

Microwave Meetings and Publications

I am often asked where to go to learn more about Amateur Radio microwave operation, equipment and techniques. The best advice is to find a local group where you can share and learn from other amateurs who either already have the experience or will learn along with you. A local group offers the possibility of trying out new rigs or improvements frequently, and will help establish personal relationships with other microwavers.

Two more sources of information are publications and conferences. Newsletters from various clubs and *DUBUS*, a European publication, keep us informed of new developments. At conferences, amateurs gather on an annual basis to focus on VHF and above topics.

Newsletters and Periodicals

Some of the more active clubs publish a monthly newsletter. By joining the

club you can also receive their newsletter and keep up on the latest information, including activities for members, topics at club meetings, construction projects and items for sale.

The San Bernardino Microwave society publishes a club newsletter. To learn more, set your browser to www.ham-radio.com/sbms/. Send your requests to the Corresponding Secretary, as listed on the site.

North Texas Microwave Society newsletter is called *Feed Point*. NTMS has a Web site at www.ntms.org/. For a subscription, click on "Membership" and follow directions.

The North East Weak Signal Group publishes a newsletter called "NEWSLetter". Subscriptions can be obtained by setting your browser to www.newsvhf.com/. Click on the membership application form link.

Mt Airy VHF Radio Club has a newsletter called *Cheesebits*. For subscription information, go to www.ij.net/packrats/ and follow the links to subscribe.

Subscription information for the European *DUBUS* magazine, perhaps one of the best technical amateur microwave periodicals, is available by setting your browser to www.dubus.org/ and sending e-mail to the address for your country. Most articles are published in both German and English, and the magazine is typically published once every two months.

Conferences

Meetings, band sessions, talks, equipment clinics, LNA noise figure measurements, antenna measurements, banquets,

vendors specializing in our needs, and lots of enjoyable discussions are in store for you at conferences held annually around the country (see Figures 1 through 5).

The Southeastern VHF Society

The Southeastern States VHF conference, held annually in April has met in Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama. The 2005 meeting is scheduled for April 29-30 in Charlotte, North Carolina. Set your browser to www.svhf.org/ for information.

The Central States VHF Society

Usually held in the summer months and in some central location, the Central States VHF Society holds its annual meeting, drawing a large crowd from all over the Americas, and some beyond. Not restricted to just VHF, there are often topics about microwaves, equipment clinics

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Figure 1—Technical talks are usually very well explained and full of practical information.

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Figure 4—Sandra of Down East Microwave is ready to help you with the latest kits and systems.

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Figure 2—Various high quality test equipment is often set up to help tune up your latest project.

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Figure 3—A banquet at a recent conference was a great time to share friendship and a good meal.



Figure 5—SSB Electronic is showing off some tower mounted solutions.



Figure 7—At the end of a Microwave Update talk the presenter takes questions from the audience

and antenna measuring. Visit www.csvhfs.org/ for more information.

Eastern VHF

Held in New England, historically in either the summer or the spring, this meeting draws attendance from all over the northeast, and occasionally from beyond. Topics of interest span from 50 MHz through light. Usually there are parallel sessions, with technical talks in one room and band sessions in another, followed by a flea market and antenna measuring the second day (see Figure 6).

Microwave Update

Possibly the largest and most prestigious annual meeting of radio amateurs focused on microwaves is the Microwave Update conference. With attendance usually well over 100, and moving to different cities around the country, this meeting has been bringing together an international crowd for nearly 20 years. The 2004 meeting is slated for the Dallas/Fort Worth area October 15 and 16 with some additional activities on the 14th. Two full days of presentations cover a wide range of topics (see Figure 7) from high-level descriptions

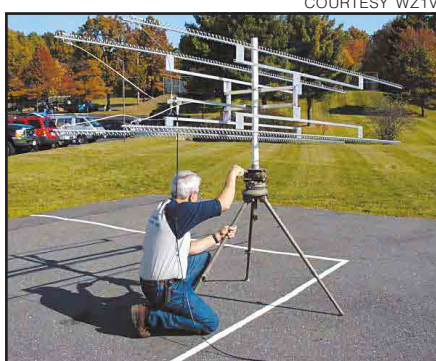


Figure 6—Antenna measuring is provided at some conferences.

to very detailed practical advice. Examples of previous meeting topics include power amplifier design, TWT amplifier tuning, low noise amplifiers, phase noise, antenna design, digital techniques, microwave EME, roving, frequency stability and rain scatter. One day is traditionally added to the beginning of the conference for those who want to participate in special activities such as visits to exciting installations and tours of surplus vendors (see Figure 8). A flea market is usually held Friday evening. If you are interested in micro-

waves, this is the one conference to attend.

The latest Microwave Update information can be found at www.microwaveupdate.org/ and the upcoming update details are at ntms.org/Update.htm.

Clubs

Your local club might sponsor other types of events. Some have regularly scheduled equipment tune-up evenings, others have activity days and some have fun competitions to get equipment ready for the contesting season. The NEWS group combines its annual picnic with a 10 and 24 GHz MDS (minimum discernable signal) test. This way, most club members learn if their portable rig is as sensitive as the others (see Figure 9).

The various links mentioned here and others can be found at www.walmba.org/interest.htm/. Please visit this site for listings of other clubs and overseas resources.

Next Month

Next issue we will take a look at RF connectors suitable for microwave work. Some connectors that work just fine on VHF and UHF begin to have problems at the higher frequencies.



Figure 8—Surplus vendor tours can be most rewarding if you can just remember that model number...



Figure 9—Portable stations being prepared at the NEWS picnic for MDS testing.