



Meeting
Tuesday
Mar 20th
7:30 p.m.

GIZMO NIGHT

Amateurs are known for coming up with creative Gizmos. Bring those Gizmos which you might have come up with to the meeting and join in on the fun. Highlight of the meeting will be the presentation of the all-time RDXA GIZMO!!!

Just a reminder, March is a test session month. Spread the word!

President's Soapbox

Mike Rundle, N1OKL

If you have not had the pleasure of being on the receiving end of a DX pileup, I highly recommend the experience. To borrow a phrase from my younger days, "What a rush!"

A recent winter holiday on St. George Island, NA85, just off the Florida Gulf Coast, provided both a much-anticipated respite from winter and great DX operating fun. Fred has asked me to give a short program at the April meeting on my little DXpedition, so I'll save the details until then. But suffice it to say that I had a blast on the air. The NA85 QTH attracted QSOs by the bucketful. And the new, homebrew off-center fed dipole at 50 feet above the edge of salt water really dished out the RF. At one point on Friday around noon, 17:00 in EU, the pileup got so deep I had to work split to shovel 'em out!

If you are looking for cheap radio thrills, you can't do much better than a coastal island. There are an awful lot of IOTA island chasers out there, plus folks who just want to talk to someone in a unique QTH. So grab a map and plan your next

family vacation on an island. There are numerous isles off our Northeast coast just waiting to be activated as your IOTA QTH.

Of course, you will need a few GIZMOS for your upcoming DXpedition. So be sure you're in attendance at this month's meeting for GIZMO NITE. Who knows, a fellow member may have just the design you've been seeking for that left-handed, all band, all mode sewer flute. Or maybe you have built one yourself in a flash of imagineering. Join us and share in the fun and creativity of amateur radio's time-honored tradition: making something out of nothing.

QRU. CU at the meeting.

Editor's Corner

Dave Wright, N2CK

Greetings all. Are you as ready for spring as I am? It hasn't been a rough winter (here that is), but the few warm days we've had along the way were quite the tease.

I finally invested in a database and awards tracking program. The package I purchased is DX4WIN. It's mighty powerful, with lots of features. They provide a full-feature downloadable demo on their web site - the only restriction being you cannot save the database to disk. It offers file import (in a number of formats), and creation of "groups" to keep contest Qs grouped together. This software was recently reviewed in QST. At \$90, it's a little more than I wanted to spend, but the features it offers are amazing! One of the functions it has is the ability to show short and long paths for the Qs in the database. I imported a bunch of my contest logs and was having a blast seeing the signal trajectories (so that's why the UA9 sounds like that!). It

offers quite a few different map projections, from a globe-type display to various Mercator projections. As I paged through Qs made during last years' WPX phone contest, I was watching the signal path – Europe, South America, Europe again, Russia, then there was no signal path! Perplexed, I looked at the QSO window to see what the Q was. I had quite the grin on my face when I realized that the QSO was with **K2FR**! Short path to Webster is pretty insignificant compared to the rest of the Qs that weekend. Once I get a little more confident on what this program can do, I'll do a program on it.

Scott, K2ZS has been doing some redesign of the RDXA website. Surf over to k2zs.com/staging/rdxaNextG/webroot and let him know what you think. I have to say, I like the looks of what he's done.

Fred Gern K2FR Memorial

Ed Gable, K2MP

The RDXA is both honored and humbled at being named, by the family, as the recipients of Fred Gern Memorials. Thanks to your generosity and those in the automotive field who were customers, and to his many non-ham friends and family, the Fred Gern K2FR Memorial Fund now stands at \$1360.

Your Board of Directors will certainly do what is right in directing these funds towards those RDXA goals and activities that Fred so heartily supported and was so much a part of. Please feel free to contact any Officer or Board Member with your ideas on how to direct this fund. We have already renamed the annual RDXA supported ARRL DX contest plaque to read *The RDXA K2FR Memorial Plaque*.

My TNC died, but I'm still on packet!

Allen Pellnat, KX2H

My MFJ (Mighty Fine Junque) 1278 TNC went west about two weeks ago for the second time in as many years. I use the TNC for the RDXA 2 Meter DX Cluster and occasionally for HF RTTY operation.

Just in time to save me along came the note in the last RDXA newsletter about soundcard-based freeware for packet operation. When you go to the first site www.qsl.net/soundcardpacket/ you get a 58-page .pdf document that describes everything you need and how to do it. The core element is a TCP/IP package written by SV2AGW called AGWPE (AGW's Packet Engine).

The .pdf document holds your hand nicely through the installation and setup process and includes a self-test to verify it's all working before you go ahead with the cable connections. Construction of the cables is the usual serial port interface to drive the PTT line of the transceiver and a simple pad to reduce the soundcard audio output to one that the microphone input is more accustomed to. The PTT interface was the only real problem I had thanks to a bum transistor from Radio Shack.

AGWPE is only assured to work with five specific packet application front-end programs. I found that WinPack which is also available as freeware is easy to download and set up and works quite well. I did have to get the Winsock dll update from Microsoft too, and even though the AGWPE setup gave me a warning message indicating I needed to update my Internet Explorer (I'm at Rev. 4.0), I didn't do it and it doesn't seem to have caused me any problems so far.

Once I got over my own cockpit problems with my homebrew transfer switch for the soundcard input/output (a little confusion on gozinta and cumzouta!) it worked like a charm. So I'm back into the DX Cluster and chasing all that good stuff that's on during the day while most of the rest of you guys are working.

DX of the past - March 1959

Ed Gable, K2MP

Two DXpeditions need to be cited this month as ones to remember. The first was the operation by Giovanna Guglielmo D'Angello, I1ADW, who put HV1CN, Vatican City, on-the-air for a new country. Gio, who's picture appeared in *DX Magazine*, was still operating with WW2 surplus gear well into the 60's. The other activity was putting San Marino on SSB for the first time. Working SSB phone vs AM phone was a popular goal then, although there was no recognition of SSB by DXCC rules. I1EZZ/M1 was activated by a bunch of GI's stationed in Italy. Speaking of GI's, a bunch of the boys from South Korea were getting restless and putting HL2 calls on-the-air without benefit of any sanction. Notably, HR2AM operated phone patches to the States every night with a license expired for 18 months. There was a long article describing the plans for activating Serrana Bank, KS4BB, for a much-needed new one by a group of W's. More on this later. It was becoming more and more common to have DXpeditions schedule operating times and frequencies. Such was the case with KS4BB and ZS5RO/ZS7 from semi-rare Swaziland. ZS5RO's published plan was to transmit on 28.250 and listen from 28.600 to 29.000 Mcs. (No comment) Active DX'er and noted *Voice of America*

Commentator Bill Leonard, W2SKE, reported that he was activating HI8SKE in the Dominican Republic. Cocos-Keeling's very active station is to go QRT as soon as VK9LE returns to Australia, his duties over. Lionel's replacement was not a ham. And in the who cares department, WA2CCC claimed to be the first to get DXCC using the new-style US call-sign prefix. In the "to die for" QSL cards received department this month;

VS1BB/VS9 Maldives, VR5PL Tonga and CR5AR Portuguese West Africa. Although Mosley and HyGain were advertising the heck out of their new tri-band trapped yagis, Telrex grabbed a full-page QST ad explaining why their trapless mono-banders in a Christmas Tree arrangement were boss.

Historical Bits from K2MP:

1947: Amateurs lose top 300 Kc on ten meters (29.7 to 30.0) and top of 20 meters (14.35 to 14.40) but gain 11 meters shared with other services. W1FH is awarded first modern (aka post-war) DXCC. DXCC Entity count was 257. QCWA and OOTC clubs formed.

DX World

Lee Jennings, ZL2AL

Just do it! (The PW0S Story)

That is Nike's slogan and that should be the slogan of every DXpedition. DXpeditions involve tremendous dedication and energy by every participant, which is why I like this incredible story of the latest DXpedition to St. Peter and St. Paul Rocks. This tiny but very dangerous archipelago is about 1000 km from the Brazilian coast. It has no grass, trees or drinking water and is inside an area of frequent earthquakes. It is just the tip of an underwater rocky column far out in the North Atlantic. The seas are so bad at

times that they often cover the main island surface and the waves break over the roof of the house and threaten to knock over the lighthouse! Crabs and sea birds love it, but it is not the kind of place you would take your family for a vacation. (See my QSL card from the last DXpedition, ZV0SB in 1999)

This was written by Bill, W9VA about PW0S during February this year.

"The Rocks" are actually the rim of a submerged volcano off the coast of Brazil in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. The actual landmass is a small irregular broken volcanic reef. There is a reason for PY0S being number 26 on the DX Magazine 2000 "Most Needed" list. Under optimum conditions it is difficult to get to, difficult to land on, difficult to find a level area to set up a station, in fact, just plain difficult. The risk of damage to equipment and bodies is not insignificant. Check out the photos at the PW0S website

www.soutomaior.eti.br/mario/paginas/dx.htm Nevertheless a group of Brazilians,

Jim PY7XC, Ciro PY7ZY, and Eli PT7BZ, started out from Recife on February 3 on the 49 foot motor/sailer "Old Smuggler," stopping off briefly at Fernando de Noronha for a rest and minor repairs. While there, **Andre, PY0FF**, decided to join the group. They arrived at The Rocks on the morning of February 9, finding the sea much too rough to even consider landing. Imagine the frustration at arriving at one of the rarest DX sites in the world with a boat full of equipment and being unable to land. Then imagine bobbing around in this small boat for three more days waiting for a break in the weather. At this point most of us would have said "To Hell With It" and headed for home. They didn't.

The seas subsided enough on the morning of Monday February 12 to attempt a landing, and they were able to get some equipment ashore and operating by 2100Z. The bad weather

continued with high winds, lightning and rain, frequently interrupting operations. If you were searching and not finding them during these periods, now you know why. Because of the three day delay in landing, by Friday February 16 the group was already way overdue getting home to their families and jobs. Supplies were running out. The weather was such that they could safely get themselves and equipment off the Rocks, and the sensible decision was made to leave. Their bad luck continued as the boat encountered problems on the way home, and it was necessary for three operators to fly from Fernando de Noronha to Recife, further adding to the expense.

The final QSO count was around 7,800. Obviously the final tally is well below expectations, but still 7,800 contacts that would have not been made at all without incredible courage and devotion to our hobby. Many picked up an "all-time-new-one," the real objective of this operation. Others gained a rare country on a new band or mode. An effort was made to spend at least a little time on all bands, all modes, including RTTY. I have particular respect for the DX'ers who were not in the pileups so that others would have a better shot at a new one. PW0S was a grass roots, low budget operation to one of the rarest and most difficult uninhabitable pieces of rock in the world. Well-used equipment was scrounged together from many sources, laptops were borrowed, favours were called-in. The call signs of these four fellows may not have instant recognition, but to me they are what DXing is all about. 73 Bill W9VA

ARRL Atlantic Division Seeking Award Nominees

Ed Gable, K2MP

Most are aware that the ARRL, each year at the Atlantic Division Convention in Rochester, NY, awards many significant awards. This year the Awards committee is eagerly seeking your ideas and nominations for *The Amateur of the Year* and *Technical Achievement* award winners. Nominations should be submitted on a form available from www.bfdin.com/atlantic/awardfor.htm

WNY Hamfest Schedule

Scott Bauer, W2LC

WARNING: Due to having second-hand information for many of these hamfests, I strongly urge you to check the hamfest location and date before traveling. Not all hamfest sponsors have sent me information, so I do the best I can with the information I get.

Ask your local hamfest sponsor to send me up to date information. I will appreciate it very much. Thank you.

73 Scott W2LC, ARRL WNY Section Manager, w2lc@arrl.org

March 31, 2001 Drumlins Hamfest,
Marble Town Fire Hall, Newark NY

May 5, 2001 Owego Hamfest,
Binghamton Amateur Radio Association,
at Tioga County Marvin Park Fairgrounds,
Owego, WB2GHH

May 18,19,20, 2001 ARRL National
Convention, Dayton ARA, Dayton Ohio

June 1,2,3, 2001 Rochester Hamfest,
ARRL Atlantic Division Convention, at

Monroe County Fairgrounds, Route 15A
and Calkins Rd

June 16, 2001 Cortland Hamfest, Skyline
ARC, at Cortland County Fairgrounds

July 15, 2001 Batavia Hamfest, Genesee
Radio Amateurs, at Batavia Downs

July 21, 2001 Utica Hamfest, Utica
Amateur Radio Club, at Frankfort

August 4, 2001 Ithaca Hamfest,
Tompkins County Amateur Radio Club, at
Tompkins County Airport

August 5, 2001 Greater Buffalo Summer
Hamfest, WNY Section Convention Main
Transit FD Hall, 6777 Main St.,
Williamsville NY, 147.255,
<http://hamgate1.sunyerie.edu/~larc>

August 11, 2001 Rome Hamfest, Rome
Radio Club, at Westmoreland Fireman's
Field

August 18, 2001 Margaretville,
Margaretville Amateur Radio Club,
KB2DCE

September 22, 2001 Buffalo Hamfest, at
Erie County Fairgrounds, Route 62,
Hamburg

September 23, 2001 Auburn Hamfest,
Auburn Amateur Radio Association at
Emerson Park on Owasco Lake

September 29, 2001 Elmira Hamfest,
ARA of the Southern Tier, at Chemung
Cty Fairgrounds, Horseheads

October 6, 2001 RAGS Hamfest, Radio
Amateurs of Greater Syracuse, at
Pompey Hill Fire Dept.

Field Day 2001

Fred Groner, W2tZ

It is that time of year when RDXA talks
Field Day. Field Day is the #1 club
activity and very well attended. Field Day

was discussed in a general sense during
the last two RDXA and BOD meetings.
These discussions ranged from
conducting a radically different Field Day
to continuing the same Field Day as
previous years. Operating QRP or even
running KW amplifiers were discussed.
The possibility of a location change was
also briefly mentioned, an advantage for
VHF. We made known that early in the
year is the time to propose any changes
or even drastic changes from past years.
No decisions have yet been made, but
within the next month RDXA needs to
have a Field Day objective and definite
plans in the works. So now is the time if
anybody wants to take a leadership role
to implement any Field Day changes to
please step forward with plans. I was co-
Field Day chairman last year and really
liked what we did the last few years, but I
love Field Day and if there is great
enthusiasm on the part of the club to
change direction or objectives, let's do it.
Other RDXA members might have other
opinions. Please contact last year's Field
Day chairmen, N2RD, W2TZ, or K1PY
with any inputs.

Interesting .signature

Dave Wright, N2CK

*I spotted an interesting .signature in a
post to the DX reflector. I asked for, and
received permission to share it with you.
The .signature is from **Lee, ZL2AL**. I
hope you find it as clever as I did!*

"In days of old when radio was bold
and transistors were not invented.
The sparks would glow, the RF would go
and the air would become ozone scented"

How's DX?

Chris Shalvoy, K2CS

I hope you've all enjoyed the plethora of DXpeditions and contests over the last few weeks.

Judging by the log submissions and emails, we've all been REAL busy...

February started out with ARRL DX CW, moved on to CQWW 160m SSB, and the first weekend in March finished off with ARRL DX SSB.

Operating time was limited for me in the CW test so I can only report on about 4 hours on 10 meters Sunday. Nothing overly exciting but did log SU, KH9, V7, TZ & KH0.

Probably the most "exciting" contest I've worked in a while was the CQWW 160m SSB. Believe it or not, the infamous "wire" was used but fed with 500 watts! I operated only 2 hours but managed 30 states. What a thrill only calling a station **1 TIME** and hearing stuff like "loudest signal on the band (come to think of it, maybe "only signal on the band" may have been more appropriate... it was 4 am in the 160 SSB Contest....), "booming signal", "great audio", etc.

For those of you who think I sold out... never fear, the amp was promptly disconnected the next morning and hasn't been used since.

The ARRL DX SSB contest was fun as well, even though the mode switch was in the wrong position. Bands were in great shape but my S meter was not. I was plagued by s9 noise all weekend long, all bands. This problem has been here for 30 years, and RG&E can't seem to find it!! The noise blanker helps but often can't suppress enough. It's just recently resided after 3 or 4 days.

Nonetheless, worked most of what I heard and had a blast for about 28 hours.

As for non-contest DX, if you don't have a full log sheet for the last month, shame!

D68C, T32RD, 3G0Y, 5U3T, 9M0M and 6Y8A have been on around the clock, easy and on any band and most modes.

Granted, 6Y may not be real DX from here but remember your band countries... you'll need 'em someday.

BQ9P takes some work but 17m seems the place to be at sunrise. For you amp and beam guys, they're already in your logs I'm sure.

I see news that the first VK0MM card is out so be patient.

IN THE LOG (only the good stuff, non contest)

D68C	(20m, 30m, 15m, 80m, 10m, CW) (10m FM) (10m, 15m RTTY) (12m, 15m, 17m, 80m, 40m, SSB)
3Y0C	(17m SSB)
T32RD	(15m, 12m, 80m, 10m CW) (17m, 10m, 80m, 20m SSB) (20m, 17m RTTY)
XX9TDX	(15m CW)
4JT9H	(20m CW)
NP4H	(160m SSB)
3G0Z	(10m SSB)
VP5/K4ISV	(160m CW)
6Y8A	(40m, 80m, 30m, 160m, 17m, 15m CW) (20m, 10m SSB)
VK9NS	(40m CW)
3D2AG/p	(30m CW)
N2VV/C6A	(160m CW)
9M0M	(15m CW)
5U3T	(40m, 15m, 10m CW)
3G0Y	(20m, 17m, 80m, 15m, 12m, 10m CW)
BQ9P	(17m CW) (17m SSB)
IN THE MAIL (no buro packs)	
4W/ON6TT	(15m SSB)
EL2WW	(10m CW)
S07WW	(30m CW)

E31AA	(20m CW)
3D2DX	(10m, 15m SSB)
WP4KJJ	(6m SSB)
4S7EA	(20m CW)
CE0ZY	(20m, 17m, 12m CW)
FO0HWU	(20m, 17m CW)
P29VXX	(40m, 30m, 80m CW)
A45XR	(10m, 20m, 17m, 15m CW)
FT5XN	(20m CW)
E44/HA1AG	(20m, 40m CW)
4K9W	(12m CW)

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

(best of luck BOB)

First LF Transatlantic QSO is completed

From the ARRL web site

Amateur Radio history was made this month when amateurs in Canada and the UK completed what appears to be the first two-way transatlantic Amateur Radio exchange on 136 kHz. **Larry Kayser, VA3LK**, and **Lawrence "Laurie" Mayhead, G3AQC**, managed the LF feat using extremely slow CW that featured *90-second-long* dits and *180-second-long* dahs. The two-way contact took two weeks to complete.

"We are the first to do a two-way QSO on LF across the North Atlantic as far as I am concerned," Kayser said. "We are the ones who put the stakes in the ground; others will build on what we have done."

The VA3LK-G3AQC contact began February 5 and was completed February 19 with the reception and confirmation of VA3LK's report by G3AQC. Both stations used spectrographic software and computers for receiving. The participants agreed in advance to a "firewall" between them for the duration of the contact and

that all QSO information was exchanged over the LF radio link.

The UK has an amateur band at 136 kHz. While Canada has not yet authorized general Amateur Radio operation on 136 kHz, Kayser and a few other Canadian amateurs have received special authorization to conduct LF experiments there.

G3AQC and VA3LK were using a combination of commercial and surplus equipment at their respective stations. G3AQC estimated his effective radiated power at 350 mW, while VA3LK said he might have been at the 5 W ERP level.

In October 1998, the ARRL petitioned the FCC to create two amateur LF allocations at 135.7-137.8 kHz and 160-190 kHz. The FCC has not yet acted on the request.

Hiking HAMS Claim Pedestrian Mobile Distance Record!

Lee Jennings, ZL2AL

Bonnie Crystal, KQ6XA, of San Mateo, California, and **Max Pompe, ZL1BK**, of Auckland, New Zealand, are claiming the record for the longest direct-path, pedestrian-to-pedestrian Amateur Radio contact. The two worked each other on February 18 on 10 meters using compact SSB transceivers and homemade antennas. On the New Zealand end, ZL1BK used a 1.8-meter (5 feet 11 inches) homebrew telescopic whip mounted on his Yaesu FT-817 running 5W. Crystal had a 6-meter (19 feet 8 inches) fishing pole strapped to an aluminum pack frame and ran 20 W using a Vertex/Standard VX-1200 HF Manpack transceiver, a radio that's not marketed in the US. "Both of us used 3-meter insulated-wire dragging counterpoises," said Crystal.

The 6500-mile contact began on 15 meters but ended on 10 on 28337 MHz because conditions were better there for that path. "Other stations in the HFpack group here in the US had been trying to make a go of it, but we just lucked out," Crystal said. For his part, ZL1BK said, "I still can hardly believe we did it, but the Pacific gods smiled on us as we rode the airwaves today." Both operators are members of a worldwide email group of backpack radio enthusiasts called HFpack, which keeps a database of so-called PM (Pedestrian Mobile) long distance records. The HFpack Web site has more information at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/hfpack/>

Contest Calendar

Chris Shalvoy, K2CS

March, 2001

24-25 CQWW WPX SSB

April, 2001

9 144 MHz Sprint

May, 2001

12-13 50 MHz Sprint

26-27 CQWW WPX CW

June, 2001

9-10 ARRL June VHF QSO Party

23-24 ARRL Field Day

July, 2001

14-15 IARU World Championship

12 Meter Band Interference

From the ARRL web site

The ARRL Monitoring System will formally ask the FCC to monitor yet another intruding signal, this time on 12 meters. The widely reported signal sounds a bit like a tightly wound, noisy spring being repeatedly compressed and released. It's believed to be coming from

a surface-wave radar installation, possibly in Central or South America.

"It sounds like someone playing with a really noisy spring, or a very poorly tuned guitar string," says ARRL Monitoring System Administrator Brennan Price, N4QX. "This signal is also unique in that it precisely occupies the entire 12-meter band, from 24,890 to 24,990 kHz, with the same pitch and tempo throughout the band."

While the signal does not appear to be overly disruptive to amateur communications, it is almost certainly an intruder. "The 12-meter band is allocated to amateurs on an exclusive basis worldwide," Price says. "This is not one of those instances where the observed station has as much right to use the frequency as United States amateurs; any non-amateur signal on 12 is an intruder."

Informal discussions with professional monitors suggest that the rough pulses--about two per second in frequency--are characteristic of a CODAR (Coastal Ocean Dynamics Applications Radar) transmitter. CODAR is a specific type of HF radar used to map ocean surface currents in coastal zones. (An overview of CODAR theory and applications is available from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration web site.)

On the block

Dave Wright, N2CK

Own a piece of K2FR! HF Transceiver, ICOM 751A, very good condition with mic, manual, pwr supply, built in keyer, etc. RDXA members and friends: \$425.00. VHF/UHF handheld, looks new, ICOM T7H, 5 watts, \$150. Much more to follow. Contact Ed Gable k2mp at 392-3088 or k2mp@eznet.net

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

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