

The Eastern Iowa DXer



The Official Newsletter of the
Eastern Iowa DX Association

An affiliated club of the American Radio Relay League



April 1999

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Club Officers

President	Dave Andersen, KØRX
Vice President	Nelson Moyer, KUØA
Secretary/Treasurer	Tom White, KØVZR
Repeater Committee	Al Groff, KØVM
Membership Committee	Joe Finkstein, WØMJN
	Jim Spencer, WØSR
	Dale Repp, WØIZ

PacketCluster

WB8ZRL

147.51, 144.91, 223.40, CRNETROM

Repeater

WØNX/R

144.59/145.19

From the President

Dave Andersen, KØRX

Spring is almost here, and coincidentally, so is the April EIDX meeting. I hope to see you all on Friday, April 16. The meeting will be at the usual place, 219C Linn Hall. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for eyeball QSOs, and the meeting will start at 7:30 p.m. My Saturday program on 6Y2A got pre-empted by Dave Sumner, K1ZZ. He hired W9QA as his "Assistant to the Executive Vice President" about 2 weeks ago, and so Dave's in the process of moving to Connecticut right now.

EIDX member Terry Parker, WLØI, became a silent key in January 1999. The club expresses condolences to Terry's family.

Lots has happened since the January meeting. We have a new DXCC "entity", which I suspect most of you have worked by now; the record-setting ZL9CI DXpedition to Campbell Island has come and gone; and the late winter contest season has been going full force. Propagation has been just super. Lots of 10m QSOs. And some have even worked a couple of new ones on the other end of the spectrum, 160m. I had a great time doing ARRL CW as a 15m single band operation from KØXG. I made a few more than 1500 QSOs by 100 countries, which broke the 18-year-old 9th call area record by almost a factor of two.

I had an interesting email exchange with another old hamming friend as a result of my column in the Janu-

ary EIDX bulletin. It turns out that our ARRL Vice-Director KØBJ likes to scuba in the Caymans over the cold winter months. He took the newsletter down there, and ran into Mike, ZF2MO, who was interested in ham news from the midwest because he's an old W9 from way back. I've known Mike since we passed our extras together at the FCC office in Chicago in 1982. Anyway, we had a nice series of emails exchanged. He's been active in a couple of contests from ZF2, and plans many more activities during his multi-year yacht trip around the world. Thanks Bruce, for passing on the newsletter! Its a very small world, and DXing makes it smaller.

Hopefully the winter hasn't been too hard on your station hardware. I've got a broken rotor brake that I need to fix when it gets a bit warmer. Other than that, things seem to have come through in pretty good shape.

It's been a good season for QSLs - recently E3IAA, BQ9P, SUISK, and a couple of J28's and H4Ø's have been busy QSLing. I'm sure those other cards you are waiting for are coming just real soon now.

The program for April will feature Bob Sternowski, WBØLBI from Rockwell, who will tell us a bit about how we might expect radio to change in the future. When I confirmed the date with him he was in India giving this presentation. He's a world traveler who likes to talk about one of his favorite topics, radio, all over the world. I'm looking forward to an excellent program. See you on Friday, April 16th!

73 Dave KØRX

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 1999 EIDXA MEETING NEW BUSINESS

The winter meeting of the EIDXA was again held on the Kirkwood campus—again, with our thanks.

The meeting was begun at 7:30 pm by President Dave Anderson, KØRX. Dave asked us to think of moving a couple of meetings to Saturday to make two programs where presenters need some travel time. More later. Minutes of the last meeting were approved as printed.

There were 28 present and signed in. Introductions of all present were made. E-mail addresses were collected for future use with the newsletter or other club communications.

REPORTS:

Repeater—A brief discussion of the occasional times of intermittent function. Our repeater reps were not present. It's assumed this information will reach them.

Contests—There was a general discussion. Woodworker Terry, WØAWL, offered to provide an incentive trophy. No definite plans or decisions were made.

Packet Cluster—Tom, WB8ZRL, said the cluster computer is being upgraded. A problem caused a cold trip up the tower on New Years Eve to put the RF back on track.

DXAC—Jim, WØSR, said little is happening with no "new" ones on the way. Discussion centered on P5, BS7, and DXCC 2000.

OLD BUSINESS:

Shirt Order—Terry, WØAWL, says all current orders are now dead. An order blank will be enclosed in the next newsletter for your convenience.

QSL Cards—Glenn, KØJGH, outlined the procedure for cards. Any questions can go his way. E-mail KØJGH @ lisco.net

Newsletter—Nelson, KUØA, did an excellent job on the newsletter. He is trying to get more and more local input. Not much is happening with e-mail distribution of the newsletter, due to his hectic work schedule.

Membership—Two items:

WØOBK — Arlo has met all requirements for full membership and, upon deliberation, was welcomed by all.

WØHBK — Neale visited and began the membership process. He'll be ready for membership action next meeting.

KØYA presented cards for over 100 countries and was upgraded to full membership. Congratulations, Tom!

Votes:

WØOBK; moved by KØAL; seconded by KØDX; Passed.

KØYA; moved by WB8ZRL; seconded by WØEJ; Passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Banklowa Balance	\$515.29
Banklowa Interest	.06
Cash as of Noon 1/22/99	<u>70.00</u>
Total	\$585.35

New Material:

Paid KUØA—Newsletter	\$53.00
Dues Collected at Meeting	<u>40.00</u>
(8 @ \$5.00)	
Funds on Hand 1/24/99	\$572.35

An up-to-date membership list has been provided to KUØA. As is our practice, those with dues not paid will not receive a newsletter.

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January 1999 Minutes (continued from page 2)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WØSML has a new Alpha 87 for sale. Contact Doug.

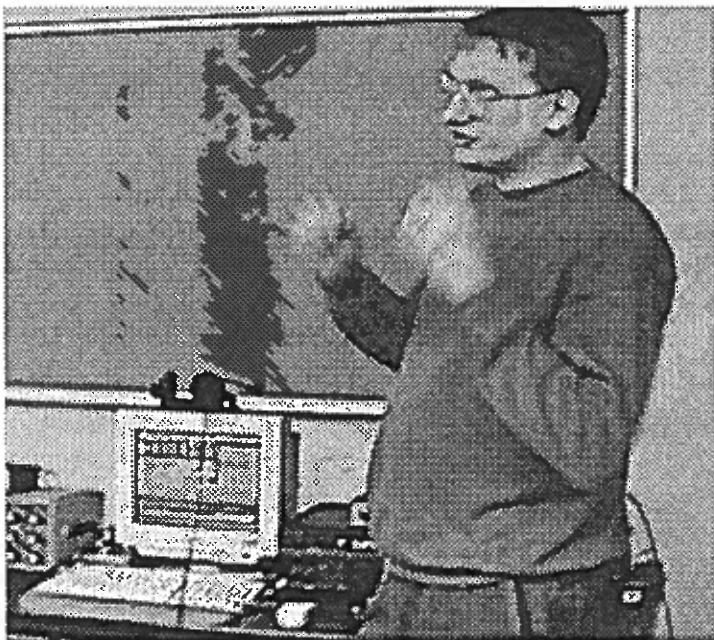
NYØV asked about and discussed Amelia Earhart as it applied to aircraft antennas and propagation.

Motion to adjourn at 8:20 pm by WØSR; seconded by NRØX.

PROGRAM AFTER THE BREAK:

KØRX demonstrated and described the function of computer control to allow instant band-hopping, making about a 20% increase in score and a single operator that can do most of the things the old multi's could do.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom White, KØVZR
Secretary/Treasurer



Dave, KØRX, explains the art of contesting with two transceivers under computer control during the January 1999 meeting of the EIDX.

Editorial

The DXCC Program— Is It Relevant?

Before the DXCC Program could pacify the peeve from adding P5 or wipe the BS7 off it's face, they've gone and stepped in another cow pie. The latest evidence that Newington is out of touch with the rank and file DX'er (and the rest of the world, for that matter) is the cancellation of 9U credits since 1994, with the lone exception of 4U9U. The listservers are raging with cries of foul, as DX'ers assess the damage to their totals. As for me, I loose my only CW contact and a 17 meter band country from working 9U5DX and 9U/F5FHI, plus the green stamps it took to confirm these "bogus" contacts.

From my vantage point, the DXCC Program suffers from a lack of consistency in applying its rules. A once predictable and orderly system has degenerated into rule by decree of the absolute despot of DX (fill in whichever call you wish to denigrate). Reappointment of Wayne Mills to a third term as Chair of the DXAC illustrates my point about blatant rules violations and situation ethics. I guess it really doesn't matter, since the DXAC was emasculated during the BS7/BV9P controversy.

I've come to the conclusion that DX'ing is more important than the DXCC Program. I know who I've worked, and I don't need the League to tell me whether it's a "good contact". The last 7O operation, which doesn't count for DXCC, produced a very handsome QSL card which I prize highly, even though I had already worked and confirmed 7O8AA in 1990 for a "good contact". DXCC credits be damned! The League is acting like the "list meisters" that "true blue" DX'ers abhor. I think it's time to amend the constitution and bylaws of the EIDX to make ARRL membership and DXCC participation optional. Then we can all get away from the politics of ego and get back to DX'ing for the thrill of the chase.

de KUØA

DX IS!—Record Keeping

Nelson Moyer, KUØA

Part of the gratification of working DX is applying for the many awards you can work toward, as you acquire the knowledge and skill to move past the first one or two hundred countries. Once you start working for awards, it doesn't take long to realize that you have to keep good records in order to make the award applications without redundancy or error. When you consider that there are 2,979 band countries and 360 band zones on the HF bands alone, you get an idea of the magnitude of the operating and record-keeping challenge ahead of you.

During my early DX'ing years, before computers, there was only one way to keep track of all the countries, modes, bands, and zones I'd worked and confirmed. Even casual DX'ers need to know about The ARRL DXCC Countries List, a booklet listing all the countries by prefix, continent, ITU zone, CQ zone, mode for available awards (mixed, phone, CW, RTTY, Satellite), and bands (160, 80, 40, 20, 17, 15, 12, 10 and blank spaces for 6 or 2 meters). Additionally, the booklet contains the rules of the DXCC program, the procedures for using the ARRL QSL bureau, the ITU call sign allocations, the list of deleted countries, and more recently, the list of field QSL card checkers. The layout is like a spreadsheet, with boxes for you to check off the countries, modes, bands you've worked. Since all awards require QSL cards, I devised a system to indicate when I worked a "box" and when I confirmed the "box". I use pencil for worked "boxes" and ink for confirmed "boxes". I use different colored highlighters to indicate bands for which DXCC certificates are available, bands which are good for 5BDXCC endorsements (160, 17 and 12 meters) and bands for which there are no specific awards (30, 20, and 15 meters). The result is an accurate and colorful quick reference to show me what countries, modes, bands or zones I still need.

Once computers were introduced into ham shacks, the record-keeping chore became immeasurably easier. Logging programs provided easy entry and searchable fields for quick tabulation of lists for award submissions. My first attempt at computer logging was with a Commodore 64 and the GeoCalc spreadsheet program. While it was slow, it allowed the user to customize a log, and print labels for QSL or mailing envelopes. Later,

I used GeoFile, a C-64 database program, for logging and keeping track of WPX and WAZ records. Finally, I graduated to a Macintosh, and started keeping the WPX and WAZ records in Excel. Because there is precious little ham software for the Macintosh, I gave up computer logging for a while, always hopeful that a critical mass of Macs in ham shacks would prompt some good commercial programs like CT for the PC. It never happened. After a long and impatient wait, I decided to get a relational database and design my own logging and record keeping system. The program I use is called FileForce, and it's a limited-feature version of 4-D, the premiere relational database for the Macintosh. Most of the features I needed were available in FileForce and the price was right, so I started a 6 month project of learning the software as I designed and implemented my ham radio database.

The database contains separate files for the log, DXCC countries list, CQ zones, WPX prefixes, QSL managers, and unique stations worked. It provides relational searches during entry so that common fields can be filled from the other files. When I enter a call sign, it pulls up the name of the operator and his QSL manager, if I've worked him before, and prompts me to enter it into the unique stations file if it's a first contact. I am presented with the log information of all contacts with that station in a scrollable list, so I can see what modes and bands I've worked him on and whether or not he has responded to QSL requests. That's a nice feature for those stations who are lax about their QSL'ing habits, as I can remind them of their negligence and shame them into sending a card. All of the databases are searchable using Boolean operators, and the program offers customized printing formats for logs, labels, QSLs, lists, or whatever you want. While it's not CT, it has features not available in CT and it's a workable solution for the software challenged Mac user.

While I've been using computers in one guise or another for nearly 15 years, I still keep records in my paper log book and DXCC Country List. The computer log is entered into the database every few days, depending upon how active I've been, and I check off the paper "boxes" as well as the electronic "boxes" whenever a QSL card arrives. The duplication of effort means I always have a paper copy of everything, while I have the search and formatting convenience of the computer. I've gone back and retrospectively entered some of my

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DX Isl (continued from page 4)

old logs on long winter nights while I listen for rare DX on 40 or 80 meters. So far, eight of my 14 logbooks are in the computer, and all new contacts are entered within a day or two of the QSO.

As I've become interested in contesting (the TH1 I had something to do with that!), I managed to acquire Marathon, a contest logging and duping program for the Mac. It's very good and extremely easy to use. Because it has a print log option, I've stopped entering my contest logs in the paper log book, except for all time new countries, bands, modes, or zones what I want to QSL direct. The combination of the rising sunspot cycle, the TH1 I and Marathon were the inducement to enter the 1998 ARRL DX Phone Contest as a single band entry. Since nobody else in Iowa submitted a 10 meter single band entry, I won the Iowa Section! I guess a win by default is still a win. Besides, I had a great time in the contest and Marathon is a real pleasure to use.

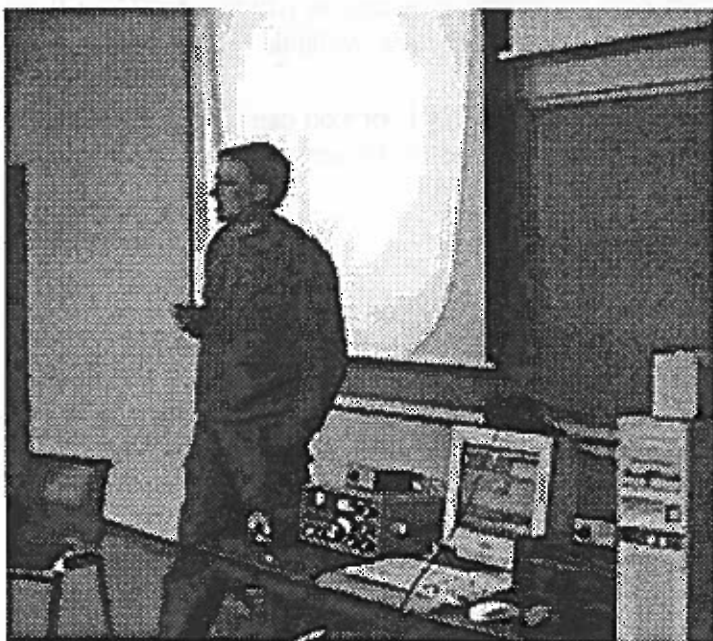
There are lots of other awards and most of them have either a paper or electronic record to help you keep track of your contacts. Whether you're hunting U.S. States or Counties, Russian Oblasts, or VHF grid squares, or one of the innumerable DX awards, good record keeping will get you there with a minimum of fuss and bother. Pick an award and go for it.

DX'ing Aides

Do you ever wonder what time to set your alarm clock for so you can get up to work that T31 on 80 meter CW? I got tired of looking up the time conversions every time I wanted to work some Pacific Island operation, so I made a handy little reference card I'll share with you. Just photocopy the table below and keep it handy. Then all you have to do is a sh/sun on the cluster and check the chart for the local time.

DX Time Chart

UTC	CDT	CST
0000	0700 pm	0600 pm
0100	0800 pm	0700 pm
0200	0900 pm	0800 pm
0300	1000 pm	0900 pm
0400	1100 pm	1000 pm
0500	Midnight	1100 pm
0600	0100 am	Midnight
0700	0200 am	0100 am
0800	0300 am	0200 am
0900	0400 am	0300 am
1000	0500 am	0400 am
1100	0600 am	0500 am
1200	0700 am	0600 am
1300	0800 am	0700 am
1400	0900 am	0800 am
1500	1000 am	0900 am
1600	1100 am	1000 am
1700	Noon	1100 am
1800	0100 pm	Noon
1900	0200 pm	0100 pm
2000	0300 pm	0200 pm
2100	0400 pm	0300 pm
2200	0500 pm	0400 pm
2300	0600 pm	0500 pm
2400	0700 pm	0600 pm



Dave, KØRX, with the impressive hardware demonstrated at the January 1999 EIDX meeting.

E.L.D.X.A. Shirt order form

- 1. **T-shirt** Size _____ Color _____ # _____ Cost \$8.00 Total _____
- 2. **Polo Shirt** (with pocket) Size _____ Color _____ # _____ Cost \$13.50 Total _____
- 3. **Windbreaker-unlined** Size _____ Color _____ # _____ Cost \$14.00 Total _____
- 4. **Windbreaker-lined** Size _____ Color _____ # _____ Cost \$18.00 Total _____
- 5. **Sweat shirt** Size _____ Color _____ # _____ Cost \$13.50 Total _____

Please add \$ 2.00 for XXL & \$ 3.00 FOR XXL

GRAND TOTAL _____

NAME _____

address _____

_____ zip _____

I have talked with the screen printers, and they have agreed to print the items at the above prices , which does include sales tax. I was also able to talk them into doing the order without the minimum order of 24. We only need 12 to complete the order. The colors available for the jackets are: gold-kelly green-orange-purple-red-white-silver- and royal blue. I assume the colors are the same for the other items as well. Remember, the printing on the polo shirts are only done in a single color, white. The printing on the other items are done in two colors, red and black. So, when you select the color of your item remember what colors will be printed on them. Sizes on all items are small through extra large. If you require larger sizes they are available for an extra charge. (see above)

You can mail your order form to me at 703 Lincoln St. Ainsworth, Iowa 52201, or you can give it to me at the next meeting. Send **NO** money! I trust you. I will make arrangements to deliver your items to you by mail, or in person, at the next meeting.

DX News via PacketCluster

Tom Vavra, WB8ZRL

DX bulletins have long been used by DXers. We used to look for them in the mailbox on Fridays or Saturdays. The ARRL has long broadcast a bulletin on cw, ssb and rtty. With the advent of the internet, a number of bulletins have become available. Six of these bulletins are posted weekly to the PacketCluster.

The ARRL DX bulletin used to be available only via radio modes. Copying it off the air and creating clean text was not always easy, but most of them were successfully copied. Now the ARRL makes them available on their WWW web site, and also posts them to the various DX reflectors. Copies are copied to the cluster each Thursday. Much of the information in this bulletin comes from other bulletins that have been posted for several days, so is not very fresh.

The ARRL propagation bulletin is posted each Fri-

day. It is a concise source for the previous week's numbers.

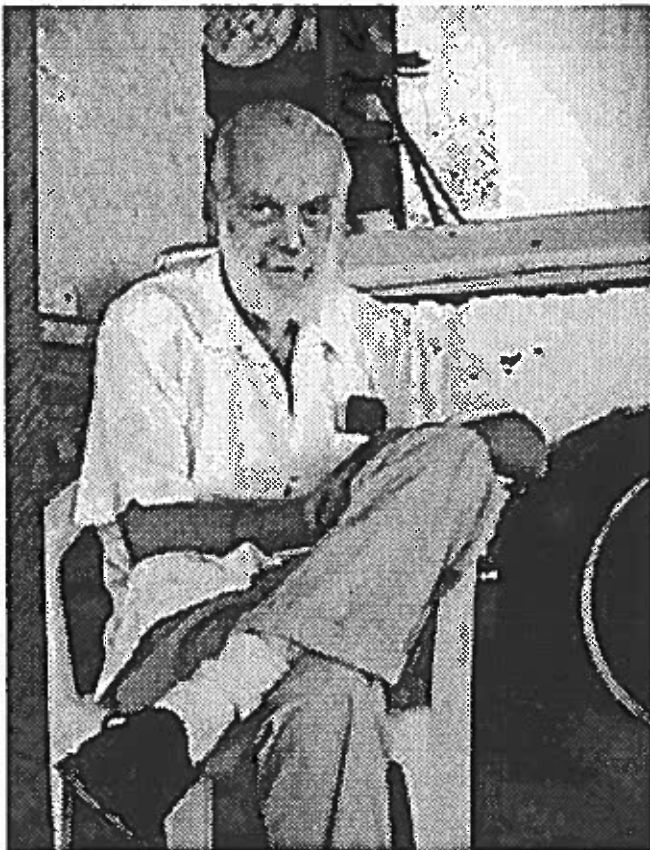
The 425 group from Italy publishes a bulletin each week, and it is usually posted over the weekend. It comes in two parts: a general DX information part; and either a calendar part or a QSL part (these two parts alternate each week.)

A German group publishes the DXNewsLetter each week. This an excellent source that also contains many spots, albeit mostly from the european perspective. This bulletin does not arrive on a strict schedule, mainly because it is written in German, and the translation to English takes time.

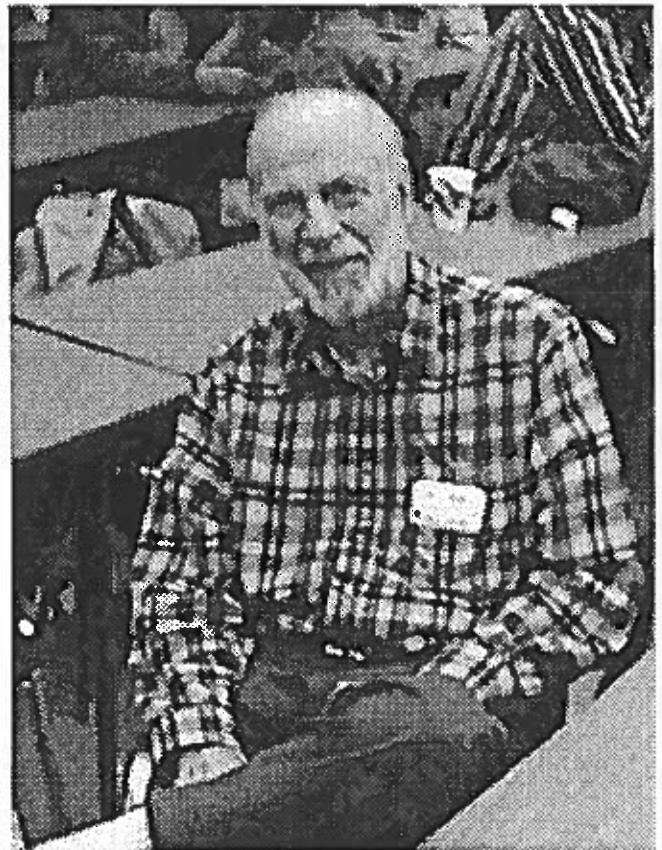
A bulletin dedicated to RTTY DX is posted each Friday. It also has many spots, but this time from the W perspective.

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Will the Real WØIZ Please Stand Up!



Bob Denniston, WØDX, of St. Thomas, U. S. Virgin Islands.



Dale Repp, WØIZ, of Cedar Rapids, IA.

DX News Via PacketCluster (continued from page 7)

My favorite bulletin is the Ohio Penn bulletin by KB8NW. This one is posted each Sunday afternoon, and is very current. Much of the following Thursday ARRL bulletin will come from here.

The ARRL and RTTY bulletins are about 4K bytes long. The other bulletins are normally 10-15K bytes long. The capture to disk of these bulletins as you read them will provide quick access to them later. NRØX appends them to a file containing previous bulletins and then uses his computer to keyword search for callsigns so he can rapidly find info about particular DXpeditions.

Bulletins are kept in the BULLETIN area for two weeks, and then moved to the ARCHIVE area. SH/BUL (is there a hidden message here?!) to see what is in the BULLETIN area and TYPE <bulletin-name> to retrieve it. SH/ARCH will display the contents of the ARCHIVE area, but realize that there will be over 100 entries there. SH/ARCH can use DOS style file names to limit that display (eg. SH/ARCH OPDX* to just list the OhioPenn bulletins.) TYPE/ARCH <bulletin-name> to retrieve a bulletin from the ARCHIVE area.

MEETING NOTICE

The next meeting of the Eastern Iowa DX Association will be Friday, April 16, 1999 at 7:30 p.m. in room 219C Linn Hall on the Kirkwood Community College campus. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for eyeball QSOs. Monitor 145.19 for directions if needed. The program for April will feature Bob Sternowski, WBØLBI from Rockwell, who will tell us a bit about how we might expect radio to change in the future. See you there.



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