

ROCHESTER

DX

ASSOCIATION

rdxa.com



ROCHESTER DX ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2001

FIRST PLACE WINNER !

CATEGORY 3A

FIELD DAY 2001



Regular Meeting

November 20th 19:30 local

111 Westfall Road
Monroe County Buildings

Muffy Meisenzahl, Administrator for the Monroe County Office of Emergency Preparedness, will be our guest speaker

November is a VE Testing Month

Note potential meeting room change at 111 Westfall—to room # 858 if asbestos removal work has begun.

Social after Meeting

Scotch & Sirloin
Winton Plaza

RDXA #1, 3A Field Day 2001

By Fred Groner - W2TZ

Finally, the Field Day results speak for themselves. RDXA made the **First Place Score in 3A**. Sounds great. Nothing more has to be said. But not so fast my friends. One thing should be said. Perhaps

it is not unreasonable to expect great things from a great amateur radio club. RDXA has put much time, effort and just plain work into Field Day, year after year. **Congratulations to RDXA, you deserved it!!!!**

President's Soapbox

By Mike Rundle - N1OKL

Some Thoughts on Contesting for Non-contesters

Contest Season is now in full swing, and it looks like the bands are holding up...so far. I had the pleasure of operating with K1PY and W2LC during CQWW SSB and propagation, at least through early Saturday evening, was excellent. I had a great time and even managed some respectable rates—largely due to Scott's fine setup near Syracuse. During the contest, I also managed to work a few new ones for my home log on Friday night and Sunday afternoon.

This brings to mind some general thoughts on contest operating for the non-contester. When I resumed my participation in ham radio in 1993—after an absence of 26 years—I found myself a bit overwhelmed by the activity on the bands during contest weekends. And like many, I felt that these major contests were disruptive to my enjoyment of the airwaves.

But I soon realized two things which are rarely discussed when the subject of band takeover by contesters comes up. The first and most obvious is that the WARC bands are completely free of all contest activity. During a contest, there are always plenty of non-contesters available for an enjoyable rag chew on these bands. In fact, when I hear complaints from various nets and others that their activities are disrupted during contest periods, I wonder why these folks don't temporarily move to the WARC bands? The argument

often cited against such action is that many folks don't have antennas, etc. for the WARC bands. Hogwash! Come on folks, it's been 22 years since we gained these additional frequencies. Virtually all rigs and antennas manufactured since 1980 are WARC-capable. It seems strange indeed that some folks would prefer to battle contest QRM than move to a clear frequency on an adjacent WARC band. Some people just enjoy QRM, I guess!

As a non-contester, the second and perhaps less obvious thought I soon had about contests was this. I could actually enjoy the contest by participating however I chose to do so! There's no law that says you have to follow ANY of the contest rules—except of course, to provide the proper contest exchange—to work stations in a contest! Think about this a minute. What this means is that, if you want to log some of the exotic calls on the air during a contest or want to experience the thrill and challenge of breaking a pileup, you can change bands as you wish, operate when you wish, run whatever power you like (as long as it's legal, hi, hi), use a DX cluster to find stations you want to work, call a given station as long as you like, etc. You don't have to compute your score, or turn in a log, or even keep a log for that matter. One point here about the exchange: if the exchange requires a consecutive serial number for each contact, you should at least tally your contest QSOs and provide that number in your exchange. But you can do this on a sheet of paper and throw it away after the contest. I call this mode of contest operation “surfing the contest.” It's great fun. It's not stressful. And though the QSOs are brief and bland compared to a DX rag chew, you can easily add some pretty rare DX to your logbook this way.

Here are some additional points about “contest surfing.” Regardless of your QTH, etc., these stations want to work **you!** Sure, you may not provide a multiplier. But every QSO logged during a contest counts for something. The really serious contesters with big stations or in rare locations, quickly work each other and afterwards, they are looking for quantity. **You** are that quantity! This suggests a strategy: namely, that the best time to work some of the exotic stations will be during the last half of the contest; i.e. when these stations are looking to rack up QSOs as opposed to multipliers.

A word on contest pileups is also in order. Compared to a pileup for some rare DX-pedition, contest pileups are transitory. They certainly don't last for days, or even hours. The typical contest pileup is brief and intense. Serious contesters who cannot get through after a few calls will move on, unwilling to let their rates drop. It's not unusual to hear a big pileup on some rare station, and a few minutes later hear the same station begging for QSOs...especially in the latter half of a contest. Also, because of band crowding, there's rarely any split operating during a contest. So if your split operating skills are a bit tentative, don't worry. Zero beat the DX, wait for the pileup to thin out, and work 'em.

Contest surfing is also a great way to get a feel for the vagaries of propagation to and from your QTH. During a contest, especially a worldwide event, the bands are loaded with signals from around the world, continually, at all hours. It thus becomes a relatively straightforward matter to determine when the best times are to work Europe, Africa, the Pacific, or Central Asia, for example.

Finally, as a contest surfer, you can set your own goals...which may have nothing whatsoever to do with the contest itself. In domestic events, you may decide to work all states or fill in those gaps in 5-band WAS. Likewise, in worldwide events, you may want to see if you can work all the zones, or work 100 countries, or work all Africa, or whatever. Alternatively, you may just need a

few rare ones to complete DXCC or 5-band DXCC, or put you a bit closer to DX Honor Role. In short, you can make the contest whatever you want it to be.

And this is the whole point. Contests are what you make of them. Even if like me, you don't consider yourself much of a contest operator, these events can provide a lot of ham radio fun and enjoyment. So, don't shy away from the fray because you are not a big gun contester. Get out there and get on the bands—on your own terms—during a contest. Or, move over to the WARC bands and enjoy a few leisurely QSOs there, with like-minded hams who enjoy a good rag chew.

QRU es CU at the meeting

Editor's Corner

By Dave Wright - N2CK

Pretty big news this month, first place in the highly competitive 3A class (350 entries) of Field Day. What makes this more significant is that with 12,584 points, we were 1,418 points ahead of the second place finisher. Quite an amazing accomplishment, and I'm glad I was part of it! Thanks to our FD co-chairs **Fred, W2TZ**, and **Raj, N2RD** for helping pull this all together. It was also my observation this year at FD that take down was much quicker, with everybody participating. What a GREAT way to spend a weekend, in the company of friends, playing radio in a serious effort, and *finishing first in class*. It doesn't get much better than this.

As you will read later in this edition, RDXA will be taking part in the Technology week at the Rochester Museum and Science Center with RARA. If you took part last year, you know how much fun it was. If you didn't, consider coming out to help.

DX of the Past, November 1962

By Ed Gable - K2MP

The amateur DX community was buzzing with anticipation of a new entity coming on the air by venerable DX'er Gus Browning, W4BPD. Gus had his sights on Norway's tiny, stormy, frigid Antarctic Outpost, Bouvet Island (LAO). Gus had just a few problems: he had no license, no permission to land and his ship wasn't scheduled to go there. Little things like that never bothered Gus before and the world believes that he will probably pull it off in December. In the mean time, Gus is at Gough Island and offering ZD9AM on 80 through 10 meters.

Also new was The Republic of Western Samoa operated by the other world traveling DX champion, Danny Weil of Yasme fame, operating ZM6AW. Danny's next stops include ZL7, ZK2, FW8 and other South Pacific delights.

Finally, yet another new country hits the air, as the Mariana Is. separate from Guam to become KG6. If you were an active DXer on this date you would have logged Campbell Is. ZL4JF; HL9KH by yet another DX legend, Don Wallace W9WNV; Portuguese Timor CR8AC; Marion Is.; ZS2MI; and Mauritania 5T5AI.

From the pages of QST, a new company is offering a new, robust linear amplifier using a pair of 3-500Z's. This company was located on Canal Street in Rochester and grew up to be Harris/RF Communications.

Historical Bits from K2MP:

1958: Having run out of W/K calls, the FCC begins to issue calls with WA prefixes.

1974: Repeater stations are now licensed separately and issued WR call signs.

1989: 17 meters, the last of the WARC bands, becomes available for use in January.

Open Letter to Friends of RDXA By Fred Groner - W2TZ

Joy and Remembrance

Greetings with great joy from the Rochester DX Association (W2RDX). We recently learned that our emergency preparedness Field Day sponsored by the American Radio Relay League and held at Webster Park in June 2001 has attained the First Place score in the 3A transmitter category. This was just a super accomplishment for our amateur radio club in the highly competitive 3A category. All of our members are just full of joy and celebration about this accomplishment.

Our first place finish, however, was not accomplished by our 2001 efforts alone, but required years of experimentation, strategy planning, begging, borrowing, and individual contribution. At this time of joy, we thank non-members for their support. We especially remember ex-RDXA members who unfortunately passed-away in recent years but who in fact contributed significantly to our 2001 success. We are deeply saddened that they can't be with us, their amateur radio buddies, to celebrate today. In their remembrance, we wish to invite their family and friends to share this time of joy and happiness with our radio club. Sincere thanks.

Special remembrance and thanks to RDXA Silent Keys,

- Bill Buchan, W2OMV
 - Fred Gern, K2FR
 - Hank Resch, K4VOS
-

DXCC, VUCC, WAS Local Card Checking

Editor

A new Service for ARRL Members starts immediately with local checking of your hard-earned QSL cards for all major ARRL awards. Continuing his over 40 years of service to the Rochester Amateur Radio community, Ed Gable, K2MP/W2AN, has just been approved by the ARRL to join a select group of Amateurs authorized to field check QSL cards. Ed is a DXCC Honor Roll member and has worked 332 countries.

Ed has been checking VUCC and WAS QSL's for 12 years and recently became eligible for checking DXCC cards. DXCC Field Checkers need to be sponsored by a qualified DX association, endorsed by the Section Manager and Division Director, pass a written test and have demonstrated DXCC experience and award participation. These tight requirements are in place to assure the highest level of integrity within the ARRL Award programs.

To apply for an award the applicant needs to be familiar with the rules and application forms. These are easily downloaded from the ARRL web site at www.arrl.org. DXCC applicants need to know that Field Checkers cannot verify cards for 160 meter QSO's, cards for Deleted Countries, or cards for QSO's over ten years old. To arrange for card checking, either in person, at a Club meeting, at a Hamfest, or by mail, contact Ed Gable at 716.392.3088 or email via k2mp@arrl.net

Lessons Learned

By Dave Wright - N2CK

At one of the recent Board meetings, we were discussing ways to add to the newsletter content. One of the suggestions was first person narratives of experiences in the hobby, and what they've learned because of it. That said, I'll bite the bullet and list some of my experiences here. My hope is that this column will elicit similar responses from other club members.

The first experience that comes to mind occurred quite a while ago during the 10M contest. It seemed like no matter where I went in the phone band, I could hear **Wayne, N2WK** calling CQ down in the CW portion of the band. I began to wonder if Wayne's station was generating harmonics. I called **Paul, K2DB** who lived in Hamlin at the time to see if he could turn on his station and verify what I was hearing. If Paul heard it, I was going to have him call Wayne. As I described the problem to Paul, I could sense a smile on his face. Without going to his station, Paul responded "Turn off your noise blanker." Poof—problem solved. Much chagrined, and slightly, educated I went back to the contest – without the noise blanker enabled on the TS-430.

The second experience I will confess to was chasing an intermittent fuse in the mobile. I was driving in to work and chatting on the .79 machine (using high power like I usually do) when I unkeyed and heard nothing. Looking down I saw the display was blank. Figuring I blew a fuse, I decided to check it once I got to work. I popped the fuse out of the holder, and it looked intact, no melted metal or discoloring of the glass. I checked it with an ohmmeter and it read fine. I put it back into the circuit, and initially the radio worked – however it didn't stay on for long. After some trial and error, I discovered that it would work in low power (life's too short for QRP), but high power quickly caused it to cut out. I decided that replacing the fuse was easy enough to do. Imagine my surprise when the radio now worked just fine on high power! I figure that high power mode drew just enough current to heat up the solder in the fuse and break the connection!

The third experience is also fuse related, however it relates to a physical connection. When I purchased my used TS-430 it had an in-line fuse holder wired by the previous owner (some of you might see where this is heading). **Vic, K1PY** (then K1JUL) and I had wanted to do some on-the-air code practice to boost our speed and copying ability. At the pre-arranged time we met on 10M and started our session. After a while I noticed the power output of my 430 was dropping. Instead of 100 watts, it was 30 or so. I figured that something had happened to the finals. I contacted **Al, K2MPE** to take a look at it. Al suspected bad plate-through connections on the PCB, and re-soldered all he could see. I picked it up and soon after it failed again with the same problem so back to Al it went. Al proceeded to go through the entire RF final stage, touching up all plated-through connections. I got it back and figured I'd give it the acid test. I connected it to a dummy load and sent code at a rapid rate with hardly any pauses (talk about duty cycle!). Sure enough, the radio quit on me again – however this time it was different. Instead of low power, the radio was in fact quite dead. Thinking that now I had **really** killed it, I did some investigation and determined that what had happened was that current flow into the rig, through the fuse holder, caused the solder to heat up sufficiently enough to melt and break the connection to the fuse! The lead from the power supply was simply tacked onto the fuse holder lead, without a mechanical connection, just an electrical connection. It took the high surge current of high-speed code to build up enough heat to cause the joint to fail.

By now some of you have probably remembered similar things that have occurred that you scratched your head over, and eventually resolved and learned from. I challenge you, the reader, to submit your experiences. I'm sure it will make for interesting reading.

RMSC Holiday Science Fair **By Mike Rundle - N1OKL**

RDXA has again been invited to participate in the Holiday Science and Technology Week at the Rochester Museum and Science Center. For those not familiar with this event, it is an exhibition of a wide variety of sciences and technologies at RMSC during the week between Christmas and New Years...rather like a science fair. Last year, RDXA and RARA setup a demonstration that included several electronic principles and an operational amateur station. During the four days of the event, our station made contact with numerous countries and thereby, shared the thrill of radio communication with event visitors.

This year's HSTW takes place on 27, 28, 29 December. The hours are from 10:00 to 16:00 local each day. Like last year, we will setup and operate an HF station continuously, throughout the event. Operators are needed.

We have established no particular operator schedule for the HSTW. Several RDXA members, myself included, will be on hand throughout. If you want to operate or lend a hand in some other way, come on down. Here's your chance to get the family out of the house and out of the malls for a different holiday experience. Your kids will have a great time at the Museum and you'll get in a little ham radio. What could be better?

We have tentatively scheduled the morning of 22 December with the Museum personnel as the date for antenna setup. As last year, we will install a vertical antenna on the roof. If you can assist in antenna setup, please contact N1OKL at: 383.1981 or n1okl@attglobal.net

DX Logbook **By Chris Shalvoy - K2CS**

Syline Change in East Rochester...the end of an era

Well as most of you may have heard, A.R.S. K2CS (ex N2PEB) has exclusively operated—since it's inception more than 10 years ago—with a modified G5RV. [AKA 100W & a wire – Ed.]

After #300 arrived a few days back (9N), plans were put into place to break with tradition and install K2FR's C3 and N2LW's 9 foot Glen Martin roof tower.

Since the weather has been far too good for antenna work, I decided to wait until Sunday the 11th since plummeting temperatures (from the previous day's high of 60) and the possibility of light snow was forecast.

Hearty souls AF2K and N1OKL (of W2RDX, IARU fame) took up the call.

9AM Sunday morning the group assembled amidst one of the best EU openings 6m has seen (the recent best happening the week before while I was operating K2NNY). I, of course was shouting my call numerous times at some ON stations I heard while Irv and Mike were sizing up the day's tasks.

The beam itself went together in less than an hour, thanks to the care and effort of its disassembly by the crew at K2FR's. Now came the fun stuff.

We hopped in Mike's truck and were off to Home Depot (seemingly like all homeowners, but ours was a different mission).

Bolts, nuts, washers, wood, snot, angle iron and so on were debated, purchased and loaded into Mike's truck for a ride to his shop.

After fashioning "Glen Martin" quality brackets, repairing the thrust bearing and loading up with some of Mike's shop, we were on our way to the "roof".

It's now almost 3 pm so darkness it well on it's way.

We assembled the "tower" components, rotor, thrust bearing, mast and hoisted it onto the roof.

Prior plans had Irv departing now so Mike and I completed the remaining installation.

Foregoing further detail, we pulled the beam onto the roof about 6PM, got it mounted and secured...**in the dark**...oh, did I mention, it was near freezing too (I'm **sure** it will work now!!).

After a few crimps, a rerun of cable and a compass alignment, I was ready for the "big time".

ZK1AKX 1 call 10m CW; V51AS 1 call 15m CW; BD4XA 2 calls 10m SSB (read S4 on my meter, loudest China I've **ever** heard); YBOA 1 call 15m SSB.

Guess it works....

Can't wait until CQWW CW.....

Chris, K2CS (Thanks to Mike and Irv)

November Contests

ARRL Sweepstakes, CW ----- 3-5 November
Japan Int'l DX, SSB----- 9-11 November
Worked all EU DX, RTTY-----10-11 November
IARU / RSGB 160m CW ----- 17, 18 November
ARRL Sweepstakes, SSB -----17-19 November
CQ Worldwide DX, CW ----- 24, 25 November

December Contests

ARRL 160m, CW ----- 7-9 December
ARRL 10m CW/SSB-----15, 16 December
ARRL Straight Key Nite -----31 December

Propagation *AD5Q's notes from Cycle 22, November 1990*

Solar Flux Range ----- 141 – 222

The fall DX season (aka contest season) is at its peak. On 10m and 15m, we have grey line openings along the most densely populated DX paths: Europe and Japan. Signals are loud with an unlimited supply of DX nearly every day. The trend at this time of year is for the high bands to close earlier, with less opportunities after sunset. This also narrows or closes the windows over the pole into Asia on 10m. The lower MUF's also bring good news, as the low bands are opening up.

40m is in excellent shape, with Europe in the evening and Asia & the Pacific late at night and in the morning. Incoming signals from points east and northeast peak from wherever the sun is rising in a window that lasts about an hour. There is activity on 80m too. The high sunspot activity means weak signals on 80m, so activity is low. There are a few stations coming through every night on the CW low end, and more activity on 75m fone. 160m is not much of a DX band at this point in the cycle, but is a great fone band for stateside work. Many serious DX'ers and contesters can be found on 160m at night.

And then there's 20m—usually open all night. As winter approaches, the band will often close sometime after midnight, especially when fluxes are down. Antarctic long paths are excellent with lots of activity in the morning to southern Asia, the Mid-East, Russia and Europe. We get a late afternoon pipeline to SE Asia and Japan, but with very little activity. Asians apparently don't get on 20m in the morning for long path the way Americans do. The path is open every day, however, and since few stateside ops watch this path, there is little competition for the rare DX when it shows.

In summary, this is the time of year when all HF bands are jumping with activity. There is a great variety of propagation available, which make the major DX contests of the fall season especially fascinating. But even if you are not the competitive type, there is plenty to do on the bands this fall—enjoy!

73, de Roy - AD5Q / Houston
<http://www.qth.com/ad5q/>

New DXCC Entity

Editor

The DX world is poised for the addition of a new entity to the DXCC list. Ducie Island, near Pitcairn Island, will likely join the list on 16 November 2001.

Make certain your logging program is updated with the relevant information for this new addition, as follows:

Prefix-----VP6/D
 DXCC Entity-----Ducie Island
 IOTA -----OC-182
 Latitude -----24° 40' 00" South
 24.6666° South
 Longitude -----124° 47' 00" West
 124.7833° West
 CW Zone -----32
 ITU Zone-----63
 Continent-----Oceania
 UTC offset-----minus 8 hours
 Start date -----16 November 2001 (pending)

Ducie Island was discovered by Pedro Fernandez De Quiros, a Portugese explorer. De Quiros reported sighting the island sometime between December of 1605 and May of 1606. He originally named the island La Encarnacion.

Callsign of the Ducie Island DX-pedition will likely be VP6DI.

Twenty-seven Day Space Weather Outlook Table

Issued 2001 October 02

US Dept. of Commerce NOAA

UT Date	10.7cm Radio Flux	Planetary A Index	Largest Kp Index
2001 Nov 07	235	30	5
2001 Nov 08	230	12	3
2001 Nov 09	230	12	3
2001 Nov 10	220	8	3
2001 Nov 11	215	8	3
2001 Nov 12	215	5	2
2001 Nov 13	210	8	3
2001 Nov 14	210	8	3
2001 Nov 15	215	10	3
2001 Nov 16	220	12	3
2001 Nov 17	220	10	3
2001 Nov 18	220	8	3
2001 Nov 19	22	8	3
2001 Nov 20	225	10	3
2001 Nov 21	230	10	3
2001 Nov 22	235	10	3
2001 Nov 23	235	10	3
2001 Nov 24	225	8	3
2001 Nov 25	215	12	3
2001 Nov 26	210	10	3
2001 Nov 27	210	8	3
2001 Nov 28	205	10	3
2001 Nov 29	205	10	3
2001 Nov 30	205	10	3
2001 Dec 01	210	10	3
2001 Dec 02	215	10	3
2001 Dec 03	215	8	3

RDXA at Hilton Apple Fest

Editor



RDXA Members operate K2A at the recent Hilton Apple Fest.

ROCHESTER DX ASSOCIATION

W2RDX

rdxa.com

This Bulletin is the official organ of the Rochester DX Association and is published monthly, September through June, prior to each monthly meeting.

All those with an interest in amateur radio and DXing and contesting are cordially invited to any meeting. Meetings are held at 19:30 local time on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Location is the auditorium of the Monroe County Social Services Bldg., 111 Westfall Rd., Rochester, NY.

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