

ROCHESTER

DX

ASSOCIATION,
INC.

rdxa.com



ROCHESTER DX ASSOCIATION, INC NEWSLETTER 1947-2011 • 60+ YEARS OF DX IN WNY MARCH 2011

**General Membership Meeting
Tues. March 15th 7:30 PM**

**This month's program is a
Double Header:**

**Live CW Skimmer Demo
with N1MM and VE7CC**

Presented by Paul, K2DB

and

DX Roundtable

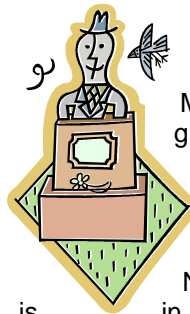
Presented by YOU the

RDXA Members!

**Media room, right next to the EOC
operations center.**

1190 Scottsville Road

Exit 17 (Route 383 South) off 390



The Podium

Paul Kolacki, K2FX

March is upon us, and boy do we have a great meeting planned for you this month! K2DB will be presenting a program consisting of a discussion and live demonstration on the use of CW Skimmers, and the Reverse Beacon Network. This is a new technology tool that is in use by many top DXers and contesters. Paul will show you how to implement this tool into the VE7CC Cluster and N1MM Software. This new technology means that you will no longer have to rely on regular packet cluster nodes to work that new multiplier or DX station. After the presentation, there will also be a general discussion on DXing, breaking pile-ups, and even dealing with "lids". With the Solar Flux and general conditions the best they have been since 2005, the bands are really heating up, and are presently offering us just a glimpse of what is to come in the next few years during Solar Cycle 24!

If you missed the February meeting, we had a very interesting discussion about the recent Survey's you were asked to participate in. Since I realize not everyone could attend, I have outlined some of the results in another article you can read in this month's Newsletter. Your opinions are important to us, and will help to shape the direction this club will take in the months and years to come.

Based on your preferences, as evidenced by the survey results, most of you told us that you would like to see this year's Field Day be more of a relaxed, fun, social, and teaching exercise rather than an all out contest effort. I will say that Field Day was never conceived to be a contest. It's an Emergency Preparedness Exercise, designed to hone operating skills during potentially adverse conditions which could occur, such as natural disasters. As such, I was happy to see that most of our membership was in agreement that at least for this year, we must take a different approach. If you are interested in helping to plan this year's event, please contact me, and I'll in turn put you in touch with the Field Day committee members.

Finally, with March upon us, we'll start to plan for this year's Annual Awards Banquet. Every year we partner

The BIG News!

V31AM

Our own Ken N2ZN is just back from Belize where he operated as V31AM for ARRL DX Phone. Ken logged 5,348 QSO's. Were you in his log? Look for his article next month.

April is RDXA/RVHFG awards banquet month. Time to receive your 2010 NYQP awards!

with the RVHF Group, and we usually alternate which club plans the event. This year the responsibility falls to the RVHF Group to do so, but I've offered to personally assist them as needed. Keep watching the RDXA Reflector for more information as it becomes available.

I look forward to seeing you all at the March meeting. The after meeting gathering will be at "The Distillery" in Henrietta, as we all congregate for an 807 or two and some good half price appetizers. With Ken, N2ZN, just back from his DX adventure to the country of Belize as V31AM, I'm sure there will be plenty of discussion with him about his fantastic contest efforts from that country, so come join us!!

2010 New York QSO Party

W1TY

As of press time the date and location of the RDXA Annual Awards Banquet has not been set. It is not too early to mention that in addition to the ongoing awards presented, the NYQP Coordinators Rick W1TY and Paul K2DB will be presenting the plaques and certificates for the 2010 NYQP. There are 39 paid plaques paid for the 2010 NYQP. Did you win one? Find out at the banquet!

This is last official act of W1TY & K2DB as the coordinators of the NYQP. By any measure the NYQP has been a huge success and shows great potential for continued growth. We appreciate the confidence shown in us and know that the new team of coordinators, KC2QLJ, AK2D and AK2X will also do us proud.

The Journey to Ham Radio N2YGG



"I'd take the awe of understanding over the awe of ignorance any day." — Douglas Adams

Well... most of the time, this is my belief. I was a very curious child. Not only curious-strange but curious-inquisitive, as well. I finally stopped destroying, for the sake of exploring, one of the few working electronic devices to cross my path, put the screwdriver down and tuned in to an AM station with a pocket transistor radio passed down to me by my brother. That's when I listened - really listened -- and discovered a whole new world of faceless voices out "there." I grew up on the shores of the Hudson River, where watching television was as simple as buying one, plugging it into a wall outlet and -- voila! -- there were thirteen broadcast stations to chose from, instantly and for free. The same went for broadcast radio in that there were plenty of stations to chose from. I

giggled my head off at what Dr. Ruth Westheimer had to say to callers, late in the evening and learned much about the world by listening to the morning news. I tolerated simulcasted sporting events for the sheer excitement the announcers brought to the broadcast and "oldies" music stations playing tunes from what seemed like the turn of the 19th century. When was polka invented and is that person even alive, today? Must check Wikipedia. Later.

After AM radio came adolescence and FM pop music radio. During and after that, came an intense passion for public broadcasting as the portal to another one of my lasting loves, the electronic music of pioneers like Laurie Anderson, Tangerine Dream and Vangelis. Of course, there was constant breaking news from all around the world piped in via NPR. I had the privilege, through geographical fortune, to be exposed to WNYC, a non-profit, public radio station in New York City, broadcasting then on AM 820 MHz out of Kearny, NJ and FM 93.9 MHz clear off the top of the Empire State Building, the latter of which was line-of-sight from my bedroom window.

I stayed a loyal fan and contributor of public broadcasting well into my college years even when my photographic mentor left the darkroom stereo on constantly and tuned to Oneonta-area's local NPR station, WSKG out of Binghamton at FM 91.5 MHz and Corning at FM 90.7 MHz. That is when I grew to dislike most classical music but to appreciate ad-free radio broadcast.

After college, my boyfriend-now-husband, Andrew N3LZG bought me a small Grundig SW radio. I was so fascinated by all the languages spoken over radio waves from all over the world. Shortwave listening even changed time, itself, for me when learning to follow UTC time for program scheduling. That's when the urge to make foreign contacts reared its ugly head and remained a desire for fifteen years. Unfortunately, job hunting was a time-consuming and unrelenting challenge and consequently, our hobbies were paid very little of our leftover, exhausted attention.

After getting married and settling into a home that I raise my child in and run a photographic retouching business from, I have finally made the time to explore radio as a serious hobby. Last April (2010) I studied for and passed my Technician class exam in the EMO facility during the DARC Newark Hamfest. I spent a lot of time listening to 145.110 MHz out of Bristol on a used Yaesu VX-2 handheld I had purchased from a friend. When I rustled up the courage to get on the air about a month later I did so with a Yaesu 817 and Buddipole, the latter of which did a less-than-adequate job of getting on two meters, let alone HF, even for listening. Shortly thereafter, I built a copper, two meter j-pole and discovered a world of brilliant minds, strong opinions and fascinating storytelling. It has been quite an enriching experience having found and been adopted into what I affectionately refer to as my "hamily". I have received nothing short of great encouragement, support, praise and friendship that I had never imagined could exist so far away from my culturally and intellectually diverse megalopolis childhood stomping grounds.

With generous assistance from the local "gurus", I was set up with a loaner HF station for the main purpose of

competing in my first radio contest. I studied for and passed my General class license exam in August (2010) just in time for the phone portion of the Rookie Roundup. With the help of John W3OAB for equipment loan, guidance through contesting procedure and protocol and general support, I placed first in my district and have been hooked on making stateside and DX QSOs, ever since. I find the exchange of QSL cards to be a delightful aspect of the hobby and am quite proud of my growing collection.

It wasn't long before I tired of the limits to the General portions of the HF bands so I studied for (this one took more time and effort) and passed my Amateur Extra class license exam on February 2, 2011. I must say, the hard work, time, patience, observation and fortitude it took to pass that test was a humbling experience, but I am now enjoying the benefits and privileges of my efforts. I cannot conclude my lengthy saga without first saying this: I could not have accomplished what I have in radio with sheer love and determination, alone. I also had to look to my new family for help and must reiterate how grateful I am to be accepted by such a wonderful group of people.

Orlando HamCation

AF2K

Another great hamfest in the Sunshine State again, Feb. 11th-12th-13th. Official numbers indicating attendance still growing like it's been doing for several years. Over 12K.

Several new commercial vendors, and some who have returned after a few years of absence. Rest assured you will find what you're looking for! Flea Market has expanded. Rochester and ex-local attendees included Paul N2OPW (who won a Yaesu 2m FT250R/E HT), John W8JW, Tim WB2PAY and Cathy KC2UAD, Floyd WA2WVL and Irv AF2K.

Consider heading down next year! Convenient campground for campers, motor homes, etc. directly adjacent to Hamfest site at Central Florida Fairgrounds on West Colonial Drive.

Origin of RG Coax

K2DB

RG means "radio guide" and was the original military specification for coax cable, starting in the 1930s. So what do all the numbers mean? RG-6, RG-8, RG-58, RG-59, RG-62, RG-122, RG-213, RG-405 and on and on?

The number is just a page in a book. RG-1 was the first page (and obviously wasn't a very successful cable design). RG-6, the sixth page, was wildly successful. Most CATV/broadband cable these days is RG-6.

Know your knots and be safe this antenna season.



The "Bowline" makes a loop in the end of a length of rope.



The "Figure 8" is a stopper knot that will not bind.



The "Sheet Bend" is for joining two ropes of unequal size.



The "Double Fisherman's Bend" is a reliable way of joining two ropes of equal size.

Q: When is a rope not a rope? A: Once it boards a marine vessel it is a line.

Learn CW Online

K2DB

A new website to learn and practice Morse telegraphy has been launched:<http://lcwo.net/> - Learn CW Online

There are already hundreds of training programs, MP3/CD courses and practice aids available, but LCWO

follows a radically different concept: While sticking to well-proven methods for learning and practice, all you need for using LCWO is a web browser!

This gives the user the liberty to practice CW wherever an internet connection is available, always retaining the personal settings, scores and statistics.

Currently the site, which is available in 23 languages offers a complete Koch method Morse course, code group practice, callsign- and plain text training modes and also allows to convert random text to Morse MP3s.

A high score list is available to compare results with other users, personal statistics help to track training progress.

LCWO.net is a non-commercial project. Creating a free account only takes a few seconds, and you can start practicing CW right away! Fabian Kurz, DJ1YFK

Where did my disk space go? N2CK

First off, let me preface this article that this is not a radio, contesting or DX related article. It is, however, a computer maintenance article. Most of us use computers during the course of our day-to-day activities. And, over time, they get loaded down with lots of clutter as we save stuff that's too good to throw out. Eventually you will want to defrag your hard drive and you'll get the message that you need to free up some space first so the program can run. At that point, you will be asking yourself "Where did all my disk space go?". That's where this program comes in handy.

I was faced with just that problem and after some time spent with Google, I found a neat little piece of freeware called Folder Size. It can be found here: <http://www.mindgems.com/products/Folder-Size/Folder-Size.html> The size of the download is under 2M. It works with Windows 7, Vista, XP, and down to Windows 98. Did I also mention free? A ham's favorite word.

Once installed and running on your machine all you need to do is click the green triangle button on the top title bar. You will hear your hard drive chugging away while it analyses your disk drive. The resulting display output shows the folders on your hard drive in the left hand display pane in alphabetical order with the size each folder is using. In typical windows explorer fashion, you can click in the + icon to further drive down into a specific or particular folder. It also tells you the size of your drive and how much is used and free.

The real detail comes in the main pane. It shows in descending order (or ascending if you desire) the size and percentage of disk space used by each folder on your hard drive. It shows you number of files and folders under each folder, and as in the left hand pane, one can double click on any folder and further drill down into subfolders. It will show output in bytes, KB, MB and GB. It shows when the folder was created, last modified and accessed. Clicking on any of these columns will sort by that display column.

It even has the ability to interface with duplicate file and image finder software. These are also free downloads; however as I did not download and install these plugins, I cannot vouch for how they work.

Give this application a try the next time you're fighting with a computer to recoup disk space. You might be surprised what it finds.

2011 RDXA Survey Results

K2FX

A couple of months ago we distributed a survey for the purpose of getting feedback from our general membership about important issues facing RDXA. This survey focused on some hot button topics such as the Newsletter and Newsletter submissions. Also, whether RDXA's focus is mainly on Contesting or DXing? Last but not least, what direction should we take with regard to Field Day?

My purpose for this article is to share some of these results. If you were at last month's meeting, you have already been exposed to some of the information, but for those of you not in attendance, I'll try to break it down again for you.

We had roughly 60% of the membership actually respond to the survey. It was first handed out during a regular meeting and collected that night, but was also put on the reflector for everyone else to download. My feeling is that 60% is a fairly good number. We currently have 67 paid members, and of those we had returns from 38 of you.

So what did we learn? With regard to the Newsletter, the majority of you said that you believe it is still a viable way to get information to the membership, and would like to see it continued at least bi-monthly even though the Reflector and email were the timeliest method to disseminate information. However, of those that prefer this method, only about 25% of you have actually contributed to it in the way of articles, pictures, or BIO's. One person's opinion was that it is entirely up to the Editor to write all of the material each month, and another commented that he is not a writer, and did not join RDXA for that purpose.

These results are very interesting to me, because the individuals I just referenced were adamant that a monthly Newsletter was still needed! The majority do want a newsletter, but also have not, or do not want to contribute to it. So at this time, the future of the Newsletter is uncertain. A couple of you said that awards or prizes might be in order to spur more interest. Also, when asked what can be done to get more Newsletter participation, most of you said that you did not know. Well, we don't either. This is something your Board of Directors will continue to examine. Dave, N2CK will be stepping down as Editor in June, and as of yet, no one has expressed an interest to assume those duties. If you are interested, please let us know.

So on to the next Hot Button. Is RDXA a Contest or DX Club? The answer to this one is really quite simple. You have told us BOTH! There were a few hard core contesters who only contest, as well as a few dedicated DXers who do not like or participate in contesting, but it was almost an even 50/50 split on this issue. Most of our responders also said that they are HF Active at this time

with many being on 160-10 Meters, and operating many different modes. We also had a few CW Only operators, which made me personally feel all warm inside!

Finally, the topic that seemed to evoke the most emotion in response is the focus of Field Day. With the exception of just a few individuals, the overwhelming majority of you would like to see this year's Field Day Event take a much more casual and fun approach as opposed to an all out contest effort.

We have some newly licensed members that would prefer to get some training at Field Day, and not be made to feel intimidated in a high pressure situation. Others would like this year be much more social in nature with some good food, and drink coupled with some fun operating. I think that as your President, it's my obligation to point out what Field Day is really supposed to be. According to the ARRL, Field Day was designed as an Emergency Preparedness Drill rather than a contest. Granted that several stations across the country take this approach just as RDXA has in the past, but we must not lose sight of the fact that Ham Radio is still, first and foremost, a Public Service! Being skilled enough to provide emergency communications under adverse conditions is our number one priority, with the fun hobby aspect being a great side benefit. So to me, one of our priorities as a club should be to teach some important operating skills, and continue to mentor those who seek to gain the knowledge necessary to operate efficiently and achieve those goals

The following is an excerpt from last year's RDXA Press Release to the public.

Field Day is designed to test operators' abilities to set up and operate portable stations under emergency conditions such as the loss of commercial electricity and/or telephone service. During the weekend, the radio operators try to contact as many other Field Day stations as possible, simulating the on-air skills needed to assist town officials and served agencies during an emergency. More than 30,000 Amateur Radio operators across the country participated in last year's event. The first Field Day was held in 1933". "We hope that people will come out and see for themselves, this is not your grandfather's radio anymore", said Paul Kolacki, K2FX, of RDXA. "The communications that Ham Radio Operators can quickly create have saved many lives when other systems have failed or were overloaded. And, besides that – It's Fun!!"

It should be FUN! If it's not fun, why do it? With this in mind, a Field Day committee has been established to make this year's event as fun and educational as possible, while at the same time working to foster camaraderie amongst our members. If you would like to be involved in helping to plan this year's event, please let us know. It's your club, and we want YOUR help.

I hope that these survey results have shed some light for you on issues that we need to continue to focus on. If anyone has not yet taken the survey, it's not too late to still give us your thoughts. Let me know, and I'll be sure to email you a copy to complete. To all of you who did take the time to help us out with your opinions, we greatly appreciate it.

Member Shacks



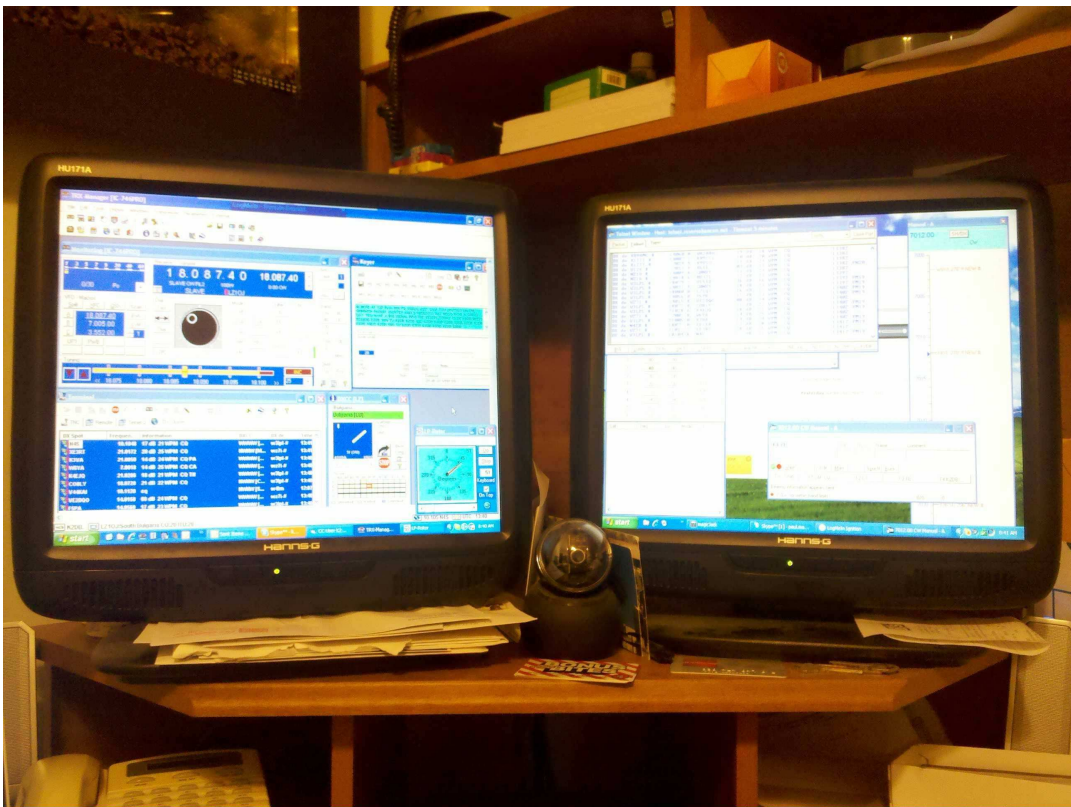
N2YGG Anmari (Spends too much money on radios. She needs shoes!)



K1PY Vic (Operating from N2CK)



W1TY Rick, RTTY Station



K2DB Paul (A minimalist set-up since his remote actual station is in St. Lawrence County)



K2DV Don (Notice he is in the phone band)



The "shack" being delivered to K2NNY. :-)



Paul K2FX



K2FX ionizes the "luminiferous aether".

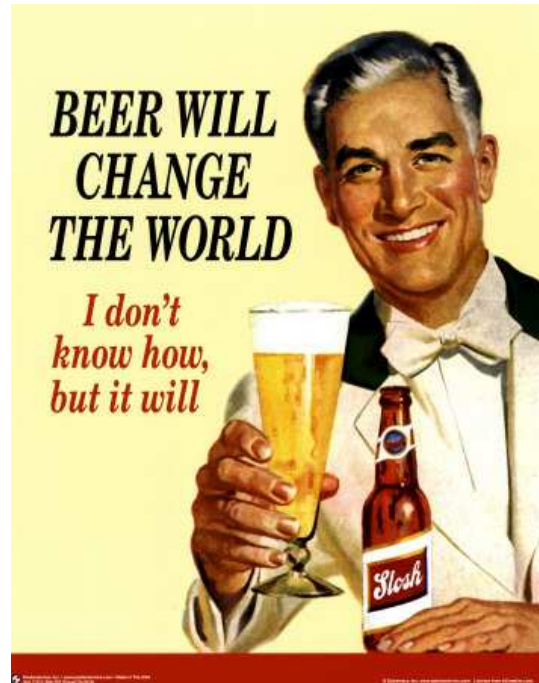


N2ZN/V31AM (This station is too neat to be that of an RDXA member) Ken operated 42/48 hours.
Ah.... To be young again!

The RDXA meeting is over. Now what?



Young or old....
Join your friends at **The Distillery** (3010 Winton Road S.)



If It's Done In Amateur Radio, It's Done At RDXA!



Rochester DX Association

W2RDX

rdxa.com

This Bulletin is the official publication of the Rochester DX Association and is published monthly, September through June. Email your articles, tidbits, ham ads, etc. to Dave, N2CK at the addresses below by the second Tuesday of the month for inclusion in that month's issue.

All those with an interest in amateur radio and DXing and contesting are cordially invited to any meeting and to join RDXA. Meetings are held at 19:30 local time on the 3rd Tuesday of each month, September through June.

President-----Paul Kolacki K2FX/ usafpilot@rochester.rr.com

Vice President-----Scott Hoag K2ZS/ scott@k2zs.com

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Chris Shalvoy – K2CS -----K2CS/chris@k2cs.net

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DX Chairman----- Chris Shalvoy, K2CS

Packet Cluster Sys Op----- Bob Hunter, NG2P

Webmaster----- Scott Hoag, K2ZS

Contest Chairman----- Ken Boasi , N2ZN

Membership Chairman----- Carey Magee, K2RNY

Newsletter Editor -----Dave Wright, N2CK/N2CK@arrl.net

NG2P Packet Cluster ----- 144.910 MHz

----- Telnet: ng2p.ham-radio-op.net / Port 7300

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585.223.4230

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69 Fairview Crescent
Rochester, NY 14617

Regular membership - \$20.00

Family Membership - \$5.00

Full Time Student - \$10.00

Any other correspondence to: Irv Goodman, AF2K

