

Central Division News & Views

Issue #18 - April, 2008

It's Been Too Long Since My Last Newsletter

Over the last three months, I have received a few inquiries about when my next Central Division newsletter would be published. My last newsletter was published on the Central Division website in December, 2006. I started a newsletter three times in the first quarter of 2007, only to have events over-take my reports. There has been excellent coverage of these events on the ARRL website and I therefore got into the habit of putting off my next newsletter. Yes, I have posted a few single topic division-wide email messages the last 15 months, but I have not taken the time to produce a real newsletter since then.

I apologize for this lack of division-wide communication on my part and this issue is my first effort to get back on track in this regard. As for any rumors about my health, there are no problems other than the routines that develop in response to increasing age - I hit 69 years this past March. More simply put, my personal schedule is a bit more crowded and I have not yet completely accomplished any item on my lifetime to-do list. Or perhaps my years are getting too short. Do you remember how long it took for a year to pass when you were in grade school? It seemed like my birthday, summer vacation, and Christmas took almost forever. Now, planned events and activities arrive much too quickly.

Amateur Radio Service Long-Term Growth?

About 14 months have elapsed since the FCC abolished the remaining Morse code licensing requirement. Contrary to the opinions of some CW enthusiasts, it does not appear we have been overrun by no-code dummies. There has been considerable upgrading of licenses and a small overall increase in the total number of licensees in 2007. The following approximate numbers are from Dave Sumner's editorial in the February 2008 QST.

Amateur Radio License Growth					
YEAR	New Technician	Technician To General	General To Extra	None To General	None To Extra
2006	20,000	4,000	2,000	500	200
2007	25,000	20,000	5,000	2,000	400

My long-term concern (3 years after the removal of the Morse code requirement), is will we be gaining even more licensees? ARRL membership increased by about 4000 during 2007 to more than 152,000. This is a welcome reversal of our membership trend in recent years, but will we also see ARRL membership continue to increase 2 years from now?

I believe the answers to both of these questions will be determined by all of us. ARRL has and will continue to provide the recruitment tools. But it's up to local radio clubs and super-active individuals to mentor new licensees and to introduce them to all that the ARRL does to support amateur radio.

2008 AES Superfest Report

The AES Superfest held at the end of March is an unusual hamfest, if you can call it by that name. There is no admission fee, no flea market, no commercial dealer sales, and it's held inside the Milwaukee Amateur Electronics Supply store. Several amateur radio equipment manufacturers demonstrate their products, there is a small, but interesting selection of forums, most of the Milwaukee area amateur radio groups are there, there are volunteer exams, and the ARRL sends a staff member to run the ARRL display. This two day event has grown over the years to the point where it will need more floor space, if it's to grow any larger. It's not the largest event I attend within the Central Division each year. However, far more ARRL memberships are sold there than at any other hamfest within the division.



W9GIG

W9WU

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NQ1R

The weather in Milwaukee this time of the year is quite variable. I've driven up there in snow, ice, driving rain, and in calm sunny 70s. However, I find the reward to be well worth the risk.

Hamfests & Meetings

As of the publication of this newsletter issue, here is my ARRL travel schedule for May, June, and July 2008. It is subject to change if required ARRL meeting dates are changed or there are last minute transportation problems.

May 15-18, 2008	Dayton Hamvention	Dayton, OH
Jun 1, 2008	Starved Rock RC Hamfest	Princeton, IL
Jun 8, 2008	6 Mtr Club Hamfest	Wheaton, IL
Jul 11-12, 2008	Indianapolis Hamfest	Indianapolis, IN
Jul 13, 2008	FRRL Hamfest	Aurora, IL
Jul 17-20, 2008	ARRL Board Meeting	Hartford, CT
Aug 3, 2008	IL State ARRL Convention	Bolingbrook, 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