

# The Ragchewer

October 2007

The monthly newsletter of the  
Lancaster & Fairfield  
County Amateur Radio Club

On the Web: [www.k8qik.org](http://www.k8qik.org)

Send email to [K8QIK@columbus.rr.com](mailto:K8QIK@columbus.rr.com)

## **Club Meetings :**

1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of every month  
at 7:30 pm at the club house.

## **Radio Night:**

Every Thursday except the  
1st Thursday at the club  
house, 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

## **VE Testing:**

The third Sunday of every  
even numbered month.  
Register at 9:30 am and  
testing at 10:00 am

## **Club House**

### **Location:**

On State Route 37 (Granville  
Pike) next to Beavers Field.

### **Nets:**

**Mondays** at 9:00 p.m.  
147.03 MHz (+.6)  
146.70 MHz (-.6) Alt. Freq.  
443.875 MHz (+5)  
**Thursday** at 8:00 p.m.  
443.875 MHz (+5)  
UHF linked system

Packet BBS 145.53MHz  
K8QIK-1 BBS  
K8QIK-2: Ohio53

### **Weather Spotter Net:**

146.76 Repeater with 123Hz  
tone Tuesday at 7:30 pm  
Alt frequency 147.24 MHz

## **October Birthdays**

Ronald Braden	W8MY Y
Raymond Webb	KB8GUN
David Harrington	W8EZE
Robert Prince	KD8EXK
Robert Ryan	KD8CBV
Richard Schleiffer	W9ZZX

## **Thursday Night Radio Night**

Radio night is every Thursday at 6:30 p.m.  
(except the first Thursday which is the club  
monthly meeting). Work a little HF, maybe  
build something? How about a hot cup of  
coffee. We'll have them all waiting for you.

## **ARRL Membership**

When you join the ARRL, or renew your  
membership through the club, we retain \$15 for  
each new membership OR lapsed membership  
(of two years or more), and we retain \$2 for  
each renewal. Please support our club, it doesn't  
cost any more. Send or give all paperwork to  
Treasurer with your money.

## **October VE Test:**

The next VE test will be Sunday October 21st  
at the club house on Route 37. Register at 9:30  
a.m. and testing begins at 10:00 a.m. Prepare  
yourself, take this test and upgrade!

## **Free Swap and Sell**

If you have anything ham radio related, you can  
swap it or sell it here. List your items for free.  
Give a price and how to contact you. Send the  
list to [K8QIK@columbus.rr.com](mailto:K8QIK@columbus.rr.com)

## **2006-2007 Officers**

### **President:**

Don Stephenson, WD8PCF

### **Vice President:**

Scott Snoke, WD8IXO

### **Treasurer:**

Ed Campbell Sr., WD8PGO

### **Secretary:**

Robert Northrup, KC8PSW

### **Trustee:**

John Hilliard, W8OF

### **Station Engineer:**

John Hilliard, W8OF

### **Net Manager:**

John Fick, KD8EEK

### **Activities Manager:**

Kay Hanna, KC8HJW

### **Public Relations:**

Allen Sellers, KB8JLG

### **Flower Fund:**

Mary Travis, KD8EEI

### **Chief Cook and Bottle**

### **Washer:**

Charlie Snoke, N8KZN

### **Editor:**

Jack Travis, AE8P  
(740) 687-1985

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## October 4, 2007 Meeting Minutes

At 7:30pm meeting called to order by President Stephenson, WD8PCF, who lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

There were 20 members present.

There were no new applications and one application was reviewed for its second reading.

### Officer Reports

#### **Secretary Report: Robert Northrup, KC8PSW**

Minutes are posted in the Ragchewer. Motion to accept by Charlie, N8KZN and second by John, W8AGS. Motion carried.

*There was a correction noted to last month's minutes regarding a motion involving replacing the fluorescent fixtures in the clubhouse and the work to be done by Charlie, N8KZN. It was reported last month that the project was on-hold due to lack of funds when in fact \$150 was approved for new fixtures and noise filters in August.*

#### **Treasurer's Report: Ed Campbell, Sr., WD8PGO.**

Ed gave the club financials. Motion to accept by Bob, KI8JM and second by John, W8OF. Motion carried.

#### **VP Report: Scott Snoke, WD8IXO**

No Report

#### **Trustee Report: John Hilliard, W8OF**

John stated all was running OK.

### Committee Reports

#### **VE Testing: Allan Sellers, KB8JLG**

Allan reported the next VE Exam is scheduled for October 21 at 10:00AM at the clubhouse. If you want to upgrade, this is a perfect time to do it so contact Allan for more details.

#### **Monday Night Net: John, KD8EEK**

Oct 8 John – W8OF  
Oct 15 John – W8AGS  
Oct 22 To Be Determined  
Oct 29 To Be Determined

#### **Ragchewer: Jack Travis, AE8P**

Jack said all is going well and is ready for the next installment of the "Chewer".

Submit your article, news item, cartoon, or other Ham related bits of trivia to Jack at k8qik@columbus.rr.com.

#### **Emergency Coordinator: Ed Campbell, WD8PGO**

Ed stated the United Way 5K run is scheduled for Nov 10<sup>th</sup> at the fairgrounds. Also there will be the annual Lancaster Holiday Parade on Nov 17<sup>th</sup>.

More info next month.

Ed also commented on the surprise drill the EMA put on recently. It was based on a prisoner overpowering a guard while the prisoner was being transported. Several club members participated and gave input on the drill.

#### **Safety: Scott Snoke, WD8IXO**

No report.

#### **Station Engineer: John Hilliard, W8OF**

John reported on 4 items that are in the works or planned. Here they are.

1. Packet radio as used in the 70s and 80s is making a comeback with the need for packet replaced by the Internet and cell phones. The EMA is looking into merging WinLink and Packet for communications via radio on the 145.54 repeater.
2. Matt Mitchell, KB8UVN will begin setting up a packet network in Columbus with our Lancaster repeater as a major node. Matt will also donate an updated PC to replace our old node controller.
3. Our 146.700 repeater was sitting in the middle of the clubhouse floor, ready to install into the new rack. Ralph, W8BVH took the rack to a local body shop and had it painted – looks real nice!! John stated it will be 2-3 more weeks until the cabinet is complete with the repeater, power supply and cavities and then hauled up to the site and placed on its new pad. The city is providing power and antenna cabling to the new unit.
4. Our 147.030 repeater blew the final power amp and power supply a few weeks ago. Presently it is providing about 10 Watts

output from the exciter stage so we still have use of it. John stated he had located 2 companies that make/build final power amps. Our used tubes were costing us about \$180 ea and new tubes about \$500 ea. One company, Hamtronics, has a unit that outputs 100W with 3W input for \$767 especially for the Ham community. The other company, TPL, builds a similar unit (150W out – 3W in) for the commercial market as well as the Ham community. Cost from this company was around \$1300.

There was good discussion about both companies and their products – both pros and cons. Tom, KB8USK made a motion to purchase one of the amps with the final decision of what amp to be decided by John, W8OF once he had final figures from TPL and compare it with the Hamtronics unit. Ed, WD8PGO stated we had just enough \$\$\$ to cover either amp, once it was decided which one to go with. It was second by Jack, AE8P. Motion carried. John asked the executive committee to give a yea/nay vote ASAP once all the numbers were in.

John also stated a crew from Southern Ohio would be at the repeater site on Saturday to help install a new antenna for our 443.835 repeater that damaged from a lightning strike.

**Activities Manager: Kay Hanna, KC8HJW**

Kay reported planning for the Christmas Party is still continuing. Our guest speaker, Pam Lemay, will speak on Preparedness. Our entertainment will be provided by Eleanor Hanna, who will perform a bell-ringing concert.

**Flower Fund: Mary Travis, WD8EEI**

Mary said there was \$16 collected and Kay, KC8HJW won \$8.

**Fund Raising: Kay Hanna – KC8HJW**

Kay said there was \$16 collected which was added to the \$14 from last month. Larry, KB8AHK won.

**Old Business:**

John, W8OF recognized Charlie, N8KZN and all the other folks who have helped feed us on Radio Nites as a job well done. All were applauded for their efforts.

Allan, KB8JLG said he went to a swap meet and picked up memory and 2 hard drives for the PCs we want to update.

Allan, KB8JLg also stated there will be a swap meet at the clubhouse this Saturday from 9AM to noon as well as a Hamfest in Massillon on October 28<sup>th</sup>. So mark your calendars.

**New Business:**

Matt Mitchell, KB8UVN was voted into membership by a show of hands.

Mark Urbine, KC8TUV will be speaking at the local Kiwanis luncheon this week in Lancaster.

Charlie, N8KZN noted we will have a steak cookout on October 25<sup>th</sup>. He was able to get a good price on steaks so let him know if you will be attending so the proper amount can be purchased.

Charlie, N8KZN and Ed, KD8EEJ did their job well as a nominating committee for 2007/2008 officers. A slate was put forth with no more than one name in each slot. John, W8OF made a motion to accept the slate as proposed. Bob, KI8JM second the motion. Motion carried.

The 2007/2008 officers who will be installed at the November meeting.

**President ----- Charlie Snoke, N8KZN**  
**Vice President---- Mark Urbine, KC8TUV**  
**Secretary ----- Mary Travis, KD8EEI**  
**Treasurer ----- Ed Campbell Sr., WD8PGO**  
**Activities Mgr ---- John Fick, KD8EEK**

Motion to adjourn was made by Bob, KI8JM and second by John, W8AGS. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:22 PM.

As a side note, it has been fun serving this club as your secretary for the past 2 ¼ years. But it is time for me to step down and let new blood take the reigns. Mary, KD8EEI will be an even better secretary for the club. Good luck Mary!!

Respectfully submitted,  
Robert Northrup, KC8PSW

## Upcoming Hamfests

**October 28<sup>th</sup>** is the Massillon Hamfest and Auction. You can get more info at <http://www.marcradio.org>

**November 10<sup>th</sup>** is the Grant Amateur Radio Club Hamfest. You can get more info at <http://www.garcohio.net>

## Tubes For Sale

If you need tubes for your boat anchor or TV contact Jeff Bell WD8JLI at 614-774-2973 or email at [jbelle@imagearray.net](mailto:jbelle@imagearray.net) he has a huge supply for most needs.

## E-mail Addresses

If you are currently receiving The Ragchewer via regular mail but have an Internet account, the Ragchewer can be sent to you and save the club some money. You'll also get your Ragchewer about a

week earlier. Send me your e-mail address and tell me to take you off the snail mail list.

If you have a new email address, be sure to also let me know. Send to [K8QIK@columbus.rr.com](mailto:K8QIK@columbus.rr.com)

## The Wayback Machine #16

by Bill Continelli, W2XOY

In our last installment, we saw how, when the FCC created the Technician class license back in 1951, their intention was to give it a separate and unique purpose. The Commission stated that the Technician class license was established expressly for serious minded experimenters who needed spectrum space in which to conduct their tests. It was not established as a communicators' service and was not to be a stepping stone between the Novice and General class licenses. The original Technician class operator only had privileges above 220 Mc. In 1955, they were given six meters and in 1959, the 145-147 Mc. segment of two meters. Getting additional frequencies for Technicians was difficult--the petitions could not mention "communications" as a reason, but rather had to show that there was a need for additional experimentation on the six and two meter bands. Because of the "experimental" nature of the license, Technicians were not allowed to become RACES stations. They also faced some discrimination by a few higher class amateurs--in fact, several proposals were made to the FCC to "punish" Technicians who used the airwaves to communicate, rather than to experiment.

In 1962, two events occurred. First, the FCC denied petitions to give Technicians the 29.5-29.7 Mc. segment of ten meters as well as full two meter privileges. In rejecting these petitions, the FCC said there was "considerable misunderstanding" about the role of the Technician class, and restated the "experimenter" policy they had issued in 1951.

Also that year, a new amateur publication hit the market- "VHF Horizons." Concentrating on six

meters and above, this magazine was full of technical articles, construction projects, contest information, and VHF news. But it was the editorial content of "VHF Horizons" that broke new ground. For the first time, an amateur magazine called for a rewrite of FCC policy. They wanted Technicians to be considered full-fledged amateurs and not just experimenters. Naturally, this caused controversy in the amateur community. Technicians who considered themselves communicators flocked to this new publication, while some higher class amateurs condemned it and restated their position that "communicating" Technicians were violating FCC policy. Unfortunately, "VHF Horizons" was not able to turn a profit, and expired after only two years.

In 1967, the FCC instituted "incentive licensing". While the actual frequency loss by Technicians was minimal--just the first 100 kc. CW segment of six meters--the FCC still struck a blow to those wishing to remove the "experimenter" status from this license. The FCC once again turned aside requests to expand Technician privileges to the full two meter band. In addition, the FCC also removed two meter voice privileges for Novices and took away the right for an amateur to simultaneously hold a Novice and Technician license. According to the Commission, too many Novices were operating two meter voice, were not increasing their code speed, and were upgrading only to Technician instead of General when their Novice license expired. Once again, the 1951 policy was restated.

However, despite the FCC's position, thousands of Technicians were on the VHF bands as communicators. With the rise of two meter FM, new

Technicians were taking to the airwaves every day, mostly with surplus wide-band commercial equipment. Recognizing that the role of this class of license had evolved, the ARRL Board of Directors met on November 1, 1969 and came to a decision. In an editorial in the December 1969 issue of "QST" entitled "Technicians as Communicators", the ARRL's new position was stated--Technicians were no longer just experimenters, but rather full fledged communicators. The ARRL proposed that they be given the full two meter band, the 29.5 to 29.7 Mc. segment of ten meters, and the ability to once again hold a Novice license simultaneously. The ARRL put these proposals before the FCC in a petition.

The FCC did not immediately respond to this petition, but rather, in 1971 issued an odd ruling in which they stated that a Technician class amateur could not use a repeater in which the input was in the Technician subband of 145-147 MHz, but the output was above 147. Nevertheless, since the repeater subband in the early 70's was 146-148 MHz and the Technician was not allowed above 147, the FCC was under pressure. On October 17, 1972, Technicians were given the 147-148 MHz segment of two meters. The FCC denied Technicians ten meters, Novices privileges, and the 144-145 MHz portion of two meters, but the door was opened.

With thousands of Technicians on two meter FM, the FCC then moved slowly towards full VHF privileges for them, realizing that the "experimenter"

designation was obsolete. In 1975, Technicians were given Novice frequency privileges. When the new repeater subband was opened at 144.5-145.5 MHz, Technician privileges were expanded to 144.5-148. The FCC also realized that Technicians could no longer be excluded from RACES operation. In 1976, the FCC eliminated the "mail order" status of the Technician exam and required applicants to show up at an FCC examination point.

Finally, in 1978, Technicians received full two meter privileges. In the eyes of the FCC, they were full-fledged amateurs. In 1987, the exam was made easier by splitting element 3--the General written exam--into 3A for Technician and 3B for General. This is why those Technicians licensed before March 1987 only have to take the 13 WPM code test to upgrade to General. Also in 1987, Technicians received sideband privileges in the 28.3 to 28.5 MHz segment of ten meters. And, in a final act of "Technician Liberation" in 1991, 40 years after the license was established, the code-free Technician was created. So, if you meet a Technician who has been licensed since the 60's, treat him or her with dignity and respect, for they have suffered and endured years of being ostracized so that today's Technicians can enjoy full VHF/UHF privileges.

In our next installment, we will look at the development of repeaters and repeater regulations. I hope you will join me.

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### Annual October Swap Meet

The swap meet was the smallest yet but we had really good weather and enjoyed the fellowship of our neighboring hams who came from Athens, Franklin, Hocking and Licking counties. I estimate there were 10 autos in the parking lot and a lot more parked in the upper area.

"Frosty", again came from Columbus, Tim

Cook came from Athens and there were 5 or 6 from Logan.

Mary, KD8EEI and Connie, N8LPC helped with food sales and we made \$15, which was put in the food fund.

Regards, Allen, KB8JLG

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### Help With Information On Member Status

Since I don't always get or read the newspaper, I need to be notified of the death of a member so flowers or a contribution to an organization can be sent from the club. Please call me at 740-687-1985 or send an email at [metravis@columbus.rr.com](mailto:metravis@columbus.rr.com).

If you are aware of a member who is sick or

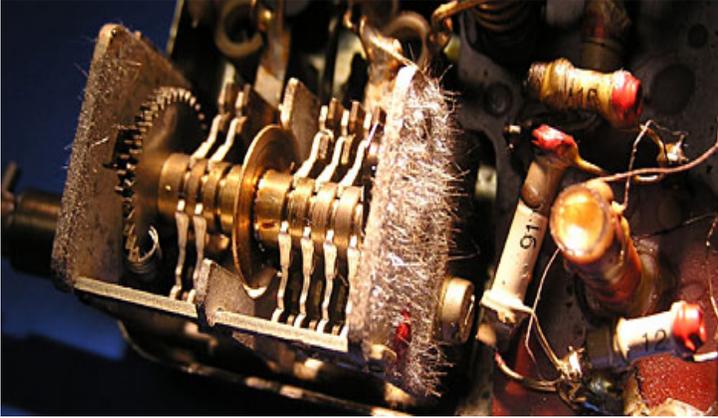
recuperating from surgery; or has been recognized for any achievement in the community, notify me so a card can be sent.

Thank you for your help.

Mary, KD8EEI

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## Tech firms: Lead needed to keep electronics reliable



By Jordan Robertson, Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — They've ruined missiles, silenced communications satellites and forced nuclear power plants to shut down. Pacemakers, consumer gadgets and even a critical part of a space shuttle have fallen victim.

The culprits? Tiny splinters — whiskers, they're called — that sprout without warning from tin solder and finishes deep inside electronics. By some estimates, the resulting short-circuits have caused as much as \$10 billion in damage since they were first noticed in the 1940s.

Now some electronics makers worry the destruction will be more widespread, and the dollar amounts more draining, as the European Union and governments around the world enact laws to eliminate the best-known defense — lead — from electronic devices.

"The EU's decision was irresponsible and not based on sound science," said Joe Smetana, a principal engineer and tin whisker expert with French telecommunications equipment maker Alcatel-Lucent SA. "We're solving a problem that isn't and creating a bunch of new ones."

Typically measuring under a millimeter long, tin whiskers look like errant strands of static-charged hair, erupting in every direction from tin-based materials like solder. Their cause is hotly debated. Other metals also grow whiskers, but not like tin.

Trouble arises when the whiskers bridge separate parts of increasingly miniaturized circuit boards. They also can flake off and interfere with sensitive optics.

While scientists debate their cause, they agree on one thing: Small amounts of lead mixed with the tin

have been remarkably effective at preventing whisker eruptions for decades.

Lead, however, is a serious health concern. In children, it can cause learning or behavioral problems and has been associated with anemia and kidney problems. In adults, exposure has been linked to high blood pressure and reproductive organ damage.

Last year, Europeans barred the toxic metal from most electronics to prevent its being incinerated or accumulating in dumps after computers and other gadgets are tossed out. Similar measures are being considered or are already in place in other countries, including Japan, China, South Korea, Argentina, Australia and the United States.

Some companies say the EU rules threaten the reliability of their products, exposing them to unknown risks and possibly threatening people's safety.

But EU officials say the regulations banning lead, cadmium, mercury and three other hazardous substances are needed to protect people and the environment.

They also note that many types of electronics are exempt from the law, including military and other national security equipment, medical devices, and servers, data storage computers and telecommunications gear that use leaded solders.

Exemptions are also granted when alternatives to the hazardous materials don't exist yet, or because the substances can't be replaced without jeopardizing safety.

Still, even some companies with exemptions say it's getting harder to buy the leaded parts. They worry about the increased risk of pure-tin parts, the culprit behind the most devastating tin-whisker-related failures.

"Over time (the failures) are just going to get worse and worse and worse," said Jim McElroy, executive director of International Electronics Manufacturing Initiative, or iNEMI, a group of big electronics makers, government agencies and other parties active in tin whisker research.

"Even if the military is exempt forever, they will be forced to convert because they can't get the components they want," he said. "And that will eventually happen across the board."

Tin whiskers have left a trail of destruction in a string of important machinery, chronicled in an extensive database of publicly disclosed failures kept

by researchers at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Md.

Last year, for example, NASA engineers testing parts for the space shuttle Endeavour discovered that millions of tin whiskers were causing an electronic box to inaccurately point the shuttle's engine, knocking the rocket's trajectory off-kilter, according to Henning Leidecker, chief engineer of the electronic parts office of NASA's Goddard and a tin whisker expert.

It turns out NASA had approved the pure-tin-coated clamps used for holding circuit boards in place back when the electronics were made in the 1980s, before NASA adopted its current rule requiring a small amount of lead in its tin coatings.

"These whiskers have the potential to destroy missions," Leidecker said.

Failures blamed on tin whiskers have run the gamut of devices and manufacturers.

In the 1980s, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration recalled some pacemakers because of a high failure rate caused by tin whiskers.

In 1998, PanAmSat Corp.'s \$250 million Galaxy IV communications satellite, which provided service to tens of millions of pagers across North America and thousands of pay-at-the-pump gas station machines, was deemed a total loss after two processors failed. The main spacecraft control processor, which governs the satellite's positioning and other functions, failed for an unknown reason, and the backup couldn't be used because tin whiskers had shorted it out a year before.

At least 10 other satellite failures have been blamed on tin whiskers, according to the NASA database.

Over the past two decades, also according to the NASA database, nuclear power plants have been temporarily shut down at least seven times after tin whiskers in the alarm system circuit boards triggered

false alarms, alerting managers to threats that didn't exist. There have been no reported injuries.

"There's a real loss of money because the plant is shut down and stays down, and it also presents a situation where workers are taught not to believe the alarms," Leidecker said. "Are you comfortable with that? I am not."

The military also isn't immune. Whisker-related malfunctions have been reported in the radar used aboard fighter jets, in the target-detection system of certain missiles, along with various unspecified problems in other parts of the U.S. military's missile programs.

Little is known about those failures, other than the part that failed and the cause. Most involve military secrets and are only known because they're revealed in technical forums by defense contractors, who incur heavy repair expenses for malfunctioning tin-whisker-infested equipment and are active in scientific circles looking for a fix that doesn't involve lead.

Tin whisker experts said the industry is working fast to come up with a lead-free solution. So far, other materials have shown to be effective in preventing tin whiskers, but not as powerfully as lead.

One promising remedy is tin-silver-copper solders, said George Galyon, a senior technical staff member at IBM Corp. However, Galyon noted that lead-free solders often require much higher temperatures, which can warp circuit boards and cause materials to degrade.

Despite the setbacks, he said the major players realize anti-lead laws give them no choice.

"It's whistling in the wind if you think we're turning this back," he said. "China's full-bent on it, the major markets are into it. The world flipped over in one fell swoop."

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## Lead-Acid Batteries

### **Source unknown**

**Listed in order of suitability to remote power use, in our humble opinion**

**Industrial forklift batteries.** These are truly top-of-the-line for a remote home, if you can afford them. Highly recommended for their longevity and resistance to abuse. Available in single 2-volt cells or trays of 3 cells (6 volts). 15-25+ year life expectancy.

**Advantages:** longest life, most resistant to deep-discharge abuse, durable metal case, inter-connect wires built-in, available in many capacities. Best value for the dollar when factored over service life.

**Disadvantages:** Very high initial cost, extremely heavy.

**Deep-cycle solar batteries (L-16s).** The most common choice for remote power systems. Originally designed for industrial floor sweepers, but very well-

suited to remote power use. 6-volt batteries. 5-6 year life expectancy.

**Advantages:** good service life, fairly resistant to occasional abuse, reasonable cost.

**Disadvantages:** not as resistant to abuse as industrial cells.

**Golf cart batteries.** Often used in small systems or as "training batteries" for flatlanders who move to the mountains. But don't expect more than 2 or 3 years from them if your system gets frequent or heavy use. 6-volt batteries. 2-3 year life expectancy.

**Advantages:** very low cost, available at many discount stores, lightweight.

**Disadvantages:** short service life, vulnerable to deep-discharge abuse.

**Solar gel cells.** Expensive, but good for certain specialized applications such as on boats, RVs, and computer backup power supplies. 6-volt batteries. 2-3 year life expectancy.

**Advantages:** maintenance-free, no hydrogen emissions, low self-discharge rate, shock-resistant, spill-proof, cold and heat resistant.

**Disadvantages:** expensive, requires special charger and regulator, vulnerable to abuse, life expectancy very short for the price.

**Telephone cells.** Manufactured with lead-calcium instead of the lead-antimony compound of normal batteries. Not really designed for remote power use, but often available at surplus/salvage for very low cost. Can give extremely long service if pampered and not abused. Keep careful track of your battery bank's state of charge with an amp-hour meter and only shallow-cycle the batteries or they will expire quickly. 2-volt cells.

**Advantages:** extremely low cost (sometimes even free), very low maintenance, can take very heavy use if not deep cycled.

**Disadvantages:** cannot be deep-cycled without damage, very heavy, usually only available used, so condition is unknown, lower voltage than leadantimony cells for charging, equalization, and metering, battery bank must have more capacity to avoid deep-cycling.

**RV/marine batteries.** Very low cost with a very short life, but better than a car battery. 12-volt battery. 6 month to 1 year life expectancy.

**Advantages:** very low cost, lightweight, available at any hardware store.

**Disadvantages:** short life, will not tolerate abuse.

**Car batteries.** Better than reading by kerosene or candle light, but will last a few months at best.

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## Is Anyone Out There?

By Danny Pease, NG9R

Tune around the bands and what do you hear? A lot of noise? Where is everyone? When was the last time you heard someone calling CQ, other than during contests? When was the last time you answered a CQ? When was the last time you called CQ? Even 75 meters during the evening is quite sparse and it sure isn't much of a problem finding a clear frequency to have a conversation on. Now I know we are at the bottom of the sunspot cycle and propagation on the higher bands is a little hit and miss, but do you just check the band with a quick twist of the knob and assume that if you don't hear anything, there is no propagation? WRONG! Try calling CQ, even on 10 meters. I think you will find there is a lot more propagation than we think. Out of the blue one day a couple of weeks ago, I was on the way home from work and I was doing my normal band hopping, just checking out activity. 40 was pretty sparse, as well as 20. 17 and 15 meters were dead. What a waste of spectrum. Wait, what is that noise? 11 meters seems to have some activity,

lets check out 10. Nothing!. I am sure the band is open on 11, so lets listen around a bit. There, a beacon on 10 meters. Up to 28.330 and CQing I go. Second call and what is that? Someone hears me and is trying to answer me! Well, we both try really hard for a few minutes and I never get the complete call, but sure enough, as I listen the rest of the way home and I hear scattered weak activity while I am still in the mobile. Nothing I can make out complete conversations while driving (S5 engine noise doesn't help), but it is apparent the band is trying to cooperate. Wait, aren't we at the bottom of the solar cycle? Well, maybe we are, but there are other modes of propagation beside the F layer. Don't assume since you don't hear anything, the band must be dead, try a CQ or 5 before you give it up. You may even surprise yourself. If we all are listening and no one is calling, how do we know whether the band is open or not? Try to log just one QSO a day and then check your log in a few months for all the new friends you have made. I am sure you will be surprised.

# Merry Christmas

Our annual Christmas party will be held



Saturday, December 15, 2007

At

Ponderosa

1732 E. Main Street

Lancaster, Ohio 43130

From 6:30pm to 9:30pm

Speaker will be Pam Delay (speaking on preparedness)



Entertainment by Eleanor Hanna (bell ringer)

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LFCARC  
P.O. Box 3  
Lancaster, OH 43130

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**K8QIK**

**October 2007**



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