

The LEGEND of The Podunk Hollow Gang

American Radio Relay League (ARRL) which is THE national organization for amateurs. The ARRL recognized the unique position of the ERC as a "club with a future" by giving us credit for being the "Original Podunk Hollow Gang." In 1939 the League sent us the original water color drawing by their staff cartoonist Phillip "Gil" Gildersleeve, W1CJD; which depicts the gang performing the spring housekeeping chores at "the shack." The caption reads, "Greetings to the Original Podunk Hollow Gang -- from A.R.R.L. HEADQUARTERS GangMAY 1939..." We have copies of the picture but have loaned the original to League headquarters where it now hangs on display. It appeared on the cover of QST magazine in 1931. The Egyptian Radio Club is widely known by its early callsign, W9AIU, first issued by the Federal Radio Commission (now the Federal Communications Commission) in 1930. We are one of the older clubs in the country with a rich history that includes the honor of winning the national ARRL operating event Field Day three years in succession in the late thirties. We have the certificate from the League honoring the club for this achievement. Emergency and public service communications are often provided by Amateur Radio Clubs as well as the Egyptian Radio Club. In recent years we have been supplying communications for the track and field events of Illinois' Prairie State Games at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville Campus. We also give similar assistance to the Cahokia Mounds Historic Site "Heritage Days" a fall festival and their "Kids Day" in the spring. We own a 7 1/2 KW generator HF, VHF and UHF radio equipment which is always ready for any emergency communications assignment. The club provides license training and testing as well as emergency preparedness training, Field Day contest operation, Egyptianfest (Hamfest) and social activities. Full membership offers voting privileges however associate membership is available for applicants under 18 years of age and for those living more than 50 miles from the meeting place. We operate four FM voice repeaters; 146.7600 MHz in St. Louis, 146.7900 MHz and 442.4000 MHz both in Edwardsville IL and 224.0600 MHz in Collinsville IL. These VHF/Uhf systems are well located and provide good coverage to the entire metropolitan area for mobile operation and for hand-held radios at somewhat closer range.

In 1990 the old clubhouse was in such shape that the club could no longer afford to keep it repaired. With much chagrin the old clubhouse was bulldozed to the ground and the property was sold to an individual. Again, the ERC was a nomadic club for a couple of years; finally settling into it's present location at the Southwestern Illinois College. Club meetings are held on the first Thursday each month at Southwestern Illinois College, Granite City Campus, located 1/2 mile south of I-270 at the intersection of Illinois Route 203 and Maryville Road. Our weekly net is found on the 146.7900 MHz repeater every Tuesday evening at 8:00 pm central time. All amateurs are invited to check in on the ERC net. The club's 10-10 net meets each Wednesday evening at 7:00 pm central time on 28.4200 MHz. Amateur Radio is under attack on several fronts at a time when our ranks are not growing in number as they once were. For this reason it would be prudent for amateurs to support the ARRL with their membership and likewise join a local radio club because, after all, we are much stronger collectively than individually as we try to preserve the hobby, we all love. So if you aren't affiliated with a local amateur radio club yet pay a visit to the Egyptian Radio Club, the "club with a future" (And a colorful history).

Written by Dennis "Mac" McCann, W9UH Updated by Wally Wise, WA9BRQ

