

RCMA

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Radio Communications Monitoring Association

ED SIRDVY, Chicago Chapter Moderator

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Fellow Members:

The first meeting of the Chicago Mid-America Chapter of the Radio Communications Monitoring Association was held June 21, 1980. The next meeting of RCMA-Chicago will be held Saturday, June 6, 1987 at 1:00 PM (informals start about noon) at The Renaissance Restaurant, 2310 S. Elmhurst/York Road, Elk Grove Village Illinois (312) 766-2040. This is the intersection of Elmhurst York Road, Devon Avenue and Runway 14R. As this will be just after the Consumer Electronics Show, hopefully some of our members will share the latest info.

Summer Meeting Our August 8, meeting will be held at John Arendt's home in Oswego Illinois. John will supply detailed instructions at a later date. They are to be followed to avoid disruption to his family and neighbors. Most of you have been there before. This meeting has been known to attract a number of out of town members. We are going to meet there because we may not have enough attendees to justify a restaurant do to the small attendance at previous summer sessions.

Open Air Meeting Our annual open air meeting will take place on a Sunday, August 23, 1987 at the usual place, Shoe Factory Woods in North West Cook County. This is a high ground, electrically quiet and under used location sans beer and motorcycle and drug gangs. Since this is our only Sunday get-together, I look forward to seeing those of you who cannot make our Saturday affairs.

Our ISP District 4 Tour had rather small attendance. As usual the sight personel went out of their way to accommodate us as did someone in Calumet Park who staged a chase and shootout. I trust he will be rewarded as a guest of the State of Illinois for some time to come. ISP cars are getting their light bars back. Chicago xway detail cars were given red and blue combo lights since Chicago residents expect police cars to have blue lights and think red lights are something else. It was found out blue lights work better during daylight and in fog. The red/blue combos will become standard statewide. Now light bars of the low air resistance style will gradually be phased in but the old models are being retrofitted with the dual color scheme.

A Southern California Ham, the kind that passed the code test that was supposed to put the fear of the FCC and ARRL in him, has been arrested. He was caught jamming the main FBI repeater!

Former Meeting Places In The News Two of our former meeting places were in the news recently. Mancini's (who no longer have a meeting room and dont open till 4) was reviewed in the Sun-Times about May 1st. They got 2½ stars. Unfortunately, the reviewer was listening to 1960s easy listening LPs when he wrote his review and called the place "Mancini's".

We can't go Home(ers) again. Homer's in Forest Park, the place that you did not like and did not like us, was converted to instant parking lot. I still know of three other Proviso Township eateries that we almost held meetings at that are available if you want to get into the restaurant or "instant parking lot" business.

ISP Marine Units have operated on various state waterways for some time. Now they are operating on Lake Michigan. Some say the 45 foot boat used to belong to the CPD but it looks different than other CPD boats which usually were 22 (3) and 35(3) feet long. You can hear them on CPD, marine and ISP Dist 3 and 4 channels. Some years back, Lake Michigan jurisdiction extended only as far as a three mile limit. The middle was federal territory. Then some type of law or agreement divided up the US waters of the Great Lakes. Since Lake Michigan is wholly within the US, certain boundries were drawn in an intersting fashion. The southern border of Michigan with Indiana was extended westward through the lake to the west border of Indiana with Illinois. North

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of that line, Michigan and Illinois split down the middle until the north Illinois border with Wisconsin north of which Wisconsin and Michigan split it down the middle. I expect Lake and Cook Counties were automatically extended to the new state border but I don't know if Chicago, Evanston, Wilmette, etc. were also extended east. This has resulted in an interesting situation on the South side of Chicago. Part of Chicago's Lakefront south of 77th Street is the state line. Cast a line into Lake Michigan from Chicago Park District land without an Indiana fishing license and the Indiana Game Warden can grab your line. If he can pull you in he can arrest you! This is the reason the South Chicago Coast Guard station was never closed. Waters in these areas were out of the jurisdiction of the CPD/CFD. When the CFD went nautical, Uncle Sam saw the opportunity to save a buck and closed the Downtown and Jackson Park CG stations. Wilmette and South Chicago were kept because local service was not available. Only the Chicago City service was considered duplicate. Later the deep water (110 ft) cutter Arundel was removed. Now that there is no big (92ft) fireboat downtown, all weather rescue capability does not exist.

The Chicago Area DX Club is looking for a new leader. Want to run a club?

The Bus is Still Running As of last January, CFD 271 was still the old CTA bus. Com vans 272-3 were pie wagons, 271 now carries a cellular antenna among its 1 1/2 dozen other curtain rods.

Cellular Cellular Antennas A number of cellular antenna towers that I think belong to the former Rodgers Radio/Metromedia cellular system employ six sets of directional antennas. Three outrigger arms have back to back screen reflector directional antennas. Thus six cells operate from each site.

Metra Railphones I have been observing the Railphone situation on the BN portion of Metra. As you recall, The RTA entered into an agreement with Airphones for radio-telephones to be placed on commuter trains the same way radio-telephones are being placed on some Amtrak trains. Although Airphones airline phones use a dedicated narrow band ACSB system, Airphone elected to use cellular phones on the trains because building a dedicated ground based system with stations every 20 miles instead of 200 or so miles for the airborne system could not be justified. Trains equipped with phones are identified with a "phone on board" sign on the train sign at the departure gate. Cars with phones are identified by a "phone off board" sign by the loading door (which is in the center of the car on Chicago's Gallery Cars. Only push-pull cab cars are equipped with phones. Train radio antennas are hi-band low profile types mounted above the end cab. The cellular phone equipped cars sport two 800 MHz low profile antennas mounted off to the left and right side airdships. Low profile antennas are used to avoid damage by the car wash rotary brushes. Horns and gumball lights have rails placed alongside to deflect the brushes.

Within the cars, the phones are mounted in the aisle just inside the door from the (centered) vestibule. There is no privacy and users cannot sit down. The phones are mounted quite low to accommodate wheel chair patients. Only credit cards can be used to place a call. The car the phone is located in is usually a smoker. Most rush hour expresses (at least on the BN portion where I made my observations) don't take much more than 1/2 hour to reach their destination anyway. Since I don't want to stand in the smudge pot smoker to observe, I don't think they get much use but can't verify that fact.

The VOA is feeding their overseas transmitters by satellite using the T-1 digital system. In standard T-1 systems, the 1.5Mbit streams are broken up into 24 56Kilobit channels. This is fine for 3.5KHz bandwidth telephone channels but for broadcast they divide things differently. One Stereo-FM feed and six AM channels are sent on the T-1 system. I expect that each AM feed uses the equivalent of 2 telephone channels and each side of the stereo-FM feed takes the equivalent of six telephone channels. Digital audio is very wasteful of spectrum. A voice channel operating in analog mode can only handle 9.6 kilobits. 19.2 kb is sent usually using two analog circuits. For maximum spectrum efficiency is accomplished using analog for analog and digital transmission for digital material. Using fiberoptic landlines though you have spectrum to burn.

Remaining Meetings 6-6 at the Renaissance; 8-8 at John Arendts; 8-23 at Shoe Factory Woods; 9-19 at location to be announced; 11-14 at location to be announced. We will discuss the location to be announced at our 8-8 meeting.

Woodridge should now be using their 800 system. Regency has proposed that all scanners be labeled to warn that they may be used illegally. The ECPA strikes again.

Ed King