

# K9YA Telegraph

Robert F. Heytow Memorial Radio Club

Volume 1, Issue 8, August 2004



## CW Rogues Field Day 2004

*An Event Fraught with Skeeters, or Not?*

*Philip Cala-Lazar, K9PL*

The good news? There were few mosquitoes. The bad news? We were chilled to the bone — in late June! Alternately heat stifled and frozen, this year the K9YA Field Day team,

Early Sunday morning with temperatures falling into the low forties, the drone of an 1,875 watt Coleman generator our constant companion, and despite layers of clothing, within the confines of our four-man tent there were three very well chilled Hams! And, thanks for asking, but no, a solid state rig, plus a propane-fueled lantern will not heat a 10' by 12' tent to anywhere near comfortable levels! Nevertheless, cold-stiffened digits didn't stop us from slapping the

Vibroplex Code Warrior paddle linked to a Ten Tec Jupiter with vigor, nor from logging the nearly 1,000 QSOs we enjoyed during our sojourn at the Boy Scout camp!

Then, as the sun slowly rose, so did the temperature — but with a vengeance! We experienced a nearly forty degree increase in what seemed like minutes as

we shed layer after layer of clothing to reach equilibrium with the quickly changing environment.

One thing remained unchanged; the bands were crowded from Field Day beginning to end. Finding a foothold on 20-, and especially 40-meters, proved specially elusive; soon as a 500 Hz gap was found it was quickly overrun with competing Field Day stations from all points of the compass. It proved to be a frequency agile 24 hours as K9YA danced to the beat of the Jupiter's keypad. Though 10- and 15-meters were arid territory for the most part, 15-meters eventually offered up the formerly elusive KP4 section.

The CW Rogues thank Stephen J. Taylor, KA4HOC, CFRE, Scout Executive Northwest Suburban Council and, of course, Art Steinke for the heaps of hospitality and assistance so generously rendered. ■

the CW Rogues, operated from a site reputed to be located on the state of Illinois' second highest elevation. Thanks to the very gracious assistance of Art Steinke, WB9JKZ, we were fortunate to obtain permission to operate from the Boy Scout's Camp Lakota. The camp is situated near the quaint village of Woodstock, Illinois, the town shown in the film, "Ground Hog Day."

Saturday morning: Mike Dinelli, N9BOR; Steve Wolfcale, N9WAT; myself; and Art Steinke set about erecting an admirable antenna farm. By 11:00 a.m. the very large and formerly empty field at our disposal was filled with a 24' tower and tribander beam; 135' inverted vee; and a multiband vertical complete with an extensive, elevated system of radials.

Expecting the same mosquito horde of biblical proportions we encountered during the previous week's site reconnaissance, we arrived well-prepared: citronella candles, Deet, mosquito coils, even a mosquito-proof head net. Fortunately, over the weekend we slapped few of the little vampires, the reason being it was either too cold or windy for them to expose their sharp proboscises; they spent most of Field Day weathering in the foliage.

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*"... we slapped  
few of the little  
vampires..."*

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*Philip Cala-Lazar, K9PL  
Editor*

*Mike Dinelli, N9BOR  
Layout*

*Dick Sylvan, W9CBT  
Art Director*



*Robert F. Heytow  
Memorial Radio Club*

*www.qsl.net/k9ya  
k9ya@qsl.net*

# When Life Gets in the Way of Ham Radio...

*TGI - Field Day!*

**Mike Dinelli, N9BOR**



*Tribander & Zepp*

I really enjoy Field Day. It's far too easy to forgo the pleasure of an evening ragchew in favor of more important activities. However, Field Day requires considerable planning and has a definite deadline. Since Field Day is a group activity, we depend on each other to do our part. That being the case, Field Day moves up on my priority list.

After last year's effort, I had some ideas on how we could improve our score. We were happy with last year's results (First Place 1A, WI), but we knew we could do better. Yes, Field Day means more than just the score, but it can still be a measure of success without sacrificing the loftier goals.

## **SELECT A SITE**

The first order of business was to select a site. We pondered this over a few lunches and remembered Camp Lakota in Woodstock, Illinois. We previously assisted Art Steinke, WB9JKZ, introduce Ham Radio to Boy Scouts at this terrific facility. After discussing several options, Camp Lakota was our first pick. I contacted Art and he was excited about operating Field Day at the Boy Scout Camp. Art contacted Steve Taylor, who is the new Scout Executive for the North Suburban Council and as luck had it, also KA4HOC!

After getting the thumbs-up for Camp Lakota we could refine our equipment list. Art volunteered to bring his portable aluminum tower and tri-band Yagi. We decided that we could hang an 80-meters, center-fed Zepp from a tower standoff. Last year we only made a disappointing 52 contacts on 80-meters and we knew

that hurt us. We also decided to bring Philip's workhorse 6BTV, multi-band vertical, which is good for 10 through 80-meter. We had our antenna farm!

Steve, N9WAT, volunteered his new Ten Tec Jupiter with accessories and we were anxious to try it out. Since we maintain the Field Day equipment list from year to year in a computer spreadsheet, the rest was easy. Much of our planning was done via e-mail. We each knew exactly what each of us had to bring.

Normally, we like to erect the antennas on the day before Field Day. However, we were unable to access our part of the campgrounds because there were Boy Scout activities planned all day. So, on Saturday, we got up early and drove the 90 minutes to Woodstock and worked hard to complete our installation before show time.

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*“The first order of business was to select a site.”*

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Part of our planning called for earning bonus points. I determined that Camp Lakota is located in unincorporated McHenry County. I Googled for the McHenry County Web site and contacted Mr. Donald Larson, vice-chairman of the McHenry County Board. He graciously accepted our

invitation to visit. I also invited the McHenry County Sheriff. He was unavailable on Field Day weekend, but was happy to send Sgt. Michael Cisner. Both gentlemen raised interesting questions during our station tours. We spent about 45 minutes with each of them.

## **ON-THE-AIR!**

We were pleasantly surprised to find that propagation was excellent on 20, 40 and 80-meters. Even with narrow passbands, CW signals filled every bit of the CW/digital subbands. Our strategy was to call CQ as long as we maintained a decent rate and it was often difficult to find a clear frequency.

Steve, N9WAT, is an experienced traffic handler, so

# Steve's Field Day Story...

**Steve Wolfcale, N9WAT**

This year started off a bit unorganized, the busiest summer I can remember ever with virtually every weekend booked from early April until Field Day.

This being the case I didn't start organizing my gear until the Friday of Field Day weekend, fortunately I had scheduled this as a vacation day and, unlike past years, we were not going to start set up until Saturday morning.

My Ham gear stays together pretty well because I leave it in Rubbermaid tubs in the garage and don't normally use any of it for my own shack. The exception was that this year we were using my Ten Tec Jupiter rig. Still, getting the rig ready for the trip was no trouble; I even found the original box to pack it in. Since this year our Field Day setting was going to be more like camping, I decided to also take a number of camping items including my Eureka four-man timberline tent to use as the "napping" tent.

I have a fair amount of camping gear due to many years of camping by canoe, motorcycle and car, however, I am a bit out of practice and here is where I should have been more thorough. In addition to getting the gear lined up and packed, I had to finish testing the foot switch and headset microphone on my rig before stowing it away. After a test QSO with Philip, I decided it was adequate, although I suspect the dynamic element in the microphone is not a good match for the rig (the manual claims the rig will work with almost all microphones.) All in all, it was about a ten-hour day getting the equipment ready to go. Good thing I wasn't in a state I consider unorganized!

Saturday morning was great fun. Art had the tent set up and his tower and beam laying out in the field but the rest of the site was a blank slate. It may sound

strange but my favorite part of Field Day is setting up the station. We had far more open space than previous years and used the field to separate our vertical from the tower as much as our 100 feet of coax would allow. Putting up the antennas went like clockwork.

We split up, or paired off, depending on the task, and in no time at all, we were on the air making test contacts. Being operational a full hour early gave me time to set up some of the camping gear that would make our stay more comfortable.

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*"I found the tent frame was missing!"*

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Just before dusk Saturday I began to set up our napping tent and discovered why the tent bag was so light. I found the tent frame was missing! The shock corded aluminum frame and stakes fit in a small bag I usually keep in the larger bag with the tent. Apparently the last time I used it I separated the two bags. Fortunately, the tent Art supplied was so large that, with a little rearranging of spare equipment and boxes, we were able to accommodate a sleeping bag pad at one end of the tent.

Overall, the set up and take down went very smoothly and there is no doubt in my mind that if we ever had to set up a station in an emergency situation we would be completely successful.

Next year I will focus a bit more on the camping and non-technical equipment needed to keep everyone operating at their peak. ■



*Steve, N9WAT, (left) Visiting with Kevin Chapman, a Scout volunteer*

# Art's Field Day Story

Art Steinke, WB9JKZ



Art Steinke,  
WB9JKZ

Ah, Field Day, it's been several years since I took part in that wonderful work all day and the long sleepless cool nights. But that's another story on the days of yore. This year Mike, N9BOR, called me sometime in April and asked if Camp Lakota would be available for Field Day, since he and Phil, K9PL, had helped me several

times operating a station for the scouts at the camp, I felt there was a good chance they could get some pay back and use the camp. Another ace in the back pocket was the new Scout Executive for the Northwest Suburban Council, Mr. Stephen Taylor, KA4HOC. He became our new executive this year and to my surprise is a Ham who was also active in the MARS system. I sent him an e-mail and explained to him our need for a place to set up for Field Day. His answer was, "Great the hams did that in the Southern Council I came from." He gave us his blessings as he likes to see the scouts exposed to Ham Radio and a chance to become interested in earning the radio merit badge and maybe be interested enough to become a Ham.

I told the good news to Mike that the camp would be available to them for Field Day. We set up a date to visit the camp to check it out and decide where to set up the station and antennas. Upon visiting the camp we were met with a barrage of little blood sucking flying insects. It was so bad that we cut short our walk through the camp.

I mentioned to Mike that I would supply the tower,

tribander, coax and a tent for the operating position. He took me up on the offer, I guess it meant less equipment to transport out there and also give them a nice antenna system for their station.

The days before Field Day I was at the camp for two other scouting activities. One was to help the last three days of leadership development for the scouts. A program that teaches scouts leadership and management skills. There were 65 scouts attending the weeklong class and campout. It's great to help teach young boys and see them embrace the leadership skills taught them.

Saturday morning, Mike, Phil and Steve, N9WAT, arrived around 9:00 a.m. and were surprised to see the tent they were to use had been set up, and the tower and Yagi on the ground ready to be put together and pushed upright. I commandeered an eight-foot-long table and chairs and found a box fan to help cool down the tent during the day. We began our set up by driving most of the equipment up a hill to the station site where we began to set up the tower, Yagi and other antennas. After about two hours, or so, they were ready to get started

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*"The magical hour of 1800 Zulu came and the CW began..."*

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and test all the antennas and the rig. Wow, one-to-one on the Yagi, not bad for a 35-year-old Hy-Gain tribander that has been out to over 30 Field Days and many scout events. The magical hour of 1800 Zulu came and the CW began, the sound of Morse code attracted many scouts and adults to the area with a lot of questions to be answered by the team.

There was plenty of food and scout groups offered to serve them meals and snacks if they became hungry. That night was a cool night, but it was warm for me. I had to go through an ordeal to obtain my Order of The Arrow (OA) vigil. This is an honor bestowed upon people who have given a lot of time and devotion to scouting. The reason I say it was a warm night is that I had to stay awake all night in the woods by

# Dick's Official Welcome

## K9YA Staff

It takes a lot of work to churn out the *K9YA Telegraph* every month. We strive to provide quality, never before published articles for our subscribers. We believe the key to finding interesting articles is in finding interesting people. We're always looking for someone to share their Ham Radio passions with us.

Last month, you might have noticed the addition of Dick Sylvan, W9CBT, to our masthead. We are pleased to officially introduce Dick as our art director and a whole lot more.

Dick has been a Ham for over 57 years. During that time, he has earned a number of on-air awards. He is currently working on QRPP WAS, and is only three states away from meeting that goal. His most coveted

accomplishment though, is being honored as a member of the A-1 Operator Club; an award bestowed anonymously by his peers for his operating excellence.

Professionally, Dick is an industrial designer. It is quite possible you've owned, used, sat on, or are familiar with something he designed.



*Dick Sylvan,  
W9CBT*

## "MORSE TIPS & QUIPS"



"THE USE OF FLASH CARDS HELP TO REINFORCE LEARNING MORSE CODE"

Beginning in this month's issue Dick launches his "Morse Tips & Quips" series of cartoons offering tried and true techniques for learning Morse code. Set in humorous situations, we feel they will make a positive addition to your Morse code experience.

A 1959 graduate of the school of the Art Institute of Chicago with a degree in industrial design, Dick has always liked cartooning, but this is his first monthly cartoon series. He aims to encourage others to share his strong interest in operating Morse code and to learn or improve this wonderful skill that is so much a part of our Amateur Radio service.

We hope you enjoy the cartoons. Look for a new one every month. ■

# A Ghost Story - Ham Radio Style

Dick Sylvan, W9CBT



This is a ghost story that really happened. My oldest brother Len, K9KBQ, passed away back in 1968 as a result of complications from heart surgery. It was an untimely death as he was only 59-years-old. Len was a very active Ham and enjoyed working the HF bands on SSB and CW. Shortly after his death, I gathered up all his old Ham equipment and was thinking how I was going to handle selling off the estate for the benefit of my sister-in-law.

I had some of Len's logbooks and other related papers.

Sitting in my Hamshack and looking through Len's Ham Radio papers, I came across his Ham license. I had decided for sentimental reasons that I would pin up his license on my cork bulletin board which was located just above my Ham equipment. I picked up two pushpins and pinned the license in front of me. Also displayed on the bulletin board were some of his favorite QSLs and a sign about the size of postcard that read, "Danger High Voltage—Safety Pays." This was located on the opposite end of the bulletin board from where the license was pinned. It was printed in a very bright Day-Glo red color to remind me of the hazards of electrical shock in the Hamshack.

I leaned back in my chair and was staring at his Ham license as I saw, to my amazement, four pushpins fly out of the bulletin board; two from the license and two from the "Danger High Voltage" sign. That made my eyes pop! The two documents fell behind my desk, which was mounted on legs about three-inches high. The license and the sign both turned 90 degrees and came out from under the desk. The license landed on top of the sign so that only the word "Danger"

showed under the license. A cold chill ran through me when I thought about it.

It appeared Len was sending me a message not to display his license; for whatever reason. I grabbed his license and quickly put it away inside a book for safekeeping; I didn't want to witness a repeat of what had occurred, or maybe worse.

I was deeply shook up about what happened and ran upstairs to tell the XYL about it. I don't think she believed me as it was an incredible story. I spent the next few days telling my family and friends about what had happened. I am not really a believer in ghosts, but something of a paranormal nature occurred.

After a year went by, I finally got up enough courage to get out Len's license again and pin it up on my bulletin board. I did this and sat back to see if the occurrence would repeat. Nothing happened. It just stayed pinned up. I then took the license and the "Danger High Voltage" sign and tried dropping them behind the desk. All that happened was the license and sign would drop behind the desk and lay

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*"A cold chill ran through me when I thought about it."*

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there. I wanted to see, if by chance, the sign or license could work its way out from under the desk. No way! The two documents just stayed on the floor under the desk. I tried doing this over and over and couldn't even come close to simulating what had happened a year earlier.

This led me to conclude that Len had tried to communicate with me not to pin up his license. No contact of any other type happened afterward. It made me think there are other things floating through the ether besides radio waves.

I don't believe in ghosts, but I can tell you something very unusual happened back then. I never had an experience like that again. ■



Robert F. Heytow  
Memorial Radio Club

[www.qsl.net/k9ya](http://www.qsl.net/k9ya)  
[k9ya@qsl.net](mailto:k9ya@qsl.net)

# Your Shack

*Fifty-six Years and Still Going Strong: Bill Hawes, W9ERG*

Bill Hawes remembers, “I got interested in Ham Radio in 1937, as a kid of six, when my father purchased a RCA radio which covered the Ham bands. When nobody was looking I started twisting the knobs and soon discovered the joys of shortwave listening.”

Bill earned his Class B ticket in 1948. While in service during the Korean War (S/Sgt. Signal Corps), he operated K4USA, WAR, HZ1AB, AEH, AJ4AB, AJ4AC and assisted at AFRD (Saudi Arabia).

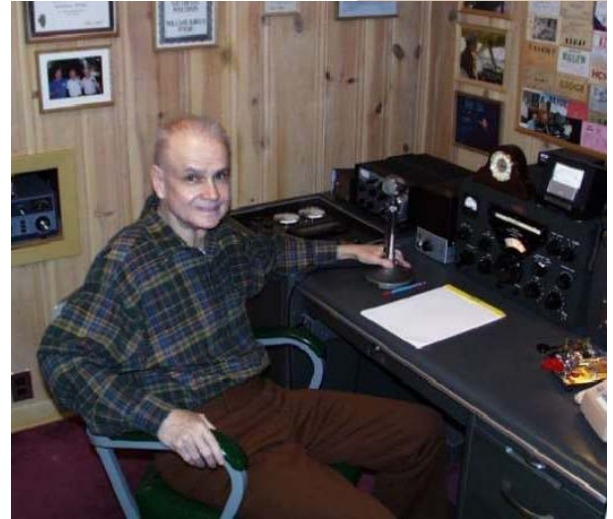
Now jump forward more than half a century and Bill’s station in Skokie, Illinois is a place of local renown. Follow him down the basement stairs of his home, turn a corner and BAM!, you are hit with the defining image of a Ham shack. There is so much to absorb; you pause before continuing your visual undertaking of the knotty pine paneling, the display of QSLs (including the card of Senator Barry Goldwater, K7UGA) and many certificates of achievement. The shack is spotless, nothing out of place; you are looking at a picture postcard of some dream station once seen in a Ham Radio magazine. You think, “sensory overload,” but this is for real.

At the operating position Bill’s current roster is a Collins 7SA-4 receiver, Kenwood TS-870S transceiver and Johnson Desk Kilowatt amplifier. The Kenwood



*Bill Hawes, W9ERG, (left) and Bill Wassom in front of the HZ1AB/AJ4AB quonset hut in 1953.*

replaced a Drake T-4XB transmitter. The pairing of Kenwood and Johnson admits Bill to 75-meter’s Kilowatt Alley, a place where QRP dare not tread. The 75A-4 and Viking Desk Kilowatt were purchased new in 1958 and have been in continuous service since. The Viking is one of only about 402 produced.



*Bill Hawes, W9ERG*

Bill says he has seen a few Viking Desk Kilowatts on ebay, but the majority were in poor condition without the refurbishing necessary to avoid arc-overs and frozen contactor points. Elaborating, he says, “Johnson used wire which deteriorated over the years and the spot welds failed. I could go on and on, but all those problems were corrected in mine years ago.”

His one regret? “How I wish I’d had the vision to buy a Collins KW1 on the installment plan back when they were available. Only 150 were manufactured and \$3,850 was a lot of money in 1952.”

Bill enjoyed Dick Sylvan’s June, 2004 K9YA Telegraph article about the Mark II Model #19 tank transceiver: “That rig comprised my first Ham station in 1948. Wish I had kept mine, but it is long since gone. They were sold by a department store in Indianapolis for about \$80 way back then!

“The problem was getting the voltage to run them which, if I remember correctly, was 24 volts. I used an external power supply and the filaments could be heated with AC without any hum.”

Vy 73 de Bill, 56 years holding W9ERG continuously and still going strong. ■

## Your First QSO

### *Be Your Own Amateur Radio Biographer*

The *K9YA Telegraph* invites you to submit your Ham Radio story. What events led you to our service? What

path did you follow to earn your license; was it bumpy or smooth? Tell us about your first QSO, whether a half century ago, or last week; was it an exercise in blood, sweat and tears or a romp in the ether. Are you a retread? If so, what brought you back into the fold?

Share your experience and photographs with the *K9YA Telegraph* community. ■

## K9YA Code Practice Nets

### Fast Net

Every first Wednesday of the month, 7.137 MHz (+/- QRM) at 7:00 P.M. (0100 Z, Thursday). Check in, exchange FISTS numbers or hang around for a chat. The Fast Net is called at 20+ wpm.

### Slow Net

Every 2nd, 3rd and 4th Wednesday of the month, 7.137 MHz (+/- QRM) at 7:00 P.M. (0100 Z, Thursday). Check in, exchange FISTS numbers or hang around for a chat. The Slow Net is called at 10-wpm, but speed will be adjusted to that of the slowest operator.

## Your Shack

### *Your Photo is Worth a Thousand Words*

Remember *Popular Electronics* and *Electronics Illustrated* magazines? Remember the photographs of shacks that were a part of every issue? How about those SWL and Novice shacks that included a few small household appliances to bloat the viewing experience?

The *K9YA Telegraph* requests descriptions and photographs of you and your shack: today's shack or yesteryear's shack — toasters, Osterizers and steam irons optional. ■

## Yuks...

*Two antennas meet on a roof, fall in love and get married.*

*The ceremony wasn't much, but the reception was excellent.*

- Fred Hopengarten, K1VR

## TGI-FD - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

he aptly sent an NTS message to the Illinois Section Manager and a book of ten messages to Ham Radio friends. The 80-meters antenna worked well for the early evening NTS net and Steve was in and out in no time.

This year we wanted to give SSB phone a try to boost our rate in the wee hours. Steve wired up a headset with mic that utilized a PTT foot switch. This is a real slick setup that allows the operator's hands free for logging. It didn't take long before we realized that SSB was not as productive as CW. Our SSB rate would have to be double that of CW, just to break even on points. Instead we found our SSB rate was less than what we were doing on CW.

## WHAT WILL WE DO DIFFERENTLY NEXT YEAR?

We're still a long way from being competitive in 1A. I think a contest caliber rig would help considerably. I'd also like to have another operator or two to allow for more rest time between on-air stints. We're still evaluating the viability of the Yagi. Anyway, we have some time to think about next year's foray. We were invited back to Camp Lakota — I can't wait! ■

## ART'S STORY - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

myself and keep a fire going. The idea is to be alone and reflect on one's life and support to scouting. One problem existed, I had to forage through the woods at two and three in the morning to find wood to burn. I tripped over some tree stumps and a tree ran into me. Well, really, I walked into the tree. I guess pointing the flashlight one way and walking another isn't the best thing to do in the middle of the night. A bruised nose and a fat lip resulted in the encounter with the tree, I guess that's just part of scouting.

The morning came early as it started to get light about 5:30 a.m. and it was time to make my way back to the central area of the camp and fill my empty belly with breakfast. After that I visited the Field Day station to check how they were surviving and how many contacts they had. Afterwards I went back to my campsite, climbed onto my cot and did some pillow modulation for a few hours.

Oh, by the way, the camp had the bug spray truck come through twice during the week, so most of the nasty bloodsuckers met their maker before Field Day began, a very pleasant surprise for the Field Day team. ■