

DIAL'S STORY

Amateur radio in Middletown actually dates back to 1915 when there were three active hams in the area. Details of radio activity from 1915 into the 1930's are pretty sketchy. Indications point to an interest in amateur radio which attracted young men in the community. Most of those interested in amateur radio were involved in related commercial radio fields such as telegraph (Morse code) instruction, shipboard radio operation and radio construction, installation and maintenance specialties.

Monday, May 9, 2016 will mark 75 years of Dial's existence and affiliation with the American Radio Relay League (ARRL). Founded and affiliated in 1941, just prior to US involvement in the Second World War, Dial had a very short operating window prior to cessation ordered by the War Department.

The first activity for the new club was Field Day. On Saturday and Sunday, June 7 and 8, 1941, amateur operators set up self-powered stations and performed exhaustive tests of equipment while operating under emergency conditions. Five Dial members set up at the old Hetzler School, southwest of Germantown, OH. Power was provided by a truck-mounted motor generator set which was provided by the Cincinnati Gas and Electric Company. Sadly, we have no written records of their successes, or failures, at this Field Day exercise.

During WWII, on-air amateur radio activity was severely curtailed.

In April, 1947, the Dial Radio Club operated under the amateur call sign W8ROT and had 18 active members. Dial, then under the sponsorship of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, returned to operation. War-time restrictions on amateur radio had been lifted and Dial was ready to go. The next Field Day experience was in June, 1951, on a Marshall Road farm. There were 30 active amateur radio operators in Middletown and a total of 100 in Butler and Warren counties.

In the late 1960's, frequency modulation, thanks to new rules of the FCC, was a new and exciting mode. Repeaters, at that time illegal in the Amateur service, were the rage. A local group, under the leadership of Sam (WB8FNR) and Marge (WB8CLG) Noblet, guided Dial in this new facet of technology.

A 2M (146.61), automatically controlled, amateur radio repeater was built and located in the press box at Monroe High School. A year or two later, this repeater was moved to its current location on the WNKU (previously WPFB) tower. The 2M repeater currently has an antenna located at a 325' level on this tower and has a commanding footprint both north and south along the I-75 corridor.

During the following years, an additional 2M (147.315) repeater was added in Madison Township, a UHF (444.825) repeater, linked to the 146.61 repeater, was added in Middletown, a 6M repeater (now decommissioned) was placed in Madison Twp. and a DMR (444.3625) repeater was located on Breiel Boulevard. In 2015, the 2M repeater in Madison Township was replaced with a Yaesu System Fusion repeater capable of operating in either digital or analog mode.

Amateur license instruction was initiated in the early 1970's and numerous Novice and Technician licensees emerged. In late 1988, after a short hiatus, license classes were reintroduced. Over the past 28 years, approximately 600 students have attended Dial's license classes and more than 500 have earned either a new license or an upgraded existing license. We have offered license examination services, which are open to the public, since 1988 and tested an estimated 1400 applicants over the 28-year period.

-K8CM, et.al (March 2016 Newsletter)