

# The Oscillator

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## Upcoming Meetings

**Friday 5/19/2010 QSL Cards! Bring in Your Favorites!**

**Friday 6/18/2010 Drive the Dixie and Field Day 2010**

## Tri Town Board of Directors Meeting May 10, 2010

Unofficial minutes

Present were Tom Niemeyer, Jim Everard, Bruce Haffner, Brian Bedoe and Todd Schumann.

Dave Dell resigned from the Board and as Field Day Chairman effective 4/30/10 due to work commitments.

The Board elected Bruce Haffner to fill out Dave's remaining term to the end of 2011. Todd Schumann was elected by the Board to fill out Dave's term as Board Chairman for 2010.

To make ready for Driving the Dixie (Saturday 6/19/10) and Field Day (Saturday-Sunday June 26-27, 2010) we will have a workday at the Bunker Saturday, June 5, 2010 From 9 am to Noon. Plans call for cleaning and antenna work. Help is needed.

Driving the Dixie is on Saturday 6/19/10 and the Tri Town Bunker will be a side trip. Help will be needed for parking and showing off the Club Station. Time is 9am to 11 am. Help will be needed. Please contact Tom Niemeyer to sign up.

Field Day is Saturday-Sunday June 26-27, 2010. We need a Field Day Chairman and people to sign up to operate. 24-hour operation is in question as is 3F or 4F operation.

The May meeting will be Friday, May 21, 2010, 8 PM at the Village Hall. Program will be QSL cards.

The June meeting will be Friday, June 18, 2010, 8 PM at the Village Hall. Program will be driving the Dixie and Field Day.

Trish will be working with Tom on a possible date for the picnic if Tom is willing to host it again this year.

Roomer has it that Rich, KB9IPS, is moving from the area this summer.

Tom, Bruce and Todd have inventoried additional items at the Bunker. A list has been made and given to Board members. Trish is to add the new items to our old inventory. The new list has four sections. Good stuff to keep, Items that can be sold, items that belong to Jerry K9PMV and questionable computer items that could be sold or recycled. We need to price the items to be sold. We also need to determine which items on the total inventory need to be insured. Any items to be disposed of must be disposed of in accordance with our By-Laws.

Respectfully submitted,  
Todd Schumann, KA9IUC, Chairman

**CQFD CQFD de W9VT, W9VT.... Whiskey Nine Very Tired, Willie Niner Vaccum Tube, W9VT FD!**

# Officers, Board Members, & Committee Heads for 2010:

Tom Niemeyer AB9LA	President	708.672-5844	<a href="mailto:tom1485@sbcglobal.net">tom1485@sbcglobal.net</a>
Matt Schumann N9OTL	Vice President	708.423.7066	<a href="mailto:mattschuman@yahoo.com">mattschuman@yahoo.com</a>
Jim Everand WD9GXU	Secretary	708.748.6798	None @ No I' dont have one
Trish Jaggard N9WDG	Treasurer	708.957.1973	<a href="mailto:the_jaggards@sbcglobal.net">the_jaggards@sbcglobal.net</a>
Todd Schumann KA9IUC	Chairman of Board	708.423.7066	<a href="mailto:tschum3063@aol.com">tschum3063@aol.com</a>
Tom Gunderson W9SRV	Webmaster, W9VT	815.466-0245	<a href="mailto:webmaster@w9vt.org">webmaster@w9vt.org</a>
Matt Schumann N9OTL	Raffle Chairman	708.423.7066	<a href="mailto:mattschuman@yahoo.com">mattschuman@yahoo.com</a>
Bruce Haffner WD9GHK	W9VT Trustee, Dir.	708.614.6134	<a href="mailto:WD9GHK@comcast.net">WD9GHK@comcast.net</a>
Brian J. Bedoe WD9HSY	Repeater Trustee, Oscillator Editor, Director	815.469.1383	<a href="mailto:Bbedoe@aol.com">Bbedoe@aol.com</a>

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## Club Meetings & Nets

Club meetings are the **3rd Friday** of each month at the **Village of Hazel Crest Village Hall**, 170th and Holmes. All are welcome and refreshments will serve. Don't forget to bring a Friend.

## Official Club 2 Mtr hangouts:

146.49 Simplex, & The Club's Repeater 146.805 WD9HSY/R

## Unofficial Club Hang Outs:

442.375 Homewood, 441.300 Grant Park WA9WLN/R, "Waldofar"  
443.325 Frankfort WD9HSY/R & 147.165 Kankakee Co. WD9HSY/R  
441.975 Elwood, W0COP (underconstruction & on air at WD9HSY'S QTH)  
All UHF's use a 114.8 PL All VHF's use a 107.2 PL

## Club Nets

**2 Mtr FM 49'ers Net** - Wed, 8:00 PM Local, 146.490.

**10 Mtr SSB Net - Thursdays, 8:00 PM Local, 28.490.**

**Cracker Barrel Net** - Monday-Friday 3:00 PM Local 146.805 -600kc 107.2 PL

**2 Mtr FM Weather Net** - Sundays, 8:00 PM local, on **The Club's Repeater** 146.805 -600kc 107.2 PL

## Upcoming Hamfests

6 Jun **Starved Rock Radio Club** <http://www.qls.net/w9mks/hamfest.htm>

20 Jun **Six Meter Club of Chicago** DuPage Co Fair Grounds <http://www.k9ona.com>

## Trading Post

Items for sale from N8EAT (Jim) 708-361-2657 All antennas in excellent condition:

Hy-Gain	AV-620 vertical (6-20 meters)	\$150.00
Cushcraft	10 Element 2 meter beam A14810S	\$75.00
Diamond	F-23A 5/8 wave 15' 2 meter Vertical	\$50.00

# My Humble Radio Beginnings

Ed Stroh – K9EGS

My interest in radio/electronics started in 1965 when I received an Allied Knight Kit walkie talkie and a Craftsman soldering gun for Christmas. (I still have the Craftsman soldering gun which works as good as the day I got it). I believe the walkie talkie was the model C-555 transceiver. Once I soldered that kit together and turned it on for the first time, the radio bug had bitten me, I was hooked. I strung up a 50 foot length of bell wire from my bedroom window to a nearby telephone pole to use as antenna. I assumed that if I put up that wire that it would increase my range far beyond that of the small whip antenna that was built in on the walkie talkie. I don't remember talking to many people on that little walkie talkie, but I do remember hearing CB'ers quite a bit. The selectivity on that unit was so wide that I could hear many different channels on the CB band even though the unit only had a crystal in it for CB channel 14.

Later that next year I built an Allied Radio Knight Kit Crystal Radio set. The crystal radio was fascinating to me since it worked without any electrical power, no battery needed. All you needed to hook up to it was a decent ground connection and some sort of an antenna wire and you could tune the AM radio band to listen to your favorite rock station through headphones.

About a year later we moved and I met a new friend who was interested in CB radio. He received an Allied Knight Kit Safari 1 CB transceiver for his birthday. Him and I worked on that kit together and soon had it on the air. That prompted me to want my own CB radio so my dad bought me a used International Executive Model 100-D CB radio. I thought that was great to be able to talk to other CB'ers as far away as 20 miles. Back then, in the middle 1960's, CB was quite different than what it is today. There were a lot more gentlemen on the air in those days. We used to use our FCC assigned call signs when making a contact, observed proper radio etiquette and always made sure that we got off the air once we "shot the five". "Shooting the five" meant that we talked for the FCC allotted five minutes per contact and then got off the air giving someone else a chance to use the channel. Back then CB was kind of similar to ham radio in some ways. That all changed once the 70's came around and all the "good buddies" got on the air. The 70's were the beginning of the downfall of CB radio.

The next Christmas (1967) my dad bought me another Allied Knight Kit. This one was the Star Roamer shortwave receiver. Once I finished soldering all the resistors, capacitors, tube sockets, etc. and put it all together, I plugged it in the wall socket and powered it up with much anticipation. I could not believe it. It worked perfectly as soon as I turned it on. I was really hooked on radio now after hearing stations from all over the world. Can you imagine being able to listen to Radio Moscow, Radio Peking or HCJB in Quito, Ecuador from your south suburban Chicago apartment bedroom? This was great! I soon discovered that I could write reception reports for hearing these stations and send the reports to these far away places in order to receive a QSL card from them. Sending in those reception reports and receiving those fancy QSL cards from those exotic station locations became an interesting and rewarding extension of the shortwave radio listening hobby.

A few years later I traded my Knight Kit Star Roamer to a friend for a Hallicrafters SX-110 communications receiver. This was a much more selective and sensitive receiver than the Star Roamer was. My country totals continued to grow.

The next thing I knew it was 1972 and I was married. That pretty much was the end of my shortwave Dxing, at least for a little while. By 1976 I was back in the hobby again and this time Santa brought me my dream receiver, the Drake model SPR-4 communications receiver. That was the greatest thing since sliced bread, or at least I thought so. It had a frequency readout accurate to within +/- one kHz. That was a major improvement over the Hallicrafters SX-110 with which I had to guess what frequency I was listening to. Usually I did not know what frequency I was on until the announcer said what it was.

After having 2 children we moved in to our first house in 1978. One of my priorities was to build a "shack" in the basement and put up some major antennas. I installed a Mosley SWV-7 vertical antenna, a Mosley SWL-7 horizontal antenna, as well as a home brew inverted L long wire. We have since moved on to our second house and I have built 2 new "shacks" since we moved here. I also upgraded to a Drake R8B receiver in 1999. Shortly after that my country totals pretty much leveled off and stopped growing. I verified about 107 countries. You see, for the most part, I was only reporting to shortwave stations that broadcasted in English. That puts a limit on how many countries that you can verify.

Fast forward now to the year 2009. This is the rather unusual story of how I finally got down to business and got my Ham license. Just after most of the TV stations started switching over to digital broadcasting, I was watching an episode of the Andy Griffith Show, which I could now receive because of the digital transition. There was a scene where Sheriff Andy Taylor and Deputy Barney Fife were in the sheriff's office. On the table next to Andy's desk I could see their police radio. Actually it was not a police radio at all. It was an Eico model 720, 80-10 meter band amateur radio CW transmitter. The average viewer would not even notice that, but I did. It brought back memories to when I was in high school and used to

go over to a friend's house that had a novice class ham license. He used the Eico 720 transmitter along with a Drake R4A receiver. It used to amaze me that he could make CW contacts with people all over the world. After seeing that Andy Griffith episode and remembering my friend's Eico transmitter, I decided that it was about time that I got my ham license. I have always wanted to be a licensed ham for many years but just never got around to it. At this point of my life I had more time to devote to studying for the license test since I was now retired. I also had more time to devote to the ham activity once I got my license. So I diligently studied for the Technician and General tests and passed them both on the same day in June 2009. My first call sign was KC9QAT but I immediately applied for my present vanity call sign, K9EGS, which contains my initials. Within a week after getting licensed I looked up the Tri-Town Amateur Radio Club on the Internet. I knew a little about them from a co-worker who was a Tri-Town member many years ago. My first encounter with Tri-Town was to participate in Field Day 2009 at the "Bunker." (Thank you so much Todd Schumann for inviting me!) That day was also my first time transmitting on the air since receiving my license because I still did not have a transceiver of my own yet. I really appreciate those Tri-Town guys who helped me get through that very first contact on the air. It was a bit awkward since I was not familiar with all the contest lingo and procedures. I think that I made about 10 contacts that day to help boost the club station total just a little bit.

After Field Day at the Bunker I was really energized about Amateur Radio. I had receivers that I have been listening to hams on for many years, but now I needed a transmitter. So my first step was to attend the Hamfest in Peotone, Illinois in July, 2009. That is where I met an elderly ham who seemed to be starting to wind down his ham career a little bit by selling off some of his gear. I was a bit skeptical at first to buy a used radio from someone that I had just met. But after talking to him for a while I felt that he was not the type of person who was out to make a fast buck at my expense. I hemmed and hawed for a bit and then finally asked him what the lowest price was that he would be willing to accept. He started out asking \$850 for the Yaesu FT-920 transceiver and eventually went down to \$600. I think that I made a good deal. When I got home I checked around a bit on the Internet and found the Yaesu FT-920 transceiver selling for around \$800 on average. So I was satisfied with the price that I paid and I was satisfied with the unit's performance after putting it on the air. When I was at the Peotone Hamfest I also bought an Alpha Delta DX-CC 80-10 meter dipole antenna from one of the vendors there. I did a lot of prior research on commercially available antenna prices, sizes and performance. This one seemed to fit my needs just fine since I live on a typical somewhat small suburban lot and had a limited ham gear budget.

I have enjoyed being a member of Tri-Town for the last 7 or 8 months and look forward to participating in the club for many years to come. I have even renewed an old acquaintance since joining the club. I recently ran into Mark Thompson at the February meeting. Mark and I attended the same high school and had some of the same electronics class teachers. Running into Mark was a pleasant surprise since I had not seen him since high school.

I have achieved a few accomplishments already in my short ham career. I have attained WAS mixed band as well as WAS on 40 meters. I only need 2 more states verified on 80 meters for the 80 meter WAS. That may take a while since one of the states is Hawaii. That state is not so easy on 80 meters, especially now that summer is coming. I still have to make the trip to the local ARRL person to verify my QSL cards in order to get the WAS certificate, but that is just a formality.

I hope that my ramblings have at least been somewhat interesting to you. It has always been interesting to me to read about how other people got their start in radio. I have enclosed a photo of my humble "shack" for your viewing pleasure.

If you are interested in traveling down memory lane and want to see some of the old Allied Knight Kits, you can surf to: [http://www.nostalgickitscentral.com/allied/products/knight\\_radio.html](http://www.nostalgickitscentral.com/allied/products/knight_radio.html) There is a list of the kits as well as photos of many of them too.

**CQFD CQFD de W9VT, W9VT....  
Whiskey Nine Very Tired,  
Willie Nine Vaccum Tube,  
W9VT FD!**

**Get Ready for Field Day!!**

## **TRI-TOWN TO EXPAND THEIR 2010 INVOLVEMENT WITH DRIVING THE DIXIE TO INCLUDE BUNKER OPEN HOUSE**

Based on concurrences from the Tri-Town Board and Hazel Crest officials, Martin (WD9JGG) and Trish (N9WDG) have extended an invitation to the organizing officials of the 2010 Driving the Dixie event to have the Bunker be an alternate stop for the cars participating in the Saturday, June 19, 2010 event. Although offered as a possible alternate or second, "non-passport stamping" stop in Hazel Crest, the organizers are very enthused about offering participants the opportunity to see the antenna arrays, radios and unique structure. Therefore, we can expect many of the participants, probably in the order of 100-125 cars to visit our site between approximately 8:45 A.M. and 11 A.M. Martin (WD9JGG), as with the past 4 years will also be looking for Tri-Town volunteers to provide route and on site coverage for the dozen or so communities along the 40 mile route between Blue Island and Momence. That coverage will basically be needed north of Steger before noon and south of Steger after noon, so some Tri-Towners can plan to help out both at the Bunker and along the route.

Mark your calendars now to come out and help out at the Bunker on Saturday, June 19 in showing off the talents and value to the area of Tri-Town, and at the same time seeing some great looking old vehicles and meeting some very nice folks that are as passionate about their hobby as we are about amateur radio..

## **TRI-TOWN Alumni Group on 40 Mtrs!**

From Bud, N9ML

Just a note the TRI-TOWN Alumni Group activity so far this year is almost 600 check-ins with hams from 27 states. Also Cal W9JAN passed away on 5.3.2010 Band conditions at net time around 22:00 UTC have been poor on short skip 50-200 miles but great at longer distances. However Rudy W9CRF sometimes blows me away with 10 over 9 signals. Rember, 7295 Mhz Mon-Fri, 52 weeks a year we promote the club and its past members.

## **Cal M. Epstein W9JAN SK**

Calvin Meyer Epstein, 85 of Tampa passed away on May 3, 2010 at home. Born in Chicago on November 12, 1924 to Joseph and Clara (Raskin), he was a U.S. Navy veteran of World War II and 69 years in amateur radio (W9JAN). He is the brother of Ben of Lincolnwood, IL and the late Mildred Shapiro, the uncle of Arlene Elliott of Longview, WA, Gayle Christianson of Vallejo, CA, Garry Shapiro of Frankfort, IL, Robert Epstein of Cabin John, MD and the late Joseph Epstein. He has one great niece, three great and two great-great nephews. Private interment in Tucson, AZ. Remembrances may be made to the Humane Society of Tampa Bay, 3607 North Armenia Avenue Tampa, FL 33607-1322 (813) 876-7138

I am deeply saddened to hear of the loss of a very good friend and amateur radio operator W9JAN. I have been a net control operator for the TRI-TOWN RADIO CLUB ALUMNI GROUP for many years and Cal was one of our regular hams that checked into net Monday thru Friday 52 weeks a year. He always added much to qso's on the net with his wit and wisdom and always great signal reports to new hams that checked into net. I almost forgot he added much pleasure in delighting us all with comments of the daily meals especially oriental food. Oh all the times he talked about his beloved cat sasha brought much laughter to us all. We always pondered how well his signals were especially since he cut his coax antenna cables years ago and fixed them with wire nuts. I think those wire nuts ought to sent to the Smithsonian as a record of one great ham radio operators achievements for more than 66 years in ham radio. Cal taught us all very well with his great commentary and I especially enjoyed his gratitude for doing the net control. Someday all of his ham friends will meet him again doing CW with K9GOD chasing DX around the Universe. May God Bless You in this new journey to the Heavens above and while up there could you put the word in to improve the sunspots so we all can make more friends like you as HAMS.73's and 88's Bud N9ML NCS TRI-TOWN RADIO CLUB ALUMNI GROUP

# Field Day 2010 – Radio Operators, Get Ready...Get Set...

Field Day – the largest on the air operating event of the year – is the last weekend of June (26 & 27)! It's never too early to start planning. Tens of thousands of operators all over the country will be embracing CW, Phone, Digital, PSK31, Satellite and other modes, making the bands come alive with excitement. Let's throw our signal out there as well! Two big changes this year involve the GOTA Station and the new Educational Activity Bonus.

First, the GOTA station. The major change this year, is that the GOTA station can only be operated by hams newly licensed since last year's Field Day, generally inactive hams, and non-licensed individuals who want a taste of the hobby. Generally inactive hams are those who have not really been on the air for a couple of years. If you've been fairly inactive for a while, come on out and make a few contacts for the club!

Second, the new Educational Activity Bonus. This sounds pretty cool. The idea is to set up a learning, hands-on activity, at the bunker, that is ham radio related, and that involves active participation. Perhaps a soldering seminar? Or a mini-class on how to jumper one of our antennas to one of the radios? Maybe a mini-seminar on how to tune up one of those old, tube rigs? Any ideas out there? Would someone like to do this? It doesn't have to be done repeatedly throughout the weekend, just once is good. I'm looking for volunteers. Give this some thought, and let me know what your ideas are.

There are other bonus points activities as well.....

- Emergency Power Bonus...* Got generator? We don't need to use it, just test it to see if it will power a radio.
- Media Publicity Bonus...* We don't need to actually get the publicity, just make an attempt to get it.
- Public Information Table...* Yep, we set up a table with information on the hobby, the ARRL, our club, etc.
- Satellite QSO...* Just one satellite QSO gets us 100 points!
- Alternate Power Bonus...* Bruce, WD9GHK has afforded us the 100 points by bringing his hand-crank generator to the bunker. 5 QSO's get's us the points.
- Visit by an Govt. Official...* We need to invite an official elected big shot, and receive a visit.
- Visit by an Em. Agency...* Red Cross, Salvation Army, local Law Enforcement... Or the mayor??
- Youth Participation...* This is pretty cool too. Any ham or non-ham, 18 years old or younger, who makes at least one contact, gets us 20 points. 5 youth doing this gets us the maximum of 100 points. Do you know of anyone who might want to make a contact for the club? This is a great way to introduce someone to the hobby, or, give our younger licensed members a shot at the excitement.

Finally, the biggest points activity is QSO's.

So come on out and make some Q's! Let me know if you're planning on operating. We'll have a total of 6 stations set up and able to be on the air at the same time. There's plenty of operating opportunities. Also, we'll need a Refreshments Chairman, a Station Operations Manager, and a Computer Troubleshooter/Coordinator. An event like this requires bodies, so please step up and help in any way you can. Send me an email, catch me on the repeater, or call me on the landline, I'd love to hear from you. It's time to.....**GO !!**

Dave N9LGP, Field Day Chairman

(Editor's Note) .... Due to work commitments, Dave has announced that he will not be able to participate.

**Will you step up to the Challenge?** See a Board Member or talk to Tom, AB9LA about this 24 hour contest!

**Still looking for Shack Pics for the Oscillator!**  
**Send them to your Editor, Brian**  
(Bbedoe@aol.com)

**Tri-Town Radio Amateur Club Inc.**  
**PO Box 1296**  
**Homewood, IL 60430-0296**

**May 2010**

**First Class Mail**



**Visit Tri-Town's Web Page!**

**WWW.W9VT.ORG**

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### Tri-Town Radio Amateur Club Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Call \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ License Class \_\_\_\_\_ ARRL Member Y / N

City, State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_ Regular Membership                   \$ 20.00

\_\_\_\_ SWL Membership                     \$ 20.00

\_\_\_\_ Extra Family Membership         \$ 6.00

\_\_\_\_ Bunker Buddie                       \$ 5.00

\_\_\_\_ Auto Patch w/1 Speed Slot       \$ 25.00

\_\_\_\_ Extra Speed Slots                 \$ 5.00

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total Paid by Club Member

For Example: Regular Member, with A/P and Bunker Buddy (20+25+5) = \$ 50.00