Rochester DX Association

Rochester DX Association Newsletter ***April '99***

Meeting
Apr 20th
7:30 p.m.
111 Westfall Road

Announcing the return of the semi-annual RDXA DX Quiz!

Test your DX knowledge! Impress your peers!

A sampling.to whet your appetite:
Match the Entity and the prefix...
Your call is UP2UP and you are trying to control a big pileup on CW. You should...
The last operational Alexanderson alternator is located in...
You have just been transferred by your company to Tokyo, Japan. You will shop for the latest in radio gear and electronic parts in the _____ district there.

Courtesy of Ed Gable, K2MP and Mike Rundle, N1OKL.

Save the date!
The RDXA Banquet is April 17'th and will be held at Rick's Prime Rib!

President's Soapbox

Scott Hoag, K2ZS

April is here, and we have already had our first electrical storm of the season. As contest season ends, it is time to focus our attention on this summer's activity. We had our first field day meeting, and things seem to be well in hand. Raj is doing a great job of putting together a plan for a promising event this year. Each month we will be reporting our progress and asking for help in specific areas. If you have not been to field day in a while, sigh-up for some air time and have some fun.

For this month's program, K2MP has designed a new DX quiz, with a twist. Make sure your there to see what it is about, and don't forget this weekend is our fall banquet at Risk's Prime Rib.

Editor's Corner

Dave Wright, N2CK

There's a special version of show-n-tell this month. **Tim, KG2NO**, recently purchased and assembled an all band QRP transceiver, the Elecraft K2. It's quite a cute little rig, some nice features, built in keyer, etc. Tim will be at the April meeting a little early to show off his handiwork. As I work with Tim, I was able to see the results of his work in the form of progress photographs.

Chris, our esteemed contest chairman, sent me the latest spreadsheet of scores for the 98/99 season. As it stands, we're at 24.8 M! What an effort! I noticed that Chris only has 4 logs submitted for the WPX SSB contest so get those logs in!

Welcome New Member

Fred Gern, K2FR

Please join me in welcoming **Jesse, K2TED**, the newest member of RDXA.

"OO" BECOMES FIRST OH OH!

Fred Gern, K2FR

At the March meeting **Paul, K2DB**, an Official Observer for ARRL (an 'OO') became the first RDXA member to renew to 10/2000 therefore becoming our first 00. Also helped test my software. Conclusion: Old 486 laptop with old slightly used database will work after Y2K. Aint it just amazing? Got a chance to test the end of the world and it didn't happen. More DX!

W2OMV Reflection

Chris Shalvoy, K2CS

The article following this was written in February 1995 and published in the March 1995 bulletin. In between jobs, I had the opportunity to spend the afternoon with Bill, reminiscing about his life, the hobby he loved so and to pick up a few "tips" along the way.

As stated in the article, Bill was very active in non-contest country chasing and always gave me a run for my money in the year-end band awards.

So many of the items mentioned in this held true right until Bill's passing last month. He even operated the ARRL DX SSB just hours before and was credited with E44 on many bands and modes.

All told, these were Bill's last published totals:

Mixed	310
SSB	267
CW	293
80	166
40	230
10	235

With the above in mind, the B.O.D is discussing a yearly award in memory of Bill commemorating the Most NON-Contest Countries worked. This would be

similar in nature to the KE2WK award and would be the highest honor a club DX'er could achieve.

In closing, I credit much of my accomplishments in this hobby to guys like Bill who'd take the time to let me in on the little "secrets", explain the unexplainable and never were afraid to "duke it out" in the pileups.

Take care my friend es best dx, --… …--

Member Profile: Bill Buchan, W2OMV

(March 1995 Bulletin)

Chris Shalvoy, K2CS

I've always been impressed with the immense amount of knowledge the membership of this club has. The rich history, operating skills, and most of all, a passion for the hobby. This month, I had the opportunity to "interview" **Bill Buchan, W2OMV**, about his ham radio "career", its beginnings and milestones, and his unrelenting thirst for DX.

Bill was first licensed as W8QKM in 1936. At that time, the licensing structure was different, being comprised of three classes, A, B, and C. Bill had earned a class B license, which was much like our General today, a written exam and a 13-wpm code test (just "increased" from 10 wpm by the way). I can assure you, no multiple guesses here. This all taking place in Buffalo at the "friendly" FCC offices.

In 1939, Bill upgraded to class A and proceeded to earn WAC on May 10, 1939 and WAS on June 19, 1939 (award # 873!). A small, informal radio club was also taking up Bill's time. The Tri-County Radio Club comprised membership for the Phelps, Clifton Springs, Geneva and Newark areas and had once-a-month social meetings as well as Field Day operation. Bill attended 3 or 4 of these Field Days in the late 30's.

In between all this, Bill was DXing. He showed me any number of countries confirmed, all in the mid to late thirties. Many familiar prefixes still exist. I was amazed at the ability to receive QSL cards at that time in history. Funny enough though, Bill commented that the cards arrived much faster than today!

After the war, a few kids (6!), and a few moves, Bill once again became active in amateur radio. He started and was the trustee of station K2ZWJ, the Clyde High School Amateur Radio Club, which was licensed on March 1, 1958. Two different teachers as well as 30 or so students were licensed with the help of Bill and that club. After a lapse, he also rejoined the ARRL in the 50's.

From 1963-1966 he was a RACES operator while also being the Emergency Coordinator for Wayne County. This while attending various Field Day operations continually since 1966.

With all the activities and people Bill has been involved with, he still stays in touch with some of the W8's and others through weekly skeds. This in between a still very active contest and DX schedule.

To his credit, Bill currently holds the following:

Award Credited (DXCC)

Mixed	282
SSB	241
CW	255
80M	105
40M	141

10M 233
Plus 5 Band DXCC!

Since joining RDXA in 1989, Bill also holds numerous band, mode, and club awards as well as some high-placing IARU and 10M contest awards. He is still one of the most active in the RDXA club awards chase.

As for equipment, Bill runs a Yaesu FT-840, a Dentron GLA-10100B linear (350w), MFJ Versa-Tuner III, Butternut "Butterfly" beam at about 40 ft, a roof-mounted Butternut vertical (complete with 35 roof-mounted radials!) and an 80m dipole.

In closing, it was a pleasure to share in Bill's ham radio experiences. I hope my "resume" is half as complete as his at age 77. Bill's now headed to NJ to set his son-in-law up with a TS-520 and dipole so he too can get into amateur radio. The guy never quits!! [ED. (KB2SE) Note – Bill finished the license climb approximately 5 years ago when he upgraded to Extra – it's never too late!]

Contest Calendar

Chris Shalvoy, K2CS

CQ WW WPX CW 29-30 May 0000-2400

1998 ARRL 160M

Rick Mintz, W1TY

Just got the 160 meter scores from the ARRL Members site, and 7 members of RDXA submitted logs. The results will be published in the May issue. Here's how a few RDXA folks did. Give them an attaboy when you see them!

Top Ten, Low Power
W2LC, 6th 121,828 points
W2TZ, 7th 109,158 points

K8FC 4th in Northeast, High Power 153,296 points (also quoted as saying "The second evening it seems it took divine intervention to work west of the Mississippi")

Interesting VE Session

Fred Gern, K2FR

The March VE test session was the most interesting one in several years. First we had a 'crowd' by recent standards: 5 prospects. The first to finish took the General theory and passed it. The next three earned No Code Technician licenses (2 tried the code but needed more practice!). The last candidate was **Albins, LY2MM**, here on business with Harris. Fitting for a DX station to test with a DX club. He took the Novice theory and passed, but had trouble with the Technician theory - different rules and regulations and the RFI Exposure questions were certainly U.S. data only (how many of you have even given the standards serious thought?). So we asked him if he would like to take the CW test and get a Novice license. His reply was affirmative so the next question was what speed, 5, 13 or 20? Al said I can't take the 5 wpm, he would be embarrassed to tell his friends, but did we have a 40 wpm test? So we now have a new Novice with his 20 wpm certificate in his hand. He vowed to be back and to pass the Extra!

DX 40 Years Ago – April 1959

Ed Gable, K2MP

New DX'ers came more and more from the Novice ranks which was then the most common entry level into Amateur Radio. Word is getting out that West Coast 40 meter Novices need to listen below 7150 for the many JA's who are answering their CQ's. "Sorry, not in Log" had new significance from semi-rare LX1SI on 10 meters. Way too many QSL's were received for 20 meter QSO's but the LX1 only operated 28 Mcs. Problem was solved when it was observed that SI's over-driven PA put out as much on 14 Mcs as it did on 28! When SI was called on 14 Mcs with stations having strong 2nd harmonics, a successful QSO was completed. LX1SI logged the contact on 28 Mcs and the DX logged the QSO in 14 Mcs. Although W2CTN's new QSL service is becoming popular; the idea of sending proper DX postage for the country of interest has always been recognized as most effective. Obtaining such stamps and keeping up with proper amounts has, until now, been very difficult. Solving the problem was Rochester's own Sax Ringler, W2SAW. Sax announced the start of his DX Stamp service with the April issue of *QST. Worked All Everything* seems to be the only missing award from the host of new sheepskin announcements coming forth at this time. It seems every country is getting on the bandwagon by offering such items as the *Worked all LA* (WALA), the French with a *DUF* award, the Germans with a complicated escalating series of awards, etc. etc. These offered (and still do) an interesting challenge and gave DX'ers something to do while waiting for new entities to come on the scene. And again speaking of our old friend W2SAW, Sax did acquire, during his great DX career, a wonderful collection of these colorful awards, which he graciously donated to the RDXA archives. So you think you have a maintenance problem by having to periodically clean out your PA cooling fan. Our rare South Cook regular, ZK1AK, reported that he could only operate for about half an hour then he and his 829B final would be overrun by bugs… the crawling kind, not Vibroplex's. Two new and exciting pieces of hardware for the serious Amateur were introduced this month. First the Collins 32S1 transmitter to match the 75S1 receiver and form the famous S-line, and from National the big and impressive NC-400, at an equally impressive $895.00.

QRZ DX

Chris Shalvoy, K2CS

3B9 is on the air, as scheduled, Rodriguez Island fired up and is already in the log at this station. Seems to be a competent group of ops that know what propagation is and where it's working. Got `em on 17m at 2116z Saturday the 3rd with minimal time spent in the pileup. 20 and 40 seemed more difficult and the 103 sfi isn't helping matters much. 3B9 is currently 61st on the hot 100 list.

Speaking of the hot 100, no surprise to anyone that P5 is the #1 most needed country. This, followed by a bunch of submerged rocks, BS7H, Scarborough Reef. Ironically enough, some of the 100 have been activated recently and were pretty easily workable.

T33 (#34), 5X (#87), 3V(#52), OK (#47), Z3 (#32), T2 (#89) to name a few have all showed up in the logs here over the last few months.

The following are scheduled for activation in the near future:

ZS8, mid April, via ZS6EZ
TL8, 1-20 of April, via IZ1CQD
HS, 3-30 April, via K3ZO
JT, 6-15 April, via I0SNY
5Z4, now, via WB2YQH
BY1, now, via OH2BH
ZK2, now thru 11 April, via DL1EMH
CY9, 21-28 July, no route yet (good one for 160 and 6 meters if they bring the stuff).

A few “links” (log searches)…

FW5FN
http://www.qsl.net/hb9hfn/log/fw_search.html
3B9R http://www.dateline.ru/3b9/
C56SW
http://www.bramham.demon.co.uk

In the mail

ZL1ANJ (direct, from 1992!!), VP2VHD (direct, from 1993!!), H40AA, EL2JR, VE1ZJ (direct, from 1995, FN95), FO0FR, D2BB, XT2DP, T94B, V63X.

In the “packs”…

ZK1DI, ZK1SCQ, 5A28, ZK2CK, 3V8BB,

By the way, cards will be checked at the Rochester HamFest this year.

Thanks to the 59(9) DXReport, my main source of weekly DX information.

Monthly Propagation Reports Web site Archive

Mike Rundle, N1OKL

While surfing through a variety of ham radio web sites the other day, I ran across a fascinating site maintained by Roy (Quack) Hradilek, AD5Q, Houston. Check it out at: http://www.nol.net/~ids/prop.html On this site, Roy offers an archive of monthly propagation reports which he authored throughout the last solar cycle. The reports date back to February 1988. Like those columns "25 years ago in QST", etc. Roy's reports provide an interesting look at conditions on a month-by-month basis throughout the last cycle. Reproduced here is Roy's report for April 1988...

AD5Q PROPAGATION -- APRIL 1988
FLUX RANGE 100 - 147

Springtime propagation patterns established themselves during March and will be with us for another 2 months. Conditions have been very good and will get better (!) as long as we don't get a lot of flares.

HIGH BANDS: 10 has been opening to western Europe and could improve during April, but will deteriorate as summer approaches. 15 has been excellent to Europe, Russia and the Middle East in the morning and Africa in the afternoon. There have been polar openings to central Asia about an hour after sunset and in the early morning. 15 has also been open to India and Sri Lanka around 11:am local time with nice sigs over the pole. 20 is wide open in the morning and through the evening, but trans-daytime paths are no longer working due to higher

MUF's. Our morning path to Europe was a winter path. For the next several months our 20 meter peak to EU will be in the late afternoon - across the darkness of evening. We can catch the other end of this same path in late evening to East Asia, and in between: Russians!

LOW BANDS: 80 meter propagation is fading fast, and most northern hemisphere activity has shifted to higher bands. Concentrate on working those countries in the southern hemisphere who can't hear us during our winter (QRN). 40 is actually pretty good, but higher nighttime MUF's will favor 20 on some paths (or the 30 meter WARC band). Here too, activity is shifting to higher frequencies in the evening (20).

20 LONG PATH: The morning path to Africa has started to open and will be with us into the fall, peaking during summer. Catch this opening 1 to 3 hours after sunrise on a regular basis and you will work many good countries in Africa and the Indian Ocean and make some regular friends. Now the BAD NEWS: we are losing the Antarctic paths until fall - they are no longer reliable and will drop out entirely during summer. Afternoon VK should hang in there another month or so, but close in the summer unless fluxes get higher. Work Asia via short path.

73, de Roy - AD5Q / Houston --> http://www.nol.net/~ids/prop.html

You can download the entire archive from Roy's website. All reports are in simple text format and the entire archive takes only a few minutes to download. I find it quite useful to refer to these reports as we proceed through the current cycle.

QSL Cards Ain't

Fred Gern, K2FR

Recently I received a note from **Mike, KF2LF**. Mike was worried that he would never reach DXCC before he became a Silent Key. His problem is that the cards are not flowing from the QSL fountain at a high rate of speed. He asked me to advise him on the best way to QSL contest QSO's in the ARRL DX Phone 'test.

The advice I have to give him is the same advice given to me when I started collecting cards - don't worry; be patient, they will come someday. Maybe we need to coin a new phrase. You know, we have the famous DX IS from Hugh Cassidy's old columns; an expression which has been stolen by more column writers than you could imagine. Maybe we need a something like QSL CARDS AIN'T. You know, 'they ain't gonna get here very fast'. An article written by a former RDXA member informs us that QSL means "Quickly Send Lots" of money. Well, if you want cards fast you will have to do that. And the damn things will still come in at their own speed.

I just received a buro pack for my old call, KB2SE. In it was a card sent in reply to my card for a QSO with 8P6SH in February 1988. Several RDXA members have cards out for a QSO with EP2MKO over 1 1/2 years ago. He's a new one for us and we just wait. Two of us have even sent out a second card bearing gifts from the U.S. Treasury. And still we wait.

You see, Mike, it is just part of the game. You're still young - if you were my age I'd say you had something to worry about!

You send out the cards and then you wait. If you want LOTS of cards I can offer a secret. Work 400 to 1000 Q's in a DX contest and sit back; you WILL get cards. Not many exciting ones, but they are cards! Of course then the other QSL card complaint arrives - "do you know HOW MANY cards I had to buy last year?"

So here's the hints for the new guys: send ALL RARE DXpedition cards to the manager only and include an addressed envelope (SAE) and $ or IRC for postage and a bit more for expenses if you can.

Send all Contest DXpeditions to the manager - most of these will be U.S. and only cost you a SASE

Send cards for QSO's with very rare countries direct or to manager if so directed. Include postage contribution and SAE.

Send card for QSO's with 'normal' countries via the buro. And ALWAYS ask for the QSL route when in doubt - or listen (or READ the BULLETINS).

Elecraft K2 QRP Transceiver

Tim Strong, KG2NO

The Elecraft K2 is a new kit on the market. Designed and marketed by Wayne Burdick, N6KR (well known within the QRP ranks for his NorCal 40, Wilderness Sierra, and SST designs) and Eric Swartz, WA6HHQ. The K2 was “designed by CW ops -- for CW ops.”

The basic Elecraft K2 is a CW only kit that provides 10 watts on 80 through 10 meters. The K2 is small and portable measuring 3h x 8w x 8d inches. It includes the standard features found on most modern transceivers as well as 3 adjustable crystal filters for each mode (CW, CW Reverse, LSB, USB, and RTTY), built in frequency counter and volt/ammeter, and CW scanning. CW scanning will scan a user adjustable range of frequencies for any variable signal. It first squelches the receiver and then starts searching for a signal. If it encounters a strong, fixed carrier, it will resume scanning. If it finds a changing signal (maybe a CW signal?) it will either stay on the frequency or it will pause for about 5 seconds before resuming the scan.

With a goal to have most if not all of my station equipment home-brewed either from scratch or from a kit, I chose the Elecraft K2 to build. I did not have much previous experience in electronic soldering, but the designers of the kit said that it was going to be easy to build. I sent my name in and was chosen to be a field tester. As a field tester for the K2, I was one of the first 100 people to build the K2.

When the K2 arrived, I first read the construction manual cover-to-cover. The manual is written in a way that made the K2 easy to build – even for first time builders. Each step had a box to be checked as it was completed. Components were described in detail; i.e. resistors were marked in the manual by value and color code.

The K2 has 3 PC boards: control board, front panel, and RF board. There are separate chapters in the manual for assembly of each board and the RF board is completed in 3 stages. After completion of the first stage of the RF board, the builder will be able to apply power to the K2 for the first time. At this point, the builder should be able to view the menu, adjust the CW sidetone volume

and tone, connect a set of paddles or handkey to test the keyer, and do some frequency and voltage measurements. The second stage of the RF board provides a 40-meter receiver that the builder will need to align. After completing the third and final stage of the RF board, the builder then aligns the remaining bands.

Since the Elecraft K2 was in field test, I was impressed by how few of problems were found. Most of the problems that were found were minor construction manual changes. The most significant problems found were ground shorts on various component pads caused by a manufacturing error. A little etching of the PC board fixed the shorts. Elecraft has stated that this problem will be fixed for the production kits and that a bed-of-nails test would be conducted to verify that the PC boards are correct.

Elecraft's support of the field testers was great! Elecraft used direct email and an Internet mailing list for support. They also were willing to take phone calls and walk-ins if needed. Missing parts? No problem, a simple email to Elecraft and the part was in the mail the next day. For a field tester on the other side of the country, the Elecraft mailing list and email were invaluable. By the time I received my kit, others were well on their way, so I also benefited by suggestions that other field testers posted to the mailing list.

I had several problems once the K2 was built, but with the help of Wayne and Eric, I was able to fix them. Eric had told us that they wanted us to succeed with this kit, therefore, if any field tester could not get the K2 to work, Elecraft would fix it for free. Fortunately, I did not have to go this route, and it was a great feeling once everything was working. It took about 55 hours to construct and align and an additional 15 hours to debug and fix the problems. Not bad for a first time kit builder!

My first QSO was with Ken, N3FGO in Maryland in the Novice/Tech+ section of 40 meters at night. Anyone who has listened to this part of the band at night knows how noisy it is. Anyway, halfway through our QSO, I almost lost him because of the QRM around us. I just pressed the filter button and N3FGO just popped right out of the noise, the QRM disappeared. The filters are a nice feature to the rig. They are adjustable to be as wide or narrow as you want.

Elecraft has many options planned for the K2. These options include SSB, internal battery, internal auto-antenna tuner, noise blanker, 160-meters, high-power (50 or 100W), auxiliary I/O and additional AF filters. The K2 was designed to be modular, so any option can be added at anytime.

Overall, the Elecraft K2 is a nice little radio. Although the K2 was not designed to contain every feature found on the most expensive rigs, there are enough features to make it competitive with many radios on today's market. If you would like to see the Elecraft K2, then come to the April and May meetings. I'll try to get there a little early and I'll hang out after the meeting. If you can't make the meeting and are interested in the K2, look me up and we can get together or visit the Elecraft web site at http://www.elecraft.com . Hope to see you at the meeting!

Rochester DX Association Newsletter

This newsletter is a publication of the Rochester (NY) DX Association, and is published prior to each monthly meeting for the information of members and others interested in Amateur Radio DX and Contesting.

You are cordially invited to any meeting, held at 7:30 p.m. on the 3rd Tuesday of each month from September through June. We meet in the "auditorium" of the Social Services Building at 111 Westfall Road in Rochester, New York

Club officers and committees

President	*Scott Hoag K2ZS*
Vice President	*Mike Rundle N1OKL*
Secretary-Treasurer	*Ed Gable K2MP*
Board of Directors	
	Bob Hunter NG2P
	Rick Mintz W1TY
	Dave Wright N2CK
DX Chairman	*Chris Shalvoy K2CS*
Contest Chairman	*Chris Shalvoy, K2CS*
Newsletter Publisher	*Dave Wright N2CK*

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