

# The Tickler

## *From the Prez.....*

Happy New Year to you all!

The weather has been decent so far this year. I hope we don't get a lot of bad weather as the days go past. It is kind of nice not having to scrape the widows every morning when I get out of work.

If you missed last month's meeting, it was very informal as the tables were all set up for a Christmas party that someone must have had the day before. The tables were all lined up in the middle of the room with alternating green and red tablecloths. There weren't any tables in the board room, so we just sat out at the tables pretty tables in the main room and held both the board meeting and the regular meeting. It seemed to be a lot more casual than normal even though I wouldn't say are meetings are ever very formal. We all did have a good time however and missed those of you who did not attend.

The Hazel Park Hamfest which was held on January 15<sup>th</sup>. I hope you had a chance to attend this year. At the time I am writing this letter, I am not sure if Norm W8TTH or I went to the hamfest. If we did make it, we had already decided just to enjoy the hamfest and not set up a table and sell stuff. Norm and I have been very busy and haven't had time to get things around for the shows yet this year.

We are still taking orders for the red badges. They are going to be the standby version that the club has used for several years. Why mess with something that works? If you wish to order a badge please get your money and information to Mark NU8Z. The cost is \$10.00 per badge.

Mark NU8Z is stepping in and helping with The Tickler this month as Ted K8AQM is off playing radio on Christmas Island. Thank you Ted for getting everything around for Mark and thank you Mark making the newsletter happen this month.

Don't forget to check out the website at [www.w8tqe.com](http://www.w8tqe.com) and get any new information and pictures to Bob K2IBM. He is our web master and we need to support him and the club by sharing he keeps up the website. Also, don't forget our newsletter editor, Ted K8AQM. He also needs our support. Get him some articles and pictures too. Without these two we wouldn't know what was going on with the club. They do a great job.

The meeting will be on January 30<sup>th</sup>. Hope to see you all there.

73,  
Ginny W8TTX

**Track the guys on the Christmas Island DXpedition (T32) on the web site:**

<http://www.t32kiritimati2012.com>

## New Bug and New Key



The restorations of old keys and bugs continues at K8AQM. On the left is a recent Ebay purchase of a 1936 "Hole-in-the-Wall bug" (so named because of the unusual structure of the main support of the lever) built by TR MacElroy, the champion of high speed cw. The top picture was the picture presented on Ebay; the base was gray and the parts corroded with age.

MacElroy never made a gray based bug like this. Rather than remove the gray paint someone had done, I decided to over-spray the base with black satin Rustoleum; so the first steps were to dismantle the bug, and carefully tape the name plate. The painting went well and now no trace of gray can be seen.

The parts of most bugs are machined brass and then nickel plated. In many cases the nickel is often worn away and the best procedure is to have the parts rigorously buffed thus removing the nickel and exposing the beautiful brass. This bug had only a few parts severely worn so it was decided to leave the nickel just polished to a shine with only a few parts showing brass. The re-assembly of the bug went well and the results are a beautifully refurbished and functioning 1936 "Hole-in-the Wall" bug.

The photo in the lower right hand corner is a refurbished 1926 Western Electric telegraph key. KG8CO gave me this old key he had acquired at a auction (cheap). The base was original and only needed some Formby's polish to bring back the luster to the wood and a bit of brass polishing makes the key new again. The plan is to pack this key on the T32 trip and work some straight key activity from Hawaii and from Christmas Island during the Straight Key Century Club activity in January.



73, Ted K8AQM

## DX Conditions

~ HARD TO BELIEVE IT'S GETTING BETTER / IT'S GETTING BETTER, ALL THE TIME ~

Some of you may recognize the above as the lyrics to a famous Beatles song. But the same could also be said for the conditions on the HF ham bands. The increased solar activity brings both bad, but mostly very good news. I'm not going to get into a lot of detail on how this propagation stuff works. You will remember some of it from your ham license studies. For a refresher, I have attached links to couple of websites. The first website "SunSpotWatch.com" <http://prop.hfradio.org/> will keep you up to date on all the important data, or the propagation numbers such as the "SFI", and the "A" and "K" indices with a whole lot of other doodads tossed in! In addition, the following website offers a "HF Propagation Tutorial" that will help you better understand the numbers and how they relate to you. See <http://www.astrosurf.com/luxorion/qs1-hf-tutorial-nm7m.htm> There are also numerous other sights that would be helpful. A simple internet search will yield numerous hits.

But all this being said, the important message here is that Solar Cycle 24 activity is increasing and conditions are getting much better. Outside of the fact that we operate on a basic 11 year cycle, It is difficult to predict with any degree of certainty how long and how intense this cycle peak will be. So now is the time to get on the air and start working some DX. If you don't get on the air now, you will never be able to sit around and tell new hams during the next low dip in the solar cycle how thrilling it was to work all around the world using 5 watts into a coat hanger. (slight exaggeration, but I hope you get my point). Seriously low power and a dipole will do the job when conditions are good.

Also, if you have any belief in the validity of the Mayan Calendar, that is another good reason to get on the air ASAP. Enjoy the bands.... Mark NU8Z

## AARC Club Gossip! .....

### ***Did you know that...***

...N8AMM now has a K9AY listening loop up for 160m?  
 ...it is possible for an swr bridge to go bad? Ask K8AQM!  
 ...KG8CO and N8AMM have a 7:00 AM sked on 160m (Thursdays) with KG8CW?  
 ...our “snowbirds” are gone?  
 ...Bill KD8WSL used many a fuse connecting his “black” lead to his positive car battery?  
 ...W8TTX got a 24 inch computer monitor from “Santa”?  
 ...NU8Z is beginning to build “ugly”?  
 ...KG8CO has developed a web site for our T32?  
 ...There is a new term going around the club....”Filter Food”(aka cashews!)?  
 ...Phil K8HCL got a new signal generator for Christmas?  
 ...K8KIC says he has enough cashews to last until Memorial Day?  
 ...Blair K8LAR got a book of the history of Hallicrafters Radios?  
 ...K8AQM’s shack is now full of “bugs”?  
 ...according to KD8WSL N8AMM has a group of “knuckle draggers” for friends?  
 ...K8AQM “lost” three amps this month? Ugh!  
 ...KC8ITC was glad to learn his rotor problem was just an unplugged plug?  
 ...NU8Z knows all the “hot” web sites for amateur radio?  
 ...K8KIC “talked” K8AQM into an Alpha Delta antenna?

## AARC Club Minutes

The Adrian Amateur Radio Club board met at the Cap building on Monday, December 26, 2011 with the following persons present: Ginny W8TTX, Caleb KK1G, Larry W8LNR, Norm W8TTH, Mark N8UZ, and Bob K2IBM. The treasurers report showed a balance of \$8,536.81. A sign-up sheet was passed around for members who are interested in ordering club AARC badges. The badges are very stylish and red decal in color. The cost for the badges are \$10 per badge, and are made by S&A Engraving. Great progress has been made on the club station. The wench along with rotor cabling is installed on the tower, feed line's are ran into the building, and the HF Radios are in place along with the impressive D-star radio, placed in the rack mount cabinet. Hopefully club station should be operational soon. The board meeting was adjourned at 7:35pm

The Adrian Amateur Radio Club met at the Cap building on Monday, December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011, with 15 persons present. Roll call was given by call sign. Mark won the 50/50 drawing. \$5.50 went to Mark, and the other half went back to the club. The minutes as published in the Tickler were approved with a motion from Norm W8TTH, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Larry W8LNR, motion carried. The treasures report showed a balance of \$8,536.81 and was approved with a motion from Bob K2IBM, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Norm W8TTH. There was no old business. There will be a workday scheduled in January to finish up the Club Station, Workday is TBA. Ted will be leading up a General Class Elmering session in March near the end of the month. Ted will also be hosting a CW Party (K3Y/8 aka W8TQE) at his ham shack, January 7 & 8 from 10:00am to 5:00pm. All members are encouraged to stop by to eat, operate, and have fun! There will be a Tech class in the Spring, headed up by Denny WE8Z. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
 Caleb Squires KK1G,  
 AARC VP

## K9AY Loop @ N8AMM

The concept of “if you can’t hear them, you can’t work them” is at the core of 160m. Both N8AMM and KG8CO are drawn to 160m DXing, not an easy task! Brian KG8CO started out with a K9AY loop for listening on 160m and has moved to “beverage” antennas. Don N8AMM has recently installed Brian’s K9AY loop at his station. The “loop” is actually two triangles loops 90 degrees apart and supported by one pole. The pictures on the right illustrate the antenna installation at N8AMM’s. The triangles are fed at the base and an extensive radial system is underneath the “loops. This feed system allows the listener to choose between four favored directions thus eliminating QRM from undesired stations.

Don uses a dipole for transmitting but plans to install a vertical for next year’s 160m season. There is a noticeable favored direction according to Don and this winter Don plans on doing extensive testing and listening on the K9AY loops. Good DXing Don!



## NU8Z's Web Findings

The following is a list of some radio related or just good web findings that I have made. You may also find them interesting.

The “Internet Archive”: <http://www.archive.org/> Old “73” and “Ham Radio” magazines plus much more!

“Radio Calculations” <http://www.tuberadio.com/coils/coil3.html>

“Rig Reference” <http://rigreference.com/> Rig ratings, Ebay listings, price history

“Club Log” <http://www.clublog.org/> Store logs on line, statistics, great tool!! Web SDR” <http://w4ax.com/> On line radio. Multi modes and bands Digital Modes Software” <http://www.rv3apm.com/> Good!

DX Zone” <http://www.dxzone.com/> Links to everything DX Coffee” <http://www.dxcoffee.com/eng/> Good DX website. Nice daily newsletter

“PSK Reporter” <http://pskreporter.info/pskmap.html> Gray line and Signal reports

“RF Café” <http://www.rfcafe.com> All stuff radio!

“FileHippo” <http://www.filehippo.com/> Best free software

“Ham Info Bar” <http://www.haminfobar.co.uk/> Great ham radio tool bar (loaded with info!)

“Drop Box” <http://www.dropbox.com/> Great place “in the cloud” to store, share and sync files

“Evernote” [http://download.cnet.com/Evernote/3000-2381\\_4-10425994.html](http://download.cnet.com/Evernote/3000-2381_4-10425994.html)



## K3Y/8 (aka W8TQE) 2012

Every year the month of January is the celebration of the birthday of the Straight Key Century Club. W8TQE is a member of this club and many club members are also SKCC members. For the past four years we have operated K3Y/8 (official special event call of the SKCC) as a multi-multi event (that's multi operator and multi transmitter). The idea is for SKCC club members to work all districts running K3Y/ 1-0 plus KH6 and KL7 to receive a "sweep" award. There are even stations operating on all continents also celebrating the SKCC birthday with their own special calls. We operated Saturday and Sunday in our casual fashion running straight keys and bugs for a total of 292 QSOs on 40m through 10m including one cw QSO on 6m with Brian KG8CO! It was great fun with many different operators on hand to man the three stations all running 300-500 watts. We were in great demand as many stations wanted to work K3Y/8 on as many bands as propagation allowed.



To the left that's Ken K8KIC in the background with Wes AC8JF logging in the middle and Don N8AMM in the foreground. The next photo shows one of our visitors and good friend Jan K1ND making sure K8KIC and AC8JF "keep the rate up and log calls correctly"!



But making QSOs are not all we do; below Brian KG8CO and Rich K8UV "guard" the food which included of course "ham", chili and an absolutely "terrible" pecan cake brought by Bruce N5ASU! That cake was "so bad" I had a hard time confirming that fact; it was really difficult to eat those four or five pieces of cake! It is a well known fact the number of calories consumed is far great than the number of QSOs we make!



Bruce N5ASU and Stan AC8W made it down from the thumb of Michigan and are pictured below trying to decide who had copied the correct call! Why even W8TTH Norm and N8CC Jeff stopped by to test the ham and chili. I think that's Jeff standing by the open door after a bowl of chili, hmm, wonder why?

N8KR Ken and K8JJC Paul also stopped by for a visit but unfortunately in all the excitement of making Qs, consuming good food and BSing, missed the photo ops! N8KR manned one of the stations while K8JJC and I talked boat anchors and DXing.

It was a great time and everyone enjoyed their time at the shack. No doubt we'll be back again next year and plan an even bigger and better operation! Thanks to all who showed and manned the stations.



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The Tickler is the official paper of the Adrian Amateur Radio Club in Adrian, MI. It is printed monthly and is distributed to members of the club, local disaster officials, local electronic outlets and other editors of ham radio newsletters. Articles about activities of members are solicited. Permission is granted to any other publication to reprint items appearing here, provided complete source credit is copied including previous print source. The club owns and operates repeaters W8TQE on 145.370, - 85.4 PL or 537 from your touch tone pad and 444.675, 123 pl.

### Local Area 2 Meter Net and 10 Meter Chats

Sunday 9:00 p.m. The ARES Net on 145.370 - Ken, K8KIC -Net Control  
Tuesday 10 Meter CW Local Chat at 8:00 p.m. on 28.050 +/- QRM  
Tuesday and Thursday 10 Meter Local Chat 9:00 p.m. on 28.325 +/-QRM

### Local Area Repeaters

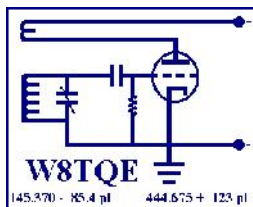
W8TQE 145.370 - 85.4 pl Adrian, Michigan  
W8TQE 444.675 + 123 pl Adrian, Michigan  
K8ADM 443.375 + 107.2 pl Adrian, Michigan  
K8ADM has access to Echo Link

### Adrian ARC 37th Annual Hamfest and Computer Show

September 18, 2011  
Hamfest Chair  
Mark NU8Z@comcast.net

### AARC Web Page and E-mail Reflector

[www.w8tqe.com](http://www.w8tqe.com)  
[adrianarc@mailman.qth.net](mailto:adrianarc@mailman.qth.net)



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**First Class**