also hid a lot of dings and dents and was easy to touch up. I could tell it used to be a nice aquamarine and white. Must have been quite a looker on the dealer lot when LBJ was in office.

It's not like I was picking out a cozy camper to take my lovely bride on a second honeymoon in the Rockies. I did see a diamond (or maybe cubic zirconium) in the rough, though. And I was running out of time. Paid cash, drug it home. Break out the shop vac and bleach.



Convenient ashtray



General grossness

Much to do

My first plan was to simply gut the beast and slap up new paneling. But as she (yes, it's a she) was cleaning up, I started seeing the original quaintness that these little campers are so famous for. The original pale yellow porcelain sink and propane stove cleaned up nicely. The faucet pump even worked! Plenty of storage, the cushions seemed in good shape, just needs a little TLC. Kinda like the pitiful little Christmas tree Charlie Brown brought to the Christmas Pageant. The interior dimensions is about 11' x 7' (minus cabinet space). Just about right.

The plan was coming together. I didn't want to alter the interior too much that would prevent any future restoration but I did need to make some modifications for FD. And Lord knows what I would find if I started pulling things apart (no news is good news).

I removed the dropdown table and replaced it with a 4' x 4', 3/4" operating table (that's 16 sq ft of operating surface). I removed the lid to one of the front storage cabinets (that is normally used as a bench/bed for the kitchenette) and drilled a 4" access whole through the floor to run power, ground line and coax. All wiring will be routed through that bench, keeping things nice and neat. There is also plenty of room for future battery storage for an AC inverter (next year). I added an extra breaker to the little breaker panel and another duplex outlet.

Fortunately, I had a spare window air conditioner that, with minor modifications, fit one of the existing windows perfectly. SWEET! Craig's List came to the rescue, locating a simple (and cheap) dorm refrigerator that filled a

space under the stove where I suspect an old propane fridge was once located. I also had a small microwave that also perfectly fit into one of the cabinets by the sink.



The Throne

The only thing remaining that would convert this tin can into the ultimate Field Day machine was a powder room. Believe it or not, there was a closet that, with some imagination and motivation, fit perfectly a portable chemical toilet. Tight, but functional – all is well (I must install a vent fan for next year, believe you me!). Installed a stereo and speakers in the overhead cabinets (gotta have tunes during setup). I routed the speakers to the roof during FD so passersby could hear the exchanges. Toaster, coffeemaker and a HDTV, we're good!

Two days until liftoff I decided to test the running lights. Soon found they had three modes of operation: Flicker, Dim and Off. The sockets were rather badly corroded. I quickly installed new taillights with harness on the rear bumper. I would like to repair the original lights but the wire is ran through the walls with no easy access short of cutting through the paneling (a project for another day).

Fearing that peeling the old wallpaper off would structurally weaken the ol' girl, I opted to do a quick and dirty with wood grain tack paper to spruce things up. Funny thing, when that vinyl contact paper heats up in the sun, it shrinks like shrink wrap. Couple of well placed staples delays the inevitable wrinkling and curling. Next year she should have a bit more permanent wall covering.



Cleaned up nicely, huh?



Back to reality: Converted kitchenette



16 sq ft operating table



Air conditioner and bunk

Showtime

I set up the Yaesu and accessories on the new operating table. Plenty of room for the logging computer. The logger will sit on the remaining kitchenette bench while the operator gets the luxury to a soft, leather bound office chair, that, believe it or not, I was able to squeeze through the 18" wide door. Under the air conditioner is another 6' bench perfect for nappies. Bottom line, the little critter can house 3 overweight (or 12 normal size) hams. Perfect size and, did I mention, air conditioned?

Hitched her up and down the road we go. Roll into the park to see all the little worker bees hard at work erecting massive towers and loops.

The Camo Camper has arrived to applause. Find a great spot in back that should give shade for a good part of the weekend.

The Accident

My 11 year old son, Aaron, was helping set her up later that evening. The camper was on a slight angle and he was using jacks to help stabilize and level her. He was working near the tongue with a jack. I was inside arranging equipment when all of a sudden the camper shifted, dropped off the wood block the tongue jack was resting on. I heard Aaron yelp in pain. I jumped out to see him lying on his back, in obvious misery holding his arm. It looked (and was) broken. He hurt bad. It appears the trailer shifted and his arm slipped under the tongue as it was falling. So lucky he didn't get pinned.

Scramble to shut down the generator, lock up the camper and rush off to Grady. Spent hours in the ER getting him patched up and home in bed. Poor kid.

Lessons learned: block all wheels, improved the tongue jack (don't rely on a wood block), stay out of the camper while leveling, pick a level surface, if possible.

Once back at the site, I set the camper back up. Continued setting up the equipment and try to get a few hours of shuteye.

Wrap-up

The Camo Camper did good. Several improvements for next year (I hope we're invited back). A sun screen/tarp to help reflect the summer sun off the metal. Even with the AC cranking, it would warm up a bit. Maybe window shades could help.

I would like to install the AC inverter and batteries for off grid capability. Dedicated plug strip for the equipment. I also would like to pass bulkhead UHF connectors through the exterior wall for easy coax hookup. Maybe install permanent leveling jacks on all four corners.

One shortcoming is there is no room for the generator. I was toying with the idea of mounting a hitch on the camper's bumper to pull a small utility trailer for the generator and miscellaneous supplies. I'll think about that...

Meanwhile, I enjoyed operating out of it so much, I left my gear in it and set up the camper in the back yard. It's now my summer radio shack. Sure beats a dark, damp basement.

Late at night, when the crickets and frogs are at full cacophony, you can hear, faintly, as if someone is talking inside a tin can, a hollow: "CQ, CQ, CQ from Whiskey Eight Camo Radio, over".

E. Craig Miller, W8CR, first licensed in 1974 as WN8TLC/WB8TLC.



Aaron's cast makes a deadly weapon

CQ Special Event de K8H:

DELARA will be operating a Special Event station this year under the callsign of K8H. The special event is in recognition of the All-Horse Parade which is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. The special event will start 00:00z on 09/11 and run through 23:59z on 09/12. DELARA members who are interested can operate in the event from their home stations using the special event callsign K8H. By operating the event from our home QTH it will allow more operating time, and will allow us to cover more bands / mode at the same time. The only thing we must coordinate is to make sure we don't have two stations on the same band / mode at the same time. The event will operate around the clock to give our night owls and early birds time to participant as well. More information will be provided at this months DELARA meeting.

If you're interested please send me an e-mail

- Gary, K8EHB