

The Eastern Iowa DXer

The Official Newsletter of the
Eastern Iowa DX Association



An affiliated club of the American Radio Relay League

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Club Officers

President:	Rick Heinrich, N0YY	PacketCluster	
Vice President:	Jeff Davis, N0DY	147.51, 144.91, WB8ZRL	
Secretary Treasurer:	George Carsner, W0PPF		
Repeater Committee:	Al Groff K0VM Joe Finkstein W0MJN		223.40, CRNETROM
Membership Committee:	Jim Spencer W0SR Tom Vavra WB8ZRL	Repeater: 144.59/	N0DX/R 145.19

From the President

By Rick N0YY

Well there is a new President at the helm. I will certainly do everything I can to help lead the energies of the EIDXA in an appropriate manner.

But I'd like to take a few minutes to thank Heinz for his efforts for the past two years. He was always in top of the meetings and presided over many external events representing the EIDXA in a positive light. Thanks Heinz!

And I look forward to working with the leadership team of Jeff, N0DY our newly elected VP and George, W0PPF our returning Secretary/Treasurer. And not to leave out all of our committee chairs for all the work they do behind the scenes to help us all be more productive and to have fun!

And it is always difficult when one of our own passes to a final resting place. We lost long time member and supporter KZ0C, Jim Bohnsack in December 2002.

Jim will always be remembered for his support in providing antennas, climbing, and antenna parts for many of us. I have at least two of his antennas and a keyer. He was the first to respond when I sent out an SOS last year looking for documentation on the old club CMOS Super Keyer. And then a couple of meetings ago he had one for sale. He will be missed.

We will have a few interesting projects in the next year. It is time for us to update our bylaws and to recognize the changes of our membership. I for one would like to see both the DX and contest interests preserved, but I think that may be part of a larger debate. This is your club! It is up to you to help steer any change or growth that you feel is appropriate.

And speaking of growth... I would like to issue a challenge to the general membership. I am struggling with how we might introduce some youth into our ranks. In general the ham radio hobby is getting older. Many of our youth are infatuated with the Internet. But what

about the excitement of working DX or getting in the fray of a contest? I would like your help in thinking about how we get some youth in the club. How can we introduce them to contesting? Or DX??? Are there other local clubs that we should visit and do a short presentation to solicit new members? Our current ARRL club listing shows a closed membership application process. Should that be changed? Should that be reflected in our update of the bylaws? Again I ask your help. I will try to guide the club from the helm, but you provide the power and direction.

I continue to travel to Europe quite a bit. I missed the entire fall contest and DX season with repeated visits to the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Spain, and France. (I wonder if there is an award for visiting 100 countries.) But I know that our club was well represented in the pile-ups. Jeff, N0DY has put his call in the fray in the 10M and 160M contests as well as visiting the Gambia (C5) for the CQWW CW DX Contest. Maybe we can get Jeff to share some of those experiences with us.

And on a final note, what would you like to see for club programs? IS there a specific DX-pedition that interests you? A special mode? I have a couple of ideas, but I want to get your views. I'll say it again, THIS IS YOUR CLUB, let's make it a growing, productive one!

73's

Rick N0YY

The Editor's Corner

By Jeff N0DY

It's quite an honor to have been elected to VP of the EIDX while I was away. (Is there a connection?) I hope I'll be able to do as good a job as the previous VP and Editor, Rick, N0YY who is now our

President. I could sure use some help with articles for the newsletter – it's your newsletter, what do you want to say?

I was truly saddened last month to attend services for the late Jim Bohnsack, KZ0C. He was a good friend and I'll miss seeing his smiling face at Godfather's after EIDX meetings. The occasion reminded me of another Silent Key, W0IZ. I never knew him, but I remember the box of his framed awards that were brought to the EIDX meeting last year. Ham radio can be a solitary pursuit – long hours spent alone in the shack with headphones on listening for the elusive DX or trying to eke out another few QSOs in a contest. In the end, though, it doesn't matter whether you have 120 countries confirmed or are at the top of the Honor Roll. All that's left in the end are pieces of paper you spent all that time earning.

Well, I didn't know W0IZ to be able to say, but I did know Jim. It seems to me that he did it right. Jim leaves behind not only a n impressive collection of accomplishments and their accompanying dry certificates, but also living memories that bring a smile to the faces of the many friends he made in amateur radio. For while our hobby can be a solitary pursuit, in the end it's about the people we meet and the friendships we share. One of my New Year's resolutions is not to lose sight of the importance of friends and family while pursuing those goals of yet another band-country or finishing one place higher in the contest than last year.

Speaking of friends, there's no greater friendship than that which lets you blow up two pieces of his equipment in a week. I sent out the story of my 160M contest in which I blew out the front end diodes on both my FT-1000MP and N0YY's as well. (Unprotected beverage antenna input too close to 160M inverted vee radiating 1.5KW). What I didn't have the guts to

reveal at the time is that I was using NØYY's Alpha amp the next weekend in the 10M contest. Guess what quit working with the unmistakable smell of magic smoke having left? (Don't let this scare you away from lending me equipment, however...)

Hints for a DXpedition Newbie

By Jeff Davis NØDY

I was a complete novice at DXpeditioning when I left for C5 last November. Much of what follows is probably obvious to most of you, but here is some advice I wish I had had before I left.

Be flexible.

Probably the best all around DXpedition / travel advice I can give. Things won't always work out the way they were planned in advance, and overcoming challenges makes for great stories after it's all over. Did I ever tell you about how we got the wireless network up by finding CAT 5 UTP cable and RJ45 connectors in The Gambia...

Study the propagation in advance.

Maybe not you, but somebody on the team needs to do this. You need to know what areas are the difficult ones and when to work these areas. You might have to ask NA or EU to stand by during these times to work the tougher areas. Asia was tough for us in C5.

Lots of times you're going to be operating by yourself while others sleep or cavort on the beach. You have to be able to make the call when to change bands and where to point the antennas. I wasn't as well versed on this as I should have been. I had a pretty good picture of propagation to the US, but I found it

difficult to get a C5 centric propagation picture in my head.

Bring small gifts for the other team members specific to your locality.

I didn't think to do this and was both pleased to receive them from other team members and embarrassed that I didn't have any of my own to give. The items I was given will be treasured mementos of the Gambia DXpedition for a long time in the future. It doesn't have to be anything extravagant. The Latvians brought everyone a traditional Latvian hat – it was great!

Stop at the duty free shop on the way.

You'll want to offer hospitality to your new teammates as soon as you're settled in. If your teammates are Norwegians, Finns, and Latvians, be sure to stock up a good supply of WØDKA!

Mark all of your equipment with your call sign.

Everything seems to have legs as it moves from place to place to meet various needs. I remember one time needing a CDROM which I remembered I had left in my computer. Unfortunately my computer had moved across the street to another hotel and a 10 minute walk. When it's time to pack up, you want to be able to identify your stuff.

Bring some of your home QSL cards

You're going to make great new friends with the other folks on the DXpedition. Your home QSL has all the pertinent contact information and you can fill it out for an eyeball QSO to commemorate the event.

Make sure someone on the team brings your national flag.

I don't know why, but it seems that everyone wants a team picture with all the national flags represented. So make sure to bring one. I was quite surprised by the degree of national pride evidenced by some of the European operators – their national flag got displayed prominently at their operating station – so of course, I had to put the Stars & Stripes up, too!



Get some practice handling pileups – both CW and phone

Point the beam at Europe, turn on the amp, and call CQ on a Saturday morning. This maybe isn't so easy if you have a small station at home. But the pileups on a DXpedition can be huge and can get unruly if it's perceived that the operator isn't firmly in control. (Sometimes even then). I'm not much of a phone operator and I found the phone pileups to be difficult at first. A 10-15 kHz wall of loud, incomprehensible Donald Duck signals was pretty intimidating. Plus my operating style wasn't too efficient at first. But I did learn and get better.

For CW, I can't recommend anything better than PED, a freeware program that unfortunately works only under DOS. It depends on your sound card being at a specific address, so it doesn't always work on newer PCs. I have an older HP

at home that I keep just for that purpose. I practiced with PED about 20 minutes a day every day for 2 months before I left.

Get to know the WARC bands.

I don't operate much on the WARC bands. My antennas aren't very good there and there's no contest activity. But on a DXpedition you'll be called on to work the WARC bands as well as the normal contest bands. Make sure you know the frequency allocations. You might not have a reference handy at the time! I learned the WARC band allocations long enough to pass my license test, then promptly forgot them. I was embarrassed to have to ask someone what was the bottom end of the 12m phone band.

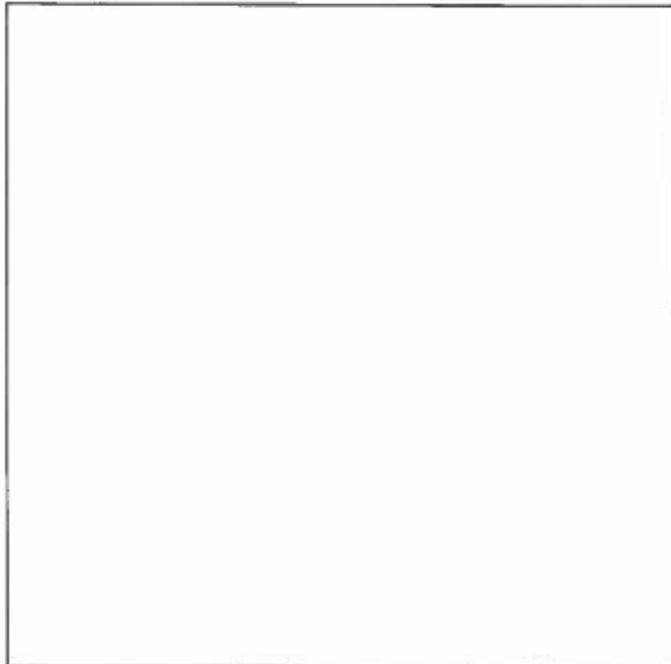
Make sure you know the calls of all your buddies back home.

It's really fun to work your buddies in the pileup, and to be able to say "Hi Fred!" when you hear them. On the other hand, it's really embarrassing to hear a call that you recognize you should know but can't connect a name to it. In the heat of a pileup, particularly after a few hours operating, even familiar facts can fail to come to mind. Next time I'll bring a cheat sheet so I can look up my friends. (Sorry, Doug).

Plan to leave some things behind with local people.

Chances are, you're going to make some new friends with local people. And if you're on a DXpedition, it's likely that you're going to a third world country where the cost of your airfare alone is many times the average person's annual earnings. So you'll probably want to leave some gifts with people you get to know.

In The Gambia, clothing was greatly appreciated – particularly anything that would be considered “cool” back home. You could tell people who had had a lot of contact with tourists because they’d be wearing logoed T-shirts for various famous sneaker makers. So bring a hat, a T-shirt or two and you’ll be a hit with your new friends.



Meeting Notice

The next meeting of the Eastern Iowa DX Association will be on Friday, January 31, 2003 at 7:30 in Room 219C Linn Hall on the Kirkwood Community College campus. Doors open at 6:30 pm for eyeball QSOs. Monitor 145.19 for directions if needed. See you there



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Road

