

 www.arrl.org		St. Paul Radio Club Ground Wave <i>Jeff Iverson, WB9DAN, Editor</i> <i>Dale Maroushek, NØPEY, Publisher</i>	KØAGF www.stpaulradioclub.org Club Repeaters: 145.310 MHz, 442.450 MHz 114.8 kHz tone PO Box 9375 North St. Paul, MN 55109
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NEWS AND NOTES FOR DECEMBER 2020 – Volume 80, Issue 12

NEXT (ON-LINE) MEETING: FRIDAY DECEMBER 4, 2020

- 6:00 PM Board Meeting (all are welcome to watch)
 - 7:00 PM Fellowship and (your own) Refreshments
 - 7:30 PM Short Business Meeting with Program Following
- (Zoom details are at the end of the newsletter)

Program

Our December program was not known at press time. Program or not, please join us for a fun discussion on Zoom.

Elections

Nominations for Saint Paul Radio Club Secretary remain open:

Secretary: Keeps a record of the proceedings of the Club, including all regular and special meetings of the Board and Members, conducts the correspondence of the Club, and keeps a record of the same. The Secretary keeps the bylaws of the Club and makes them available to members upon request.

From the President – Lou Michaels WD8NOV

It is an honor to be the President of Saint Paul Radio Club. I had a chance to talk with Dale Maroushek, NØPEY, about a membership card for the members of SPRC. It would be distributed by email to all the members of the radio club. If you would like to have one all you have to do is download it and print. It would have the club name with a logo on it, the year, the president's name, the treasurer's name, and secretary's name. There would be a space to write your name and call sign.

Happy Holiday and Joyous New Year 2021 to Saint Paul Radio Club and 73's.

Dale's Details by Dale Maroushek NØPEY

Hot off the ARRL site, we have a new Division Director: Vernon "Bill" Lippart, AC0W. Bill will replace our friend Matt Holden, K0BBC, who has served us since 2018. Welcome Bill, I'll be looking forward to setting up an introductory meeting for you with the Club.

About November 15th, many of you acknowledged the receipt of an email from me that was labeled "test of e mailing from excel." Others may recall receiving that email some time ago. Thank you, it helped answer the questions I was investigating. That being, is it possible to use Xcel to send emails to the members, and how much can that mailing be filtered? The first part I knew: it is relatively easy to send a mass mailing with Xcel and Access, as well as print mailing labels and address envelopes with the right printer.

I was testing if the email list can be filtered into mailings sorted by membership status, which is another column in our data base. Why? If I could do that, I could save tons of keystrokes, doing multiple BCC mailing via Xfinity, running into filter problems on some of your email hosts, and many more situations. My current method allows me to separate membership by year by having a new "group" started every year and condensing it down after 3 years into the "former member" file. That's why you see the GW mailing with the preamble like "This group is paid for 2021" etc. You won't see the group, but you are part of it.

Moving on, it would have been great if the Xcel mailing test had been a bit more reliable. What do I mean by more reliable you ask? Well, I don't know what happened, or the other reporter's credo questions: why, when where, who and how. You see, the first and only time I sent the file out to you folks, was last Spring! I do recall seeing something flash on the screen while I was computing now and then, and then more of you sent QSL's that it had arrived. Results are, it's a mystery to me and Microsoft may have an answer or excuse, but it is way above my pay grade as we used to say. So endeth the Xcel test. I will next be looking into mailing list programs for ease of operation and security.

I have also been researching Online Auction software that would miraculously fit all the caveats that our current setup has. The first problem is Cost! Second is weaving in offsite sellers. Third is payment, and more costs. Fourth is pick up, where, when, and how. Fifth is photograph and uploading. Historically, the software we use was built by Dallas Fogg and friends and is currently baby sat by Ted Kinner and friends. The biggest obstacle is cost. Even the cheapest profile ones would cost more than we make some years. I'll continue my search, but if you have a lead or want to help, feel free to join the hunt. The Board has postponed the Auction, in any form, indefinitely for now.

One of my many jobs is coordinating our Wednesday night nets on VHF and HF. On the VHF side, we have Tim Byrd, WD9IGX on the first week, John Hess, N2FGB on the 2nd and 4th weeks and good old me on the 3rd and 5th weeks. On the HF side, not so great. Marty, KA0NAN had Joe, then Joe passed so it was all Marty. Marty passed in August 2018, and I picked it up because I didn't want to see it die. We have the usual suspects

that check in and exchange hot topic info when they can... ten-meter ground wave is about as spooky as you can get locally. It would be nice if a couple of you would be able to control the net in a rotation like we do on VHF. Who's on first?

I will be missing the fine food treats that we used to have at the meeting. Better SAFE than not.

Building Blocks by Jay Maher NJØM

I have a t-shirt with the words "Failure is Always an Option" printed across the chest. While I might not wear it to my first bungee-jumping experience, I wholeheartedly embrace the concept. Failure is an opportunity to learn and we should use it as a tool for understanding. If you think of the kits or projects you've built in the past, did you learn more from the ones that worked right away or the ones you had to debug? In my experience, it is the latter. With simple or well-established kits, those errors are most likely coming from construction technique, which will get better with experience. With projects of increased complexity or sparse guidance, our opportunities for building our knowledge base increase.

So how can we set ourselves up for failure? One way would be for an inexperienced builder to buy an extremely complex and expensive kit with little documentation for their first build. Don't do that! Let's start off in the shallow end of the pool. Beginners should build simple kits to hone technique. We've talked before about choosing projects with maximum educational content. Seek those out. Last time I mentioned experimenting with basic circuits or modules as a learning tool. Get yourself some breadboards (or copper clad for higher frequency circuits) and build up modules on the bench. Start off with a published circuit and see how that works. Can you push it to limits? The next step is to substitute parts you might have on hand to try again. Does it still work? What are the changes in performance? Did you break it? Can you break it? Can you explain why it is broken?

Bill Meara, N2CQR, one of the hosts of the Soldersmoke podcast, often speaks of his favorite hamfest finds. When he runs across someone selling a bit of gear that they say is not quite right or broken in some unknown way, his response is "Oooh, I pay extra for that." These are the fun parts. These are the puzzles we all enjoy where learning takes place.

You should be aware that ARRL members now have free access to QEX online. If you haven't been checking it out, you might have missed another learning opportunity. Eric Nichols, KL7AJ, will be putting out what he terms "A Self-Paced Series of Essays in Electrical Engineering" over about 18 installments. He plans a general survey of EE topics of interest to radio amateurs and would like to make it an interactive experience. You'll find a tentative series outline in the July/August issue of QEX.

Making Changes by Scott Holisky NØAR

Sometimes we are our own worst enemy when it comes to making changes in the shack. When the club repeater lived at St. Thomas it was just a bit too far from me to access with an indoor antenna. So up went a 3' Comet dual band antenna. I wanted to get on the air quickly, so I used a 30 foot chunk of RG-58 that had connectors on it. I know there would be loss, but this was to be quick. I hooked the radio up to the antenna and it was all but deaf. The SWR was good, I could hear myself opening the machine, but reception was terrible. Turned out I had put up too good of an antenna and my radio was being overloaded by the FM and TV stations signals from Shoreview. The gear wasn't matched to my local conditions. That nice DC-to-light front end on the radio with no filtering at all was an invitation for IMD and overload. I replace that radio with my 30-year-old Icom. It plays fine with the antenna and the cheap dual band now lives in the car.

The same effect can happen on HF. You may think a bigger, longer extended antenna is going to solve all your reception issues. It might just increase your overall noise and lower your ability to hear the weaker stations. The classic G5RV might seem to be a better antenna but that vertical section is now picking up all the RFI generators in the neighborhood, something your dipole wasn't sensitive to.

Often, we read about others experience with a new antenna or radio and how they think it's the best thing since sliced bread. The one thing that stands out is that they have nothing to compare it to. So maybe keeping that old radio or vertical antenna in the corner of the backyard is a good thing. When you do put up something new you now have a benchmark to A/B measure it against. It may not be scientific, but I'd take a real-life evaluation over a lab measurement any day. Something to think about.

Editor's Notes – by Jeff Iverson, WB9DAN

Still making a few FT8 contacts and checking into the MNARTS net. I have been reading chess books and playing against the computer. Covid has put a crimp in most of my other activities. We don't even grocery shop any more but call in the order and pick it up.

Contributions to the *Ground Wave* are always welcome. Send them in a Word document to jaiverson@juno.com. Deadline is one week before the next meeting.

Zoom Information

Until further notice, our monthly meetings in the new SPRC year will be in Zoom. Simply click the link below or call in from any phone. If you're not familiar with Zoom and would like to arrange to practice, text Don at 651 276-4838 or email dk@donkelly.biz.

SPRC is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: SPRC Monthly Meeting

Time: First Friday, 7:30 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

You may join at 7:00 for the half-hour "ragchew," or at 6:00 to sit in on the SPRC Board meeting.

Click to Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83683855241?pwd=Zi9tR2FVanlsVEFoTENCZlI0WTJWZz09>

Or, using any telephone, dial 312 626-6799

Meeting ID: 836 8385 5241

Passcode: 651842

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,83683855241#,,,,,0#,,651842# US (Chicago)

+16465588656,,83683855241#,,,,,0#,,651842# US (New York)

If you use a calendar, download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files.

Monthly: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZcrf-qgqz4oHtVwLbEZHWPwR3LQGBE6qJXL/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGrqDMpEtGQsh2GRpwqBlqgb_zwmCVBgrdrizPnJhp7VRPhBLFuA5VdNY7B



St. Paul Radio Club, Inc.
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

SPRC Calendar

Fri Dec 4	6PM Virtual SPRC Board meeting.
Fri Dec 4	7PM Virtual SPRC Membership meeting.
Sat Dec 5	10AM VE testing. Galilee Lutheran Church. 145 N McCarrons Blvd, Roseville, MN 55113. Reservations required. No walk-ins until further notice. Contact Leon Dill, WØCOE@arrl.net or 651-425-0338.
Fri Dec 18	Edwin Howard Armstrong was born on this date in 1890 – Happy 130 th Birthday Ed! No static at all.
Fri Jan 1	6PM Virtual SPRC Board meeting.
Fri Jan 1	7PM Virtual SPRC Membership meeting.
Sat Jan 2	10AM VE testing. Galilee Lutheran Church. 145 N McCarrons Blvd, Roseville, MN 55113. Reservations required. No walk-ins until further notice. Contact Leon Dill, WØCOE@arrl.net or 651-425-0338.
Mon Jan 4	Erwin Schrodinger may or may not have died on this day in 1961