

History of Microwave Update

By Al Ward W5LUA

2022 Revision

In 1985, Don Hilliard, W0PW, felt the need to organize a conference dedicated to microwave equipment design, construction, and operation. At the time of its conception, many microwave terrestrial and EME firsts were occurring on the microwave bands and it appeared that microwave needed a dedicated conference. Don held the first conference which he named "The 1296 and 2304 MHz Conference". It was held at the Holiday Inn in Estes Park, Colorado. 66 people were in attendance. It sure seemed like Don was on the right track with his idea and he was right. In 1986, Don held the second conference which he rightfully named "Microwave Update 86". 64 people were in attendance. The 1987 and 1988 "Microwave Update" conferences were again held in Estes Park, Co. and chaired by Don Hilliard.

After putting on 4 fine conferences in Colorado, Don decided to take a break from all of the work. Don turned over the responsibility of coordinating the event to the North Texas Microwave Society (NTMS).

In 1989, WB5LUA and WA5VJB of the NTMS hosted the 5th "Microwave Update" in Arlington, Texas where 94 people were in attendance. The 1990 "Microwave Update" was to go back to Colorado where Keith Ericson, K0KE and Don Lund, WA0IQN, were to head up the event. Unfortunately, Don Lund passed away during the year and Keith decided to postpone the 1990 Update. WB5LUA and WA5VJB of the NTMS hosted "Microwave Update" 91 in Arlington, Texas.

"Microwave Update" '92 was held in Rochester, New York and sponsored by the Rochester VHF Group. The conference was chaired by Frank Pollino, K2OS and Dave Hallidy, K2DH (x KD5RO/2). "Microwave Update" '93 was held in Atlanta, Georgia. The conference was organized by Jim Davey, WA8NLC, and assisted by Rick Campbell, KK7B and Charles Osborne, WD4MBK. "Microwave Update" '94 was brought back to Estes Park, Colorado where it was chaired by Bill McCaa, K0RZ. Bill was assisted by Al Ward WB5LUA, Jim Davey WA8NLC, Jim Starkey, W0KJY, Phil Gabriel, AA0BR, and other local area amateurs. "Microwave Update" '95 was brought back to Arlington, Texas and was chaired by Al Ward WB5LUA and Kent Britain WA5VJB of the NTMS. The 96 "Microwave Update" was held in Phoenix, Arizona and was chaired by Jim Vogler, WA7CJO. The '97 "Microwave Update" was held in Sandusky, Ohio and sponsored by Tom Whitted, WA8WZG, with the assistance of Tony Emanuele, WA8RJF. The 1998 "Microwave Update" was held in Colorado under the guidance of Bill McCaa, K0RZ, and John Anderson, WD4MUO. The 1999 "Microwave Update" was held in Plano, Texas with Al Ward, W5LUA and Kent Britain, WA5VJB hosting the event.

The 2000 Microwave Update was held in the Philadelphia area with John Sortor, KB3XG, and Paul Drexler, W2PED hosting the event. The 2001 Microwave Update was hosted by Jim Moss, N9JIM and Will Jensby, W0EOM, in the Sunnyvale, California area. The 2002 conference was held in conjunction with the Eastern VHF/UHF Conference in Enfield, Ct. The

conference was hosted by Paul Wade, W1GHZ, Matt Reilly, KB1VC, Tom Williams, WA1MBA and Bruce Wood, N2LIV.

The 2003 conference moved across country to Seattle, WA where Rick Beatty, NU7Z and the PNWVHFS hosted the event. Rick's committee consisted of John N7MWV as the co-chairman along with Jim K7ND, Eric N7EPD, Jim W7DHC, Jimmy K7NQ, and Lynn N7CFO.

The 2004 conference was held in Dallas, Texas where Al Ward, W5LUA, Bob Gormley, WA5YWC, Kent Britain, WA5VJB, and the North Texas Microwave Society hosted the event.

The 2005 conference was held in Cerritos, Ca. The event was hosted by Pat Coker, N6RMJ and Chip Angle N6CA along with the San Bernardino Microwave Society and the Western States Weak Signal Society.

The 2006 conference was held in Dayton, Ohio and was hosted by Tom Holmes, N8ZM, and Gerd Schrick, WB8IFM of the Midwest VHF/UHF Society.

The 2007 conference was held in Valley Forge, Pa at the Dolce Valley Forge. The conference was hosted by Phil Theis K3TUF, David Fleming KB3HCL, Rick Rosen K1DS, and Paul Drexler W2PED of the Mt Airy VHF Radio Club.

The 2008 conference was hosted by Donn Baker WA2VOI, Barry Malowanchuk VE4MA, Jon Platt W0ZQ, Bruce Richardson W9FZ, Bob Wesslund, W0AUS, of the Northern Lights Radio Society and was held in Bloomington, MN.

The 2009 conference was held in Dallas, Texas and was hosted by Steve Hicks, N5AC, Al Ward W5LUA, Bob Gormley, WA5YWC, and Kent Britain WA5VJB of the North Texas Microwave Society. In 2009, The Don Hilliard Technical Achievement Award was created in honor of our founding father Don Hilliard, W0PW. The first recipient was Paul Wade W1GHZ in recognition of his many years of service to the amateur microwave community.

The 2010 conference was hosted by the San Bernardino Microwave Society in Southern California and was chaired by Pat Coker N6RMJ and Doug Miller K6JEY. The conference was dedicated to Dick Kolby K6HIJ who recently became a silent key. Dick was posthumously awarded the Don Hilliard Technical Achievement Award for his many years of dedication to the VHF and microwave community.

The 2011 conference was held in Enfield, Ct, hosted by the North East Weak Signal Group. Bruce Wood N2LIV (SK) was the conference chairman and Paul Wade W1GHZ was the program chairman.

The 2012 conference was hosted by the 50 MHz and Up Group of Northern California in Santa Clara, CA. Jim Moss, N9JIM and Will Jensby, W0EOM, were the conference co-chairs..

The 2013 conference was hosted by Jeff Kruth, WA3ZKR and the Morehead State University at the Space Science Center at Morehead State University in Morehead, KY

The 2014 conference was hosted by the Rochester VHF Group and organized by Dave Hallidy, K2DH, Frank Pollino, K2OS, and Bill Rogers, K2TER and was held at the Marriot Airport Hotel in Rochester, NY.

In 2015, the 30th Microwave Update conference was hosted by the San Bernardino Microwave Society as it celebrated its own 60th year and with support from the San Diego Microwave Group. Chaired by Pat Coker N6RMJ, the conference was held in San Diego, CA and included presentations on three world distance records set during the past year.

The 2016 Microwave Update Conference was hosted by the St. Louis Area Microwave Society and was held at the Holiday Inn Airport West in Earth City, MO near St. Louis. The organizers were Bob Sluder N0IS, Mel Whitten, K0FPX and Jim Richardson N5MU.

The 2017 Microwave Update Conference was hosted by the 50 MHz and Up Group of Northern California. It was held at the Biltmore Hotel in Santa Clara, CA. Jim Moss, N9JIM, and Mike Lavelle, K6ML, were the conference co-chairs.

Microwave Update 2018 was held in Fairborn, Ohio, a suburb of Dayton, and was hosted by the Midwest VHF/UHF Society, an active group of hams mainly in southwest Ohio, but with members all over the US, Canada, and beyond. A highlight of the weekend was a tour of the Voice of America Museum in Mason, Ohio, and the 10 GHz EME station setup at the VOA site.

The 2019 Microwave Update Conference was hosted by the North Texas Microwave Society in Lewisville (Dallas) Texas. The Chairman were Bob Stricklin N5BRG and Al Ward W5LUA. Antenna gain measuring was conducted by Kent WA5VJB, Phase noise analysis by Chuck AF8Z and Eric AG5XV and noise figure by Doug AD0CX. Thanks to Keysight and Anritsu for the loan of test equipment. Thursday afternoon was highlighted by a GNU Radio Workshop run by Tom N5EG.

Anyone interested in sponsoring a future conference may contact the selection committee: Kent Britain WA5VJB, Barry Malowanchuck VE4MA, and Tony Emanuele K8ZR (x WA8RJF).

Submitted by Al Ward W5LUA May 5, 2022