Rochester DX Association

Holiday Dinner:
December 21, 2021
(See flyer in this issue)

Next Regular Meeting:
7:00 PM January 18, 2022
Johnny's Irish Pub,

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Deadline for next issue:
Februarv 28. 2022

President's Letter

Hope you've all had an opportunity to get into a contest or two over the last few weeks – bands have been quite a bit better than in years past.

As a "nostalgia" thing, I always put a big effort into CQWW SSB, remembering my "first" contest almost 30 years ago. Time marches on though, I can only stay awake so long now, the days of 40+ hours (I managed 42 once) are long gone. This year I was in the mid 20's so a bit over the relatively new "classic" designation but I'm in it more for fun than any award.

Friday nite I heard several from Asia on 20m and was able to work some JA's Saturday at dusk (on 15m) so that was a nice surprise. Not the big runs of years prior but something to look forward to.

All the work that has been done at W2CCC has paid off, not use to working almost anything I hear, a far cry from the G5RV and barefoot TS-440sat. Now, not any huge power (400w) but that also will be improved given the time.

The rotable dipole on the C4 is impressive, can actually get on 40m and work a few without literally "screaming". I think W2CCC has ended up in supercheck as many know the call.

Field Day Results

Results in December 2021 QST show RDXA placed 19th out of about 1800 club aggregate scores, with 11 logs submitted for 17,666 points. Roughly 1800 clubs participated. Good work!

Outside of contesting, finally finished off 12m DXCC, been working on that for a while (as you well know, the band has been less that useful for years). Only a few shy on 160m as well so hopefully after the upcoming ARRL 160m contest, that can be completed soon.

As has been said many times before, submit your logs for RDXA credit and on the website so other club members can see the fun you're having.


807

In our hope to get back to as much "normalcy" as possible, we've been meeting "in person" at Johnny's the last few months. The members who have attended enjoy the location and room. Provisions to allow for Zoom participants have kept out of town or otherwise unable to attend members up to date. Added benefits include the ability to have an 807 while the meeting is in progress (and afterward as well).

All in all, very positive comments on the location and meeting room so we will continue w/ our meetings there thru 2022.

After a 2 year absence, we've once again announced the "Holiday Dinner" to be held on Tuesday 21 December at Johnny's. A buffet style dinner will be available with several dishes and desert - $20 a person. Looking forward to seeing those who are able to attend, it's been a long time for such a social organization to be apart from its membership (as shown by IRVfest a few months back).

An informational flyer is elsewhere in the bulletin.

Looking at January, our next general membership meeting will be devoted to Field Day 2022. As with so many other RDXA events, we've been without a FD for 2 years now. The thought is to revisit plans from past FD's and make decisions on what we feel best for 2022. Antennas, station configurations, food – all on the table. The initial hope is to continue at Webster Park but that's not to say we'd continue with similar efforts of the past. No one is getting any younger and the bands are getting better… less work may be way more fun so we need to find an appropriate balance.

Looking forward to hearing those that feel they'd be able to participate as June will be here sooner than any of us think. As for Gayle and I (if all works out) I'll be in Ireland for 2 weeks so may not be able to be a part of the 2022 effort. Time will tell as things change on a daily basis it seems.

Let me wish you all a very happy and healthy holiday season, all the best in the upcoming new year.

Chris, K2CS

2021 NYQP Update

The official NYQP log count stands at 495 logs, down from last year's record 532 logs by 7% however, still a very impressive number. The scoring process is now under way. Stay tuned for further updates. Thanks to all who participated in this year's event!

Cool Tools – Part 1

Dave Wright N2CK

I wanted to share with you another life hack I stumbled upon to make it easier to prepare coax for installing a PL/259 connector on larger diameter coax (i.e. 213, 8/8U, etc). The tip I would like to share utilizes (perhaps) a common household tool – a tubing cutter. As I live in a house with copper plumping, I've had the need to repair a copper pipe or two (typically if I forgot to turn off and drain the water line out to the garage!). My approach to stripping coax in the past has usually involved sharp cutting tools (utility or exacto knife) in close proximity to my fingers. I would hold the blade in a fixed position, and rotate the coax under the knife to get down to the center conductor, pull that off and then trim back the outer jacket to expose the shield. To strip coax in this manner usually involved nervous anxiety from the sharp object, combined with frustration when I discovered my cut marks didn't meet. Yes, I know there are specialized coax strippers available – but as I don't install connectors that frequently, I never pulled the trigger to purchase one.

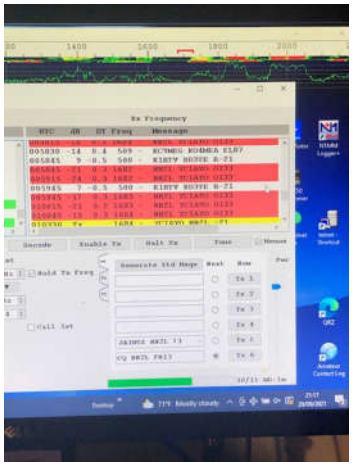
As I installed the PL/259 connector on the fresh run of RG 213 at the boat club, I thought there had to be a better way. Recently, I had a eureka moment. Why not use a tubing cutter? If it cuts through copper pipe, surely it could cut through rubber, braided shield, and plastic di-electric. That said, I dug out the trusty 50+ year old tubing cutter. For those not familiar with a tubing cutter, it has a cutting wheel, and 2 roller wheels. You insert the object to be cut into the jaws, and gradually tighten the tool while you rotate the tool around the (in this case) coax being stripped. Does it work? You betcha! I used my method this morning to strip 2 different types of coax. Total time to strip both pieces – maybe 10 minutes max! Certainly MUCH quicker and safer than my previous method; with the added benefit of a very clean stripped wire. No little strands of excess braid to trim. And (wait – there's more!) once the cutter has cut through the center di-electric and the underlying copper can be seen – the tubing cutter can be used to pull the center insulator off the wire. Simply open the jaws and position the tool over the insulator you wish to remove and tighten slightly. The tool will bite into the insulator and hold it. At this point, grab the coax in one hand, tool in the other and pull. Once the center conductor is stripped, use the tool to cut through the outer jacket to expose the braid below.

If you have one of these tools, give it a try. They're fairly cheap – I found one on-line for just over $10.00 at a local big box store. You might find it will make this task a bit easier, and safer – with the side benefit of a nicely stripped wire ready for the connector.

"When the Cats away…"

Chuck Lempke NN2L

Funny story! I was on was 20m FT8 the other night for a bit and called a couple of DX stations without result. So after a few minutes I decided to put my time to better use and wandered out to the kitchen to enjoy some delicious Merlot Cheese with a whole grain cracker or two for a snack.



Eventually, I wandered back to the radio shack to see if band conditions had changed only to find 'red' plastered all over my monitor. I looked closer…and couldn't believe it. YC1AYO in Indonesia had called me a total of 13 times in my snack absence before he gave up and threw in the towel. Apparently the truism "When the Cats away…" applies to DX as well. :)

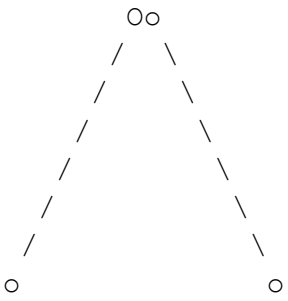
A Digitally Tuned 80m Antenna

Ken Hendrickson N8KH

Report on an 80m "digitally tuned" antenna. It is digitally tuned with a set of wires having length relationships based on the base-2 number system. Hence: "digital tuning".

I have an 80m inverted-V with the apex at about 40'. The ends of the antenna are about 6' above ground on my wooden fence. I recently reworked the antenna, replacing the Chinesium alligator clips with some Chinesium banana plugs. The antenna is fed with a W2AU balun in the center at 40'.

Below, see some ASCII art showing the configuration of the antenna. This will look best in a constant width font.

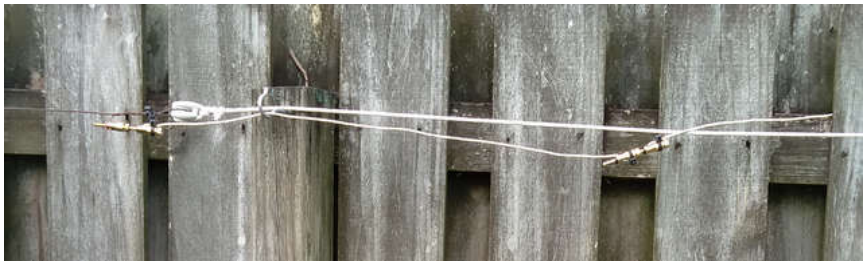


The ○'s at the top represent the balun connection. The ○'s at the bottom represent the tuning wire extension points. The length of the inverted-V without any wire extensions makes it resonate at about 4000 kHz.

I have made two sets of three lengths of wire with banana plugs at each end. The lengths are 1', 2', and 4'. There is a set for each end of the inverted-V. This allows extending the length of the inverted-V on each end by any length between 0' and 7', with an adjustment length of 1'. The following chart shows where the antenna resonates with various extension lengths. In each case, the 2:1 VSWR bandwidth is about 200 kHz. My automatic antenna tuner can easily handle a 3:1 VSWR, so the usable bandwidth is a bit wider than 200 kHz without changing the extension lengths.

Extension Length (feet) on each end	Center Frequency (kHz)
0	4000
1	3950
2	3865
3	3741
4	3667
5	3575
6	3510
7	not measured

To "tune" the antenna, you run out and change the length of the extensions on both ends. You get wet in the rain, but there isn't much snow and ice to be bothersome here in Florida.



The Chinesium alligator clips rusted badly after about a year, and would no longer bite like an alligator clip should. They clearly did not have much copper or brass content. They were replaced with Chinesium banana plugs that appear to have significant brass content. Time will tell how they work out.

The antenna performed incredibly well in the ARRL CW Sweepstakes contest in November 2021, with 189 QSOs — more than on any other band — and helping me to earn a "clean sweep" by contacting *every* US and Canadian section during the contest.

Cool Tools – Part 2

Dave Wright N2CK

After a pretty quiet radio summer for me, I was pulled into an antenna/radio project at my boat club. We had some roofing work done this summer to rebuild and resolve some leak issues up top. During that work, the (what looks like RG-58) coax to the external antenna was cut – leaving our club without a working VHF marine radio installation. Knowing I was a ham, I got pulled into the task of replacing coax and antenna. The member I was working with shared a handy wire pulling tool with me – and I knew I had to share it with the club.

For our project, we had to run coax from the ground floor, through the second floor, to an attic and cupola. I procured a 125' length of RG-213 from Rich, W2FBS new and unused. The VHF marine band is at 156Mhz. Checking the specs, 213 wasn't as good as LMR 400, but the price was right on the new (unused) 213 – plus it was available locally (no shipping costs).

We figured out a route to run the cable (keeping all the coax inside the building!), and after drilling holes to route the cable we were ready to start running the coax. The cable I purchased was pre-terminated with PL/259 connectors. I cut off one connector so we had just the coax going through the walls.

The first tool my partner pulled out of his goody bag looked like a Chinese finger trap (remember those from your childhood?)? It fit very nicely over the bare coax. I've included URLs to it below (available at Home Depot) or amazon (of course!). Once the coax was inserted into the wire grip, simply pulling the grip tightened on the jacket of the coax.

https://www.homedepot.com/p/Southwire-1-2-in-Pulling-Grip-58281040/314761048

https://www.amazon.com/Southwire-Equipment-WPG1-Pulling-2-Inch/dp/B014FVCFQQ/ref=sr_1_6?crid=3UOHO8OPG29OH&keywords=southwire+pulling+grip&qid=1637172533&sprefix=southwire+pulling%2Caps%2C193&sr=8-6

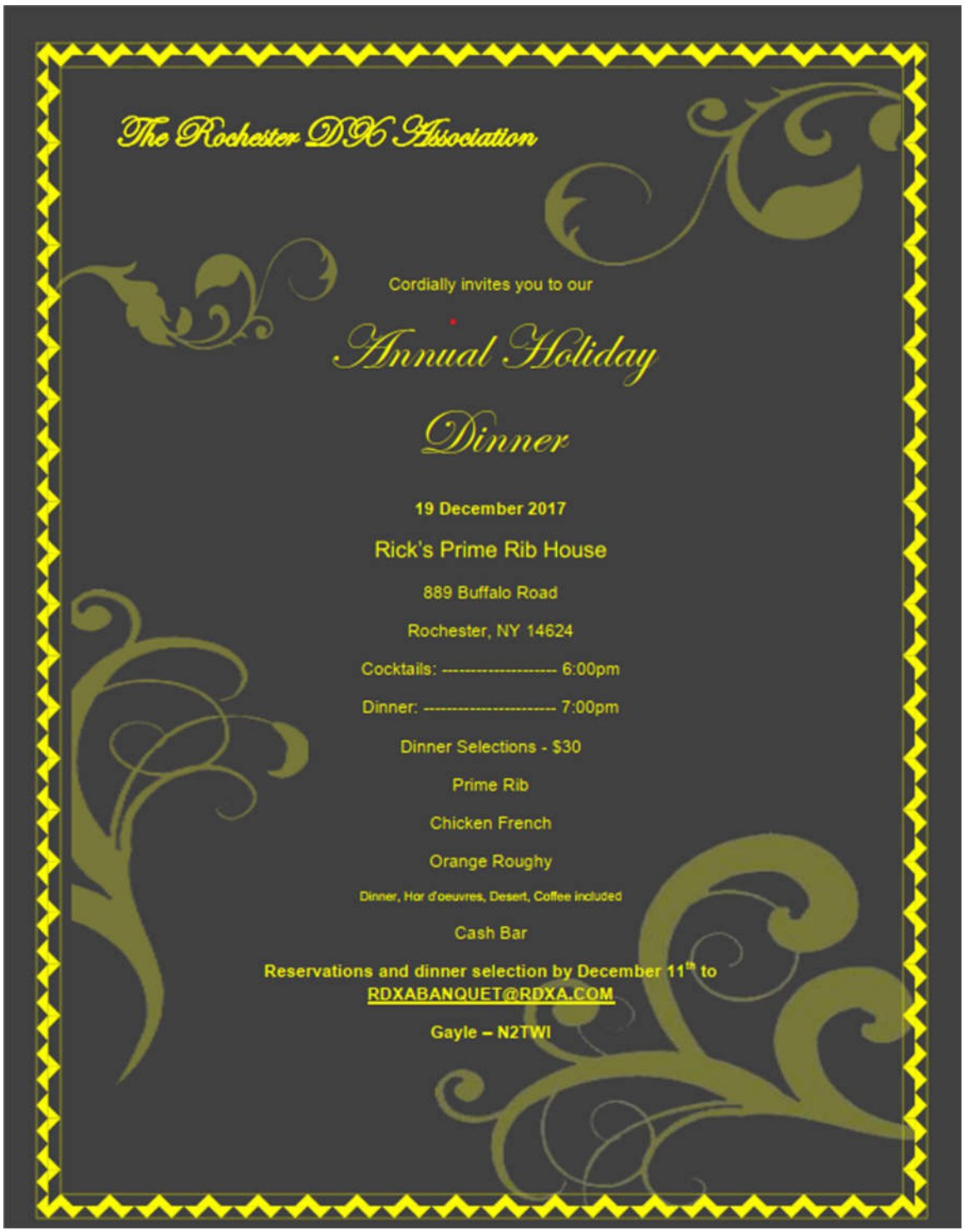
The second tool he introduced me to was a set of fiberglass rods – 3' in length and extended as needed (kit extends to 33'). The set is available at harbor freight, the URL is below.

https://www.harborfreight.com/3-16-inch-x-33-ft-fiberglass-wire-running-kit-65326.html

Once the coax was in the pulling grip, and one fiberglass section attached, it was a simple matter of pushing the fiberglass rod through the hole and pulling the wire through! No messing with a fish tape, electrical tape, etc. It made passing wire between floors SO easy! When done,

we used ~100' of the coax. I installed a PL/259 on the bare end and we stuck a temporary boat antenna in the cupola (club trying to decide if they want to install an external antenna or if the internal antenna will satisfy requirements). A quick check with the MFJ analyzer showed a SWR of 1.5 at throughout the marine band.

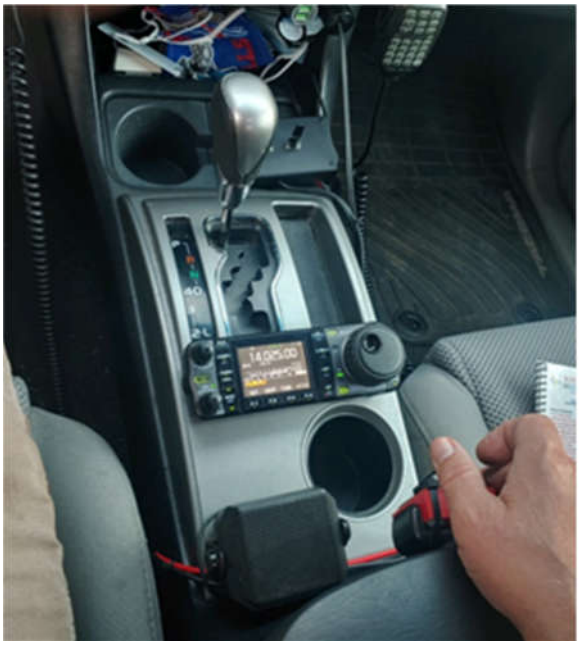
These weren't expensive either – the fiberglass kit is ~$9.00 and the pulling grip $15.00. Having both these tools made the task MUCH easier.



Fall Update at N2BEG

Doug Stewart N2BEG

This fall literally flew by. I for one am still wrapping my head around it being December. I had a list of several dozen projects before NYQP and I think I got to about 6. I did manage to accomplish getting my HF rig in the truck prior to NYQP and putting a few semi-rare counties on the air before gremlins reared their ugly heads and Mother Nature threw her hat in the ring.



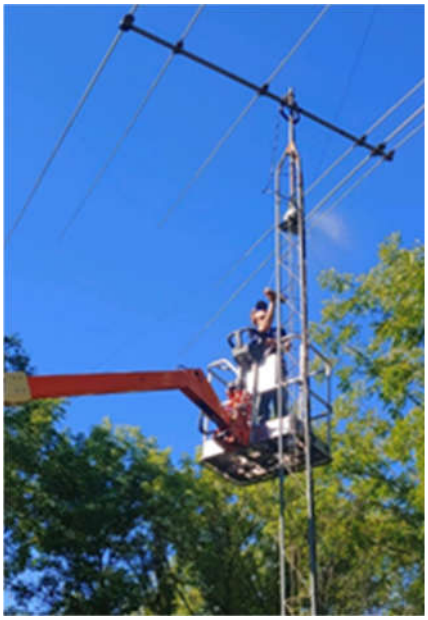
IC-7000 speaker and mini-paddle

High-Sierra MK-1500 Mk II

While the setup did work, I need to make improvements. I have a turbo tuner on order that will greatly help. 3 months and still waiting. The manual tune box and the LDG 7000 auto tuner is too cumbersome to get the antenna resonant where it will actually radiate. I also need to add more grounding straps. This may have to wait until spring now…

My other large project that I at least got started was the tree work needed to be able to turn my beam. I have a large black walnut that grew into the beams turning radius. After that was done I had planned on tilting the tower over, adding a tower section, replacing my rotor and rearranging antennas. I ran out of fall to complete this.

I can now at least turn my beam, but my rotor no longer displays position so I don't know where I'm pointed unless I look out the window. Not too convenient in the basement shack. While I had the lift there, I had my guy hook up a wire rope to the top of the tower so I can use a winch to lower it once I get that fastened to the tree I selected.



I finally had surgery to fix my left thumb (no cartilage left) which has impacted doing most things, (like typing or contesting very effectively!) I did manage to run CQWWDX phone.

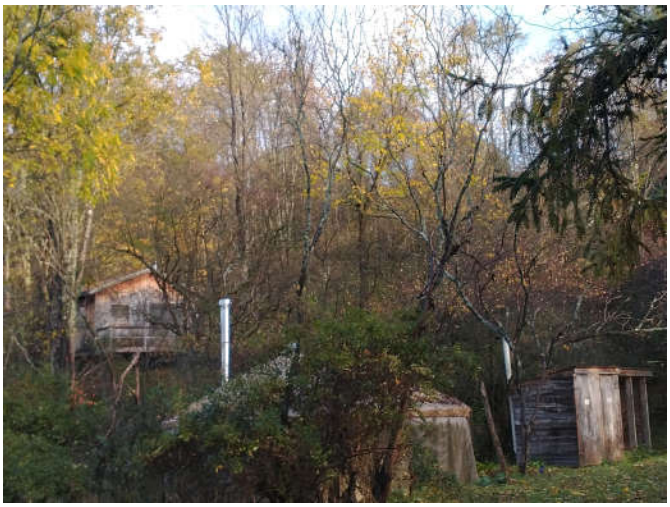
In other news, my shack is a mess, I need to still fix my Inv L, set up my new-to-me ANAN 7000 and get to a whole bunch of projects on the bench. I also discovered that my new neighbor, WF2W has indeed set up his shack and is active, at least on 160. When he was 3 miles away he shutdown 25 kc of the band whenever he was on, now at a block away 160 is useless if he is on. Luckily, I've never heard him on other bands but he even got Jack's (WA2CHV) KX3 to protect itself turning off preamps etc. and he is still a couple miles away from him. He must be running the legal limit. I'm anxious to see if the ANAN can handle it but I'm a little apprehensive about damaging the rig. I want to see if I have coronas forming on my Inv L when he transmits first, once I get it back up, lol.

NYQP Tioga County Activation

John Hall AC2RL

Last Summer I started to think about activating one of New York's less active counties for NYQP. Looking at past results I saw that Tioga County had not been heard from in several years.

Where to go? I did some online research, looking for motels and B&Bs that might be ham friendly, and in mid-September I took a drive down to check places out. The best bet looked to be the cabins at the Rune Hill Sanctuary, just south of Spencer, New York.

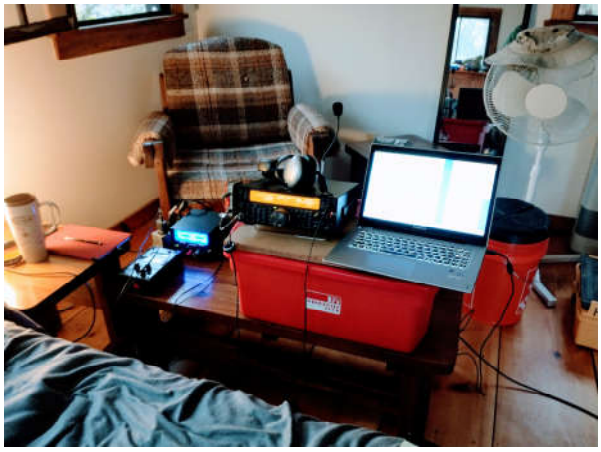


Sumac Cabin on the hillside to the left, behind a yurt and the privy.

Rune Hill had been a dairy farm, a hippie commune, and is now a nature reserve with cabins and campsites for rent. They were listed on Airbnb. Their Sumac cabin is sited on a wooded hillside, a short hike from their parking area. It had gas heat and electrical power. I made my reservation.

I arrived mid-afternoon on Friday, October 15 amidst a light rain and toted my gear up the hill to the cabin. The rig was my Kenwood TS-590 and the antenna was a 40-20-10 meter fan dipole.

Hanging the antenna was a bigger job than I expected. Sometimes having too many trees is worse than too few. It didn't help that the slope of the hillside was about thirty degrees. Did I mention it was raining? I persevered and with the help of my trusty pneumatic launcher I got it hung and clear of trees just about sundown.



My operating position

The next morning I was ready to go when the event started at 9 AM (1400 UTC). I made 238 contacts over the next twelve hours, all but seven of them on 40 meters. I tried 20 meters around 1930 UTC but went back to 40 after five contacts. 40 meters slowed down after 2200 hours and I realized I really should have brought an 80 meter antenna. I went to my car (in the rain) and made a couple of contacts with my mobile rig, and Icom IC-7100 and a 75 meter hamstick, but only made two contacts in an hour, so I put it to bed. On 75 meters a hamstick is a seriously compromised antenna.

Sunday morning I got up, packed up, treated myself to steak and eggs at the diner in Spencer, and headed home.

My two most memorable contacts were:

- The first QSO of a young ham who had just gotten his General license
- Providing the first Tioga County contact for a county chaser on the west coast who said he then only needed six more to have worked all counties in the contiguous 48 states.

Lessons learned:

- Trees are useful for hanging antennas, but not too many trees.
- Expect inclement weather and steep slopes.
- Operating twelve hour straight solo is harder than it sounds. I ended up on the air for just over seven hours.
- Maybe make it a group operation next year. Getting too old to solo.

RDXA 2020-21 Calendar

September 2021

~~7 BOD~~
~~11-13 ARRL September VHF~~
~~21 Meeting~~
~~25-26 CQWW RTTY~~

October 2021

~~5 BOD~~
~~19 Meeting~~
~~16-17 NYQP~~
~~30-31 CQWW SSB~~

November 2021

~~2 BOD~~
~~6-8 ARRL SS CW~~
~~16 Meeting~~
~~20-22 ARRL SS SSB~~
~~27-28 CQWW CW~~
~~30 BULLETIN DEADLINE~~

December 2021

7 BOD
3-5 ARRL 160m CW
11-12 ARRL 10m
21 RDXA Holiday Dinner
27-29 RMSC Event
25-26 Stew Perry 160m CW

January 2022

1-2 ARRL RTTY Roundup
4 BOD
15-17 ARRL January VHF
18 Meeting
28-30 CQWW 160m CW

February 2022

1 BOD
12-13 CQWW WPX RTTY
15 Meeting
19-20 ARRL DX CW
24-27 CQWW 160m SSB
28 BULLETIN DEADLINE

March 2022

1 BOD
5-6 ARRL DX SSB
15 Meeting
26-27 CQWW WPX SSB

April 2022

5 BOD
19 Meeting

May 2022

3 BOD
17 Meeting
20-22 Dayton Hamvention
28-29 CQWW WPX CW
31 BULLETIN DEADLINE

June 2022

7 BOD
18-19 ARRL June VHF
21 Meeting
25-26 ARRL Field Day

July 2022

9-10 IARU
17-18 CQWW VHF

August 2022

16 IRVfest
27 ROC City Hamfest
31 Contest season concludes
Membership year concludes
31 BULLETIN DEADLINE

Rochester DX Association

Club Station — W2RDX

Club Website —http://www.rdxa.com

Facebook group —RDXA QTH

This Bulletin is the official publication of the Rochester DX Association and is published quarterly.

All those with an interest in amateur radio, DXing and contesting are cordially invited to any meeting and to join RDXA.

Meetings are held at 19:00 Local time on the 3rd Tuesday of each month, September through June. Meetings are located at Johnny's Irish Pub located at 1382 Culver Rd. Rochester, NY.

President,.....Chris Shalvoy – K2CS
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	Gene Fuller – W2LU

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Paypal: treasurer@rdxa.com
US Mail: Mike Sanchez KM2B
8 Piccadilly Square
Rochester, NY 14625

Regular Membership: $25.00

Family, Full time Student or Out of State member: $6.25