

Central Division News & Views

Issue #21 - April, 2010

Amateur Radio Regains Illinois EMCOM Recognition

After a hiatus of many years, the State of Illinois has finally agreed to reinstate a state-wide RACES organization. Illinois SEC Brad Pioveson, W9FX; Charlie Richey K9DUE; and Jim Pitchford N9LQF; successfully concluded an agreement with the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) this past February 9th. I take no credit for this achievement, but it has been a long-standing goal of mine to have the Indiana and Illinois ARRL Sections create the same amateur radio emergency communications organization that exists in the Wisconsin Section.

In Wisconsin, every amateur radio EMCOM operator wears both the ARES and RACES hats. This has eliminated EMCOM turf wars in Wisconsin and has led to the creation of a smooth-running state-wide amateur radio organization that has an excellent reputation for quick and efficient performance of emergency radio communications for many years. Indiana hams are already working in this direction and now Illinois hams will be able to do so. Congratulations to all who have contributed to this effort!

Personal Identity Theft

This is not an amateur radio issue, but a growing majority of amateur radio licensees are consistent computer and cellular telephone users. I include cell phones because recent generations of hand-held communication devices are really computers with cell phone functions added. Therefore, everything I say in this article also applies to cell phone use.

I'm guessing that 90 percent of the stolen identity problems are caused by ignorant, careless, or thoughtless computer and cell phone users. These users provide a fertile base for the spread of Internet SPAM and virus-infected emails. Everyone should use both an anti-virus and a fire wall program, and keep them up to date. If you receive email messages from persons or institutions you don't recognize or normally deal with, **do not open (read) the message - Trash It.**

The IRS, FAA, FBI, FCC, CIA, DOD, FTC, etc, and all genuine banks and financial institutions do not make inquiries, or send demands for payment or "account verification" by email. If you receive an un-requested email from a business or what looks like an official government agency, **do not respond to the message - Trash It.**

Electronic greeting cards are also an easy way to receive a computer virus, or at least receive more SPAM email. Usually, the notice you receive, does not announce the sender. Consider this to be a red danger flag. And some of those sites that tell you the name of the E-card sender can be spoofs of legitimate web sites. If you receive an unexpected anonymous email notice that you have an E-Card waiting for you, **ignore the message - Trash It.**

If you receive an email from someone you know, but the message headers look like it's multi-forwarded SPAM email, **do not open the message - Trash It.**

If you receive an unexpected email with an attached file from someone you know, **verify its authenticity with the sender before you open it.**

I have been using the Internet since 1994 and I follow the above rules. My name, callsign, address, home telephone number and email address are published in *QST* 12 times a year. This data is also posted on the ARRL web site and it now probably exists in over 500,000 computers world-wide. Yes, I have to filter (block) a couple hundred junk and scam email messages every day. However, my computer has never been hacked and my identity has never been stolen.

New Central Division Webmaster

After eight years of serving as the Central Division Webmaster, Clay Melhorn, N9IO, has stepped down. We all owe Clay our thanks for a job well done. I am grateful that he has always been there when I finally finished a newsletter and was anxious to get it published. Somehow with everything he does, Clay was always able to get it posted in a very short period of time. Thank you Clay!

The new Central Division Webmaster is Greg Braun, N9CHA. Greg makes his living producing video projects (advertising and training) for industry. He is very skilled with both still and video cameras and has excellent graphics layout sense. Greg, thanks for taking on this job.

Long Overdue Newsletter...

It's been almost a year since I published my last division newsletter. When I was first elected as your Central Division Director, I was concerned about sending out too much stuff. However, the only complaints I have received about this newsletter is that I don't send out enough of them. I will try to step up the frequency, but please keep in mind that I try not to duplicate any of the topics that are reported by the ARRL. When I was first elected, there was only one weekly *ARRL Letter*. Now there are several fine periodic electronic publications available to ARRL members.

Hamfests & Meetings

As of the publication of this newsletter, here is our ARRL travel schedule through September. It is subject to change if required ARRL meeting dates are changed or there are last minute transportation problems. # = W9GIG only * = W9XA only

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| # | Apr 9-10 | AES Superfest | Milwaukee, WI |
| * | May 2 | Kishwaukee Hamfest | Sandwich, IL |
| | May 13-16 | Dayton Hamvention | Dayton, OH |
| | Jun 6 | SRRRC Hamfest | Princeton, IL |
| | Jun 20 | 6 Mtr Club Hamfest | Wheaton, IL |
| | Jul 9-10 | Indianapolis Hamfest | Indianapolis, IN |
| | Jul 11 | FRRL Hamfest | Aurora, IL |
| | Jul 14-18 | ARRL Board Meeting | Hartford, CT |
| | Sep 10-11 | W9DXCC Convention | Elk Grove Village, IL |
| | Sep 17-18 | Peoria Superfest | Peoria, IL |
| | Sep 25 | Radio Expo | Belvidere, IL |

I hope to see many of you at these hamfests. In addition to shopping for new and used equipment, they are a great way to renew and develop friendships and to meet some of the voices you have heard on your radios.

73 - George R. (Dick) Isely, W9GIG
Central Division Director