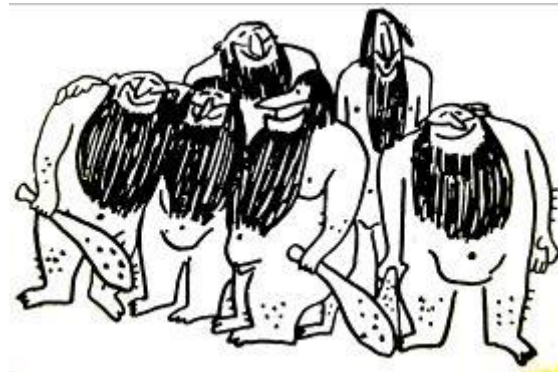


Rochester DX Association



President's Letter

by Chris Shalvoy K2CS

Page 2

The Funny Page

Doug Stewart N2BEG

Page 12

RDXA Field Day 2024

Doug Stewart N2BEG

Page 3

Resurrecting a TRAC TE-144 CW Keyer

Mike Sanchez, Lynn Bisha

Page 13

A UHF Band Opening at Fish Camp

Dave Wright N2CK

Page 10

DXing with HamAlert

John AC2RL

Page 15

Irvfest Photos

Photos on page 11

RDXA Calendar

Page 16

Tool Tip

Soldering PL-259
Connectors

Page 11

Deadline for Next Issue:

November 30, 2024

President's Letter

Good DX all,

Been settling in at our place up north, having far more time to spend up here since retirement.

Thanks to John, WB2BYP and a quick visit a few weeks ago, "contest season" seems a bit better since all the 160m stuff works perfectly. I restrung all the beverages last year and they continue to perform as they should.

Just after he left a few weeks back, they had a pretty severe storm up here, power was out for 3 days, trees totally blocked our road as well as alternative access. A confirmed tornado touched down a few blocks from us. There are remnants of many "snapped" trees and you can see where it was just easier to bulldoze the broke stuff into the forest. We lost a fairly large tree but due to excellent engineering, no tower or antenna damage at all!

It'll be nice to be able to be here before and after the contests as having to head up after work and leaving before the end of the contest always precluded a full effort. My vacation days were generally used up with other things and I didn't have the ability to put my best effort in.

We've generally spent 2 weeks at W2CCC then 2 home. Trying to back away from certain responsibilities as we intend to spend even more time here. Funny, the day I retired, we headed up north and spent 18 days here. That was the first time in 20 years we've been in Cold Brook that long since we bought the house 20 years ago!

Have an extensive list of things to do, some radio related obviously and others just plain old "creature care" stuff.

The recent (and as of this, continuing) CY9 DXpedition had been fun and was a great way to test 160m, 1 call so far both times I heard them. Now granted, I'm pretty close but still, throw the call in once and get a response, pretty cool.

Might be a chore on the upper bands, hearing backscatter so not sure I'll be logging them on 10 or 12 - have got them on 15 FT8.

The new "Super Hound" version of FT8 has been used and it's the first time I've copied anything on it, heard absolutely nothing with the Palmyra/Jarvis operation so had no idea it even worked.

Sorry I missed them up here as I try to only work stuff with the call I'm located at.

Had a (first and) great time at the ROC City Hamfest last week, so nice to see many old friends, some which I haven't seen in multiple years. A fair portion of the old "79 repeater" gang was there and there was even talk about trying to resurrect those types of gatherings. That's what initially got me into RDXA over 30 years ago. Had an extensive chat with Scott, W2LC - our newly elected Section Manager (once again I might add).

IRVfest was once again a success with just over 20 in attendance. A great way to end the RDXA calendar year and begin yet another.

Speaking of "new year", dues are now being accepted and current plans are to kick off 2024/25 with another extremely successful, "Show Us Your Shack" (and other tall tales) on Tuesday 17 September at 7:00pm - Johnny's. I'll have Zoom credentials sent along shortly, I'd hope we had as much participation as past years.

Not needing to be mentioned is the dinner beforehand, all are welcomed (to the Merchants Grill, next door - 5:00pm or so).

The club is always looking for program ideas, glad to entertain any suggestions you may have.

Can't wait to get in a few more pileups and "run em" in the upcoming VHF and HF Contests.

Get on the air, it's fun and bands will continue to improve as we head into the fall months.

Best DX es 73,

Chris, K2CS

RDXA Field Day 2024

N2BEG
(FD Captain)

With field day still somewhat fresh in our minds, I thought I would recap things from my perspective, after what looks to have been another successful performance by our small band of dedicated members willing to brave all of the elements and obstacles thrown in our way.

Our annual pilgrimage to Webster Park started with some meetings months ahead of time to get planning and coordination figured out. We had our success last year to build from (and also learn from) in hopes we would make things even easier and less stressful all around. Our initial plan was to do almost exactly what we did last year with a few minor tweaks. We kept the station 'tech' pretty much the same, so the 3A class would be no different and we could focus on the issues we did run into. We did mix up the station mix this year and had two CW stations and one SSB/FT8 station. Other slight variations were to the VHF station antenna set up as well as a few other tweaks and the CW stations "upgrade". More on that later.

As is our usual, we started out the weekend at the Nutcracker. I know we have a lot of history there, but I'm voting for the first change next year is the breakfast venue. In talking with others, it ain't what it used to be, and we have other options. (Tom, KC2VHS found one literally right up the road from the park that got very good reviews. Plan on something different next year.)

After that, we all headed to start setup. The usual process went pretty well with everyone pitching in and getting a lot of things set up fairly quickly. One issue we noticed was the small flood under the water spigot by the commissary that we



use all weekend for washing hands and coffee, etc. It seemed at first that someone just left the thing on before we got there and the ground was saturated, but as time went on, it became evident that something else was going on.

We continued on with getting the hardware in place and assembling the spider beam which we had pretested at my place a few weeks before. All was going to plan. The setup was the same as last years winning effort (why mess with success?) with few modest changes.



Not having to mess with milmasts is always a plus, and we had the masts pretty much figured out after last year. We forged on with setting up dipoles and the CWshelter. Welcome Murphy. Upon unloading the tubs for the big shelter we came to realize we had everything we needed, except the roof. It was discovered after discussion that the tubs marked roof, did not actually contain the roof panels. Rather than divert resources to driving back out to Hilton to Ed's place to retrieve them, Mike, K2GC offered up his newly acquired bus to serve as the impromptu CW "shelter". For those that were not able to see this glorious beast in person, here it is.



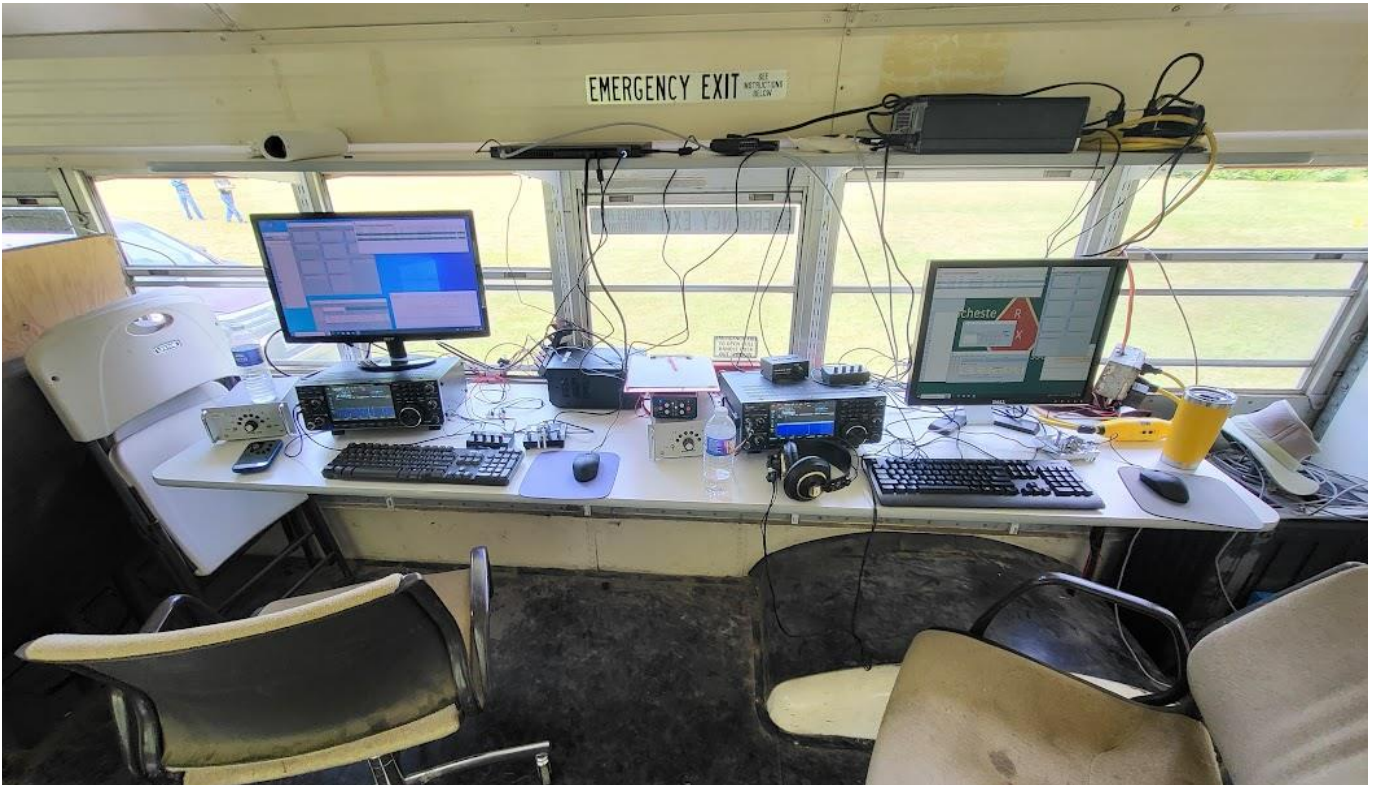
Mike managed to find this for sale in an online auction through ironplanet.com and bid on it. He was the only bidder and purchased it for \$800. Expecting the worst, he went to get it and found out there was NOTHING wrong with it mechanically and DROVE IT HOME. (it's a '97 with 180,000 miles) Score!

We had some challenges getting the dipoles in the tall pines behind the parking lot, but the stalwart antenna team braved the treacherous terrain, rotting animal carcasses and insects to haul up the two dipoles end to end for use by the phone/ft8 and GOTA stations. Having the ability to share these antennas between stations seamlessly is HUGE.

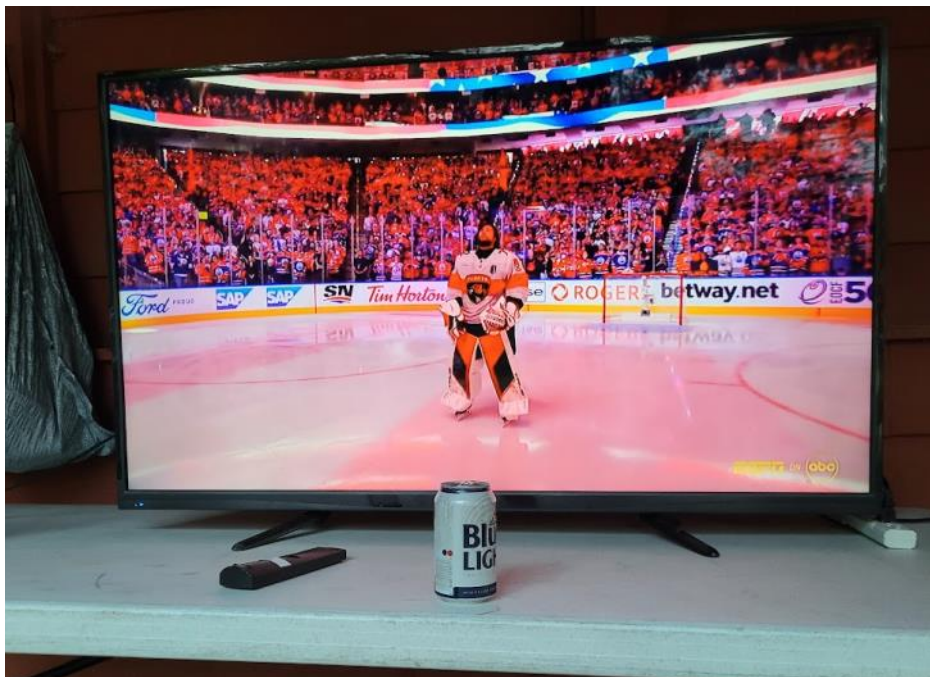
Setup continued throughout the day on Friday, with stops for a lunch of Wegman's subs followed by the rest of the set-up. These days the wires in the trees are the most time-consuming part of the process and many were engrossed in the task.



Some last minute changes were suggested and implemented in hope it would help with QSO coverage. The rigs, power runs and generator and the satellite station were all set up. As the dinner hour approached most things had been crossed off the list. A few antennas had to still be done Saturday along with the networking of the rigs, testing and final CW station setup.



Saturday lunch gave us time to reflect on remaining tasks and by the time the starting gun went off at 2pm, all was in good shape and we started making Qs. The large monitor under the commissary also kept track of the qso totals along with a QSO map of the latest contacts showing everyone where we were making Qs. (we also found the N to F adaptor to hook up the VHF/UHF log periodic to the antenna input to watch the Stanley cup final game on Friday night, a field day first I believe.)



Saturday afternoon was spent finalizing things, giving visitor tours and answering questions and a satellite contact by Dave, K2DH. (He went on to make four more I believe) According to the FD submission by Mike, K2GC, ALL of the available bonus points were obtained during the course of Field day, which we think may be the first time that has happened for RDXA. Don, KC2CTZ provided literally, a box of baefangs to use for VHF/UHF contacts by anyone visiting. Quite an impressive box of handhelds for sure. Saturday dinner was also provided curtesy Danny W and consisted of a delicious blend of chicken and sides. There was plenty of food for all. Operations ran all afternoon and into the night and many hands filled the seats, that is the key to scoring well, and hopefully enjoying the experience. The GOTA and phone/FT8 stations enjoyed a “mostly peaceful” coexistence thanks to an even more improved filter and isolation setup provided by Bill, Rus, Mike and Mark, all providing the necessary bits and pieces to allow multiple station operation on the same antenna and in close proximity, a feat that still blows yours truly away in how well it works. As the night crew pounded away at the QSOs and dragged onto morning the shift changes occurred with regularity and count continued to pile up. Thankfully the coffee flowed and with first light on Sunday, the birds sang and donuts arrived! The Park crew had come with a bobcat full of mulch to address our flooding concerns at the spicket by the commissary as it appeared to have a leak at or near the foot valve. The usual visitors of park and campground guests continued to come through as well as our elected official to fulfill that bonus requirement.

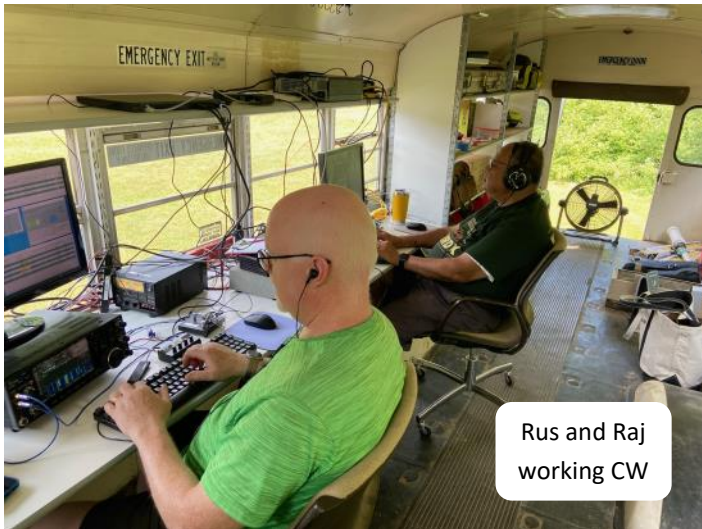




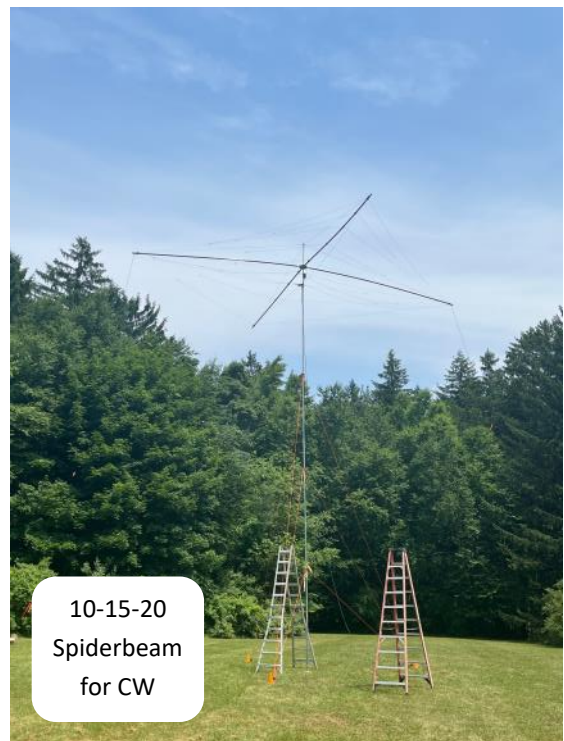
As Sunday morning wore on the high bands came alive and CW Qs mounted on 20 and 15. FT8 was steady through the night and switching to phone on occasion led to some good runs as we were usually fresh meat on 80 and 40. By the time the clock hit 2pm we had already taken down the 80 and 40 meter dipoles and packed up a lot of stuff. We had enjoyed our traditional burgers on the grill and some brats courtesy of W2BSN as per usual and the take down turnout was excellent. Many hands made for lighter work all around.

It took some time to pull the logs together and figure out our score. Mike, K2GC did yeoman duty this year as usual, along with Henry and Oliver in providing a tremendous amount of hardware, labor and of course the new deluxe CW accommodations. When the totals were announced, we wound up posting one of our best ever scores. We managed to log 2,900 QSOs, 3380 bonus points (getting ALL available bonus points!) and posting a score of 13,962. The QSO break down was 1507 CW, 884 digital and 509 phone QSOs. In looking at 3830scores.com, there was only a single station that posted more QSOs.

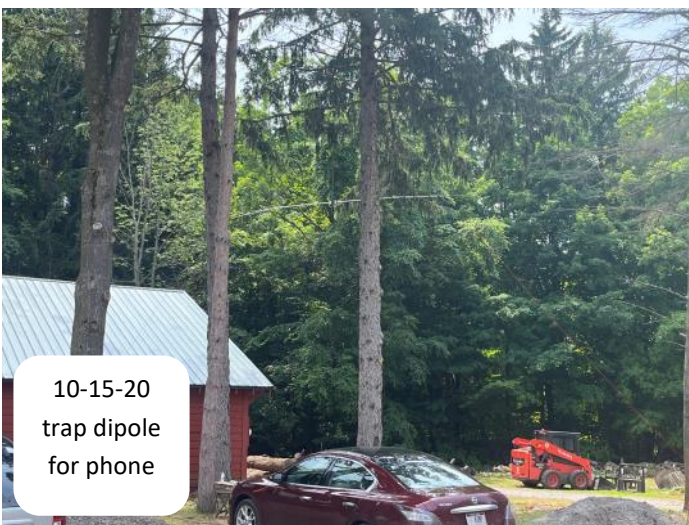
This outing ranks as one of our best showings and demonstrates once again that we can come together and pull off a successful and enjoyable operation, have a blast doing it and hopefully spread the ham radio message to a few folks along the way. Hats off to all of you that came out, contributed or worked us to help put RDXA at the top of the heap for field day 2024, congrats!



Rus and Raj working CW



10-15-20 Spiderbeam for CW



10-15-20 trap dipole for phone

Additional photos by Jack WA2CHV and Mike K2MB

A UHF Band Opening at Fish Camp

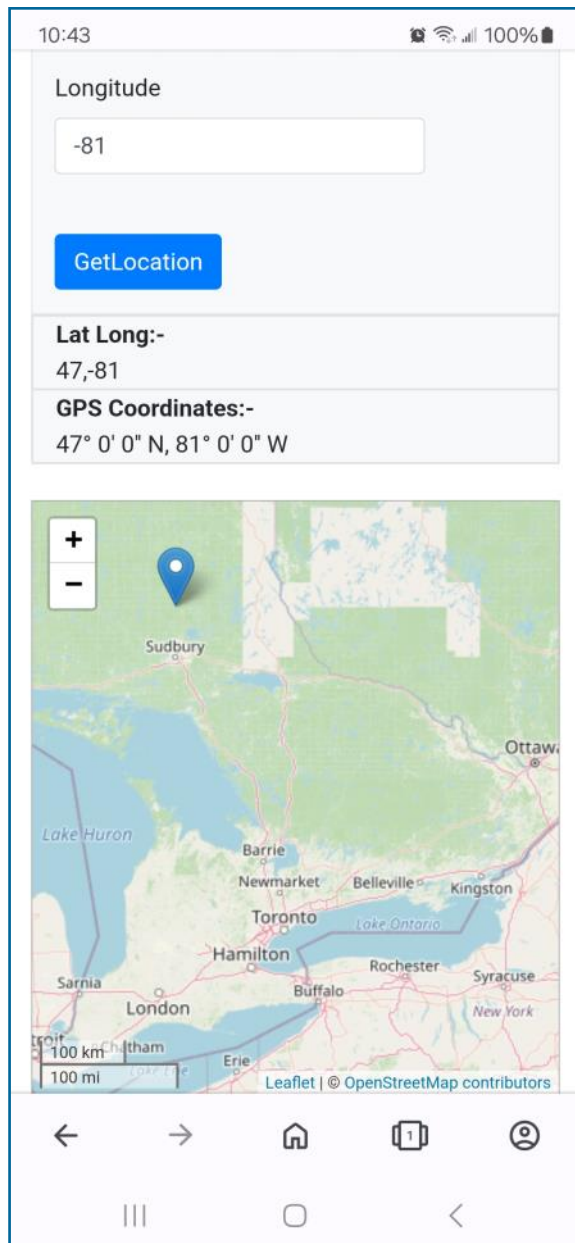
Dave Wright N2CK

I recently had the opportunity to travel to northern Ontario, Canada for a week on a fishing camp – Saturday to Saturday. I was told the area around the camp was devoid of development – and the description was accurate. No structures (other than a couple trapper cabins around the lake, and the cabins the lodge rented out), cell towers – not even an observation watch tower. Because there was no cell coverage, we all switched our phones to airplane mode. The solitude and lack of access to the outside world was strangely relaxing. I found myself burying myself into the book I brought.

Though it was cold and windy (and a smidge of rain), I fished hard Sunday and Monday. On Tuesday, I took a day off to thaw out, and went back out on Wednesday. Thursday was supposed to be hot with NO wind, so I stayed back at the camp. When dawn broke on Thursday morning, a heavy fog covered the lake – we couldn't see the trees on the other side. The fog lifted by 9:00 and the crew left the docks (2 boats). That morning – the lake was amazingly quiet. No wind – nothing. The lake was like a mirror. As I sat relaxing on the deck with my coffee after breakfast, I heard someone in a neighboring cabin having a phone conversation. Could it be? Sure enough, I switched the phone into normal mode – and I had access to the internet! As luck would have it, Thursday happened to be my anniversary.

I quickly made a call home, surprising my wife. We talked for a bit before my signal faded. After the call, I surfed my favorite sites for an hour or so – before I lost access. As I pondered why this was happening, two words popped into my head – tropospheric ducting! I was experiencing it in real time. Once the winds picked up and the moisture laden air covering the surface of the lake began to dissipate, I lost access.

It was such an amazing experience – and I happened to be there when the “band” opened. As it turns out, the “band” was UHF cell tower frequencies. It was there solid (I know I had 4G service for a while), started fading – and then gone. If it hadn't been for amateur radio – I never would have known to check – and missed it.



Irvfest Photos

Doug Stewart, Chris Shalvoy and Rick Mintz



Tool Tip

John Hall AC2RL

I used to have trouble soldering PL-259 connector bodies. They took a long time to heat up and I often had melted the dielectric by the time I got the solder to melt. Well, I have found a solution that works for me. 1. File the holes with a little rattail file to get clean metal. 2. Add a dab of paste solder flux in each hole. 3. Most important, use a heavy, wedge tip soldering iron - not a pencil or a gun. A heavy tip is better for quickly dumping a lot of heat into the connector. I got the 200 watt GE iron in the picture at the Tool Thrift Shop in Fairport for ten dollars.



The Funny Page

Doug Stewart



Ham Radio Operator uses coaxial cable he placed in his garage in 1976 just in case he needed it



Why Women Live Longer than Men

Resurrecting a TRAC TE-144 CW Keyer

Mike Sanchez, Lynn Bisha

When I first began learning CW, Lynn Bisha kindly loaned me his very nice TRAC-TE133 Keyer that would help me practice sending. The Keyer had a very clear and crisp tone and the ability to set the ratio of the Dot to the Dash and volume. I borrowed this keyer for nearly one year but realized that I needed to acquire one of my own since learning is more about continuous practice than learning and done.

The advantage of having this particular make of Keyer is it runs on a 9V battery and has a very, very low battery draw and I can practice CW anywhere anytime, no need to plug in a wall someplace then try

to find a table nearby. Eventually, to be responsible, I returned Lynn's very nice TE-133 Trac Keyer and began looking for a TRAC replacement. Unfortunately, in my first google search, I found absolutely nothing for sale. So, I placed an alert on eBay.

A little over a year went by and finally a TRAC alert came through on eBay. The listing did say "untested" but I went for it anyway because months had gone by with no TRAC Keyer for sale anywhere.

When the key arrived, I immediately put in the required 9V battery and hooked up my keyer eager to continue my practice. Neither the dash nor the dot produced even a hint of sound no matter the volume setting. I checked the key on my radio to make sure the key was not a problem and it produced nice dots and dashers on my FT-1000MP keyer. After a bit more testing of the TRAC keyer I declared it dead and left it on my workbench for a couple months before, during a winter cleaning, taking it out the Monroe County Eco Park for recycle.

To continue my CW practice I bought the only Keyer available, the MFJ 407E. This keyer does work however, three significant differences separate it from the superior TRAC keyer I had borrowed from Lynn.

The battery drained even when the keyer was off and, when it was on, the battery drained very quickly making truly portable operation expensive.

The sound from the speaker on the MFJ was muddy and sounded distorted relative to the crystal clear CW sound of the TRAC. I was surprised that the quality of sound mattered so much to me, but, a distorted muddy sound is what I decided to get used to.

Since the battery dies in mere days, I had to use it plugged in, which, meant I had to always find a wall plug next to a table someplace. Instead of practicing on any table anywhere.

Then, last fall, on the RARA groups.io, I saw an estate sale, taking place down in Binghamton, and the list of items denoted, wonder of wonders, a TRAC TE-144. This was the "high end" TRAC keyer with adjustments for speed, weight, Tone and Volume.

I contacted the person facilitating and he gave me the address in Binghamton and the phone number of the Widow to contact. I did and she kindly gave me a time and day to meet her at her home.

On the appointed day I drove down to Binghamton and found the home where the estate sale was ostensibly occurring. I knocked on the door and the wife of the Ham opened the door, kindly invited me in (like the old days) and asked if I wanted to have tea. Of course, I said yes and then spent several hours while we chatted about her long time husband, his work, his love of radio and her helping him put up antennas. Honestly, quite interesting.

After several hours she did disappear into another room and returned with the TRAC Keyer. It looked brand new, never used. (Now, I know why). I had no way to test it so I paid her the \$50 that was on a sticker on it.

I drove back to Rochester, grabbed my keyer, plugged it in, pressed to the left and YES, a stream of dits emitted. Then, I moved the keyer to the right. Nothing. Nada. No sound at all.

Another dead TRAC keyer. Two for two. I left it on a shelf in my basement and after a fair number of months forgot about it.

Eventually, during an RDXA meeting, I mentioned to Lynn Bisha that I had bought yet another TRAC and it was not working. He said "bring it over, let's check it out". However, it was another few months before I saw him one day and he reminded me to bring it



over. Turns out he was home, and had some rare free time, and I was home at the same time so I took it over to him.



Lynn descended to his fully equipped basement shop (Fully Equipped does not quite speak to his basement electronics shop) opened it up and quickly ascertained its CMOS design and copied down all the CMOS numbers in the Keyer. Then, he carefully reseated each one. Still no dash. Lynn then brought out a bag of CMOS replacement transistors from a well labeled drawer.

BUT, when he again held the keyer he noticed something odd. When the key was plugged in part way a dash DID occur. But, when pushed in all the way, no dash. Lynn looked carefully at the inside of the TRAC for a long moment and said "I think we have a wiring problem here". The keyer slot had three wires emitting from it to other parts of the system. Lynn looked at it a bit more and said "I think I am going to swap this wire and that wire." Then, with a small soldering gun he unsoldered both, swapped them, and then tested.

BINGO. When the key was plugged in it generated both DASH and DOT correctly. Lynn mentioned that the keyer had probably never been used and perhaps came from the factory wired incorrectly. This would explain its like new condition.

Now? I am practicing sending wherever I want and with a keyer with a very low battery draw that sound crisp and clean.

Thanks to Lynn Bisha's kind offer to "take look" I have access to a high end keyer with a good design that is essentially new some 45 or so years after it was manufactured with, likely, bad wiring.

Thanks Lynn.

Mike Sanchez KM2B



Jack WA2CHV and Joe AD2DB provide communications support at Aid Station #2 on the Mammoth March, August 10 in Letchworth State Park

DXing with HamAlert

John Hall AC2RL

HamAlert (<https://hamalert.org>) is a free system that watches for spots on the DX Cluster, PSK Reporter, the Reverse Beacon Network and other sources. You specify what you're interested in and it notifies you when it sees a spot that matches your criteria.

You specify what spots you want to know about by defining "Triggers" on their website. See the screen capture to the right. Triggers consist of one or more Conditions and Actions. For DX stations I typically use their Callsign and spotter CQ Zone 2,4, and 5. See the example. It can also trigger on DXCC entity, and IOTA, SOTA, POTA, or WWFF references.

When a spot matches a trigger it can notify you through the HamAlert app on your phone, an SMS text to your phone, and several other ways.

Below is a screenshot of the HamAlert app on my Android phone displaying an alert. The phone made a "blip" noise when this arrived. The notification tone is configurable and can be muted.

HamAlert has helped me catch some DX that I otherwise would have missed. It's free and easy to use.

Conditions		Actions	Comment
Callsign	XT2AW	App	Burkina Faso Sep8-22
Spotter CQ zone	2, 4, 5		
Callsign	VK0DS	App	Davis Station Antarctica
Spotter CQ zone	2, 4, 5		
Prefix	T88	App	Koror Island, Palau IOTA OC-009
Spotter CQ zone	2, 4, 5		
Callsign	JG8NQJ	App	Marcus Is. Minami Tori Shima
Spotter CQ zone	2, 4, 5		
Prefix	DU	App	Philippines
Spotter CQ zone	2, 4, 5		
Callsign	R11ANE	App	Progress Station Antarctica
Spotter CQ zone	2, 4, 5		
Callsign	6O3T	App	Somalia Sept 9-30
Spotter CQ zone	2, 4, 5		
Callsign	9J2AO	App	Zambia Sept 14-23
Spotter CQ zone	2, 4, 5		

Latest spots

15:42Z **XT2AW** (28.074803 FT8)
PSKR DX de K1LO: 28074.8 XT2AW FT8 -5 dB 1542Z
 (WSJT-X v2.7.0-rc6 875602)

RDXA 2024-25 Calendar

September 2024

3 BOD
 14-16 **ARRL September VHF**
 17 Meeting - Show Us Your Shack
28-29 CQWW RTTY

October 2024

1 BOD
 15 Meeting - NYQP
19-20 NYQP
26-27 CQWW SSB

November 2024

2-4 ARRL SS CW
 5 BOD
 19 Meeting - TBD
16-18 ARRL SS SSB
23-24 CQWW CW
30 BULLETIN DEADLINE

December 2024

6-8 ARRL 160m CW
 5 BOD
14-15 ARRL 10m
 17 RDXA Holiday Dinner
21-22 Stew Perry 160m CW

January 2025

2 BOD
4-5 ARRL RTTY Roundup
 21 Meeting
18-20 ARRL January VHF
24-26 CQWW 160m CW



** Tentative

February 2025

6 BOD
8-9 CQWW WPX RTTY
15-16 ARRL DX CW
 18 Meeting
21-23 CQWW 160m SSB
29 BULLETIN DEADLINE

March 2025

1-2 ARRL DX SSB
 6 BOD
 18 Meeting
29-30 CQWW WPX SSB

April 2025

1 BOD
 13 RDXA/RVHFG Banquet
 15 Meeting

May 2025

6 BOD
 16-18 Dayton Hamvention
 20 Meeting
24-25 CQWW WPX CW
31 BULLETIN DEADLINE

June 2025

3 BOD
8-10 ARRL June VHF
 17 Meeting – FD
22-23 ARRL Field Day

July 2025

12-13 IARU
19-20 CQWW VHF

August 2025

19 IRVfest **
23 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. Consult the club website for up to date info.

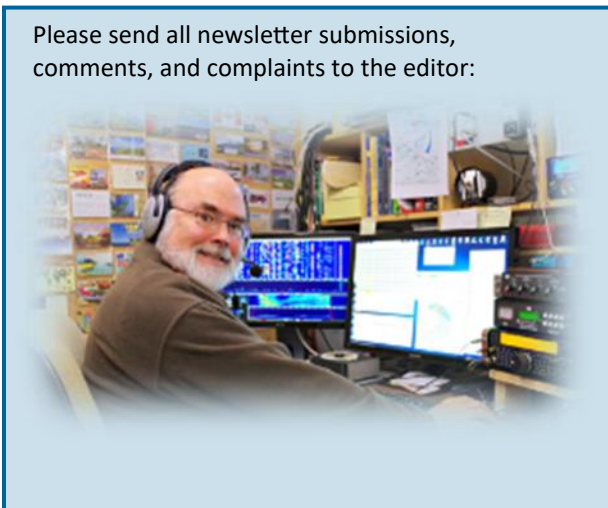
President Chris Shalvoy – K2CS
president@rdxa.com

Vice-President Mark Hazel — K2MTH
vicepresident@rdxa.com

Treasurer Mike Sanchez –KM2B
treasurer@rdxa.com

Secretary Bill Rogers – K2TER
secretary@rdxa.com

Please send all newsletter submissions, comments, and complaints to the editor:



Board of Directors

Chris Shalvoy – K2CS
Mark Hazel – K2MTH
Bill Rogers-K2TER
Mike Sanchez – KM2B
Lynn Bisha – W2BSN
Dave Hallidy - K2DH
Doug Stewart-N2BEG
John Hall—AC2RL
Rus Healy — K2UA

Appointed Positions

Webmaster	Chris Shalvoy – K2CS
Calendar Chairman	<vacant>
DX Chairman	Chris Shalvoy –K2CS
Contest Chairman	Charles Kurfuss- WB2HJV
Banquet Coordinator	Gayle Shalvoy - N2TWI
Media Coordinator	<vacant>
Election Committee Chair	Bill Rogers – K2TER
Membership Chairman	Mike Sanchez – KM2B
Field Day Chairs	Vic Gauvin - K1PY Doug Stewart – N2BEG Bill Rogers - K2TER
Newsletter Editor	John Hall - AC2RL
Board Support	Vic Gauvin – K1PY John Gilly – W3OAB

Membership Dues can be sent via:

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: \$10.00

