

# *The Smokehouse*

*Where Country Hams Hang Out*

*February 2019*



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## **ELMER**

In our hobby there is a term 'Elmer', referring to someone who helps new amateurs find their way inside the community, locate resources, understand techniques, etc. It's part of what we might consider the folklore of amateur radio.

I started this with the intent to quickly introduce the concept of an Elmer and then spend some time talking about our own role in this adventure, but as is often the case, I was sidetracked by my own investigation.

There is a push within the community to abandon the concept of an Elmer, that it's not real that it serves no purpose and that it's a recent invention and

irrelevant to our community. Finding an Elmer today appears to be hard work, seeing the wood for the trees, finding a unicorn in this social media connected world. But as it turns out, Elmers are closer than you think.

With a little searching, the person who is credited with introducing the word Elmer into the amateur radio vocabulary was Rod W9BRD. He was the author of a column "How's DX?" in QST magazine from 1947 through to 1978. In March of 1971 he wrote:

Too frequently one hears a sad story in this little nutshell: 'Oh, I almost got a ticket, too, but Elmer, W9XYZ, moved away and I kind of lost interest.' Sure, the guy could have

burned through on his own, maybe, but he, like others, wound up an almost-ham. No more Elmer. We need those Elmers. All the Elmers, including the ham who took the most time and trouble to give you a push toward your license, are the birds who keep this great game young and fresh."

Rod was first licensed in 1937 as a 14 year old. He became a silent key in 2012.

On the face of it we have this idea that an Elmer is someone who helps you get your amateur license, but it started me thinking. What if Elmer wasn't a phrase, but a reference. The name Elmer is a male name from Old English, meaning "noble" and "famous". What if

W9XYZ wasn't an actual callsign, but an example, given Rod was licensed as W9BRD, it would be simple to think of XYZ as a random suffix, much like I might use VK6XYZ, which happens to be a nonexistent call at the moment.

What if Rod was saying: Oh, I almost got a ticket too, but Peter VK6LB, or Paul VK5PAS or Mary VK4PZ, moved away and I kind of lost interest.

Instead of using real amateurs like I just did, Rod wanted to use a generic name, someone "noble" and "famous", with a generic callsign to not single out a particular person.

The reference to "Elmer" takes on a whole different meaning. It means anyone, you, me, the amateur at your club, anyone who can help another person become an amateur.

As it turns out, "Elmer" is all of us, it's a way to refer to anyone and everyone, it's not a specific role or purpose, it's the invitation to you to help another amateur.

This of course means that you need to step-up. You don't need to put on your Elmer cape and become a

superhero, you just need to be part of the community, to ask questions, to help with discovering answers and to encourage investigation into this exciting pursuit of amateur radio.

So, are you an Elmer and if not, what are you going to do about it?

### **MCARC Meeting, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019.**

The meeting came to order at 7pm in the basement of the City Hall Building located in Glasgow, KY.

KY4BC made a motion, seconded by KC4RGE to dispense with the reading of the minutes. Motion passed.

KD4SS gave the financial report. He reported \$xxxx.xx in the checking and \$xxxxx.xx in the savings. Motion made by KY4BC, seconded by K8RPG to accept the financial report. Motion passed.

#### **Committee Reports:**

**Repeater Committee:**  
KD4SS will pay the tower climber \$1000.00 for the work he has done so far. The tower has broken shackles on some of the guy wires and the climber is

unable to climb the tower until they are fixed. The fence around the site has been expanded and the drive to the site needs to be re-graded. Marcus with Southern Kentucky Communications stated that the roadwork and tower repairs should be done soon.

**Hamfest Committee:** 89 tables out of 115 tables have been sold. Given past numbers, the tables should sell out soon. We are planning on having tailgating again this year. We should finalize everything at our February meeting. KD4SS noted that with the government shutdown, the FCC is not processing any new applications or renewals.

**Field Day/Special Event Committee:** No report.

**Webpage Committee:** No report.

**Old Business:**

Badges have been ordered. The vendor is to start making them soon. He will contact KJ4CMG when they are ready to ship with a total cost for the badges. 31 badges were ordered.

**New Business:**

WN3NFD was introduced to the group. He recently moved to the Munfordville

area. He also introduced his wife who is interested in getting licensed. KN4IV nominated WN3NFD for membership. We will vote on him at the next meeting he attends.

Committee assignments for 2019:

Repeater Committee:  
W4RRK, KG4KGY,  
KJ4CMG, KF4HNF;

Hamfest Committee:  
KN4IV, N4AES, N9FXU,  
KG4ABA;

Webpage Committee:  
W3JBG, KN4WLS,  
KC4RGE;

Field Day Committee:  
N4AES, KK4RJV,  
KK4OVW.

Old Kentucky Hams will meet on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Meet at 6pm in Rafferty's in Bowling Green, KY. The Old

Kentucky Hams is a very old ham club that has members from many different states. Meetings originally took place in Mammoth Cave. The club has been meeting since the 1930's. Meetings are held twice a year in January and June. Lifetime dues are \$1.00. For more information, search for My Old Kentucky Hams on Facebook.

KD4SS gave a presentation on a YouTube video. The

topic was radio history with Jim Ferguson.

No further business to come before the meeting, KC4RGE made a motion, seconded by W4RRK to adjourn. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 7:34pm. There were 13 members and 2 guests at the meeting.



### **Earth's Magnetic North Pole Shifts toward Siberia**

National Centers for Environmental Information ([NCEI](#)) scientists have updated the world magnetic model (WMM) mid-cycle, as Earth's northern magnetic pole has begun shifting quickly away from the Canadian Arctic and toward Siberia, an [NCEI report](#) said this week. The new WMM more accurately represents the change of the magnetic field since 2015. The alteration could have an impact on government, industry, and consumer electronics.

"Due to unplanned variations in the Arctic region, scientists have released a new model to more accurately represent the change of the magnetic field," the report said,

noting that updated versions of the WMM are typically released every 5 years. This update comes about 1 year early.

"This out-of-cycle update before next year's official release of WMM 2020 will ensure safe navigation for military applications, commercial airlines, search and rescue operations, and others operating around the North Pole," said NCEI, which is part of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). "Organizations such as NASA, the Federal Aviation Administration, US Forest Service, and many more use this technology. The military uses the WMM for undersea and aircraft navigation, parachute deployment, and more."

Other governmental entities use the technology for surveying and mapping, satellite/antenna tracking, and air traffic management. Smartphone and consumer electronics companies also rely on the WMM to provide consumers with accurate compass apps, maps, and GPS services.

Airport runways may be the most visible example of a navigation aid updated to match shifts in Earth's

magnetic field. Airports around the country use the data to give runways numerical names, which pilots refer to on the ground. The declination has changed slightly more than 2.5° over the past 2 decades or so. Compasses use declination — the difference between true north and where a compass points — to help correct navigation systems for a wide variety of uses.

As Earth's magnetic field evolves between the 5-year release schedule of the WMM, these predicted values can become off as the rate of change in Earth's magnetic field evolves due to unpredictable flows in Earth's core. The NCEI report said Earth's north polar region is experiencing one of these erratic changes.

DXer and Contester Frank Donovan, W3LPL, said the slowly drifting *geomagnetic* north pole has much greater significance to DXers and contesters because the northern auroral oval — which greatly affects HF propagation over the north Atlantic and north Pacific Oceans — is closely centered on the geomagnetic north pole and *not* on the magnetic — or dip — north pole discussed in the NCEI report.

“The geomagnetic north pole has been drifting generally northward at only about 3 miles per year,” Donovan pointed out. “The location of the magnetic north pole is important to navigation but of relatively little importance to space-based phenomena such as HF ionospheric propagation.”

— *Thanks to NOAA-NCEI*

## 2019 Kentucky Hamfest

03/02/2019 | [Cave City Hamfest](#)

**Location:** Cave City, KY  
**Type:** ARRL Hamfest  
**Sponsor:** Mammoth Cave Amateur Radio Club  
**Website:** <http://ky4x.org>

04/06/2019 | [LTARC 41st Annual Hamfest](#)

**Location:** Elizabethtown, KY  
**Type:** ARRL Hamfest  
**Sponsor:** Lincoln Trail Amateur Radio Club

04/13/2019 | [Letcher County ARC Hamfest](#)

**Location:** Whitesburg, KY  
**Type:** ARRL Hamfest  
**Sponsor:** Letcher County Amateur Radio Club

04/27/2019 | [RCARA Tailgate Hamfest](#)

**Location:** Ashland, KY  
**Type:** ARRL Hamfest  
**Sponsor:** River Cities Amateur

Radio Association  
**Website:** <http://www.rcara.net>

06/01/2019 | [Princeton KY Hamfest](#)

**Location:** Princeton, KY  
**Type:** ARRL Hamfest  
**Sponsor:** Princeton Ham Radio Club, Tri-County ARES Group  
**Website:** <http://w4kbl.org>

08/10/2019 | [Central Kentucky Hamfest](#)

**Location:** Lexington, KY  
**Type:** ARRL Hamfest  
**Sponsor:** Bluegrass Amateur Radio Society  
**Website:** <http://bluegrassars.org>

09/07/2019 | [Greater Louisville Hamfest 2019](#)

**Location:** Shepherdsville, KY  
**Type:** ARRL Hamfest  
**Sponsor:** Greater Louisville Hamfest Association  
**Website:** <http://LouisvilleHamfest.com>

09/14/2019 | [Richmond Hamfest](#)

**Location:** Richmond, KY  
**Type:** ARRL Hamfest  
**Sponsor:** Central Kentucky Amateur Radio Society  
**Website:** <http://www.ckars.org/hamfest>