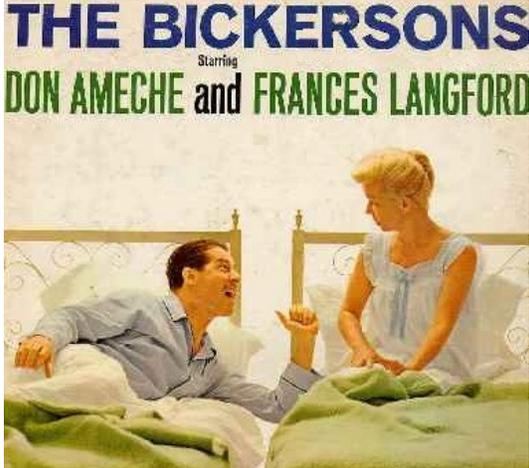




"The Bickersons have retired. Three o'clock in the morning finds Mrs. Bickerson wide awake and anxious, as poor husband John, victim of contagious insomnia, broadcasts the telltale signs of the dreaded affliction. Listen..."



The Bickersons was a radio comedy series that began September 8, 1946, on NBC, moving the following year to CBS where it continued until August 28, 1951. The show's married protagonists, portrayed by Don Ameche and Frances Langford, spent nearly all their time together in a relentless verbal war.

Blanche would awaken John, even at three in the morning, and the feuding would continue with their trademark arguments about John's job, Blanche's domestic abilities, John's alleged eye for neighbor Gloria Gooseby, Blanche's shiftless brother Amos or John's taste for bourbon. Blanche is one of the monstrous shrews of all time. Her aim appears to be to drive her husband crazy and she succeeds very nicely. The harassed John's only weapon is insult, at which he's pretty good.

You can listen-in to their feuding at: <https://oldradioprograms.us/Bickersons.htm>



The Central Texas Amateur Radio Net meets every Thursday at 8:00 PM on the W5AMK repeater, on 146.960(-) PL 123.0 Join Us!

September NCS & Back-Up NCS Schedule

September 5th: September 12th:
 Net Control: KE5ISN KI5FQL
 Back-Up: KF5OHR KG5RWM

September 19th: September 26th:
 Net Control: AD5SK AG5UQ/KI5FKT
 Back-Up: KF5OHR K6WXA

Light-Up 2 Meters

This two-hour simplex event is on Sunday, September 8th, from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm local time. Suggested operating frequencies are 146.520, 146.550 and 147.550.



Coryell County Joint Comm Group Meeting

The next meeting of the Coryell County Joint Comm Group will be on Thursday, September 12th, at 11:30 AM, at the County Annex, located at 800 East Main Street - Suite A, in Gatesville.



Texas QSO Party

Sponsored by the Northwest Amateur Radio Society - W5NC - to encourage contacts between Texas amateur radio operators and amateur radio operators throughout the world.

Contest period is September 14th to the 15th. For more information, visit: <http://txqp.net/>





September VHF QSO Party

Contest period is from 1800Z, Sept. 14th to 0300Z, Sept. 16th, on all authorized amateur frequencies of 50 MHz and up. For complete information on this event, please visit:

<http://www.arrl.org/september-vhf>



The Fall Radio Show comes to Dallas at the Hilton Anatole, 2201 North Stemmons Freeway, this September 24th through the 27th. More info is at:

<https://www.radioshowweb.com/about/aboutRABNAB.asp>



Free Training Course Available

The Central Texas Disaster Action Response Team has scheduled the next "G-317: Introduction to Community Emergency Response" course to be held in Killeen, on Friday, September 27 (6-10pm), Saturday, September 28 (8am-6pm) and Saturday, October 5 (8am-6pm).

This 24-hour course covers information on fire safety, search and rescue, medical aid, terrorism, and is designed to provide awareness of local threats and hazards along with ways to prepare for them in the absence of first responders during times of emergency.

To register for the course, please visit: <https://www.preparingtexas.org/DeliveryDetails.aspx?classid=f3c5d3ad-dd52-481f-a866-1e04f608e25c>

"The casualty lists that railroads, street cars and autos are responsible for, are charged up to progress. There is not a single death chalked up against radio so far."

Radio Topics - September, 1923

WWV Centennial Event

The National Institute of Standards and Technology radio station WWV, the world's oldest continuously operating radio station, will be celebrating its centennial this fall.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology and the Northern Colorado Amateur Radio Club have teamed up to organize the station's 100th anniversary events.

As part of the 100th anniversary event, the NIST has teamed up with the Northern Colorado Amateur Radio Club to have a special event station using the callsign WWØWWV, operating from the grounds of WWV. The special event station will be on the air from September 28th to October 2nd. QSL requests go via WØDAS.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.nist.gov/news-events/events/2019/10/nist-radio-station-wwv-100-year-anniversary>



You Never Know What You'll Hear On The Radio



Station WSM announcer Jack Harris broadcasts details of a milking contest between Tennessee Governor Gordon Browning (L) and Nashville Mayor Tom Cummings (R), at the 1938 Tennessee Dairy Festival.



Vandal(s) Target Waco Radio Stations

M & M Broadcasters in Waco were vandalized during the evening of July 25th, leaving 11 popular radio stations off the air.

The company's Programming Director said someone knew what they were doing, and knew where they were going, as well as they had to know something about radio. Several coaxial cables had been cut, along with the phone and internet lines.



The resultant damage done by the vandal(s) knocked stations KRZI 1660 AM, KBHT 104.9 FM, Sirius XM Radio 56, KBBW 101.3 FM, Magic 104.5 FM, La Mejor 106.1 FM, KGSR 93.3 FM, KLRK 1590 AM FOX Sports and KRMX 92.9 FM off the air for about eight to ten hours while engineers worked to repair the damage.

Some employees reported that they heard noise on the roof of the facility and walked out the side door, where they saw a man in a white BMW with a Texas Longhorns logo on the back.

Waco police are investigating the incident. Knocking a radio station off air is an FCC violation meaning the person responsible could face felony charges.



More Idiot Copper Thieves

This past August 4th, Tulsa County Sheriff Deputies were called to the transmitter site of station KRMG, in Sand Springs, OK., where an engineer had checked on an interrupted signal and found one man dead with wire pliers in his hand and another man severely burned, convulsing on the ground.

The injured man was taken to the hospital where he was admitted in critical condition. Officials did not release the identities of the two men involved.

While at the site, Sheriff Deputies arrested 37 year-old Angie West, the apparent get-away driver. She told Deputies she had taken the men to the area to take copper, but fell asleep in her car while waiting for them.



Someone took an old defunct radio and re-purposed the front of it into a coat rack or hat rack.



It would be nice to know what year, make and model the radio was originally. Anyone have any clue?

Thanks to WB4J for the contribution. -Ed.



DDØVR will be active as **3D2VR** from Fiji, September 2-9, and September 23-27. In-between he'll be active as **5WØVR** from Samoa, 9 - 16 September. Then as **A35JY** from Tonga, 16 - 21 September. QSL via his home call sign.

A group will be active as **A35JT** from Tonga, Sep. 24 - Oct. 6. QSL via LotW, eQSL, or MØOXO.

KV1J will be active signing **stroke FP**, from Miquelon Island, Sep. 24 - Oct. 8. QSL via his home call or LotW.

PH2M will be active signing **stroke SV9** from Crete, Sep. 20 - Oct. 3. QSL via his home call or LotW.

HA5AO will be active as **3DAØAO** from eSwatini (Swaziland) September 15 - 30. QSL via his home call.

IV3TMM is active as **9U3TMM** from Burundi, until 17 September. QSL via his home call or LotW.

A group will be active as **A82X** on CW and SSB; and **A82Z** on the Digital modes from Liberia, September 28 - October 11. QSL via I2YSB.

Special Event Station **PH75MG** will be active 14 - 21 September, from the Netherlands. QSL via PI4CQ.

DF2WO will be active as **D44TWO** from Santiago Island, September 29 to October 13. QSL via MØOXO.

A group will be active as **MD/OP2D** from Isle of Man, September 21 - 27. QSL via MØURX.

W7GJ will be active as **S79GJ** from La Digue Island, 20 Sep. - 5 Oct. QSL via his home call.

RC5A as **5H3CA** and RMØF as **5H3RRC** will be active on Mafia Island, 29 September - 5 October. QSL via RC5A.

PA2JJB is active as **PA6TXL** from Texel Island, until October 8. QSL via his home call.

DL2GAC is active as **H44MS** from Malaita Island, until September 20. QSL via his home call.

R2ATP will be active signing **stroke LZ** from Bulgaria, September 1 - 24. QSL via his home call.

KB1QU will be active as **9G5QU** from Ghana, September 8 - 21. QSL via N4GMR.

A group will be active as **T3ØL** from Kiribati, 6 - 15 September. QSL via YL2GN.

A group will be active as **C21W** from Nauru, 16 - 25 September. QSL via YL2GN.

A group will be active as **K7TRI** from Tillamook Rock, September 6 - 9. QSL via VE3LYC.

DL2GMI is active as **H44MI** from Malaita Island, until September 3. QSL via his home call, or LotW.

AA3B will be active as **V26K** from Antigua Island, 8 - 20 September. QSL via his home call or LotW.

JA8COE will be active signing **stroke Ø** from Sado Island, September 22 - 24. QSL via his home call sign.

JAØJHQ will be active as **T88PB** from Palau, 6 - 9 September. QSL via LotW or his home call.

DL4APJ / HBØ will be active from Lichtenstein, 12 - 18 September. QSL via his home call, eQSL or LotW.

DL2JRM / EA9 will be active from Ceuta & Melilla, 13 - 16 September. QSL via his home call.

IK2GZU will be active as **5H3MB** from Tanzania, 25 Sep. - 28 Oct. QSL via his home call, LotW, or eQSL.

JD1BNA will be active on Marcus Island, 25 - 30 September. QSL via JL1UTS.

F8BBL will be active as **TK19IOTA** from Corsica, September 6 - 22. QSL via his home call or LotW.

How's DX? *Continued...*

5E6A is active from Morocco until September 29. QSL via EA7FTR.

J13DST and **JR8YLY** will be active each signing **stroke Ø** from Sado Island, September 6 - 11. Then they will be signing **stroke 5** from Shodo Island, September 20 - 25. QSL each via their home callsigns.

PT7ZT will be active the entire month from Brazil as **ZZ4ØZT**. QSL via his home call or LotW.

K9HZ is active as **J68HZ** from Saint Lucia Island, until 4 October. QSL via his home call, or LotW.

K5SL will be active signing **stroke PJ4** from Bonaire Island, September 7 - 14. QSL via his home call.

DH5FS will be active as **E51SFS** from Cook Islands, 8 - 25 September. QSL via his home call.

JO3LVG will be active as **T88MK** from Palau, 12 - 20 September. QSL via his home call or eQSL.

Special Event Station **9M4COO** is active through September 1st, from Malaysia. QSL direct.

A group will be active as **EX6QP** from Kyrgyzstan, 2 - 15 September. QSL via SP6OJK.

JG7PSJ will be active as **WHØRU** from Saipan Island, 15 - 22 September. QSL via his home call or LotW.

OZ1DJJ is active as **OX3LX** from Upernavik Island, until September 5. QSL via OZØJ.

LA7GIA will be active as **6O7O** from Somalia, September 14 - 28. QSL via MØOXO.

F6EYB is active as **FK8CJ** from New Caledonia, until the end of the year. QSL via his home call, LotW, or eQSL.

TM41CDXC will be active from France, September 13 - 27. QSL via F5CWU.

What's New?



For the past ten years Kenneth Watkins-KE5ISN, has been our Net Control Director, running the schedule for the Central Texas Amateur Radio Net. He has now elected to retire from that position.

Succeeding him in that position, please welcome Tina Boatwright-KI5FQL, as our new Net Control Director. Please join me in extending your full support and help to her.

There had been words that the net, which has been held each Thursday night at 8:00 PM, for the past ten years, was possibly going to end this month. Not for lack of enthusiasm, or lack of participating stations, but due to the lack of Net Control Operators.

This past August 22nd, four people stepped up to the plate and volunteered to pitch in as Net Control Operators: Tina Boatwright-KI5FQL, Jacob Tusig-KG5RWM, and the Grandfather & Grandson combo of Cliff Pinkerton - AG5UQ and Alex Donnell-KI5FKT.

Please welcome each of them to the rolls and thank them for volunteering.

And... just because we have four new Net Control op's, don't think we have enough. Step up and get involved and help out. The more people involved as Net Control Operators, the less of a burden to the others when someone can't make it due to real life commitments.

If you're interested in helping out, please contact Tina-KI5FQL, via email at: ki5fql@dmstxinc.com

"Radio has the challenge and the opportunity of creating content that surprises, enchants, and delights."

Fred Jacobs - President, Jacobs Media Strategies



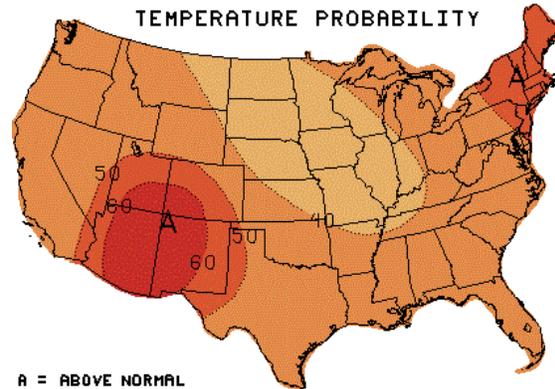
Fall Forecast Outlook

The Earth's orbit around the sun – and the tilt on its axis – are bringing us to a place in time and space where our world's Northern Hemisphere will have the Autumnal Equinox. For those of us here in Central Texas, the Autumnal Equinox, bringing the first day of Fall, will be on Monday, September 23rd, at 2:50 am CDT.

NOAA forecasters monitoring oceanic and atmospheric patterns say that the El Niño in the Pacific Ocean has ended and neutral conditions have returned. With that, conditions are now more favorable for above-normal hurricane activity. NOAA is now expecting 10-17 named storm systems, of which 5-9 will become hurricanes, including 2-4 major hurricanes. The peak of the Atlantic hurricane season usually comes around September 10th each season, with the hurricane season ending on November 30th.

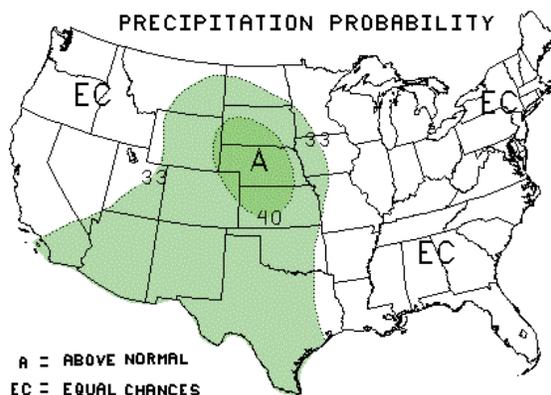
After several rounds of heat this summer, warm weather is predicted to stick around for much of the fall season. There are probably going to be people at the beaches for a longer duration this year compared to other years, as all fifty states are forecast to have seasonally above average temperatures during the outlook period.

Come the middle of fall, the region is likely to experience a cool-down, signaling an end to the summery weather. But it won't signal an early winter for the region.



Fall 2019 will be drier than 2018 with much more variability in rain activity and distribution. Overall, drier than average conditions are expected both in the western and eastern half of the country.

Inland, average to above average precipitation is expected during the outlook period followed by a return to average to below average precipitation for October and November.



In the East, overall warmer than average conditions are expected along with generally average precipitation except across the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains where precipitation received could be below average during the fall season.

A generally active weather pattern is in store for the southern Plains this autumn with some forecasters calling for a number of severe weather events for the late-severe weather season.

The Southeast and Gulf states should remain on alert for tropical impacts during the autumn, with forecasters predicting two to three more tropical impacts for the United States. But, we won't really know until we get close to that time period where storms are going to evolve and where they're going to head.

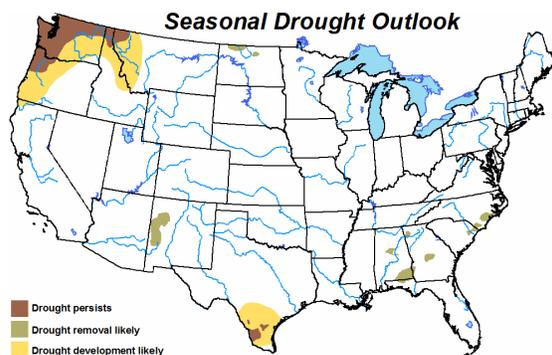
The seasonal transition will be more dramatic farther to the Northeast. Forecasters are talking a transition that could go from rather mild weather, to some snow lying on the ground by mid-season. The highest elevations of the Northeast will have the best chances for autumn snow as we get into mid-season, but it may be a long time for significant snow that's going to stick.

Fall marks the seasonal transition out of the core of fire season to most regions. Given the weather outlook, a Normal significant wildland fire potential is expected across the region.

For October and November, Normal potential is expected in most areas except for Florida in October and across the Mid-South, Oklahoma, and north Texas in November where Below Normal potential is expected.



Lightning-induced fire activity is expected to increase elsewhere. Wind events, which have been largely absent thus far, will increase in frequency as dry frontal passages become a more common occurrence. The occurrence of both wind events and low humidity's will influence an increase in fire behavior and growth.



The latest drought outlook continues to show moderate to severe drought in place across portions of western Oregon and Washington State. The southeast and portions of New Mexico and southern Puerto Rico are also showing areas of moderate drought.

While most of the region is drought free, pockets of abnormally dry conditions and moderate drought exist

across the Carolinas, Georgia, and south Texas. Some of these areas could see an increase in fire activity heading into and through the fall months.

In summary, Fall should probably be renamed "Still Summer" because it seems like by the time "true fall conditions" arrive with frost, wearing sweaters, and the foliage turning, Red-nosed reindeers and inflatable Santa's are already in stores. "Winter" to a lot of people now is really just late fall meeting early spring.

Anyways, take this post as a warning sign summer lovers: those seasonal frapuccinos and smores at Starbucks will soon give way to Pumpkin Spice Latte, and before you know it, the last outdoor concert will take place, and your favorite swimming pool will close for the season.

RADIOTORIAL



Beware of Dingbats - They Live Among Us

It seems hardly a week goes by that we don't hear about some shooting event. It's stating the obvious, but: No place is safe. Now factor in the field in which we radio people are involved, and add a bit more to the risk factor. Consider Joe Dingbat who looks at your aerials, and obviously to him, your radio broadcasts are the source of the interference on his TV set.

Every media outlet attracts attention and many are lightning rods in today's polarized culture. If you have never considered your radio station a target, you either haven't given it much thought or your transmitter has been off for a while.

We live in an era where there are enough individuals on the edge that we must take these things seriously. If you haven't thought through active shooter scenarios and how you would prepare and respond to one at your station, I humbly submit that the time has come. Just Google "Radio Station Shooting" and you'll see numerous stories about radio station WORT in Madison, Wisconsin.

The station was the subject of an active shooter on August 5th, 2018 when a masked gunman entered the radio station around 3 a.m. and opened fire on three people in one of the studios. One of the three volunteers, a DJ, was wounded. He was treated at a hospital and released. The two others were not injured. Police have yet to identify the shooter. You just never know who is coming to the front door sometimes.



Many individuals often seem on the edge of rage. That doesn't mean they are likely to come in and shoot up your station; but with today's environment, you have to take every threat seriously. Certainly, a very important aspect of security is to not let the potential problem into the building in the first place.

It's not fun to think about these things, but the reality of the news each day should drive us to realize we shouldn't wait for a tragic event to take steps to increase our own security.

Take any "off-the-wall event" seriously and get it on record with the local authorities. It could be related to events they've seen elsewhere and your report might help them stop an unstable person before they do greater harm. And in any case, don't take matters into your own hands. Be a witness, and not a hero.



YL NEWS and VIEWS

Darlene “Dee” Yazzie

“The Voice of the Navajo Nation”

Thousands of AM radio stations are on the air, many of them thriving—“The Low-Fi Voices That Speak for America” serving the unique sets of people whose voices aren’t always heard loudly. Broadcasting experts, through conversations and ratings, identified some of the more distinct voices on the AM dial. Making the list was station KTNN in St. Michaels, AZ, which is owned by the Navajo Nation.

The unique voice there, is that of Darlene “Dee” Yazzie, perhaps the most important Navajo-language broadcaster in the world. Her main listeners are people who are out in the rural area, where they don’t have electricity, or running water. Her audience spans across the Navajo Nation territory in Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. Some of their listeners include Navajo “elderlies,” as well as tribal members stationed abroad in the U.S. military.



KTNN came on the air in 1986, and broadcasts on 660 KHz AM with a full 50,000 watts, from the seat of the government of the Navajo Nation. The station broadcasts Navajo tribal music and audio from Navajo ceremonial dances and Native American music, as well as country music and bluegrass in English. Most of its announcers are bilingual and broadcast in Navajo and English. There’s also the Navajo “word of the day” segment, started by Yazzie.

The poverty rate in the Navajo Nation is roughly 38 percent, and the suicide rate is double the U.S. average. Yazzie, who has experienced depression herself, talks about it openly on-the-air. “A lot of people, they text me and say, ‘You inspired me today. I’m going to have a good day.’ That’s how important radio is to me.”

In the Navajo Nation, Darlene’s community outreach ranges from speaking to large groups of students to visiting local elderly people. She is well-known throughout grassroot Navajos as a hallmark for helping to increase awareness about traditional Navajo culture. Her message, just like on the air, is one of inspiration — and the people she meets often return the favor. “The greeting I get is ... ‘Thank you for being who you are,’” she says.

More than your average radio station, KTNN is an experience into the great Navajo Nation, offering a unique blend of music. Their bilingual on-air staff effortlessly transition from one genre to another, broadcasting hits of today and classics from decades past, with an added selection of Native American traditional and contemporary music. It is almost as if the music and the talent behind the mic are one.

Their website, with a link to listen live, can be found at:

<http://www.ktnnonline.com/index.html>

BROADCAST TOPIX

The Titanic of Radio Contests

The year was 1972 and WOHO was second in the ratings in Toledo, Ohio, behind WSPD, a stuffy bastion of Frank Sinatra records, and call-in recipe shows, all pushed by air talent well past their prime.

WOHO held weekly announcer meetings during which they would be scolded by their program director for not beating 5,000 watt WSPD, with their puny 1,000 watts that mostly couldn't be heard at night. A DJ we'll call Gary, interrupted the familiar harangue with an idea for a contest that would, in his words, "set Toledo on its can." Little did they know then, that Gary would be the one getting canned.

"OK, guys, we'll take our jingle package and edit out the O's from our call letters and just replace them with silence, then we'll get on the air and play the edited jingles and say that someone stole the O's from our call letters and buried them somewhere in Toledo. We'll give clues as to where they are, and whoever guesses the location will win \$500."

"Hold on there, pal," said the program director. "Let's make that prize \$250 because that's all the general manager will pop for." So they marched down to the GM's office to let him know how they were going to finally beat WSPD. When presented with the idea, the general manager, a man we'll call Mr. Leonard, screamed "That's crazy. How can you bury the O's from our call letters? It doesn't make any damn sense!"

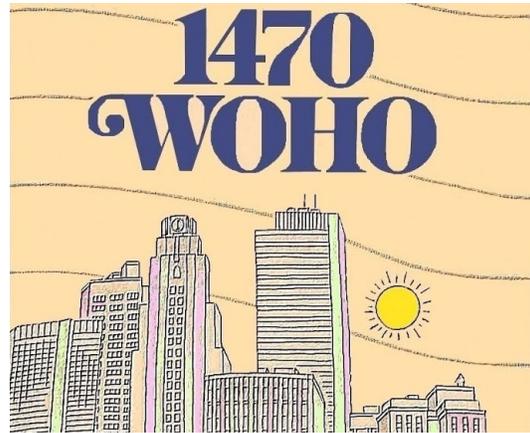
"Look, Mr. Leonard, no one will really be burying anything. We give clues about a secret location in Toledo and people just guess it to win."

"OK, but make that prize \$150, boys. You can throw in some of those free drive-in movie tickets we get every month. And for Christ's sake, don't be caught out there burying anything!" said Mr. Leonard.

And so it began. They started airing their WOHO jingles, with the edited-out O's from their call letters. "One forty-seven, W_H_, the station with the happy difference."

They made no other comments on the air, just played the doctored jingles. The jocks began asking on their shows, "Hey, anyone out there know what happened to our call letters?" Listeners phoned the announcers and were put on the air to offer their theories. They feigned puzzlement and allowed this to go on a few more days. In fact the Toledo Blade, the local daily paper, put a mention of their phony predicament in its entertainment section.

Things were going well, so they sprang the next phase of the scheme, wherein they presented the rules in on-air promos like this: "Someone has stolen the O's from WOHO's call letters, and we need your helping finding them! We received a note in the mail and here is what it said:"



‘Your call letters are in a secret place. Guess where it is and begin the race.
Go west and look for a big brick tower, the one that tolls this very hour.
Locate the letters and win a prize, but don’t use your hands, just use your eyes!’

“Tell WOHO in a postcard where you think the missing call letters are, and if you’re right, you can win \$150 and free movie tickets from the home of the good guys! Send it to WOHO, Broadcast House, Toledo, Ohio!” (Jingle out:) “W_H_, Toledo.”

The location they had in mind was the bell tower at the University of Toledo, a well-known landmark. But before any postcards were received they got a panicked call from a security guard at the University of Toledo...

“Hey, what’s going on over there?” the man wanted to know. “We got people digging up the lawn over here and they said WOHO was going to make them rich!” At the station, they replied that they’d look into it, but at that point they didn’t take this report very seriously. After all, who would be stupid enough to do that?

The next call was from the Toledo Police Department, asking the same question. That got the station's attention. While dealing with the cops, the program director walked into the office and said he’d gotten calls from three TV news departments asking if we were really telling people to dig up the lawn at UT. This was now officially out of control.



Panic time...

The program director called an emergency meeting of the air staff and told them that all contest promos were to be taken off the air immediately. He had made a return call to the police telling them there was a misunderstanding by a few listeners and that we were sure the problems would stop very soon. That’s when he was informed that there were

about 70 cars in the parking lot at the university and people were not only tearing up the grounds but also blocking traffic.

The station's crew got on the air and announced that under no circumstances was anyone to dig anywhere in the city. They went on to say that they would announce the contest winner shortly. The doctored jingles came off the air and in fact no jingles were played.

That seemed to calm things down, but that was not the end of the tale. Gary, the poor jock who suggested the contest in the first place, was given two clear messages by the general manager: “Get Out and Stay Out.”

A couple days later a few listener postcards trickled in, but none of them guessed the correct location of the never-to-be-spoken-of-again “missing call letters.” The local newspaper editorialized about “poorly planned radio contests that endangered our citizens,” and WOHO was mentioned specifically. The station had to pay landscapers to repair the damage at the university and embarrassingly, they were forced to air an apology.

Sergeant Joseph Kasperko, Jr. **Radio Operator of the B-17 "*Strictly G.I.*"**

Joe Kasperko was a city boy from McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania. He had been working at a dairy store when the war came, and enlisted in the Army Air Corps in August 1942. His training took him to various air bases in the deep South, South Dakota and Arizona. Letters home chronicled his moves from base to base, his daily life as a trainee and his hopes for the future. He was good-natured and positive, but did his share of grumbling, as every military man did.

Arriving in England in the summer of 1944, he ended up as a radio operator and gunner assigned to the B17G Flying Fortress "*Strictly G.I.*" of the 323rd Squadron, 91st Bomb Group in Bassingbourn, England.

The crew members of the "*Strictly G.I.*" represented the typical hodgepodge of America — young men drawn from every state and background. They had been stationed in England for about a month before they were listed for their first combat mission together. It would also be their last.

On September 9th, 1944, the crew got out of the sack at 3 a.m., had breakfast and went to the briefing session. A groan went up as they saw that the target was Ludwigshafen, a critical but heavily defended position deep in Germany. The I.G. Farben plant there made synthetic oil on which Germany's military depended.

A dozen B-17 Flying Fortresses lifted off that morning and thundered toward the mammoth I.G. Farben industrial plant that sprawled along the Rhine River at Ludwigshafen. Enemy anti-aircraft guns filled the sky with flak, but as on every mission, the big bombers had to fly straight through the storm of metal.



Sergeant Joe Kasperko, Jr.

Flak hit the plane initially at 11 a.m., when the windshield was shattered, and through the navigator's desk, throwing papers everywhere. No one was hurt in the initial blast and *Strictly G.I.* flew on to drop its bombs over the target. Then at 11:15, WHOMP!, the plane just seemed to drop. Flak had knocked out two engines and the interphone. Mortally wounded, *Strictly G.I.* fell out of formation and began losing altitude. Fire broke out in the bomb bay, separating the officers in the cockpit from the enlisted men in the rear of the plane.

The pilot gave the order to bail out to those nearest him in the cockpit. Then he, the co-pilot, the navigator and the bombardier parachuted out. Five others remained trapped in the back of the plane as it descended to 14,000 feet, began to spin and then exploded in the clouds. Among them were Sgt. Joe Kasperko, the radio operator and gunner; Sgt. Herman Valentine, the top turret gunner; Sgt. Donal Laird, the ball turret gunner; Sgt. Rollin Wright, the tail gunner; and Sgt. Stanley Morris, the waist gunner.

The four officers who parachuted out, were captured immediately after they hit the ground and spent the rest of the war at Stalag Luft I, until the Red Army liberated the camp in the spring of 1945. Back home, no one knew what happened to the *Strictly G.I.* for months.

Of the twelve B-17 Flying Fortresses that had lifted off that morning, *Strictly G.I.* would be the only one not to return from the mission and the War Department listed the crew as missing in action.

The German military removed the larger parts of crashed planes after the war but some evidence always remains. The Army identified Joe's remains from his high school class ring. He was initially buried in Mussbach, Germany, with the remains of the others killed in the crash. Later their remains were exhumed and reburied at an American military cemetery in Belgium.

Last summer a research team found pieces of the *Strictly G.I.* in a forest near Speyerdorf, about 20 miles south of Ludwigshafen. The team got to work identifying the plane and excavating the site, where they've found small pieces of the bomber, personal equipment and exploded ammunition.



Strictly G.I. and her crew

The team, called Historical Research Community Rhineland-Palatinate, has been excavating the site with local archaeologists and tracking down the relatives of the crew with the goal of erecting a monument. They do not want the names of the airmen and this historical and tragic site to be forgotten. They paid the highest price for their country.

Their goal is for the families of the lost to now have the final piece of the story to go with their old telegrams, the War

Department letters, the anguished correspondence between families desperate for news and clinging to hope in 1944 and 1945.

The last entry in Joe Kasperko's book of correspondence is a citation from General Hap Arnold, commander of the Army Air Forces: "He lived to bear his country's arms, he died to save its honor. He was a soldier and he knew a soldier's duty. His sacrifice will help to keep aglow the flaming torch that lights our lives that millions yet unborn may know the priceless joy of liberty."

More than seven decades have passed since then. Of the survivors from September 9, 1944, only Lt. Richard Klein, the bombardier remains. He's 97 and living in California.

In the annals of World War II, *Strictly GI* — officially B-17G 43-37594 — became just another bomber casualty. By the end of the war, the 91st Bomb Group had lost 197 planes. American industry pumped out 12,731 Flying Fortresses and more than a third of them were lost in Europe. The U.S. Eighth Air Force as a whole, lost a total of 6,537 heavy bombers by war's end.