



HARBOR BEAM

Michigan City Amateur Radio Club

Feburary 2007

146.970 / 441.950

Echolink Node: 193001

P.O. Box 148, Michigan City, Indiana 46361

WEBPAGE: <http://w9ly.org>

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What's
new?

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News & Events

Forgot to send in your Club Dues? There still is time. Annual dues are \$12.00/\$6.00 for students. If you can't attend the meeting, please mail your dues to the club's P.O. Box. Currently your dues are the only source of income for the club. Our dues helps to pay for insurance, maintaining the repeater, our summer events and the Harbor Beam.

Even with your dues, this does not cover our annual expenses.

We need your support.

LIFE MEMBER

At the last meeting RON STAHOVIK, N9TPC became our newest Life Member. Ron has been a member for a number of years. For years he was the driving force behind our Hamfest. Ron and his wife also help maintain the repeater site by mowing the grass every year. He also is the driving force behind our new club project. Ron joins two other Life Members, Bob, K9ET and Phil WD9BDW. Ron joins the ranks of a select few.

Congradulations Ron

MEETING NOTICE:

The Michigan City Amateur Radio Club will hold its next meeting Feburary 21st at 7:30pm. Meetings are held at Queen of All Saints School, Woodland Ave & Barker, Michigan City.

This month John Phillips, KA9PGC will have a demonstration of his "OLD TIME RADIO" which he calls "The One Tube Wonder"

ARES & SKYWARN Information Nets are on **Thursday Nights at 8:00pm**. Please check in and show your support, or even just to see if your radio still works. Nets are held on 146.970 the W9LY repeater.

SIREN TESTS

Michigan City and LaPorte County conduct the Emergency siren test on the first Saturday of each month at 11:00am. LaPorte County wide net is 146.610, and Michigan City Local is on 146.970. Early warning sirens saves lives, and we need your help each month to assure they are working. **This month, all the sirens failed in Michigan City. By Monday, the transmitter was repaired and placed back in service.**

Saturday Morning Breakfast is held at **Jenny Rae's** at 8:00am in the morning. Come and join some good friends and club members for breakfast. The numbers are growing, and seats fill fast.

The Harbor Beam is published the Saturday, before the next monthly club meeting, 12 times each year, by the Michigan City Amateur Radio Club, P.O. Box 148 Michigan City, Indiana 46361; for it's members and those interested. Inquires and submissions should be sent to the Harbor Beam Editor at our e-mail address w9ly@w9ly.org.

Michigan City Amateur Radio Club

NAME THIS AMATEUR



If you can name this Amateur, you win. The winner should watch their mail.

**12:01 AM Eastern Time
Friday February 23, 2007**

The code will be dropped officially. The rule changes will grant limited HF operating privileges to all Technician licensees on 80, 40, 15, and 10 meters.

Once the new rules take effect, Technicians can upgrade to General by passing a single written exam (Element 3) and to Amateur Extra by also passing the Element 4 written exam. No Morse code test will be required.

VE - TESTING will be held, Monday February 26th @ 7:00pm. The test session will be held at the Red Cross Chapter House, 113 Warren Road, Michigan City.

For more information you can e-mail the VE Team at vec@w9ly.org. E-mails sent to this address will go directly to the VE Team.

Our next VE sessions will be in May, Aug and November on the 4th Monday at 7:00pm.

AMATEUR RADIO IN THE MOVIES

Men of Boys Town (1941 film), is the sequel to *Boys Town* (1938 film). In this movie *Whitey Marsh* ([Mickey Rooney](#)) has frequent conversations with his friend *Pee Wee* (Bobs Watson) over the amateur radio waves. Whitey transmits from the home of his adoptive parents, while Pee Wee is at the amateur radio club in [Boys Town](#).

Have you noticed, in America, spring no longer falls on March 21st? In 2005, for instance, the vernal equinox, the first day of spring for the Northern Hemisphere, came on Sunday, March 20 at 12:33 GMT last year.

Now this doesn't seem right. I mean, when we were all growing up, the first day of spring was always on March 21, not March 20, right? Now all of a sudden spring comes on March 20.

How did that happen?



While it's true that we've traditionally celebrated the beginning of spring on March 21, astronomers and calendar manufacturers alike now say that the spring season starts one day earlier, March 20, in all time zones in North America. Unheard of? Not if you look at the statistics. In fact, did you know that during the 20th Century, March 21 was actually the exception rather than the rule? The vernal equinox landed on March 21, only 36 out of 100 years. And from 1981 to 2102, Americans will celebrate the first day of spring no later than March 20.

In the years 2008 and 2012, those living in Alaska, Hawaii and the Pacific, Mountain and Central time zones will see spring begin even earlier: on March 19. And in 2016, it will start on March 19 for the entire United States.

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Radio Wave Propagation

Blind Zone: The blind zone is the area around a radio station which cannot normally be worked by either ground waves or normal ionospheric sky waves. Usually stations in the blind zone can only be worked via intermittent backscatter propagation. This zone is also called the “skip zone” by the US Military.

E_s: A mode of propagation producing well known short skip radio contacts off the E-layer of the ionosphere. This propagation occurs most frequently during the summer months with a major node occurring during the summer, a minor node occurring during the winter, and “valleys” occurring around both equinoxes. During the summer, this mode is popular due to its high signal levels. Finally, the skip distances are generally around 1000 statute miles.

F2: The most common mode of propagation is sky waves reflected off the F2-layer of the ionosphere; these reflections are responsible for most DX contacts.

Gray-line: The area occurring along the sunset and sunrise zones (i.e. also called the terminator in astronomy) is known as the gray line and it has special significance to radio communications. Signals which travel along this gray line region often experience significant improvements in received signal strengths as compared to the direct shortest distance communications. This is because the radio wave absorbing D-layer disappears faster than the higher altitude radio wave propagating F2-layer around the time of sunset (and vice versa for sunrise). Because the F2-layer of the ionosphere remains strongly ionized along this gray line, HF signals often have less attenuation when they travel along the gray line as compared to the more direct shorter route.

THE 2007 ADVANCED SKYWARN TRAINING is Saturday, March 10, 2007 at Elkhart Central High School.

For more information visit

<http://www.imoskywarn.org/>

Spring?

There are a few reasons why seasonal dates can vary from year to year.

A year is not an even number of days and neither are the seasons. To try and achieve a value as close as possible to the exact length of the year, our Gregorian Calendar was constructed to give a close approximation to the tropical year which is the actual length of time it takes for the Earth to complete one orbit around the Sun. It eliminates leap days in century years not evenly divisible by 400, such 1700, 1800, and 2100, and millennium years that are divisible by 4,000, such as 8000 and 12000.

Another reason is that the Earth’s elliptical orbit is changing its orientation relative to the Sun (it skews), which causes the Earth’s axis to constantly point in a different direction, called precession. Since the seasons are defined as beginning at strict 90-degree intervals, these positional changes affect the time Earth reaches each 90-degree location in its orbit around the Sun.

The pull of gravity from the other planets also affects the location of the Earth in its orbit.

The current seasonal lengths for the Northern Hemisphere are:

Winter	88.994 days
Spring	92.758 days
Summer	93.651 days
Autumn	89.842 days

As you can see, the warm seasons, spring and summer, combined are 7.573 days longer than the colder seasons, fall and winter (good news for warm weather admirers). Take that Al Gore!

BASIC WEATHER SPOTTER TRAINING

CQ CQ CQ.....

LaPorte County Skywarn and National Weather Service will host a two hour class that is right around the corner. March 12th at 3:00 pm and at 6:30 pm, the National Weather Service will conduct Severe Weather Spotting Class at Purdue North Central's LSF building. This class is sponsored by Emergency Management, Purdue North Central and Skywarn.

The first thing you might ask why would this be of value to me?

For starters, weather spotters learn what to look for in the sky when severe weather approaches. This knowledge could save your life, or your families in advance of weather warnings.

Weather reports from trained spotters can help save lives. Even with Doppler Radar, the National Weather Service can not tell what is happening at ground level. Spotter reports can give the NWS information which could result in Warnings being issued to the general public.

When seconds count, your weather report could result in a warning being issued earlier than without your report.

Currently LaPorte County has over 60 residents that have taken this class.

If you enjoy watching the weather and want to learn more, this is class for you.



WEATHER NETS

Soon we will thinking spring. With Spring comes warm weather, "YEAH!!!"

With Spring also comes severe weather.

Weather Nets for LaPorte County are held on the Michigan City Repeater system 146.970 MHz. In the event of a system failure, weather nets move to the LaPorte Repeater on 146.610 MHz. If both fail, Skywarn will move to a simplex frequency of 146.520 MHz.

After the storm has passed, ARES nets may take over. As with last years 106 mph winds, ARES may be operating on both repeaters.

Did you know, that amateurs are not the only ones who monitor our weather nets?

Because of the deciation of our spotters and NCS's, a large number police officers and volunteer firefighters have our frequency programmed into their scanners. We have recieved feed back from a number of them.

They tell us our spotting reports have been more accuarte and letting them know what is going on during severe weather. This has really helped them when they work public events outdoors.

Spotter reports are also forwarded to Emergency Management. These reports can save a couple of minutes in issuing a warning to the public.

Also the general public listens in on there scanners as will.

When Servere Weather approaches,

ARE YOU READY?

W1AW Special Event

Friday, February 23 12:01 AM EST

“Welcome Weekend”

W1AW will be on the air all weekend for this special event to celebrate the fact that so many amateurs have gained or will earn new privileges as a result of the rule changes. The station will operate starting at 12:01 AM Eastern Time on Friday, February 23, continuing into the wee hours and resuming operation during the day. Then W1AW will be on the air on both days of the weekend, from 10 AM until 5 PM — perhaps longer as conditions and enthusiasm dictate.”

Operation will be on both SSB and CW. W1AW operators will concentrate their activities on the Technician and General class HF subbands. On SSB, the station will use its normal phone frequencies — 1.855, 3.990, 7.290, 14.290, 18.160 and 21.390 MHz. On 10 meters, W1AW will operate SSB on or about 28.480 MHz.

Operating will be casual unless pileups develop. The purpose is to welcome newcomers to new privileges.

”First Contact” certificates will be available as part of this event. ARRL invites anyone making a first contact or first HF contact to enter the contact information on the ARRL “Welcome Weekend” Web site and receive a certificate in return. “If the first contact is with W1AW we will also be including a W1AW QSL card for the contact.”

