

ROCHESTER

DX

ASSOCIATION

rdxa.com



Regular Meeting

October 15th 19:30 local

435 East Henrietta Road
Monroe Community Hospital

Video program: "Winning on the Hill"

This video produced by K1PY reveals the culmination of the intense VHF rivalry between the RVHFG/N2WK Contest Team and the RPI W2SZ/1 Mt. Greylock Expeditionary Force

See accompanying article,
"The Making of Winning on the Hill"

A video projector will ensure maximum enjoyment for all

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Note meeting location change. Park on South side of building and enter through South door (the side that faces I-390 & the Canal. Location is the Board Room. Mention "radio club meeting" to guard/receptionist.

Social after the Meeting

Scotch & Sirloin
Winton Plaza

President's Soapbox

By Fred Groner - W2TZ

Since being elected President in June, I wondered just what I would say now that I have been placed on the Soapbox. It really wasn't that difficult because there are so many phases of amateur radio that deserves both negative and positive comment. Most of my reflections about amateur radio give rise to positive comments, but there are a few which leave me just a little annoyed, especially those about DXing and Contesting. Needless to say, RDXA is heavily involved with these operating activities.

Unfortunately, in the real world of Contesting and DXing, there exist certain perceptions and attitudes that bother me. One involves what constitutes a "good operator." In our ranks, the measure of a

good operator is too often based on contest scores and country totals. A high contest score is perceived as coming from a good contest operator, and a high country total is perceived as coming from a good DXer, and good operator in general. I can't disagree totally with this perception because a high contest score and a high country total are often indicators of a "good operator."

But not so fast my good friends because we shouldn't be too quick to judge. Consider the operator running 100 watts to a 30 foot high tribander who missed that rare P5 country. Is he a "bad operator?" Consider the operator running an Alpha at a kW to a 100 foot high 5 element monobander who, on the other hand, worked that rare P5 country. Is he a "good operator?" Unfortunately, many view the operator who got the P5 as the better operator and he is labeled accordingly. That P5 might have put him on the Honor Roll – an award only granted to "good operators" (query)?

My answer is who the hell knows if one or both of these guys is a "good operator." I do know, by perceived standards, that the Alpha would make me a better operator, and that high monobander along with the Alpha would make me a much better operator yet. My point? If you know anything about contesting and DXing, you know the importance of both power and antennas in getting that contest score and that country total higher. The loud station and the results it produces are often misinterpreted as being a well-operated station. I have always felt that the best operator in the world with a multitude of operating skills won't log that DX station if the DX station can't hear him. Power and/or effective antennas are more often than not needed to guarantee a QSO with that needed DX station.

As a side point, I have always been confused that the contest categories in ARRL and CQ contests are based only on 5W, 100W, and kW power levels with no restrictions on antennas and/or antenna height. The CQ TS-Wires category is a step in the right direction, but no antenna height restrictions are part of the rules. The rules seem to say that power matters, but antennas don't matter. We know better don't we? This raises a very interesting question. When is QRP no longer QRP, and when is low power no longer low power? Think about it. [Perhaps a category based on EIRP—effective isotropic radiated power—would be appropriate? We all learn to calculate this to get our tickets, after all. Ed.]

I personally don't like to hear amateurs use the term "good operator" or "bad operator." If I personally had to define a "good operator" a significant part of that definition would include the ability to do more with less. Part of the enjoyment of amateur radio is conversing about what operators are using for rigs, antennas, etc.

and trying to relate these factors to achievements. When you talk to RDXAers you will find a very wide range of rigs, power levels, and antennas. You will also find some very impressive achievements in both contesting and DXing done with very modest means. RDXA as a group has indeed done more with less – remember our #1 finish in 3A in the 2001 Field Day. From this Soapbox, I can say RDXA is a very interesting, accomplished group, but I am not going to describe RDXAers as a group of “good operators” or “bad operators.” See you at the meeting.

Making “Winning on the Hill”

By Vic Gauvin - K1PY

Vic provides a behind-the-scenes look at production of this month's video program, Ed.

Open black; slow zoom logo, spin; pulsing music swells, peaks, quick fade to black. Morse CQ over black. Voice: “CQ contest” over K2FR at 2m station.

This briefly describes the opening of one of the biggest projects that “Mr. Big Projects” (aka K1PY) has ever undertaken. It had to be a labor of love, otherwise no sane person—hmmm—maybe we’ve hit on it here! What are we talking about, you ask? Let’s go back a decade or so.

The RVHFG has had a long-standing competition with the Mt. Airy PackRats in the major VHF contests. Back in the late 80s, early 90s, this rivalry, especially during the January VHF Contest, probably permeated the overall Rochester radio scene more than any other event save the Hamfest. There was a second, less well known, but no less intense VHF rivalry however. This was between the RVHFG N2WK Contest Team and the RPI W2SZ/1 Mount Greylock Expeditionary Force.

W2SZ, the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Radio Club, was (and still is) an overwhelming VHF presence that totally blew away the competition. Totally. Several orders of magnitude. Wayne N2WK and his team decided to take on the challenge of beating the fabled “S-Zed.” [How ironic that a decade later an RDXA member is President of Zed. See article in “Pings” Ed.]

What’s it take to beat a big gun? A bigger gun! To achieve this, for several years the RVHFG set up a Field Day style operation on Gannett Hill, the name of the hilltop in Ontario County Park down in the Bristol Hills. This is one of the highest spots in Western New York and a prime VHF location. The extent of the preparations was incredible. RDXA puts on a pretty good Field Day, right? Logistically it doesn’t even compare to the Gannett Hill efforts at that time. It was huge. It’s the thing of tales and legends. Having had the opportunity to participate in 1990 and just being blown away by its World-Class magnitude, I decided the 1991 effort had to be recorded for posterity. Hence, I thought making a video would be a fun project. Of course, never having done that before, little did I know what it would evolve into. I mean, we all know that I do like the ‘big production’ and kind of get carried away, but, well, you’ll see.

So how does one go about this? Mike N2KGGH, an amateur videographer and one of the cameramen, recommended using SVHS for quality. How do we cover the magnitude of things? There’s so much going on. Well, how about 2, no 3 video cameras? How do we capture the extent of the logistics? Maybe we record the planning meetings as well. We definitely need multiple cameras on the setup and tower raisings – the bulk of the action. And the Rovers! Gotta describe them and all it takes. The operating! What’s it like? What do you do to beat the S Zed

Goliath? Then there’s the “other” stuff – food, technical support, power, the list is endless. You gotta capture it all. Well, after all the preparation and a hugely successful weekend, we had 13 hours of videotape on 8 cassettes that indeed did just that. That was the fun part.

Now what do you do with 13 hours of tape that you can’t even look at (SVHS remember)? Enter Chuck, an unsuspecting, and still after it was all over, friend of Mike’s and mine at work. Chuck does video editing on the side, weddings and things. He had the equipment it would take. We made a time-stamped VHS copy, and now I could see what we had, and refer to the time stamp. What was the story here, though? At the outset, this was intended to be a local documentary of the effort. We wanted to show what it took, but we also wanted to show the little side stories that add to the tapestry. We’d followed a script of sorts when shooting. Now it was time to find the scenes that depicted them. To know where what was when, I determined I needed a log. Many, many, many, many, many weeks later, I had a 1-inch thick book that described every second of the 13 hours of video, scene-by-scene, word-by-word, each logged to the second it occurred, 10 seconds per page. Needless to say, *Whew!*

After a recovery break, I now needed to pick the best scenes and dialog that fit in with each of the desired segments. In some cases we had the video but no audio, and vice versa. So we had to split things – use the video from one place and the audio from elsewhere. Then how do we pull it together? We’ll need narration to provide the flow and transitions. So, search the log, grab 3 seconds of video from here, 5 from that tape, 8 from this other tape, and overlay 16 seconds of audio from elsewhere over it all. Quick cuts like those I thought were the only way to keep it lively, but boy did it add to the work! And transitions from one scene to the other. How long should each take? 2 seconds? 1.7? And graphics – we needed to show some data indicating how the team grew from its simple beginnings to its now big league presence. Back to Chuck’s.

Video editing and special effects are fascinating processes. Chuck had the coolest suite of software and equipment to do all this. After about two week’s worth of evenings over three or four months, we had all the graphics made up and the transitions programmed. They were all on SVHS of course. Now we had a log, script, scenes, graphics, transitions, segues, and 13 hours of SVHS. We needed to put it all together. Chuck’s stuff certainly wasn’t available.

Mike was able to arrange for me to hook up with the Webster Community Television people. Community TV is that little-known resource that produces local programming for towns and “broadcasts” on cable. I believe it’s one of the rules that cable has to provide this resource in order to get permission to come into an area. Anyway, Webster had the only studio that had SVHS editing equipment (except for Rochester, but that had lots of restrictions as to its use.) As long as Webster could show the video, I could use their place to edit it.

They were real supportive to a true beginner, and showed me how to use the editing suite. Really cool actually! I got going on it all, arranging an editing schedule in between when they did their own stuff. It quickly became apparent that this would take quite a while, and accessibility was an issue. Unless someone was available to get me up some steps, I couldn’t take advantage of available editing time. Not to let a minor issue like that get in the way, I spent the next two months (remember, everything BIG) designing and building a portable 16-foot ramp/platform that I could set up at

the side door of the studio so I could get in pretty much anytime someone was there to unlock the door. Now we're on our way.

Tapes, log, and script in hand, we fast-forwarded to the desired tape location, rocked the video back and forth to determine the exact cut-in point, then did the same to find the exit, rewound to start, played it out, got it captured on the edit master, and bingo, we had 3 seconds of video. Cut after cut, and we'd have a scene. Leave some trailer and leader on each end of the scene so we can go back to Chuck's to cut in the transitions. Slowly, slowly, it comes together. And we've got a video master.

Then there's the sound track. Audio is captured along with the video, on its own track. However, sometimes we wanted audio different from what was recorded with the video. So now there's an entirely separate pass to cut in the audio. Same as before: Go find it, time it, sync it, mark the cut ins/outs, and go for it. Whoops, timing not quite right? Hmmm. Where or what do we edit? Somehow it too comes together.

Now we're ready for the narration. The verbal glue that ties it all together. Enter our local on-the-air ham radio celebrity Dwight K2KWK. Bearing with me wearing my producer and script-writer hats, we had several studio sessions to get it down. Reading from a prepared script wasn't Dwight's usual narration style, so we had fun putting the right emphasis and tone to things. It was an experience for both of us, one that we both thoroughly enjoyed.

We must be pretty much there, right? Yes, except it's still kind of bland by today's commercial standards. After all, the audience, regardless of the fact that this is a documentary of local interest, has as a reference what they see every day on TV. It's gotta have a background music track. Curtis N2HKD and Scott N2LBE (now AA2WV) to the rescue, and I've got several CDs that seem to have the right sound. Back to the studio. Several sessions later, fade it in, go to this cut for 23 seconds, bring it down and go to the other one, lower to go under the narration then bring it up, quick cut, and we've pretty much got it. It's trickier than you'd think getting things to "fit." I had some great luck, though, and there are a couple of instances where you'd think the music and video were actually planned for each other ahead of time. Just luck (and a bunch of work).

One of the more enjoyable parts was doing the credits. Following commercial examples, I rolled these over out-takes, stuff that you couldn't use during the main portion, but was too good to leave, as they say, on the cutting room floor. There's some fun stuff here.

Off to get a bunch of copies – around 50 or so were made. Chuck the video guy was also the print shop guy at work, and we made up neat labels for the videotape boxes, and it was ready to go.

You rightly guessed that all of this took a while. Quite a while, which I'm sure you now can appreciate. Of course, the principals in all this, Wayne et. al., weren't quite aware of the scope of this effort, and had pretty much figured after around a year and half after the event that it was a lost cause. I told 'em, "it's coming," but one could easily understand their doubt!

Finally, albeit a bit late, it made its world premier showing at the 1993 RVHFG Banquet. We got a video projector and showed it that year at the Rochester Hamfest. It went to ARRL (to Rus, NJ2L, now K2UA), *CQ*, 73, *NCJ*, and to local hams that were actually in it or interested in general. It went to Spain, Cuba via N6CL, and to VHF clubs in several states after requests came in from a mention in *CQ*. It's still available from the ARRL video distribution program, and a few years ago, the Canadian Radio

Relay League requested it from me so they could distribute it as well.

Adopting the "been there, done that" approach, I've since sworn off super-major efforts such as this one. Field Day aside, I've pretty much toned down the scope of my efforts. But every once in a while, seeing something really cool, the urge pokes up a bit. You should see...

Contesting

By Raj Dewan - N2RD

Contesting is by far, my favorite ham radio activity. Ham radio is a big hobby and I realize that it may not be on the top of every one's list. Even my wife fails to understand how sending 599 05 endlessly can be fun. I explained to her that it is as much fun as making 2,000 left turns on a short non-scenic road such as the Indianapolis oval. If you want to get a taste for contesting and do not have a full 48 hours to devote to it, do not despair but read on.

Fitting my avocation into the time left from my vocation is hard. I teach at a university and every fall, I get busy with teaching and new academic year activities. It is the busiest time of the year for me. Unfortunately, it is also when the contest season peaks. Much as I like contesting, the clash of time requirements makes it difficult to get enough time to do "real" contesting. In the last couple of years, I have modified the way I approach contests—spending less time but getting as much fun as possible.

Contesting, like racing, is about competition. The problem is how to run a competitive race while doing only a few laps. There are a number of solutions.

Easiest are the contests, such as the CQ WPX or the Sweepstakes where a sequence number is part of the exchange. If you start the contest with every one else, then it is easy to compare how you are doing compared to others. Work to keep your sequence number in the league with the best you hear. This really is a lot of fun and really gets the adrenaline flowing. I did this in the WPX last year. While I participated for only 12 hours in a multi-day contest, I really had a whole lot of fun. I tried hard to keep my sequence number in the top decile of numbers I heard. This is a challenge with a call like N2RD in the WPX contest. Changing my call to a spark plug variant like NG2P or AE9E entered my mind.

The next approach to competing while running an abbreviated effort is to compare "lap statistics" rather than over all performance. How does my top rate compare with that of others? How many multipliers did I work on the 80m band compared to the top performer? Did I catch the opening to VK/ZL that some others did? This kind of information can often be found on the score reflectors, like 3830, or in the soap box section of the contest report and serve as a point of comparison.

Clubs are great for leveraging up the fun in all kinds of ham radio activity, including contesting. At the next ham radio club meeting you attend, ask around to see if there are people interested in comparing/competing on a limited time basis. Forming a contest interest group of similarly constrained contesters can provide another source for comparison and competition. Members putting in a full time effort can also participate by comparing only part of the log. This is especially fun as all of group members are likely to be in similar propagation zones and have similar ham radio environments. How about a single band effort—especially on a band that has propagation only some of the time? Look at the propagation chart and pick out the times that will get the best score in a limited time. Sure, others with mega stations and full time

effort will score higher, but will come closer than you will in an all band effort.

While this strategy can be applied to any band, it works best at the extremes of the HF spectrum where the propagation gets more idiosyncratic. The top band, with allocation in MF portion of the spectrum from 1.8 to 2 MHz, is a great one. For DX contacts, I don't even bother turning the radio on until an hour before sunset. A number of good propagation programs can be used to predict openings on the 10m band. My favorite is VOACAP [*developed for the Voice of America, Ed.*] which can be downloaded for free from http://elbert.its.bldrdoc.gov/pc_hf/hfwin32.html. This has the same engine as the one used to generate the propagation charts in the QST magazine.

You can always compete against yourself. In racing and in sports, there is a notion of 'personal record'. Well, your past years' logs document your previous effort. Before I begin preparing for a contest in a new season, I examine some of the logs of contests past. I set a goal to do better than I did the last time. Better in multipliers, or QSOs, or some combination of measures. Setting a goal and trying to reach it can be really exhilarating even if it involves a short time period. For instance, in successive CQWW efforts, I operated just the first 12 hours and tried to score more than I did the previous time. One year, I got an immense sense of satisfaction when at 9 hours into the contest I exceeded the previous year's score. Sunspots may have helped the euphoria.

Concentrating on multipliers rather than the number of QSOs can be another way to reduce the time devoted to a contest. Many of my friends look for a sweep during the Sweepstakes. While purists may frown at such activity, I relish the pileup for working rare multipliers that full-time testers and casual multiplier hunters want. If you hear big gun stations calling the multiplier station the same time as you do then you know you that have hit the big one. Now the real skill comes into play. Can you break the pile up and work the station before the big gun with stacked yagis and a full gallon does? Each pile up can be source of enjoyment. The closest analogy is a car race when there are many cars bunched up and one car makes a clever pass and goes to the lead of the pack. Ah, what a joy that is.

Comparing my contest performance with other ham radio activities can also provide fun and a sense of accomplishment. Many of us enjoy working towards a variety of awards such as DXCC, Worked All States, Worked All Zones, Prefix counts, and others. Comparing the multiplier score after even a few hours of operation in a contest and looking back at how long it took to get to the same level in casual operating can be interesting. I still remember the relish and joy that I got from working my 100th DXCC entity. I re-experience that same elation when I work my first hundred multipliers during a DX contest or, perhaps, even come close to working a DXCC worth of entities during a contest weekend. You do not have to operate every hour of a contest to be competitive and to have fun.

2002-03 RDXA Board Meetings

RDXA Board of Directors meetings for the 2002-03 year will be held at the following locations, on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday of the week prior to the General meeting; date to be set at the discretion of the host. BOD meetings are open to all RDXA members. Contact the host for date and time.
 October 7, 8, or 9 ----- Mike – N1OKL

November 11, 12, or 13 -----Charlie – WB2HJV
 December -----no meeting
 January 13, 14, or 15 -----Fred – W2TZ
 February 10, 11, or 12 ----- Dave – N2CK
 March 10, 11, or 12 -----Paul – N2OPW
 April 15, 16, or 17 ----- Irv – AF2K
 May 12, 13, or 14 ----- open
 June 9, 10, or 11 -----K1PY

RDXA Financial Report By Charlie Kuhfuss - WB2HJV October 2002 RDXA Secretary-Treasurer

Checking account deposits - 7/10/02 through 10/2/02

\$1300.00 Transfer from Charter One to new M & T account.
 \$245.00 (15) 2002/03 Memberships were paid by check. Two members each sent an additional \$10.00.
 \$326.12 Transfer from Petty Cash
 \$1871.12 Total Deposits

Checking account withdrawals - 7/10/02 through 10/2/02

\$16.15 New Checks
 \$30.00 Field Day Generator Fuel
 \$58.32 Award Costs K2MP
 \$79.92 Club Shirt Logo K1PY
 \$37.00 October Newsletter Stamps N1OKL
 \$221.39 Total Withdrawals

Current Checking Account Balance \$1871.12 - 221.39 = \$1649.73

Petty cash income - 6/18/02 through 10/2/02

\$23.00 50/50 Raffles June and September
 \$350.00 Field Day Food Kitty
 \$252.65 Petty Cash Transfer NY2A
 \$170.00 (11) 2002/03 Memberships were paid in cash (Includes one Family Membership @ \$20.00)
 \$21.00 Shirt Fee Cost Adjustment @ \$3.00 each
 \$816.65 Total Petty Cash Income

Petty cash expenses/transfer \$ to checking

\$352.54 Field Day Food (Paid via cash and money orders)
 \$37.99 Stamps for September Newsletters
 \$326.12 Transfer to checking
 \$716.65 Total Petty Cash Spent

Current Petty Cash Balance \$816.65 - 716.65 = \$100.00

Memorial fund status

\$1345.00 Balance as of 6/18/02
 (\$518.11) Adjusted per BOD direction @ 9/9/02 meeting (Tangible item expenses since Feb. 2001 *)
 \$826.89 Available Memorial Funds

* Tangible item expenses since February 2001 are as follows:

\$246.13 Tent parts (flaps, bungies, anchors, etc) on 4/6/01
 \$213.66 Folding tables on 6/4/01
 \$58.32 Vinyl signs on 6/6/02
 \$518.11 Total expenses for tangible items

RDXA financial summary as of 10/2/02

Current Checking Balance + \$1649.73
 Petty Cash + \$100.00
 Total Available Funds = \$1749.73
 Less Memorial Fund (\$826.89)
Total Operating Funds = \$922.84

34 Members are paid to-date for the 2002/03 season

October Contests

VK/ZL Oceania, SSB	5, 6 Oct
RSGB 21/28 MHz Contest, SSB	6 Oct
VK/ZL Oceania, CW	12, 13 Oct
JARTS WW RTTY	19, 20 Oct
RSGB 21/28 MHz Contest, CW	20 Oct
CQ Worldwide DX, SSB	26, 27 Oct

November Contests

ARRL Sweepstakes, CW	2-4 Nov
Japan International DX, SSB	8-10 Nov
Worked all Euro DX, RTTY	9, 10 Nov
RSGB 160m, CW	16, 17 Nov
ARRL Sweepstakes, SSB	16-18 Nov
CQ Worldwide DX, CW	23, 24 Nov

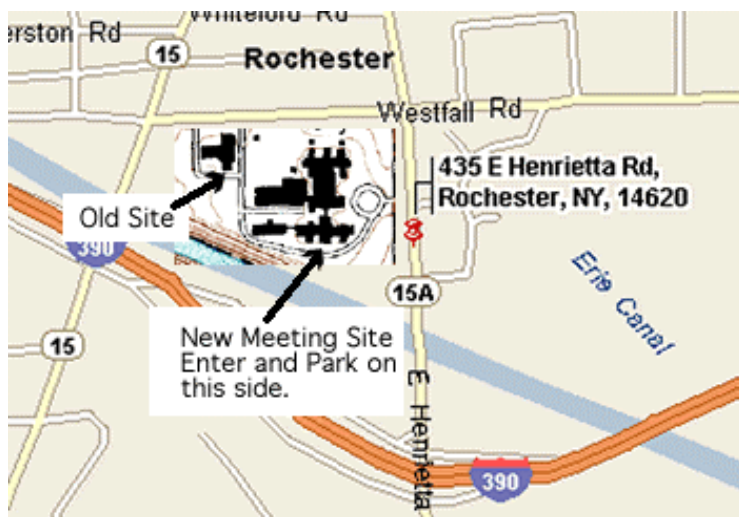
New RDXA Meeting Location

By Raj Dewan - N2RD

The county, in its infinite wisdom and finite finances, has decided to lock down the county building at 111 Westfall Road every evening. This was the building where we had been meeting for many years. It is no longer available for radio club meetings.

The new meeting location is the Board Room in Monroe Community Hospital, 435 East Henrietta Road. This building is at the SW corner of Westfall and E. Henrietta Road. It is the beautiful ornate 1930s brick building that is in the same campus as the county building. The parking lots are connected.

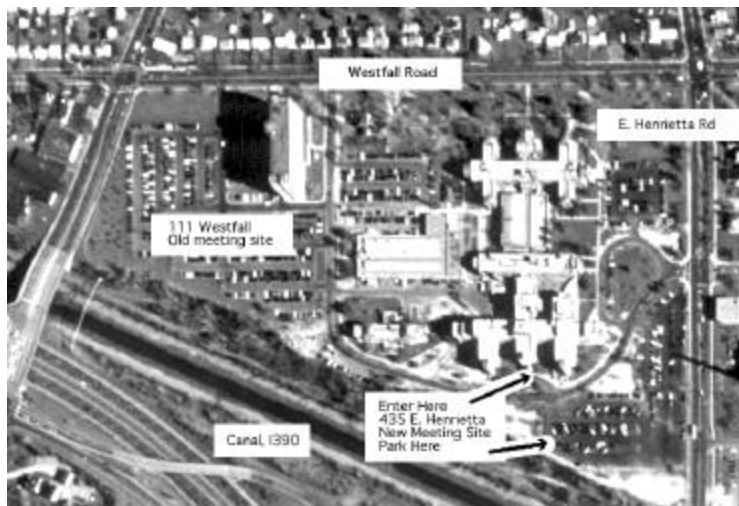
Park on the south side of the building. This is the side closest to the canal and I-390. Enter through the south side entrance. Mention "radio club meeting" to the guard/receptionist. Building security have been informed.



Map showing old and new meeting locations.

We have access to the Board Room beginning at 7:00pm. This precludes VE testing before the meeting. Consequently, we have suspended VE testing until we can find an alternate location.

We found out about this change just before the September meeting. A number of people helped secure this new location. These include Ed Holdsworth N2EH, Irv Goodman AF2K, Sandy Gulack N2DZS, George Lloyd N2UIO, and others.



Aerial photo showing old and new meeting locations.

DX of the Past October 1958

By Ed Gable - K2MP

There was some nice DX around this month starting with a new ham on Chatham Island, ZL3VB, who happens to be postmaster there. Speedy QSLing was promised. DXCC status for newly formed French Guinea is still under study as many have already logged FF8AC/GN in anticipation. Also under study as a new entity then was Das Island under the rule of Sheik Aba Dhohu and located in the Persian Gulf. If you ever wondered how some current DXers have 350 or more countries confirmed, look at these very active 1958 stations:

- Ruanda-Urundi OQ0PD,
- British North Borneo ZL1ARB/ZC5,
- Spanish Morocco EA9BU,
- Bahrein Island MP4BBW,
- Aden VS9AC,
- French Equatorial Africa FQ8HA,
- New Hebrides FU8AE,
- Formosa BV1US,
- French Cameroons FE8AP,
- My favorite, Karelo-Finn Republic UN1AH

Even with all of these exotic countries on-the-air, on top of the DXCC list was Don Wallace, W6AM, the Rhombic king, with 287 confirmed mixed CW/Phone. The results of the 24th ARRL DX Test were published in QST. The million point mark was broken by none other than Katashi Nose KH6IJ. The RDXA came in 5th place with local winners W2FBA and W2SAW. The June VHF contest results were also made known. A tremendous 50 Mc E skip took place which changed the character of a winning station to locations such as Wyoming, Montana, Texas, Arizona and the like. WNY top scorers were W2ORI, K2HRB and W2SOK, none from the Rochester area. 50 and 144 were clearly the bands of choice as nation wide only 49 stations used 220 Mc, 27 contestants were on 420 Mc, while 5 stations made it to 1215 Mc. Two stations reported 10,000 Mc. QSOs, presumably with each other!

An interesting but underutilized DX band quietly went away this month with the FCC announcement of removing the 11 meter band from Amateur use.

Contesting Strategies

By Raj Dewan - N2RD

At our September meeting, we had an open discussion in which all present shared thoughts on contesting strategies. N2RD recaps the lively discussion in this article, Ed.

With the summer over, antenna projects nearing completion, and kids in school, our thoughts are turned to the contesting season that is about to start with the CQ/RJ RTTY contest. We decided to kick off the new club year with a discussion of contesting strategies. A number of good ideas were provided by members attending, especially Fred W2TZ, Scott W2LC, and Chris K2CS.

Propagation – Given a sun spot cycle still near its peak, the MUF at contest start is likely to be at 15m or maybe even 10m. Stay with the MUF and ride it down in frequency as it dips with the sun. By late night, 40m and 80m will yield choice multipliers and the 20m band will provide good running conditions. Make excursions to the lower frequency bands to pick up multipliers. A number of operators QSY to the 160m band at the top of the hour to look for multipliers. The 160m band can yield good QSO rates from 11pm to 2am local time. Grayline propagation offers choice multipliers on the low bands which otherwise may not be available.

CQ versus S&P – Call CQ whenever you can. If you run high power then this is the preferred mode of operating as you can hold the frequency and get good QSO rates. This is a little harder but not impossible if you run low power. Find an open frequency, perhaps higher up in the band and call CQ. The important thing to remember is that many stations, especially multipliers, are only available if you call CQ as they are only searching and pouncing. Conversely, there some multi-multi teams in rare DX locations that can only be snagged by S&P. So a mix of techniques is needed. The proportion of CQ and S&P depends on your station—power and antennas.

Work everything you hear – Work the weak ones; these are stations that are either running QRP, and you may not ever hear them any stronger, or they may be simple home stations that are getting on just to make a few contacts. They offer an opportunity to make a QSO that should not be missed. If you do not work them when you hear them, you may not hear them again.

Food – Coffee and chocolates are a no-no. While they offer a short burst of energy, the high is inevitably followed by a deeper and longer lasting down period. Over all, it is better to consume foods that release a consistent amount of energy over a long period. Complex carbohydrates in vegetables are especially advised. Also, stay hydrated; dehydration can lead to fatigue.

Sleep – The body sleep rhythms naturally follow a 90 minute cycle. If you plan to take a short nap then plan on a time that is a multiple of 90 minutes. This will allow your body to wake up at its naturally alert moment.

Equipment – Contests really work out a rig. The transmitter is on for longer periods, especially if you're trying to run and not having much success. Use an external muffin fan to keep things cool. The receiver is also challenged with strong signals close by. While band pass filters are useful for S&P, narrow ones may be a liability while running CQ. Noise blankers and preamps increase intermod products and make the band sound even busier than it might be. This is especially so on 40m and 80m bands. Turn these off to make it easier on your ears. Tuned front end bandpass filters, such as stubs, may help if you get a lot of inter-band interference from other hams close by.

I hope you find these contesting tips useful and that all of us will have a great contesting season.

When is the Contest Over?

Reprinted by permission

By Ward Silver - NØAX

"The Contester's Rate Sheet"

Back in the old days of many No. 2 pencils, Operating Aid No. 6, and poor handwriting, contest activity went on much, much longer than the operating period. I'm not talking about making QSOs, of course. The activity involved the laborious counting, sorting, deciphering and copying of the logged data that took days and weeks to complete before finding a No. 9 business envelope and enough postage to hold the logs, dupe sheet, and summary. The time people spent on logs made the annual tax season look like a picnic by comparison. It could truly be said that the contest took 48 hours of yelling and four weeks of paperwork, with the final picture of one's contest only available when the mailman carted off your work to the sponsors.

These days we have it so-o-o-o easy – just seconds after 0000Z, we type a few characters and almost instantly our entire log package is ready to go. So, without four weeks of poring over scribbles and scratchouts, when is the contest really over? With the greatly improved accuracy and speed of computer logging, how much post-processing is it ethical to perform after the clock ticks the final tick?

What other sporting event allows post-event adjustment of the participant's recorded behavior? Except for disqualifications and rare protests, in all other sports the winners are determined at the conclusion of the event. The only parallel to log adjustment that I can think of is a golfer filling out his score card after the hole is completed. To be sure, there must be some accommodation of paper logs and the necessary delays. Perhaps there should be two deadlines – one for paper and one for electronic logs. Maybe there should be a stricter deadline that must be met in order to qualify for awards or certificates.

The original log deadlines weeks after the contest were necessary to allow for the delays of manual work and the post office. With the technology available today – databases of calls, log manipulation toolsets, email and reflectors and Web pages – not only can we correct our typos, but we can "sanitize" our logs by cross-checking calls, exchanges, bands, and modes.

But is "can" the same as "should?" (Before going further with the discussion, I should be clear that this subject is of concern primarily to those competing for awards or against other entrants. If you are a casual participant handing out a few QSOs, then this isn't such a Big Deal.)

Except as based on notations made during the contest, there should be no substantive changes in log content once the contest period is over. Some examples are in order:

- Correcting the exchange for W1AW based on notes made in the contest – OK.
- Changing the exchange for W1AW based on what was received last year – not OK.
- Fixing an obvious typo during a post-contest review of the log – Questionable.
- Changing a call based on a post-contest summary on the 3830 reflector – not OK.
- Correcting a busted call during the contest based on a subsequent contest QSO – OK.

- Changing calls based on post-contest comparison against a database – not OK.
- Replaying contest audio to check calls and exchanges – not OK.

When it's over, it's over. No correlation between Internet databases and your dupe sheet. No emails asking, "Am I in your 160-meter log at high noon?" No reviews of packet spotting logs. If you're computer logging, then typing is just as much part of the contest as keying or tuning. Mistakes in keying count as busted QSOs, why shouldn't typos made in receiving be the same?

By all means, review your logs and recorded audio to improve your performance – in the next contest. It's clearly acceptable and desirable to be sure that your submitted package has the best possible description of every QSO you made during the contest. But not the ones you "think" you made, or "should" have made, or

CQ WW RTTY

By Mike Rundle - N1OKL

Nine members of RDXA participated in the recent CQ WW RTTY contest in a multi-single effort. In this category, the Contest rules permit a single-transmitter "run" station and a second transmitter "multi" station, and this is the manner in which our group approached the Contest. Jeff, W2FU kindly provided the use of his world-class contest station for the 48-hour effort. N2WK, W1TY, and K1PY organized the event and recruited K2CS, N2OPW, NG2P, K2ZS, and N1OKL as operators in addition to themselves. The group operated as W2FU.

When I arrived for my first shift at 08:00 local Saturday morning, the Contest had been underway for 12 hours. Our score at this point had already topped a million points – and we were only a quarter of the way through. I was the multi-op partner for N2WK, and Wayne was talking confidently of achieving three million points. Better get to work.

N2OPW gave me a brief training rundown, and with some uncertainty, I eased into the multi-op position. After handful of Qs, I gained confidence in my ability to hold up the multi end of our effort. In case I got in trouble, Wayne was there to bail me out.

I soon got the hang of running my half of this powerful station. After 40 minutes or so, I was checking the cluster, chasing and working mults, bandmapping for Wayne on the run station, changing bands, and swinging antennas with glee.

The WriteLog software provided a powerful, yet easy-to-use tool for juggling all these tasks. With eight screen windows showing everything from beam headings to a graphic display of transceiver frequency and stations worked and mapped, spots needed by band, rate, score by total and band, I felt like the world was literally at my fingertips. One call snagged virtually every station. Yes, this is how it should be. Life is good!

I suppose all contests have a rhythm, but this RTTY event seemed possessed with a certain Zen-like calm. The shack was quiet, with the soft whirring of cooling fans broken only by the melodious deedling of RTTY tones. You could chat briefly with your partner while you tuned the bands hunting for the elusive multipliers.

If you needed a break from staring at screens and meters and dials, you had only to glance out the shack windows directly in front of the operating positions. The view overlooked Jeff's pond, where a great blue heron could often be seen. I noticed a small island in the pond and RTTY Rick asked me if I planned to get an IOTA number for the island. Hi!

Mid-morning on Saturday, Jeff, W2FU lamented that it all seemed a bit too calm because, "You haven't blown anything up." Not wishing to upset our host, we later fried a bandpass filter by neglecting to change the filter when we changed bands on the rigs.

We finished with four million points. According to posts on the 3830 reflector, this will play well stateside. From a worldwide perspective, it will likely be below 5th place, though last year it would have been 5th overall, regardless of class.

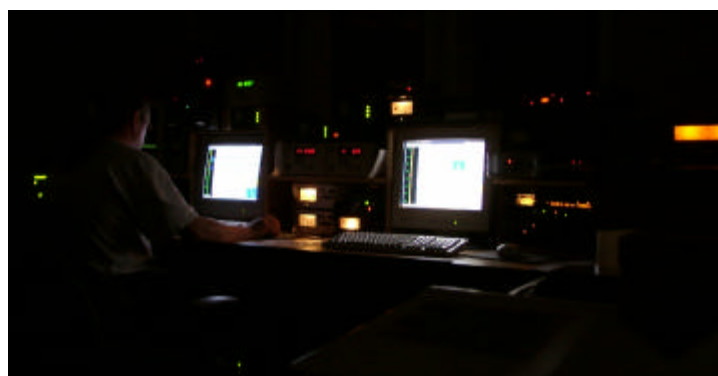
Following are some photos of the ops in action at the event, taken at various points during my 10 hours of operating.



K1PY at the "run" station (foreground) as N2WK cheers working a mult.



N2WK at the controls of the multiplier station. Note the many windows on the computer screen giving a view of to all aspects of the log, rigs, etc. Around the operating position are rotors and switches for all the antennas. It took a few looks to figure out where you were aiming your signal!



Night operations Sunday morning. Surrounded by myriad softly glowing dials and displays, W2FU CQWW RTTY ops work out the low bands.

Twenty-seven Day Space Weather Outlook Table

Issued 2002 October 01

US Dept. of Commerce NOAA

UT Date	10.7cm Radio Flux	Planetary A Index	Largest Kp Index
2002 Oct 02	155	12	3
2002 Oct 03	155	12	3
2002 Oct 04	160	8	3
2002 Oct 05	170	8	3
2002 Oct 06	185	8	3
2002 Oct 07	200	8	3
2002 Oct 08	200	12	3
2002 Oct 09	200	12	3
2002 Oct 10	200	12	3
2002 Oct 11	200	8	3
2002 Oct 12	195	8	3
2002 Oct 13	195	8	3
2002 Oct 14	195	10	3
2002 Oct 15	180	10	3
2002 Oct 16	170	10	3
2002 Oct 17	195	10	3
2002 Oct 18	190	10	3
2002 Oct 19	160	10	3
2002 Oct 20	155	8	3
2002 Oct 21	150	8	3
2002 Oct 22	155	8	3
2002 Oct 23	150	5	2
2002 Oct 24	150	5	2
2002 Oct 25	150	5	2
2002 Oct 26	145	8	3
2002 Oct 27	140	12	3
2002 Oct 28	140	10	3

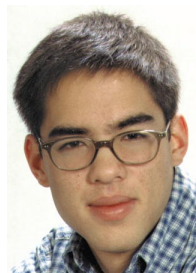
For Sale

For Sale: Trans World Electronics (Escondido, CA) T-1000. 1000 watt Linear Amplifier (will do 1250w). Broadband / Solid State / No Tune, 1.8-30MHz. Manual plus Installation & Service Manual. Excellent condition, a real performer and pleasure to use. Prefer to sell local or within 200 miles of Rochester. Wt. 103 lbs. Asking \$1900 or best offer. Irv Goodman, AF2K (585) 671-4430, AF2K@juno.com

Remember, non-commercial ads are **free** for RDXA members.

Pings

Dues are due – It's time to renew your RDXA Membership for the 2002-03 year. See Charlie, WB2HJV at the meeting or S&S. Or mail him your check direct; address on the back of the Bulletin.



RDXA member and ace Field Day CW op **Andy Mui, K2TJ** has been elected President of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Amateur Radio Club, callsign W2SZ. Founded in 1911, W2SZ is known among its members at RPI simply as "Zed." The station is arguably one of the best equipped college ham clubs in the U.S. Check out their website: <http://www.rpi.edu/dept/blue/un/w2sz/www/>

Contestatia

Anonymous
Thanks to Rick, W1TY

Go placidly amid the QRN and the QRM, and remember what peace there may be in S&P.

As far as possible, without surrendering your frequency, be on good terms with all stations.

Speak/send your exchange clearly, and listen carefully to the response, even to the casual and non-contester types for they, too, have point value!

Avoid loud and aggressive stations, they are not worth the cost in rate to fight them.

If you compare your Q-total mid-contest with others, you may become vain or bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser-reported Q-totals than yours. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.

Keep interested in your own station, however humble; it is a real possession in helping the Club aggregate score.

*Exercise caution in playing with new software **before** the contest for untested software is full of trickery. But let not this blind you to what virtue there is in new software; many stations have used new software; and everywhere there are useful upgrades.*

Be yourself. Especially, do not feign pleasure over a new multiplier. Neither be cynical about propagation; for in the face of all plans; propagation is as predictable as the wind.

Take kindly the counsel of the contest sponsors, gracefully surrendering to their requirements for log submittals.

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden attacks of Murphy. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness of being on a band and calling constant CQs without answers.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a contester and licensed operator; no less than the others who don't contest on the bands; you have a right to be there.

And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the fortunes of contesting will change, as they should. Therefore be at peace with Murphy, whatever you conceive him to be.

And whatever your labors and aspirations, in the QRM and confusion of the contest, keep an accurate and honest log.

With all its QRM, QRN, and visits by Murphy, it is still fun. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy. Remember the cry, "Wait Till Next Year!"

Hurricane Lili



Wednesday, 2 October 2002. Gulf of Mexico. Multiple waterspouts from Hurricane Lili, as seen from an offshore drilling rig nearby.

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 Board Room of the Monroe Community Hospital, 435 East Henrietta Road, Rochester, NY.

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