HAMS IN A HUDDLE:

West Quad Radio Club Opens Spring Semester Activities

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By KENNETH LOWE

When our reporter dropped in on the West Quad Radio Club in the Williams House tower one night this week, he found its members huddled eagerly about their short wave equipment, meeting for the first time this semester.

"We're just getting reorganized," Bruce Weinert, vice-president of the club, told our reporter, "so don't expect to hear 'In the Hall of the Mountain King' tonight."

Our reporter explained that nothing was farther from his mind and asked about the equipment. Weinert pointed to an array that inoluded a speech amplifier, frequency meter, tuning receiver and a 700-watt transmitter, most of which was purchased from Army surplus.

Rotary Beam Antenna

"We plan to increase our transmitting power ten-fold in the near future by installing a four-element directive array rotary beam antennae," Corky Eberwein, president of the club, said. Our reporter was understandably impressed by the name of the instrument, as well as by its size, which will be 85 feet.

The club—known to the trade as amateur, or ham, station W8-ZSQ— has contacted other stations over an area extending from Twin Falls, Ida., to Woonsocket, R. I., but has not yet established communications with any foreign countries. "That would be a definite possibility with our new antennae, though," Eberwein said proudly.

Certified Members

W8ZSQ has been operating on and off since May, sending and receiving messages in both code and voice. Most of its members have Class B operating certificates and one member, George Crane, holds a Class A certificate.

Asked to explain the origin of the word "ham"—a problem that has long perplexed our reporter—the members expressed uncertainty. One suggested that the word might have come into usage about 30 years ago when radio amateurs were given to presenting skits, which non-operators regarded as pure corn.

Talkative Operators

Another question which has kept our reporter awake nights —namely, what do radio amateurs talk about when they are operating — was answered with more conviction. "Equipment," Eberwein said. "Some operators get to know one another pretty well on the circuits and then they might talk about anything from family problems to presidential candidates. But mostly they just talk about equipment."