



Regular Meeting
March 16th 19:30

Gander Mountain
Meeting Room
300 Jay Scutti Boulevard
Henrietta, NY 14623

Amateur Radio on Int. Space Shuttle
ARISS-Webster Event and EchoLink Monitoring
by
Jon Dickason, N2JAC

Our March meeting topic is about the September 10th ARISS event at Thomas High School in Webster. A team of 9 hams operated a satellite station in the school library where 10 students spoke with astronaut Ed Lu who was aboard the International Space Station. The whole school was inspired by this event! It was very special because Ed was a graduate of their school.

This event used the formal ARISS application and process. The planning, equipment, duties, personal, and results will be reviewed. Audio, video CD and stills of the event will be used. Jon Dickason, N2JAC will cover results of a ground tracking experiment using EchoLink. Jim Stefano, W2COP, developed a method to sequence the communications handoff among internet linked ground stations along the ISS path. This gave the potential of extending a 9 minute QSO to a 25 minute QSO.

President's Soapbox Paul Mackanos K2DB

Well RDXA members, as I write this soapbox, it sure looks like spring is about to come upon us. I am sure it will put a big upswing to our winter doldrums, and make us think about all those nice things we can do outdoors. (Like antenna's)

To update you as to the RDXA, we have had a change in our President' position. Fred, W2TZ has resigned, and I will fill out the remaining term as President. As we are nearing the last few months of the RDXA year, it is time to think about officers and board members for next year. We have a nominating committee comprised of K1PY, N2CK, N2RD, and N2VJB. If you are so interested, please get in touch with any member of the nominating committee.

I would like to have each and every one of you, check into our website a www.rdxa.com and poke around a bit. I have been doing it, and have found whole bunch of useful information on our site. I really did not do much with the site before, but as I kept checking it out, I found more and more information available. Scott, K2ZS has done a great job administering the site, and keeping it up to date. Almost anything to do with amateur radio is available there. So go check it out, and let us know if there is anything else that should be there for us. Remember, it is our club and our members, so our website should reflect that fact.

Contesting and DX'ing - Have you all submitted your scores for RDXA, and updated your scores on the website? With me being in a condo, and LIMITED antenna's, I have not been real active, but I did have a chance to work with fellow RDXA member W2FU for ARRL CW and had a blast working with a BIG GUN. I know a lot of us RDXA'ers were also in that contest. How about a little blurb from you guys on what you thought about the contest? Did you work any new ones? Did you have fun? Could you break the pile-ups? etc.

Field Day - it's coming, think about it, we will be in the planning stages in the near future and need your input as to

what you guys want to do. Let's talk about it a little at the next meeting.

As a parting note, about our past President, Fred W2TZ, I would like to say that Fred has done a lot for our club, and has told me that he will remain active in the club and its activities.

73 es Best DX

Paul K2DB

RDXA Finances Charles Kuhfuss WB2HJV

The RDXA financial report as of March 3, 2004 is as follows:

Current checking balance	\$1328.79
Petty Cash	\$118.00
Total available funds	\$1446.79
Less memorial fund	(\$726.89)
Total operating funds	\$719.90

February activity:

K2FR Memorial Plaque	(\$67.00)
Dues	\$30.00
50/50 raffle of Feb.17th	\$18.00

The RDXA currently has 55 paid members.

Nominations for offices

- Vic K1PY

Now's the time...

for all good RDXAers to consider what they can do to keep the club as great as it can be. For success, everyone should of course participate in some manner, no matter how big or small, just something, just do it.

For those whose time has come to take on a formal position, the '04/'05 nominating committee would like to hear from you. Toss that ol' hat in the ring and have a ball. Over the years you surely have observed that we have a pretty easy-going club (although there's a few on the fringes that think vying for top 3 in Field Day is a bit intense). So this is a non-threatening environment that you can truly enjoy. This is dramatically supported by the oft-repeated observation that our board of director's meetings – the supposed "business" part of the club – are regularly attended by several non-BOD members just because they are a friendly get-together of folks simply sharing their enjoyment and mutual interest in the hobby and in our club. I think it says a lot that guests often equal the board at these meetings. Hey, if that piques your interest in stepping up to some position, attend the next one to check it out for yourself. *(The electronic issue of this newsletter may reach you prior to the March meeting, so watch for info via the rdx a e-mail list.)*

Also don't hesitate to recommend a nominee or two, sort of like the current primary! Affirmation by several folks may be just what it takes to convince someone who's hesitant to agree to serve. Contact any member of the nominating committee: Vic K1PY, Dave N2CK, Raj N2RD, Kevin N2VJB, and Tim WB2KAO. (We have an extensive committee due to some recent urging by one of our more active members!)

Lastly, if a board or officer position still isn't quite the thing for you at the moment, we still need help and enthusiasm in all the other areas in which we participate: Field Day, our biggest event, plus HamFest, St. John Fisher, Rochester Science Museum, Lighthouse Weekend, and help with any number of committees such as Program, DX, Contest, and the newsletter (new-member biographies, station photo tours, ...) – your opportunities are endless – the extent to which you participate accentuates both your and everyone else's enjoyment in the club.

Now's the time...

Contesting and DXing from the past

March 1969

Ed, K2MP

Conditions are good with lots of choice DX on the bands. You could log; CR8 Timor, FK8 Wallis Isl., JT1 Mongolia, Both McQuarie and Heard Islands as VK0, Malpelo HK0, Nauru VK9 and prefix of the month, 2B3DC from Biafra.

The pages of QST revealed the plush, Collins equipped, KC4USV from McMurdo Sound. KC4USV operated nightly phone patches for the lonely GI's at a year-round operation called operation deep freeze.

The photo didn't show the Rochester connection, that of Lucille Briemer, W2SCI, who regularly held long phone patch sessions for the stranded chaps. Lucille received many accolades and souvenirs from the appreciated McMudo residents. Lucille still, to this day, has mementoes carefully hung in her now seldom used ham shack. She still has the Drake TR-4 and 4 element 20 meter mono-bander pointed at KC4 and ready to go. Other local phone patch operators were Bob Nezelek, W2CNS and Brockport's W2AFQ. There were probably more. Phone patching is a dying activity but at one time was a major contributor to the community by the Amateur Radio Service. Today, K2MP regularly conducts phone patches from medical missionaries in HI8 land to their supporting Church in Rochester.

Reported then were the results of the first RTTY world-wide SS contest. There were only 140 logs turned in but the Soap Box had nothing but praise for the well organized test and hope that it will continue. Of the top ten, 7 were DX and three were from W's.

So, it's March and everyone is looking forward to the BIG show at Dayton. Nope, not yet. The show to be at for the latest news and manufacturer's displays was the 18th annual Single Sideband Show in New York City. Held at the lovely Penn Top Room at the Hotel Statler, this was THE place to be. This year the featured demo was to be Yaesu's FTdx-400.

Field Day Warning

Vic, K1PY

The club needs to be aware of and start mentally preparing for a real Field Day challenge this year. It's already hard enough getting into the top 5 or top 3 in our very competitive 3A class from our somewhat geographically challenged Western New York section. This year we've got a gauntlet thrown down before us – a challenge to compete, club-to-club, with one of the top FD scoring clubs in the country, located in the mountaintops of Colorado.

Yep, W0GG, the Pike's Peak DX Group, has laid down the challenge directly to RDXA – who can better whom in 3A for FD 2004. They're even following our lead with WriteLog logging and a networked computer system.

Last year, when they weren't really trying, we just *barely* beat them to come in 4th to their 5th. But in 2000 they made #1 with 5825 QSOs for 17,306 pts!!! 12-14k is a super score -- 17k is record-setting! Conditions may no longer support that kind of score, but the point is they're capable of great things. AND they operate from a 9000-foot high mountain!

So folks, the name and honor of WNY contesting is on the line here. Are we prepared to respond to this challenge from the big guns on the mountain? Can we rally the expertise that took US to #1 as well? Do we have the bodies ready and willing to get out there and set up and operate the best FD station yet to be set up in WNY? Do we have the strategists to optimize our efforts? Ponder this, for if we collectively decide to pick up that gauntlet, you'll be called on as never before. Are we up to it? Will you be ready to be a part of it?

Footnote: The "drama" of my little writeup aside, and not diminishing that this is a real challenge, it comes about because our friend and comrade Joe K8FC, still an active RDXA member, has relocated to CO, and has of course hooked up with the best FD group around, like he did when he was here! So in truth it's a friendly competition that should elevate both clubs to greater accomplishments. But that doesn't mean we're going to let them win!!!

The RDXA Logbook by RDXA Members

The articles in this series are composed of input solicited from general members on a particular theme. They are written by you! We will have a different theme each month. Just email your input to the editor at n2rd@arrl.net and it will be in the logbook.

This month's theme is:

Phone Operation

Gene, W2LU:

I operate almost exclusively phone. I could say because it's the best mode or I could acknowledge the fact that it's because I have never learned to be a CW operator. At any rate I enjoy hearing the other guy and recognizing his voice, the way a CW op learns other's fist.

My first phone rig was a pair of 807's with cathode modulation - a transformer in the cathode circuit with a carbon mike and battery! With a National NC-57 and a 3 element 10 meter beam on my parents house I worked nearly 100 countries.

In the 60's I made it to SSB with a Halicrafters HT-32, a home brew 811A amp (still a great tube) and an NC-183D with a product detector! Next I had the Drake twins and a home brew 4-1000A amplifier. Now I use an ICOM IC-756 and a home brew 8877 amp.

Mikes have gone from the old carbon to a JT-30 crystal to an Electro Voice 676 dynamic to the current Warren Gregorie TR-2000 Boom Headset. The TR-2000 seems to be a great poor man's Heil. I tailored the audio to give a bit more highs and even put a phase reversal switch on one headphone - very noticeable but hardly worth the effort.

I am now working on a processor to reduce the blower noise. Analog Devices makes a a chip - SSM 2166 or SSM 2167 that has Preamp, Noise Gate and Compressor on a 14 pin chip for a few bucks that looks great - we'll see. Have not gotten into the fancy equalizers, etc.

As for working dx on phone it's still the basics - good listening and good timing.

Charlie, WB2HJV

My goal for phone operation is to have good clean audio. I'm not particularly concerned about it being broadcast or studio quality. Just good communications audio is what I like. This includes a good mix of highs and lows with reasonable punch.

What is my favorite microphone? Probably my Heil Pro Set Plus with the wide element for ragchewing. This coupled with about 5 to 10 DB of processing gets me great signal reports with my TS-850. For DX with the TS-850 I use the Heil hand microphone with the DX element, and the same processing. Yes it makes a difference in the pile-ups with Bob's "in-your-face audio". With my FT-897 I use the stock hand mic again with 5 to 10 DB of processing. No equalization. Gets me favorable reports. My TS-50 always gets me unsolicited great audio reports with the stock hand microphone. No adjustments to the audio were made. Just plug and play out of the box. Amazing the least expensive radio of the three gets the best reports.

How do adjust my xmit audio? Set up a schedule with Tim WB2KAO. He has great ears. I also cover all my microphones with a foam windscreen. I buy them at Radio Shack and they cut out the "breathiness" characteristic I have with my voice on SSB and FM. This includes my VHF/UHF dualbanders.

I do not use any special speech processors or digital voice keyer.

In contesting, I'm amazed though in a pile up with a 2x3 call the number of DX stations that come back to me with "who's the Juliet Victor?" The WB2H gets mixed in with all the two letter calls.

My favorite phonetics? For WB2HJV I never came up with much myself although Rudy W2ZIA gave me "High Jacked Victim". High jacked by the DX bug I guess!

Paul, K2DB

What is your favorite mike? The one that came with my IC-746PRO, that is still in the plastic bag.

How do you adjust the transmit audio? Clockwise and stop when it starts to splatter.

Any special voice processors? Do you use a digital voice keyer or a computer for the same. Tried a few over the years, will probably use the .wav files in Writelog

Any phone contesting tips? Be loud and polite and hold onto your run frequency. Being LOUD is best.

Your favorite (effective and funny) call phonetics: KISS TWO DUMB BLONDS, others not suitable for printing in a family oriented newsletter.

CW Forever !!!!!!!!!!!

Vic, K1PY

Phone, the "default mode" for many including myself for a long time now, certainly presents its challenges to your physical tolerance, never mind sanity (*why am I doing this???*). So I've really invested in developing cw and rtty abilities to provide a more enjoyable contesting experience. But there's still certain phone contests that you want to participate in, whether it's competitively or not. So

you've got to deal with it and make it as tolerable as possible.

Computers, as is true with logging and many other aspects of radio, have made this mode much easier as well. The biggest thing for me is the soundcard-based voice keyer. Especially in SS, with the long exchange, it's a voice-saver. And an auto-repeating CQ message is real nice, saving all the mindless repetition, plus letting you tune around on a second radio should you have that option. The ability to record new voice messages on the fly is great, since your pace changes as the contest evolves, so you can match your recorded messages to your current pace and style (more aggressive or more laid back). If you invest the effort, you can also voice-automate the SS serial number as I've done, and Rtty Rick has automated the callsign of the station you're working. To paraphrase Rick, you could end up working an entire phone contest without speaking a word into the microphone!

To most easily avail yourself of these features, it's more convenient to route your mic thru the computer soundcard. This now opens the door to some signal processing, available in varying degrees on different soundcards. One could contour the frequency response to mimic that provided by the Heil HC-4, saving a bunch of \$\$\$. As a side-note, many newer rigs also provide for this. Taken to the max, you could easily sound like a YL and cut right thru those pile-ups. (You'll just have to deal with the South Americans as a result of your apparent gender change.)

Right now I'm in the midst of mic switching and control modifications in my primitive SO2R setup. It's easy enough to simply toggle the mic from L rig to R rig. But then you want something quicker and easier, like a right-rig push-to-talk that'll move the mic faster. But then you don't necessarily want to have to hold the switch down the entire time because you might also need to finish entering a call-sign via the keyboard. So you dream up a computer-activated latching mechanism. Optimizing the station interface recently has been one of the most enjoyable and exciting aspects of the hobby. There's always something to make it better.

Although rtty is absolutely the easiest mode in which to do SO2R, since the callsigns are printed right there on the screen, phone might be the next easiest. Thing is, you have to somehow manage listening to sideband on two rigs. And one is enough to drive you nuts after 24 or more hours, so you're dealing with two!!!! This is probably the most difficult aspect of a 2-radio setup. All I currently have is a 3-position toggle in the expected configuration:

Left rig, both ears

Left rig left ear, right rig right ear

Right rig both ears

There are holes in the control box for volume controls for each side, but that's down the road. Right now I just modify the rig audio. Mostly, as a low-power station, I S&P both rigs, or at most CQ one and S&P the other. At this stage of SO2R experience, I switch my mental focus to whichever radio has something going on. Find a station,

determine who it is and what they're doing, and perhaps enter the call sign in the log window and wait. Then change focus to the other rig and do the same, while mentally off to the side waiting for the first station to QRZ. When it does, drop what you're doing and hit the Fkey to send your recorded call sign message (or call directly via mic/vox if you want). Amazingly, you can do this without all that much additional stress – I think it's because there's something active going on more of the time and it keeps you focused and alert. I'll have to admit to tiring out towards the end of a weekend, however. Then it's tempting to just ignore that second radio – but then you think there might be that last section or mult that you need over there, and you keep going (and sometimes, there IS!!).

A couple things come to mind to reduce the overall fatigue level of listening to endless SSB. One is leave the monitor off, or at least barely discernable – you don't need to hear yourself transmitting.

The key one, which I'm sure N2CK will mention as well, is to reduce your RF gain and/or switch in attenuation. Unless you're DXing or pulling out that weak station answering your CQ, there's typically waaaaaayyy more signal coming in than you need – cutting back magically results in a feeling of relative tranquility – at least compared to what it was before. Try it if you haven't – you'll be amazed.

The RDXA Logbook Theme for March

Operating HF Digital/RTTY

What is your favorite setup? Do you use special modems such as a TNC/Terminal or just the sound card? What software do you use? Do you use the newer modes such as PSK31? How do you set up your radio? Any and all details are welcome.

Just email your input to n2rd@arrl.net by 4/6

The Exchange

For Sale by Natan, W6XR

I have two F12 XR-5 for sale. Both in the air less than one month. 20 through 10 meters including WARC bands. Includes balun and both units assembled, trimmed and tested with price of \$600.00 each. Pickup in Ithaca, NY preferred. These are my personal antennas now on the ground.

(Ed. Reply to Natan via Email natan@twcny.rr.com)

For Sale by Jim, N2VX

I got a good deal on clamp-on ferrite beads and have extras. They are used for RFI suppression on PC cables, etc. They came to 0.70 each. If anybody's interested I can bring them to the next meeting. The rest go to the hamfest.

(Ed. Send Jim an email jim_cronin@juno.com and he will bring them to the next meeting.)

Wanted, placed by Irv, AF2K

An elderly gentleman, new ham, is looking for a used 2 meter FM xcvr for base use. Mobile rig would do I suppose. Nothing too complicated. Will need an antenna also. Located in Pittsford, 490 & 31-F neighborhood. Anything for sale?

(Ed. Reply to Irv via email af2k@juno.com)

For Sale, placed by Irv, AF2K

HAZER (Rohn 25G) Excellent condition. Galvanized steel and aluminum, by Glenn Martin. Includes worm gear winch and 4" brass stainless steel pulley in Rohn tower top section to raise and lower Hazer. \$350. Pick-up only, in Pittsford, NY (585) 381-8187

Rohn GIN POLE, 25G, Excellent condition. \$200. Pick-up only, in Pittsford, NY (585) 381-8187

Rochester DX Association
W2RDX www.rdxa.com

This bulletin is the official organ of the Rochester DX Association. It is published monthly, September through June. Email your articles to the newsletter editor n2rd@arrl.net by the first Tuesday of each month for inclusion in that month's newsletter.

All those interested in Amateur Radio, especially in DXing and contesting, are invited to attend to attend meetings and to join our club. The club meets at 7:30pm local time on the third Tuesday of each month from September to June. The club web site has the latest information on meeting location. It is currently schMany members meet at a local bar Scotch and Sirloin for camaraderie after the regular meeting. Come and join us!

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