

The Eastern Iowa DXer

The Official Newsletter of the
Eastern Iowa DX Association



An affiliated club of the American Radio Relay League



January 2004

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144.59/1145.19

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From the President

By Rick N0YY

Well another holiday season has come and gone. I hope everyone got the new toys they wanted for Christmas.

The contest season is in full swing and that has brought out several interesting DX-peditions. As it stands as of this writing I still have not worked the TO4E expedition but I did work about everyone else. That's quite a feat with the solar activity we have had. I got to experience some of the spectacular flares during Sweepstakes and again some of the disturbed conditions during CQWW CW and again during the ARRL 10M contest. It sure has provided some comic relief!

Again travel has compromised some of my activities. I really wanted to go to the W0DXCC Dinner but was unable to because of other commitments. I wanted to hear what W8JI had to say. I always find Tom's comments interesting on the various reflectors.

I had the opportunity to participate form N0NI's station for the CQWW CW contest and again had a blast. Toni participated as a Multi/2 and we had radios going all the time. He has upgraded several antennas and they sure played during the contest weekend. We wound up setting a new personal best for N0NI and from the early listings it looks like we did VERY well. Now it remains to be seen if we will hold our position in the ranks as the sponsors go through their assessments.

As we were preparing for the contest I was reminded of a very important consideration. We all like to get in the pile-ups or in the contest fray and demonstrate our skills. But one thing that I think has been compromised by packet and other tools is accuracy. Take the time to get the call and exchange right. In a contest it can mean the difference between a plaque or missing completely. In a pile-up it can mean a busted contact and that can mean a missed opportunity of many different kinds. Take the time to be accurate.

I missed having Jeff, NØDY, around for the contest weekends. It was always nice to have someone close to share the battle with. Hopefully things are going well for him in the warmer climes.

Ken, KAØY, has been helping (read that doing) some great work on getting the website ready for roll out. He has taken up where I have been ineffective and I thank him from the bottom of my heart!

And let's welcome Tom, KØYA, as VP/Editor. This is his inaugural newsletter. Let him know how he did. And remember, this is your newsletter. Let Tom know what you want to see/hear on the printed pages.

Editor's Corner

By Tom KØYA

Well, here it is the start of a new year. It's a leap year, an election year and a watershed year for amateur radio in certain respects. BPL and the Morse Code issue have the potential to totally transform the institution of amateur radio as we have known it for many years. I don't think that there have been any issues as critical to the future of our hobby that I have observed in my 43 years as a ham as these two!

I can't imagine Dxing, or any operating for that matter, without my key in my hand! I just cringe at the potential impacts of the Morse Code decisions which would eventually include reallocation of band operating modes to reduce or eliminate the CW bands!! I know there are going to be strong feelings on both sides of this issue. I am also aware that amateur radio has to change and adapt to the technologies of today to stay strong and to attract new people. I hope everybody will take a few minutes and respond to

Wade's request for comments. It is an important issue that will impact the future of our hobby.

If the Morse Code issue isn't enough, BPL is staring us in the face as well. This service, if implemented on a large scale, could create interference in the HF bands to the point where we would no longer be able to operate over long distances, if at all! Look at the latest newsletter for the current state of affairs in Austria! Then look at the trials ongoing in the US. The ARRL and our hobby need everybody's support if we are to survive this threat. This is not a distant threat like some things seem to us, it will have a direct impact on each of us if trials are continued and expanded and if this service is endorsed and allowed to be implemented in the US or elsewhere.

Whew! What a start to the New Year.

I'm sorry for the late mailing of the newsletter. We were back in 3 land for the holidays and I didn't get a chance to get this together before we left.

See you all at the meeting on the 16th and please let me know what you would like to see in the newsletter and let me know if I have any errors on the mailing list.

Notes from the ARRL Midwest Division Director

By Wade W0EJ

A couple of things I can ramble on about prior to the Board meeting.

BPL will be discussed at the meeting. I am not sure what will come of it this time.

There has been much ado the last couple of days regarding the weekly poll contained on the ARRL web site which

generated a considerable "response" compared to other polls. What got the most attention were the two options to express an opinion about whether to retain or not the Morse Code test requirement. The Board will be revisiting the ARRL position on this issue (current position taken prior to WRC 2003: do not oppose the removal of the international treaty requirement for Morse code testing, but retain the testing requirement in the US.) at this upcoming meeting.

Some comments on the web site poll and the issues included:

1. Check out the story on the web site about why that poll was discontinued and the results discarded and what the real purpose of those polls are. The URL is: <http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2004/01/06/100/?nc=1> The reasons stated in that story are why I NEVER use those poll results to help formulate my positions on issues that come before the Board. What are important to me are the well-thought-arguments of the Midwest Division ARRL members that they provide me directly.

2. There are some very vocal proponents on both sides of the Morse Code issue. Regardless what the Board decides on this issue at this next meeting, the Board will be bashed as spineless, leaderless, corrupt, on the take from the manufacturers, etc. and there will be a few who threaten to quit their ARRL membership over the decision. This Board will make its decision based solely on what is determined to be in the best interests of amateur radio.

3. If BPL is not defeated and soon, Morse Code or no Morse Code is a moot debate.

4. One of the things the Volunteer Resources Committee has been working on since July is a proposal for an Elmer

program. The purpose of this program would be to match new hams with Elmers with the end result being helping a new ham get on the air and better integrated into the amateur radio community. I think most of had one or more persons help us through this initial step of our amateur radio careers. Somewhere along the way, we, as the amateur radio community, have lost this recipe for helping others get started in amateur radio. (IMHO, I think this decline started when we saw a large influx of former "CBers" become amateur radio licensees. As a group we looked down our noses at these folks, failed to help properly integrate them into amateur radio, and we have been the poorer for it ever since. Shame on us!) This program is designed to take us back to the days when veteran hams helped the newbies take that first step: to get on the air.

The W0DXCC was a bigger success this year than last year. Attendance was about double what it was the previous year. The Twin Cities DX group did an excellent organizing and hosting W0DXCC. The programs were very good. EIDX was represented by about the same number who attended the first event, but you could still count all the EIDX members attending on one hand!

Because the Board meeting straddles the EIDX meeting, I will not be attending the EIDX meeting.

W0DXCC 2003 Convention

By Tom, WB8ZRL

The second W0DXCC was held on October 18th in Bloomington, MN. The Twin Cities DX Association was the host with AC0X, Lou, acting as the primary coordinator. There were 125 people in attendance, up from 67 last year. All

states in W0 were represented. In addition to DXers from zero-land, there were attendees from 4, 5, and 9 land, as well as N7NG from the headquarters staff. The EIDX was represented by AK0M, K0VSV, W0EJ and myself, as well as honorary member W0GJ.

Seven attendees held 5BWAZ, a most difficult award to earn from 0-land. Two DXers shared high DXCC count with 356.

Radio City and Timewave Technology were both there with merchandise to Display and sell.

The first presentation was by K4SV, Dave, about his DXpedition to Africa. W0IZ was originally scheduled to give this presentation, but was not able to attend the convention. Dave and a small group operated from 7P8, 3DA0, and ZS during their trip. Of interest was ZS6WPX, who set up the trip. He makes All the arrangements for the operating site, equipment including towers and antennas, and picks the operators up at the airport, and drives them to the operation site. This is a business for ZS6WPX and is not all that expensive.

The W0 QSL bureau was there and gave a presentation. Rick, KB0U, the bureau manager, talked a bit about how the bureau process has changed. He told about receiving one or more 4 pound boxes from the ARRL headquarters every week. This kept the inbound card count pretty constant. Now the ARRL sorts and forwards very few cards. The overseas bureaus now send boxes of cards direct to each call area bureau. Rick showed us two unopened boxes. Each box was about 15" x 20" x 8". One from JA and one from EA. Rick said the JA bureau sends such a box every 3 months or so. This may explain the peaks and valleys in bureau cards. As an aside, Rick was sorting the JA box for the

individual letter sorters while the other presentations were going on. He let me go through some of the sorted cards looking for local calls that I could bring back with me. I did find a few cards for K0GT. One of these was a JA, and I made a flippant comment to Rick about another JA card. Only later did I look at the card closely, and discovered it was for a 50Mhz contact. Not quite just another JA card.

Wayne, N7NG, talked about the Logbook of the World. Use has been growing daily since it started in September. If you have a contest or logging program that creates cabrillo or ADIF files, then think seriously about sending them in to the database. It only costs a bit of time, and may one day provide you with a confirmation costing just a fraction of what it now takes to send for a card. And it may provide a confirmation for the guy at the other end of the QSO.

Glenn, W0GJ, made an A5 presentation. I have seen at least four of his presentations, and I see something different every time. Also attending with Glenn was A51BB, who is an exchange student living with Glenn's family. Glenn said he was scheduled to return to A5 in April of 2005.

Carl, K9LA, talked about W0 propagation. This just confirmed what all of us know: that we fight the auroral region for most of our paths. Carl suggests that we check out ICEPAC and W6ELPROP on the web. A google search will find them.

W8JI, Tom, traveled from Georgia to talk about low band receiving techniques. Tom is certainly one of the best 160M operators. His site is a former dairy farm, and he has plenty of room for antennas. He talked about beverages, beverage arrays, a 70' x 330' vertical array, and 1/8 wavelength 4-square. The 1/8 wave 4-

square is very interesting because it uses short (how about 20') verticals. For experiments, he has a 315' tower. That is to support dipoles 5/8 wavelength above the ground. There is much information on Tom's web site, www.w8ji.com.

K0IR, Ralph, was the banquet speaker. He shared personal experiences about his Antarctic DXpeditions to South Sandwich, South Georgia, Heard Island and Peter I Island. Ralph will be a member of the 3Y0 team going to Peter I in early 2004.

A number of door prizes were given at the banquet. Donors were: Tennadyne Corporation, Icom, Heil, Burghardt, Lance Johnson, DX Publishing, DX Engineering, and Ham Test Online. The primary prize was an Icom IC-706MKIIG which was raffled. The convention sponsors were very pleased that the raffle raised over \$1700 which will be donated to the NCDXF. They were especially pleased that more money was raised at W0DXCC than was raised at W9DXCC.

The TCDXA should be proud of their efforts to put on the second W0DXCC. The Holiday Inn was top notch, and attendance was nearly double last year. Like last year, there was enthusiasm for a 2004 W0DXCC, but nobody stood up to say they would host it. I expect that it will happen. We should seriously think about having W0DXCC in Cedar Rapids some year.

ARRL CW Sweepstakes 2003 – An Interesting Lesson

By Rick N0YY

Ah yes... As I screwed down the last connector on my station I said I needed a way to wring out the last gremlins, how to

do that? Get in a contest that'll surely do it! So with the confidence that my station was finally ready I looked at the calendar. Hmmmm, well I'll still be in Europe for the CQWW Phone weekend. Let's see... Sure let's do CW Sweepstakes!

It had been 24 years since I put a serious single operator effort into the November classic. The last time was when I used John, W0VU's station in Marion. That effort netted a sweep of the available multipliers and 692 QSOs. Yes that was back in the days of paper logs and dupe sheets! So I decided to see just what I could do.

Just like in my station design I went to the Internet and searched the results from the last couple of years. The ARRL website gave me the results in a searchable format. Iowa, Midwest Division, high power, packet assisted, etc. and then the 3830 Reflector at the Contesting.com website gave me more detail.

To be a serious entry you needed about 1200 QSOs. Several of the SMC boys did that level so I was sure that it was possible in the Midwest. The general rule of thumb was run, run, run and worry about the multipliers later. It is a bit different for the more relaxed efforts that use packet spotting to chase the multipliers for the Clean Sweep mugs and pins. To do 1200 QSOs in 24 hours was a 50 QSO per hour average rate. Remembering that Sunday afternoon rates of 30 per hour just increased the pressure to perform early.

So with the plan formed I sat back and started a check list of things I needed to accomplish. I like to have a plan in front of me and then work to that plan, especially when I travel and sometimes forget where I left off! Now this was late August so I "knew" I had enough time.

Well throw in a couple of trips to Europe and a few multi-day trips to Washington DC and the next thing you know its only a month away and I'm no where near ready! I still had the new filters to order for the FT-1000s and all the software to get ready.

And the software... I had grown absolutely dependent on Jeff, N0DY and his software ability. He had taken charge of configuring the software and tweaking it to make it play like a violin. So when I set my expectations I only wanted it to do what Jeff had done in the past. Boy was I in for a RUDE awakening. I took a copy of the software with me on my last European trip and thought I'd learn on the airplanes and in hotel rooms. Nice try, but no cigar, as they say. I was struggling, calling K5DJ the developer of WriteLog and asking for help. Unfortunately I found that the software at home was a different version than what I had on my laptop!

I had decided to straddle the fence in terms of class. I decided that I would operate in the Unlimited Class that allows the use of packet spotting but I would focus my time on running. So the main thing I needed was to have the packet spots fill the bandmaps in the software. Well try as I might I could NEVER get the internet spots to interface with the logging program.

I had also intended to run as a Single Operator, Two Radio (SO2R) configuration. But as I was doing the final wiring I realized that I did not have enough isolation between the antennas to ensure that I would not do damage to the front-end of the second radio. (Again I learned this from Jeff from his 160M contest exploits where he cooked a radio front-end because of significant power coupling to the second radio.) Time was

drawing close so I just disconnected the second radio and said that that was a lesson for another day.

So now it was just left to operator conditioning. Did I go to the Rec Center and exercise? No instead I came back from Europe and a terrible set of flights and got home tired and grumpy. The software still did not work and I learned that my daughter had planned a HUGE Halloween Party for Friday evening – the night before the contest. And I was to do the hay rides with the tractor and a hay trailer. And then I learned that the party would not start until after the football game so it started at 11 pm! The good news was it lasted only until 2:30am. So I could get some sleep

But not enough...

I woke up too early and did a few things around the house still not happy with how things were set up. "How can I fix this problem" or "What would be a compromise for that?" hounded me all morning. The contest started at 3pm local time (2100 UTC). Of course the second thoughts all come back with a vengeance during the last hour.

To make a long story short, I wound up setting up a separate PC to keep track of the spots while I used the main PC for logging. No it didn't fill the band maps like I wanted, but then again I was intent on running. The multipliers would happen or they wouldn't.

Well things started on time and I was caught calling CQ for the first three minutes before the run started. I was focused on at least one per minute and was close to that. The first hour was 47 QSOs and the second hour 57 Qs. I was already behind my plan, but I was doing OK. I sat there and found that my band plan was not consistent with where the

ops were. Studies of the past showed that 40M and 20M were the workhorses from the Midwest. Well the high bands were producers this time. And that was OK. I started on 15M and stayed there for an hour and then went to 10M and had a good run too.

I sat in the chair with no breaks until midnight and then everything collapsed around me. I wanted to stay on until at least 2am or maybe even 3am, but the lack of sleep the night before took its toll. I remembered the sleep strategy that has been so widely publicized stated that the human body rested in cycles, each about 90 minutes in length. If you went shorter or longer you would have trouble leaving the sleep cycle and returning to normal. So I slept for 90 minutes. And of course the band was DEAD when I got up. SO I went back to sleep for another 90 minutes. I had no trouble falling asleep because I was still exhausted. So exhausted that now I slept for three hours! So here it was 5am and the bands were very slow, but I couldn't afford to go back to sleep for another 90 minute cycle.

So I started plugging away. The previous evening showed that 40M was a band that had its own sustaining rate. During the morning hours both 40M and 20M caught some of the more casual operators. Those that wanted to get on for two or three hours just to play, but weren't really serious. The rates picked up until someone pulled the plug on the band.

At 1718 UTC there was an M-class Flare of magnitude 9.5 that just shout the bands down. Based on my sleep strategy I couldn't afford a break so I just kept plugging away. The rate dropped from 50 per hour to 25 per hour for the next 90 minutes. Here is just a few of the spots that were posted:

21000.0	M0CLASS	02-Nov-2003	1720Z	flare	<K19R>
21000.0	S0LAR	02-Nov-2003	1721Z	Bands all gone	<N4GG>
21000.0	FLARE	02-Nov-2003	1729Z	all dead here	<N3OC>
14061.7	BREAK	02-Nov-2003	1723Z	TIME FOR 30 MIN BREAK	<AD6WL>
21050.0	S0LAR	02-Nov-2003	1723Z	ALL DEAD FOOTBALL NOW	<K0JPL>
14025.7	K2PLF	02-Nov-2003	1732Z	only signal heard	<N3OC>
14000.0	W5DDX	02-Nov-2003	1724Z	sscw broke the sky	<K1DW>
21054.8	BY1BYE	02-Nov-2003	1734Z	bands!	<N3OC>
21016.0	S0LAR	02-Nov-2003	1734Z	Did my tower fall down?	<W3HVQ>
21016.0	S0LAR	02-Nov-2003	1728Z	GO TO 80M	<N5JB>
21050.0	S0LAR	02-Nov-2003	1729Z	was about X9!	<W9TN>
21000.0	S0LAR	02-Nov-2003	1729Z	some indications x8	<K19R>
14000.0	S0LAR	02-Nov-2003	1729Z	Good day for gardening!	<W1RG>
21018.1	WC1M	02-Nov-2003	1730Z	still banging away	<K1TTT-5>
21023.5	W1VE	02-Nov-2003	1733Z	cq'ing in solar noise	<K1TTT-5>
21035.3	KG9X	02-Nov-2003	1734Z	still running	<KM9M>
28044.0	N0YY	02-Nov-2003	1734Z	IA only signal any band...	<VE9DX>
14000.0	W5DDX	02-Nov-2003	1736Z	are echolink contacts allowed	
28039.1	K7MM	02-Nov-2003	1741Z	EWA (it's wrking!)	<W9SN>
14040.8	KF8UN	02-Nov-2003	1743Z	lonely	<K1TTT-5>
14043.8	K6UFO	02-Nov-2003	1746Z	Still trying	<AD6WL>

But in every cloud there is some joy. I had a huge smile with the post at 1734 UTC from VE9DX. Yes here I was stuck on 10M and still working stations and he posted me! And to think I was the "only signal any band"!!

Well that was not the end. A few hours later there was a magnitude 7.5 flare and then later a magnitude 2 flare. It was amazing to hear the sound of cellophane being pulled over the band and a few crinkles as the signals went away.

NW7US provides some detail about the Flare activity from his website - there have been three X-class flares in less than 24 hours. The first was an X8.3 flare from region 486 on November 2, 2003, at 1725Z, then, November 3, 2003 at 0130Z there was an X2.7 flare from region 488, followed at 0955Z by an X4.3 flare from the same region. Both the X8.3 and X4.3 occurred during the contest. There was no report of the mid-afternoon flare.)

But I had no latitude to stop! I had already used up much of my time off. So I kept plugging away. 40M was still the band with the rate so I stayed there as much as I could. And "could" was the operative term. At 0030 UTC, Sunday evening I had to pull the plug with only 22

hours (out of 24) in the log. Mother Nature stepped in and decided that I was having too much fun and unleashed a thunderstorm right on top of me. I almost missed it with all of the solar hiss but the static of a thunderstorm is unmistakable! So the cables were unplugged and the log saved.

So how did I end up? Well it was a personal best, but not quite what I had expected. 955 QSOs with 78 of 80 multipliers! The equipment worked flawlessly and the software never crashed. In all everything behaved the way it was supposed to – except the operator.

So after every event there is some assessment to guide us in the future. This contest was no exception. Here are the three “principles” I learned:

- 1) The more you want the software to do, the more you have to learn about how to fix it when it doesn't work!
- 2) No matter how much you plan you better be ready to do something different.
- 3) The operator is the weak link in a well designed system.

Yes I'll be back next year. It was a blast and I'll fight with the sun or whatever Mr. Murphy chooses to bring to the party.

QST de W1AW DX Bulletin 1 ARLD001

From ARRL Headquarters
Newington CT January 8, 2004
To all radio amateurs

SB DX ARL ARLD001
ARLD001 DX news

This week's bulletin was made possible with information provided by CE3HDI, the OPDX Bulletin, The Daily DX, 425DXnews, DXNL, WA7BNM and Contest Corral from QST. Thanks to all.

NIGER, 5U. Bull, 5U7JB has been QRV on 17 meters, and will concentrate his activity on the newer bands for the next few months. He will be active on the other HF bands during contests. QSL via ON5NT.

SOUTH SHETLAND ISLANDS. Ricardo, CE3HDI will be QRV as CE9R from Escudero Base on King George Island, IOTA AN-010, from January 10 to February 24. Activity will be on all HF bands using CW, SSB and RTTY. QSL to home call.

ANTARCTICA. Felix, DP1POL has been QRV on 20 meters around 1800 to 2000z. QSL via DL1ZBO.

IRAN, EP. Mohsen, EP3SMH is generally QRV on 15 meters around 1300z. QSL direct.

GUADELOUPE, FG. Pierre, F6FXS will be QRV as FG/F6FXS from January 14 to February 13. Activity will be on 40, 30, 20, 15 and 10 meters using CW. Activity may be around 1300 to 1400z and then 2200 to 2400z. QSL to home call.

AUSTRAL ISLANDS, FO. A group of Finnish amateurs are QRV as FO/OH6KN from Tubuai, IOTA OC-152, until January 18. Activity is on 160 to 10 meters, including 30, 17 and 12 meters, using CW, SSB and some RTTY. QSL via OH9MDV.

MINAMI TORISHIMA, JD1. JD1YBJ has been QRV on 80 meters around 1100 to 1300z and is here until January 16. QSL direct.

SVALBARD, JW. JW5E has been QRV on 80 meters using SSB around 0630z. QSL via operators' instructions. Meanwhile, JW5RIA is also QRV until May 30. QSL via LA5RIA.

BRAZIL, PY. Emilio, PU5HAS will be QRV as PY5/PU5HAS from Mel Island, IOTA SA-047, from January 15 to 17. Activity will be on 80 and 10 meters using SSB. QSL to home call.

MOUNT ATHOS, SV/A. Monk Apollo, SV1ASP/A has been QRV on 17 meters around 0800 and 1400z and 12 meters around 0900z. QSL direct.

TUVALU, T2. T20RE has been QRV on 20 meters around 0700z, 30 meters around 1000z and 40 meters around 1100z. QSL via HA8IB.

CONGO, TN. Walsker, CT3HK is QRV as TN3S until October 31. QSL to home call.

BELIZE, V3. Gerd, DJ4KW and Gisela, DK9GG will be QRV as V31YN and V31GW, respectively, using CW and RTTY, respectively, from January 10 to the end of February. Activity will be on 160 to 10 meters. QSL to home calls.

NORFOLK ISLAND, VK9N. Jim, VK9NS has been QRV on 20 meters around 2300z. QSL direct.

FALKLAND ISLANDS, VP8. Ted, NH6YK is QRV as VP8DHI and has been active on 17 meters around 0000z. QSL to home call.

CAMBODIA, XU. Peter, NO2R is QRV as XU7ACY from Sihanoukville until January 12. Activity is on 160, 80 and 40 meters. QSL via K2NJ.

VIETNAM, XV. Eddy, XV9DT is QRV using either XV1X or 3W1X. Activity is generally on 160, 80, 40 and 30 meters. QSL via operator's instructions.

SYRIA, YK. Omar, YK1AO has been QRV on 40 meters using CW around 0500z. QSL direct.

THIS WEEKEND ON THE RADIO. The North American CW QSO Party, Hunting Lions in the Air, East Asia 160/80 Meter DX Contest, DARC 10 Meter Contest, Midwinter CW/Phone Contest, UK DX SSB Contest and the NRAU-Baltic Contest will certainly keep contesters busy this weekend. Please see January QST, page 98 and the ARRL and WA7BNM contest websites for details.

Meeting Notice

The next meeting of the Eastern Iowa DX Association will be on Friday January 16th 2004 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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