

The Eastern Iowa DXer



The Official Newsletter of the
Eastern Iowa DX Association

An affiliated club of the American Radio Relay League



August 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
	Joe Finkstein, WØMJN
Membership Committee	Jim Spencer, WØSR

PacketCluster WB8ZRL

147.51, 144.91, 223.40, CRNETROM

Repeater WØNX/R

144.59/145.19

From the President

Dave Andersen, KØRX

Welcome to the summer issue of the EIDXA newsletter. I hope it finds you well. Unfortunately, since the last meeting, we have lost a couple of members. Dale, WØIZ and John, WØUZ are both silent keys. We will miss them!

Since our last meeting, the Dayton Hamfest has come and gone. I didn't buy too much of anything, but some other club members took the opportunity to augment their stations. Hope that the new equipment sets everybody up for the summer and fall DXing seasons. I had the opportunity to attend the DX banquet with WB8ZRL and WØSR, among others. The meals at these banquets always amaze me—the food's not too bad. Also got to hear a nice program on the ZL9CI operation. That was quite an endeavor. They made almost 96,000 QSOs. It is hard to believe that there are enough DXers out there to make that many QSOs. I guess I worked them 14 times though, so maybe it's possible.

The big DXpedition news for the coming months is the 3CØR Annobon operation scheduled for September. Although this is a notoriously tricky place to get operating and access permission from, there is a group scheduled to activate this island that claims to have all permits and other required paperwork in hand. They say that their license is valid until December 31, 1999, and that following a successful first operation the plans are to go back again several times until the end of the year.

This will be an all-time new one for me, and so I'm hoping that the operation will come off as planned.

One other DXing friend from far away turned up recently— Alex, RV1AC, whom I had worked several times in contests over the years, was one of the ops in the just-completed R1MVA operation. He lives in St. Petersburg which is just a short hop from Finland, and Malyj Vyssotskij Island. I got to meet him in person for the first time last summer during a work visit to that area. A very friendly person, and a fine operator too.

Our August meeting will be on August 14th. We will have a cookout at NRØX's place, just like last year. Go north from Martelle on Highway 1, and look for the towers on the east side of the road. I certainly hope to see all of you there!

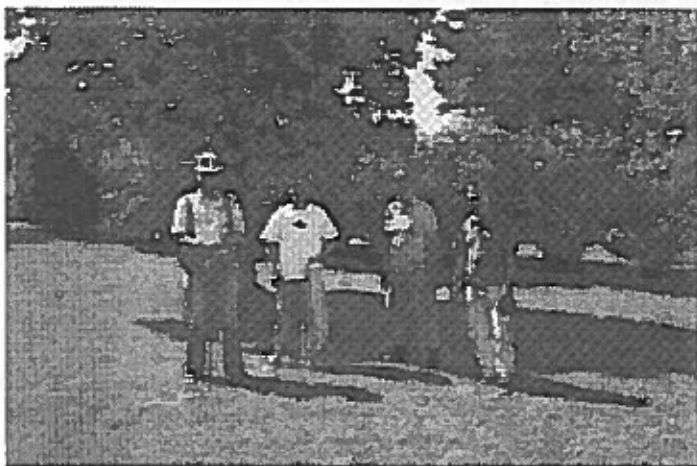
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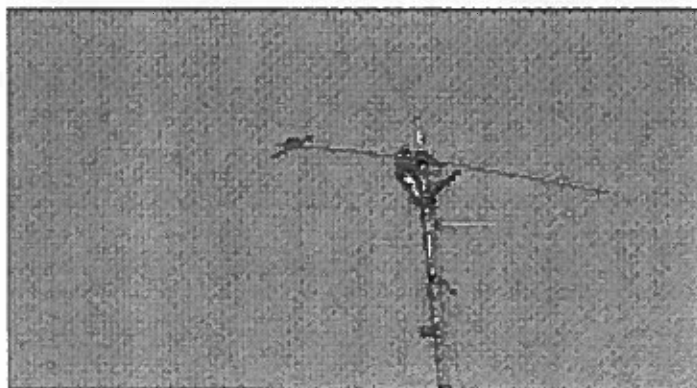
Skyhawk Soars

After talking about a new antenna for several months, I finally purchased a new Bencher Skyhawk. The antenna is an interlaced three band yagi for 10, 15, and 20 meters. The largest problem I faced was how to get a 24 foot boom with elements that were over 37 feet long on top of my 100 foot tower. Making the job a little harder than usual, was the four sets of guy cables. I put myself in the capable hands of Tom, WB8ZRL, and Heinz, NRØX. With their planning of how to get the antenna on the tower, and permission from my neighbor's neighbor, we were able to set up a tram line and pulley arrangement and secure the antenna on the tower with absolutely no problems.

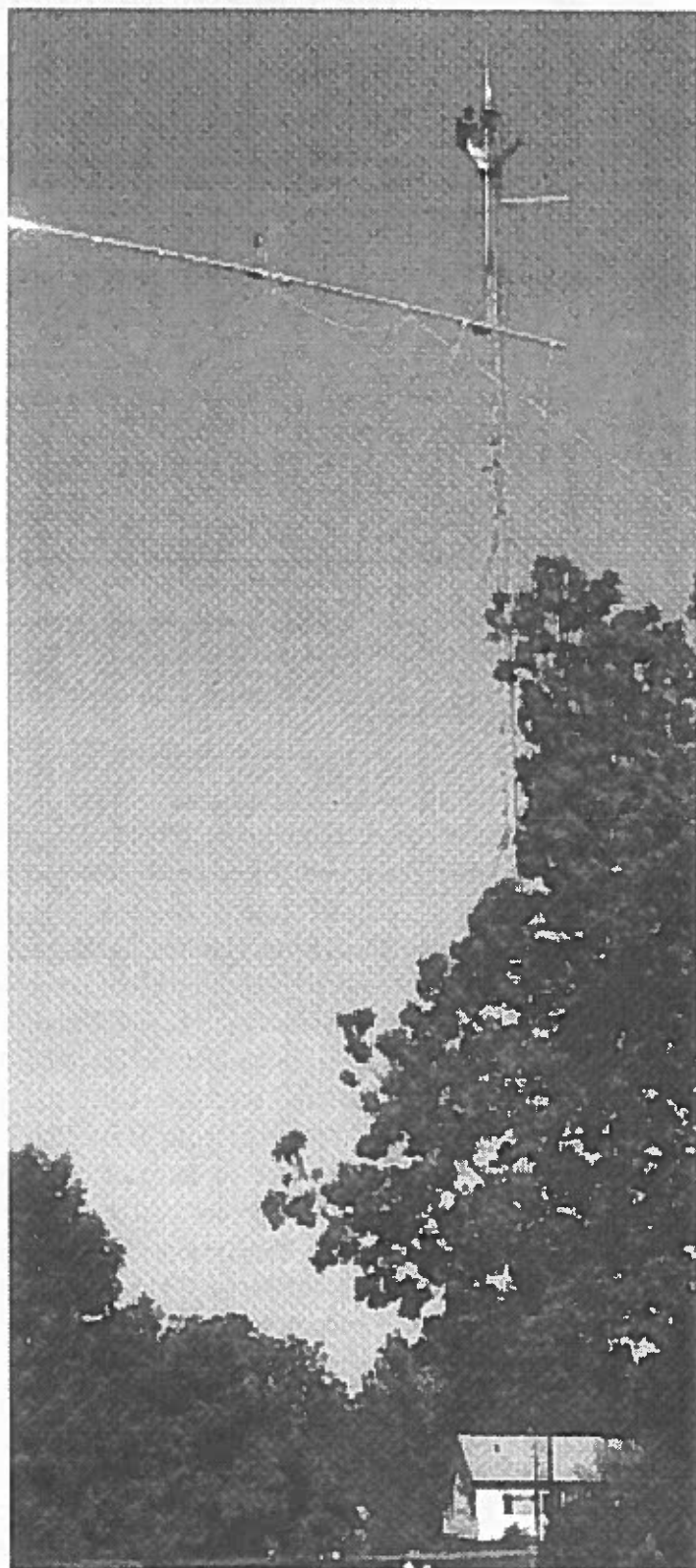
I also need to thank Tom, KEØMO, for the pictures and Tony, KCØCRA, for rope pulling above and beyond the call of duty. As for the performance of the antenna, well, I haven't worked P5 yet, but it seems to get the job done. 73 es gud DX de WØAWL



Tom, WB8ZRL, Tony, KCØCRA, Heinz, NRØX, and Terry, WØAWL.



Terry, WØAWL, admires the take-off angle to P5 as he prepares to bolt the Skyhawk to the mast 100 feet up the tower



Here's the full length of the tower as Terry, WØAWL, watches the Skyhawk approach the top of the tram line. The tag line to the right of the picture was used to keep the elements clear of the guy wires and the trees. Thoughtful planning and a lot of crew experience made this operation safe and rewarding. Terry should be a presence to be reckoned with on the bands for years to come.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Nelson:

Before smear (sic) the DXCC Desk in particular and the ARRL in general in an editorial, I suggest you owe it to your readers to get your facts straight. The 9U contacts you mention were made with stations presenting forged documentation. Bill Kennamer was only enforcing the rules listed under DXCC Section 1, Basic Rule 7, and also Rule 12 (a) when he removed those operations.

I too lost my 9U confirmation credit. But instead of whining about it, I plan on working the next legitimate operation from there. Same for 7O.

As far as Wayne Mills being appointed for a third term as DXAC Chairman, there was nothing irregular there either. The full ARRL Board of Directors voted to waive the two year term limit in Wayne's case because he has done an outstanding job as the DXAC Chairman. In addition, since he was a member of the DXCC 2000 Committee, most directors wanted him to help carry through the implementation of the DXCC 2000 program.

As far as your comments about revising the EIDXA constitution and bylaws, that of course is up to EIDXA members. I suggest you read the last paragraph of MY editorial in February's Midwest Division Newsletter:

"Throughout the history of the hobby, the ARRL has been the one organization to provide constancy. While governed by a board selected democratically by the membership, we do make decisions that are not always popular with some of the members. Even some decisions that are not popular with the majority of the membership such as incentive licensing in the '60s. Threats to your director or section manager that because the League did such and such, or your director did this or that, you are not renewing your League membership is about as immature as it gets. To you who hold that viewpoint I would like to say, 'Grow up!'"

73,

Lew Gordon, K4VX

Editor's Response:

Hi Lew,

Editorials are opinion pieces, and I and many other DXers aren't too pleased with those in power at the moment. I must have hit a nerve, which is what editorials are all about. How are you going to represent us if

you don't know what we think, or does that matter to you? A concise statement of opinion doesn't constitute whining. There have been too many irregularities in the DXCC program lately. The present Directors seem to be out of touch with the grass roots. If the shoe fits, wear it. If there's manure on it, clean it off.

73,

Nelson Moyer, KUØA

Editorial Note:

One of the measures of a successful editorial is the reader response it generates. Judging from the email and phone barrage, April was a good month. Predictably, the ARRL Midwest Division Director on the mailing list for the EIDXA newsletter has taken umbrage at the April 1999 editorial regarding my view of the machinations of the DXCC program and its ARRL sponsor. Lew must have sent his email to me milliseconds after reading the April editorial. I guess he wants to be identified with the "absolute despots of DX", since he apparently leaves no room for opinions contrary to his own. Any alternative viewpoint to the DXCC party line is arrogantly characterized as "whining". We're expected to honor and revere everything our "representatives" do, or we're deemed childish and immature. They obviously must know more than we do, and they must be trusted to protect us from unscrupulous operators in a perverse world. Where were they when Don Miller and Romeo were duping the multitudes, and why do those contacts still count? For the record, Lew, consult Webster's definition of dissent. It's not the same thing as whining. Besides, I didn't lose mixed and phone credit for 9U, just CW and a 17 meter band country. I have the 7O confirmed on phone as well, I just used it as an example of the complications of internal politics in third-world countries where current administrations won't honor documents issued by the previous administration, nobody knows who's in charge, and bribes get things done.

If DX'ers are the pinnacle of hamdom, why aren't they permitted to think for themselves? Since our leaders refuse to accept just criticism, DX'ers are left with three choices, one passive and the other two active: to ignore the politics and quietly play the game; to seek a change in the leadership through the ballot; or to cancel membership. Since DX'ers are an assertive bunch, I suspect many will opt for one of the latter two choices. The ones who opt for the former, deserve what they get (or don't get, in the case of 9U!).

de KUØA

A Lesson Learned

Tom Vavra, WB8ZRL

I don't remember who the Elmer was, but his lesson must have taken. Recently I was the ground crew on a project to take down a tower. The lesson from my elmer was to check out the surrounding grounds, and decide where the "run away from the tower" lanes were. The idea is to know how to get out of the way before you need to do it. That extra thought time might take too long if you actually need it. Well, as the first section came off the tower, the gin pole brackets came loose from the tower. I was about 15 feet from the tower. The tower section landed between where I stood and the tower. But the gin pole impaled itself in the ground very close to where I had been. By that time I was 25 feet further down the hill. I don't remember much about what happened. I had moved without thinking. I remember the rope going slack, and I remember the guy on the tower shouting something. The next thing I remember was retrieving my hardhat after rolling down the hill. Had I paused to think about where to run, I may have been hit by the gin pole. A possible serious accident was avoided because I had listened to my Elmer's words, and taken them to heart.

Your Editor Needs You!

A good DX newsletter doesn't happen all by itself. The quality and variety of material in a good newsletter depends upon the quality and variety of the contributions from the membership. If you have ideas and information to share, by all means, write it down, send it to me, and I'll work it into a forthcoming newsletter. Do you have pictures of your shack, your antenna farm? your significant other (just kidding!)? Send them in and let the rest of the club see why you're beating them in the pile-ups. Anything DX related is fair game. Give me some material to work with, and I won't have room for controversial editorials. You may send articles via the Packet Cluster, via email or mail me a floppy disk. You may send photographic prints (as WØAWL did), or digital files, attached to email. de KUØA

In Memoriam

Dale Repp, WØIZ
1918-1999

Dale Repp, WØIZ, became a silent key on June 3rd. He was nearing the end of a year long battle with cancer when he succumbed to a stroke. He had celebrated his 81st birthday only two days earlier.

Dale was first licensed in Toledo, OH, when he was a teenager. For years he only operated CW on homebrew transmitters. He eventually discovered SSB and for a while was on top of the honor roll for mixed, CW and SSB. Only P5 kept him from retaining that top position. At his death, he had confirmations for 353 mixed, 340 SSB, and 341 CW. He was also active on RTTY and had over 310 confirmed there. Dale always accepted a challenge, and pursued single band DXCC. He was credited with 158 on 80, 258 on 40, and 280 on 10 meters in the last yearbook. Dale was also active on 2 meter CW and had very impressive totals of states and grid squares.

Dale was a longtime member of the EIDX. He attended the last meeting even though it tired him out severely. The "Italy Zulu" and "didit dahdahdidit" will no longer be heard in the pileups, and will be missed by many. RIP Dale.

DX Is!

Being Asked for Special Favors

Nelson Moyer, KUØA

Any DX'er who sends direct QSL requests has been asked to provide some kind of assistance to DX stations. Sometimes this is relatively simple, like when the DX sends cards for 2 or 3 other U.S. stations with your card (while pocketing the green stamps or selling the IRCs on the secondary market). I usually bite my tongue and forward the cards to their owners at my expense, hoping others will do the same for me.

There are times, though, when the requests go beyond the exchange of cards. I've gotten requests for ham magazines, radio manuals, even ARRL books. This seems to me to be beyond the scope of charity, although I've occasionally photocopied pages of particular interest for some desperate DX operator.

A fairly common request which costs little except for your time, is the request of foreign hams for pen pals. It's a good way for them to learn English, and they usually don't care if their pen pal is a ham or not. The most memorable note I've gotten in this regard came with a QSL from Madagascar. The note was from Fifie, a young lady who is looking for young male pen pals, and probably a ticket to the U.S. Since I'm neither young nor looking for amorous adventure, I will be happy to provide Fifie's address to anyone who wants to explore the romance of Madagascar.

Occasionally, the novelty of the request makes me appreciate how fortunate we are here in the U.S. Recently, a Norwegian ham put a note in with his QSL card telling me he had taken up bowling, and wanted me to send him a video or training manual on the art of bowling! I don't bowl, so I'm not much help. If any of you readers want to make this ham happy, contact me and I'll give you his call. Maybe you could get a sked on 160 meters in exchange for a bowling how-to.

Sometimes the requests take on a more serious dimension. I recently received a letter from a young postal clerk in Indonesia, begging for any money I could spare to support his family. He isn't a ham, he got my name and address from the return address on the envelope of a QSL I sent to try to confirm YB on CW. The economy in Indonesia is in ruins and he can no longer live on his salary as a postal clerk. He told me that his monthly

salary had been devaluated so much that it was only worth \$20 dollars. In desperation, he asked if I would hire him as a servant and bring him to the U.S. Obviously he doesn't understand our culture, and he is making the assumption that anybody rich enough to have a radio and send for QSL cards directly, is wealthy and powerful. The reality is, I'm neither, and while I feel sorry for this young man, and believe that he is sincere, I am in no position to support his family either here or there. I've often wondered how many letters he sent out and how many replies he got. If this story moves you help this man, I'll provide his address and more information about his unfortunate situation. We in the U.S. lose the perspective that most of the world's population live on less than we spend to feed our pets.

Cycle 23—Are We There Yet?

If you've listened to 10 or 12 meters lately, you wouldn't believe we're nearing the peak of cycle 23, yet the experts tell us we're only one to two years away. Even allowing for the mid-summer absorbance on these bands, I wonder if this is all we're going to get out of this cycle. I had great hopes of working my last two zones, numbers 22 and 26, on 10 meters during cycle 23, however, now I'm wondering if it will be possible. I plotted the predicted values from CQ Magazine, together with the actual smoothed sunspot numbers for the first two and one half years of cycle 23, and it's clear the cycle isn't measuring up to expectations (Figure 1). The last three smoothed sunspot numbers increased by only one unit each month. If this trend continues, cycle 23 will be even lower than cycle 20, which peaked at a smoothed sunspot number of 111 (Figure 2). In fact, if the present trend continues, cycle 23 won't even break 100! This would be the lowest sunspot cycle since 1830, when cycle 7 peaked at a smoothed sunspot number of 71. The only two cycles with lower numbers were cycles 5 and 6, both with smoothed sunspot numbers of 49. At least cycle 23 won't be the worst cycle ever, but it's definitely a disappointment, compared to cycle 22 (Figure 3). The solar flux is getting high enough to open the path to Southeast Asia during the CQ WW contests this fall, and maybe even open the polar great circle path to zone 22. There won't be many opportunities to work those paths if cycle 23 continues to sag, so I plan to be watching and listening.

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MINUTES

Spring Meeting of the EIDXA

Kirkwood Community College, Rm. 219C, Linn Hall
April 16, 1999, 7:30 p.m.

The spring (pre-Dayton) meeting of the EIDXA was opened by President Dave Andersen, KØRX. Immediate need was to acknowledge the passing of Terry, WKØL. A moment of silence was held in his memory.

Introduction of those present was made. The minutes of the winter meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter, motioned WØEJ, seconded by WB8ZRL, all voted aye.

Reports of Standing Committees:

Repeater—KØVM said, "It's doing OK, let me know if problems exist". WØEJ spoke of a controller card, no action taken. NRØX spoke of going to tone access, discussion followed. Around half of those present did not have compatible radios. Discussion ended.

Contests—KØRX operated at KØXG. A multi-single was held at WØWP.

Club Call Sign—WØSR spoke of the process that led the club to WØNX. A rethinking has taken place since the passing of NØDX. The memory of NØDX and the appropriateness of the call sign for a DX club were cited as reasons to explore a change. Contact was made with his widow and she has agreed to let the change go forward. With such a designation, the call will not have to go into the call sign pool. KØDX and KØRX will work on this. The potential change activity was motioned by WØSR and seconded by WØAWL. The motion was passed.

Packet Cluster—Tom, WB8ZRL, reported a new computer is on line, a 486-66. He is experimenting with the operating system. The most recent is Linux, but he keeps looking.

DXAC—WØSR spoke mostly of E4-Palestine. A look at the map shows that the E4 area is split with 4X splitting it. Could Palestine be two countries based on this separation?

QSL Cards—KØJGH spoke about QSLs. If you need some, see Glenn.

Shirts, Jackets, etc.—WØAWL spoke about jackets, shirts, etc. Order blanks are in the winter newsletter.

Membership—WØHBK and KCØCRA are membership eligible. KCØCRA was voted in. Congrats, Tony.

New Business:

KØRX spoke about computerized checking of logs. Graded logs are at N6TR@contesting.com.

KUØA reported that the FCC requires registration of towers located in the vicinity of airports. The registration form can be completed on the FCC web page. New construction now requires both FCC and FAA notification and approval.

Summer Meeting (Picnic) was proposed by WØAWL, who volunteered to cook, Heinz, NRØX, okayed his antenna farm as the site. Time and dates are 4 p.m. 8/14/99 (main date) or 8/21/99 (rain date).

KZØC moved to adjourn and the meeting did, in fact, adjourn.

After a break, Bob Sternowski, WBØLBI, from Rockwell gave the program on the future of radio.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tom White, KØVZR

EIDXA TREASURER'S REPORT

May 10, 1999

Newsletter expenses paid to KUØA:

Printing	\$31.40
Postage	\$19.47
Total	\$50.87

Deposit 4/17/99	\$50.00
BankIowa Savings Account	\$550.43
Cash	\$36.10
Ballance	\$636.53

Mount Athos

Photos courtesy of SV1NA

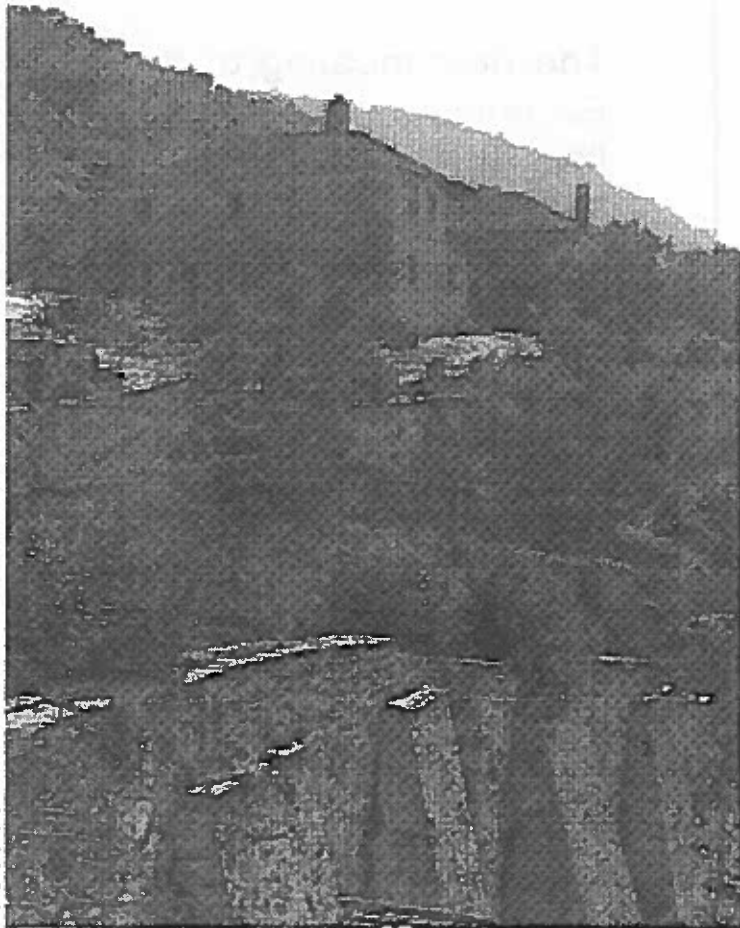


Figure 1. Predicted vs. Actual Sunspot Numbers

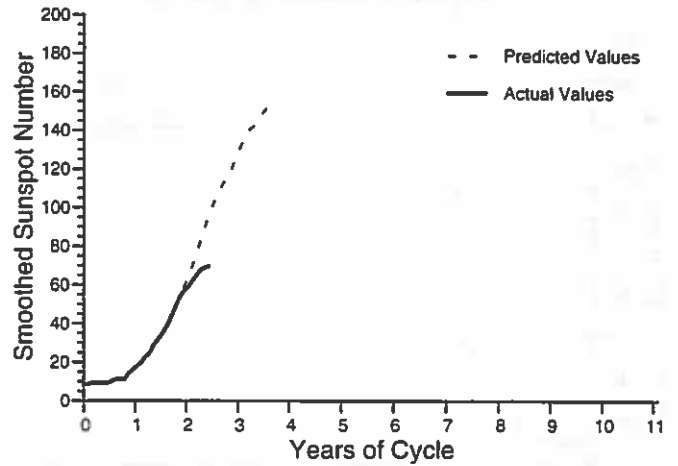
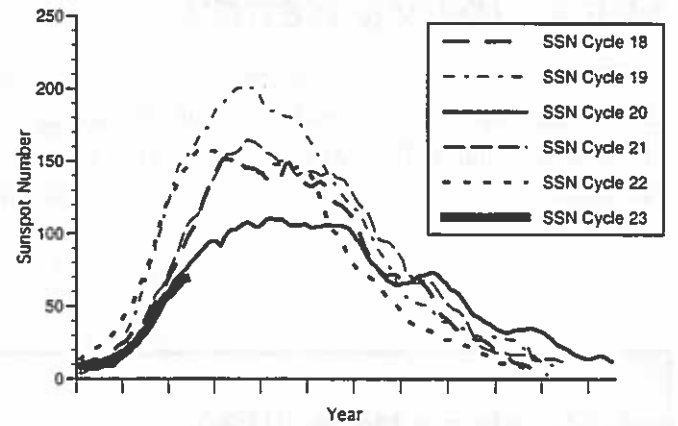
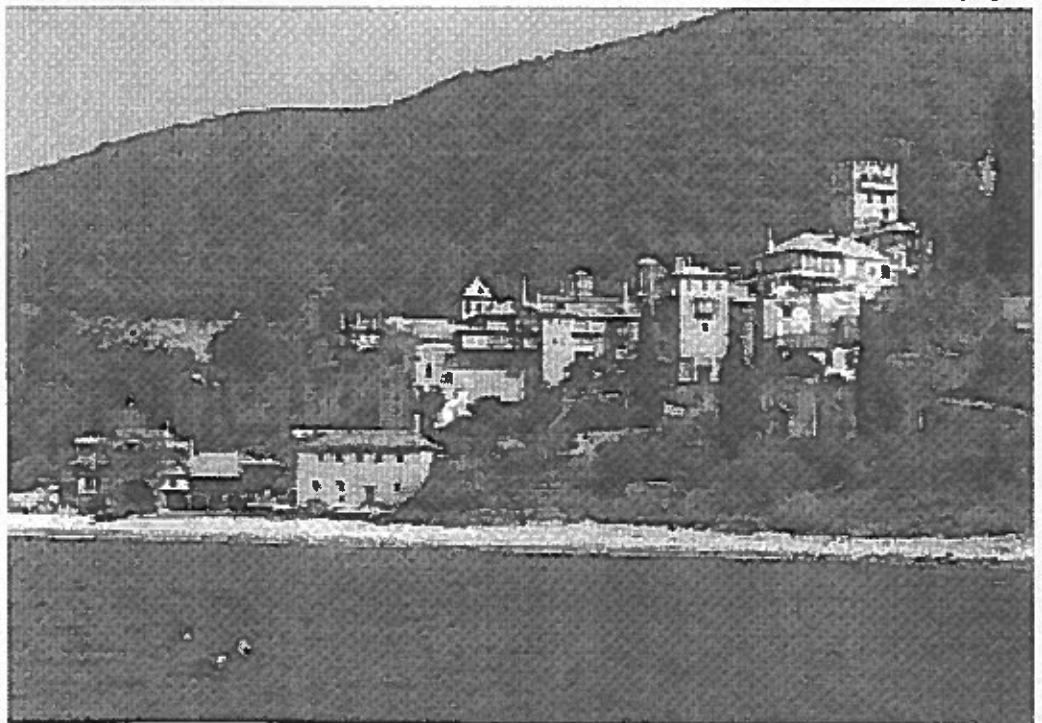


Figure 2. Cycles 18 through 23



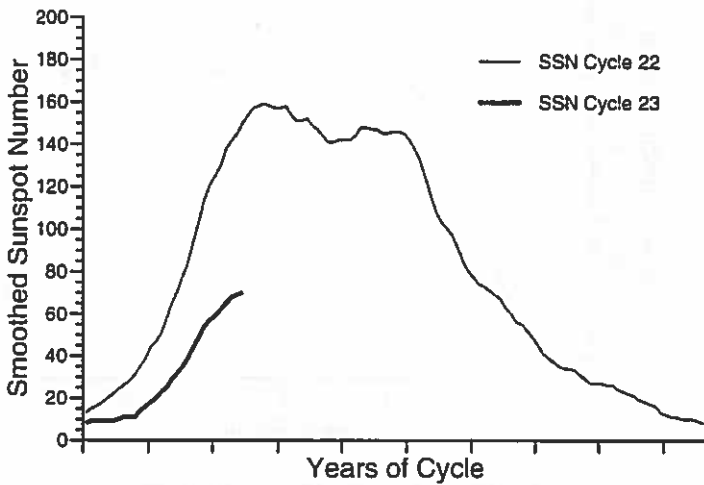
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The theocracy of Mt. Athos placed number 17 on the most wanted list in the 1998 ARRL DX Yearbook. Monk Apollo, SV2ASP/A, is the only active amateur on the HF bands, and he generally operates only SSB and RTTY. CW operations are rare, however, Dominick, DL5EBE, visited Mt. Athos in September 1998 with the express purpose of making CW available to the multitudes. This operation was very successful, however, the demand will probably remain high, and we can hope that other CW operations will follow before cycle 23 starts to go down.



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Figure 3. Cycles 22 and 23



Shirt Orders Ready

The order from the screen printers is ready. I will have them available at the club picnic. I also have 12 EIDXA hats that will be available on a first come first pay basis.

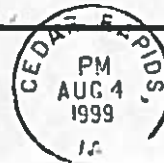
de WØAWL

MEETING NOTICE

The next meeting of the Eastern Iowa DX Association will be Friday, August 14, 1999 at the antenna farm of Heinz, NRØX. Heinz lives on Hwy. 1 just north of Martelle, IA. Look for the towers.



Nelson Moyer, KUØA
 28 Ealing Drive
 Iowa City, IA 52246



Jim Spencer
 3712 Tanager Dr. NE
 Cedar Rapids IA 52402