



the exchange



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The Prez says.....



Happy Holidays to you all! I can't believe we are on the verge of another new year. I hope you have been on the air filling band slots and chasing ATNOs.

You may not have heard this yet, but 2024 will be the year of the club. The Ohio Section has an exciting project planned for the March timeframe that I hope SWODXA and YOU will participate in. Lets make this OUR biggest year ever!

Big Kudos to Billy, AA8KY, Joe, W8GEX, and Janet, W8CAA, on our membership committee. I believe we have had the largest increase in membership over the past 45 days than anytime in my association with SWODXA. Great job!

Now, we want to make sure that we are learning from our new members as well as existing members. Some of you are very shy about sharing your experiences and knowledge. We have a huge store of talent and "DXperience" and I want to find ways to share that. When the call goes out for volunteers or ideas about programs, please respond.

If you are a member of another club and they have a presentation that you think our members would find interesting, please pass along the details. You can check our website to see the great lineup we have early in 2024. I have a few other programs lined up but not yet confirmed. Always keep an eye on the website!

(cont. on page 4)

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SWODXA 2023—2024 Calendar

January 2024

6-7 ARRL RTTY Roundup
11 SWODXA Meeting
13-15 ARRL January VHF
26-28 CQWW 160M CW

February 2024

8 SWODXA Meeting
10-11 CQWW WPX RTTY
17-18 ARRL DX CW
23-25 CQWW 160M SSB

March 2024

2-3 ARRL DX SSB
14 SWODXA Meeting
30-31 CQWW WPX SSB

April 2024

11 SWODXA Meeting

May 2024

9 SWODXA Meeting
17 SWODXA Dinner
17-19 Dayton Hamvention
25-26 CQWW WPX CW

June 2024

8-10 ARRL VHF
13 SWODXA Meeting
14-15 All Asian CW
22-23 ARRL Field Day

July 2024

12-13 IARU HF Championship
20-21 CQWW VHF

August 2024

9-11 WAE DX CW
24 Ohio QSO Party

September 2024

6-8 All Asian DX SSB Contest
6-8 ARRL Sept. VHF Contest
12 SWODXA Meeting
13-15 WAE DX SSB Contest
28-29 CQWW RTTY

October 2024

10 SWODXA Meeting
26-27 CQWW DX SSB

November 2024

4-5 ARRL SS CW
9 SWODXA Meeting
16-18 ARRL SS SSB

December 2024

6-8 ARRL 160M CW
14-15 ARRL 10M
28-29 Stew Perry 160M CW

SWODXA Club News

Upcoming Club Dates and Topics

Meeting Date	Topic
Thursday, January 11th, 2024	25 Most Wanted Status by Bernie, W3UR
Thursday, February 8th, 2024	The C-Match Method of Phasing Vertical Antennas—Lee, K7NM
Thursday, March 14th, 2024	Introduction to Node Red - WO2X - David de Coons



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The Pres Says (cont.)

It's less than 145 days until Hamvention® and the DX Dinner®. As always, we need some volunteers to help in various aspects of the dinner. Just let me know if you are available! We have already taken an order for a table of 10 and we have the speaker committed.

The biggest contribution that you can make is to sell raffle tickets. We basically break even on the dinner and it is the raffle tickets that generate the revenue we need to support DXpeditions. Even if you are not going to the dinner, you can buy some raffle tickets at our meetings for your self and a few others to sell.

I am already getting questions about the 2023 DXpedition of the Year. This will be a tough choice! W8GEX and his committee will be up to the task and I think it will be exciting.

Enough rambling. Please keep the newsletter in mind when you get that new rig, new POTA setup, new software, book, or antennas at Christmas. We are always looking for content to share with all of our members.

Merry Christmas to you and your family.

Bill Salyers-AJ8B

aj8b@arrl.net



This Week in Amateur Radio
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**Stay on Top of all that is Happening in Amateur Radio
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QRP DXing & Contesting

Randy Shirbroun, ND0C

Randy is off and running as our QRP column editor. If you have a question or a suggestion for a column, you can email Randy at randysdvm@gmail.com



DXing with QRP – Part 2: Pile Ups

Welcome back to our discussion of working DX using QRP! By now I am sure some of you have tried it and hopefully had success snagging some decent DX while running five watts or less. Please drop me a note to share your experiences: both the joys, and the frustrations! What works for you?

In the last column we dug into QRP DXing Tip #1, the importance of listening while chasing DX. Many of the principles we discussed certainly apply to DXing regardless of the power levels you are using. But using those tips effectively will help to improve your odds of being successful with QRP. Even though our ultimate goal is to be heard by the DX station, it doesn't mean we should ignore the value of listening on our end which will in turn allow us to better use some of the techniques we will cover in this column and improve our chances of success.

In addition to the suggestions regarding effective listening, what are other strategies and tactics we can use to get through to the DX station? As we dig into these various concepts, you will undoubtedly note that most are not very original and certainly not unique to DXing with QRP. These tips will hopefully help us to be more effective DXers whether we have a big gun station or are little pistols. But when we are running only five watts, we need every advantage we can get! Sometimes a high power station doesn't have to worry so much about finesse, timing, precise frequency selection, etc. But for a QRPer, those principles are essential to success.



Not to overstate the obvious, but when we are running just five watts output, we are at a significant disadvantage when chasing DX! Depending on a multitude of variables including propagation, QSB, QRM from adjacent frequencies for the DX station, and of course the number and strength of other stations calling the same DX station, we need to remind ourselves of the importance of really being on our game.

QRP DXing & Contesting (cont.)

The reality is that most of the time when we find a DX station, there are already several other callers, and possibly a good-sized pile-up. This is certainly true with the prevalence of DX spotting networks and the pile-ups they can spawn. But it also emphasizes the value of using the old-fashioned technique of simply turning the “big knob” and tuning through a band, looking for DX. The objective is to find the DX station before it is spotted and the hordes descend.

Tip #2 - Using packet cluster spots

If we are lucky enough to find a lonely DX station while tuning across the bands, we have managed to eliminate some of the variables that negatively impact our chance of working them. Even if the DX is relatively weak, we have a decent chance of them hearing our call if there is no competition from others, hence no QRM.

But if there are multiple stations that have found him too, then our chances of getting through are decreased. QRM is one of the biggest detriments to our success as QRP DXers. That is the inherent disadvantage of depending solely on packet cluster spots for DXing: everybody else knows where the DX is too.

I use packet cluster spots quite a bit for routine DXing (outside of contest activity). The spots give me a good idea of who is on, obviously. It also gives me a general feeling of the propagation – who is hearing who. For example, is ten meters open to eastern Europe from the central US? This points out the necessity of using filters, either the one between your ears, or options on the spotting website. If an FK8 is spotted by a ZL, that is of limited value to me, other than just indicating that the FK8 is on the air. But obviously the propagation is going to be vastly different for the ZL than for me in the central US!

However, as we’ve said, using spots can be problematic for the QRP DXer – basically a double-edged sword. If a rare country/station is spotted, it is going to obviously attract a lot of attention in a big hurry! I will typically check it out, but usually a big pile-up will have already developed. A packet cluster pile-up. (You can interpret that anyway you like!) If the DX station is fairly strong at my location, I may jump into the pile-up with my earth-shattering five-watt signal. But there are several factors I take into consideration when assessing my chances for success and whether or not I decide to keep calling or move on. These factors also hold true with any pile-up. (See Tip #5)

But keep in mind, even though the use of cluster spots has some merits, there is also no substitute for “turning the big knob” – to find those unspotted lonely DX stations!

QRP DXing & Contesting (cont.)

Tip #3—Battling in the pile-ups—Strategies and tactics

Some may feel that jumping into a pile-up while running QRP is akin to bringing a knife to a gunfight! While it can be a bit challenging and even intimidating, you can have success. If we have maximized the efficiency of our station and we, as an operator are on our “A game”, we can do it! So, let’s explore some approaches.

There are different types of pile-ups and multiple variables that affect our chance of success in getting through with QRP. One obvious consideration is the size of the pileup. Is it a small pile-up that we might typically see on a weekend with a garden-variety European station? Or is it a mega-pile-up for a very rare DXCC entity or a DXpedition to a once-every-ten years island? For the small pile-up for a common DX station/country, the chances of success are quite high. For the gigantic pile-up – not so much. Those are the pile-ups in which I hear the successful DXer say things like “Glad I got through to you – I’m just running 500 watts!” – Makes me laugh a bit.

Of course, a crucial consideration is propagation. Do the conditions favor our location? How loud is the DX station? If all the stations getting through are on the east coast, or in Europe, I need to re-assess my chances of getting through from the Midwest. A high-power station might be able to break through even if the propagation is not favorable, but it is nearly impossible for a QRP station to do so. As a QRP operator we need to use good judgement. (See Tip #5 below.)

Another variable affecting our expectation (and realization) of success in a pile-up is the DX operator and his/her technique or efficiency. Are they running contest style, churning out several QSOs per minute. Some DX operators are just plain better at pulling calls out of the pile-up than others, exhibiting the proverbial “good ears”.

What if a rare DX op is leisurely chatting about the weather, their station etc.? There is nothing wrong with folks having a nice conversation and we all need to remember that is the DX operator’s prerogative, even though we are “chomping at the bit” to work them! It is their pile-up and they can handle it any way they want, no matter how rare they are! But obviously the rate is much slower than the “contest-style” operator, so that may determine if I want to hang around and wait and wait.... I do think we need to remind ourselves to not be impatient with the casual DX op, no matter how rare they are, and not start dropping in some tail-end calls, etc. That is, more than likely, just going to aggravate the DX operator.

QRP DXing & Contesting (cont.)

One note: if the DX station is “going by the numbers”, calling for a specific call area, or for a specific region, e.g., “west coast”, don’t call him if you’re not in the area/geographic region. Running QRP does not give us special license to call out of turn! As a QRPer, I am embarrassed when I hear another QRP station call out of turn – in my mind it gives all QRPers a bad name. We aren’t special, just because we have chosen to use five watts or less!

Tip #4 – Timing!

As I have mentioned previously, when we are running QRP we aren’t likely to be heard over the top of a big pile-up – we just aren’t going to be the loudest caller! So, the single most important tactic to improve our odds of being heard is using good timing.

Often this is as simple as letting the din die down, i.e., waiting a second before making your call. It is a matter of “hitting the gaps” between the other callers. This also involves listening – there’s that word again! If it sounds like the other callers have subsided, I’ll quickly drop my call in. Many times, I’ve had DX stations come back to me, commenting “you timed that well!”

I also look for a pattern in the callsigns the DX operator is coming back to. E.g., if they are consistently just getting the suffix of the calls, that tells me I should wait that second to drop in my call next time.

Some DX operators are better at pulling out calls, especially complete calls, from the pile-up than others. On the other hand some may take 10-20 seconds (or more!) to pick out a call (or even a partial). As a QRPer, I believe my odds are improved the longer the DX operator takes, since I might be able to slip in and be heard as the chaos thins out – if my timing is good!

Another tactic that may work, if done skillfully, is tail-ending. Dropping in your call just at the end of the previous QS0 may work. But you must use discretion and practiced skill. Even though we are just running QRP, we don’t want to risk interfering with the QS0.

QRP DXing & Contesting (cont.)

Tip #5 – When not to spend time in a pile-up while running QRP

We need to “choose our battles” when trying to break a pile-up with five watts. As Clint Eastwood, in his role of “Dirty Harry” Callahan advised, we need to realize our capabilities... and limitations! We may need to cut our losses and bail out at some point.

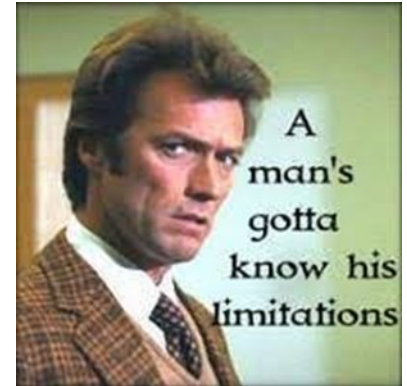
If the pile-up is huge and the DX station is **not** strong, your odds of snagging him are significantly reduced. The DX station is probably running power, at least 100 watts, maybe a KW, and you will be much weaker for him than he is for you. In that case I would suggest noting the frequency, or plugging it into the rig’s memory, and checking back later.

If there is a huge pile-up on a DXpedition station in their first day or two of the planned operation, I wouldn’t waste much time battling the hordes until a few days later. If it is a major DXpedition that has committed a couple weeks to the operation, the odds are the pile-ups will be significantly smaller in the last few days and they might be begging for contacts towards the end of their stay there.

If the DX station is weak and has a big pile-up, it is a good guess the propagation is just not favoring you. This emphasizes the importance of understanding propagation patterns. For example, if an African DX station has a pile-up of Europeans calling but the DX is weak here, I’m not going to waste my time calling. Depending on the band, the African station may be much stronger for me in a couple hours.

As an example, recently I heard an HS0 station on 15 CW coming in SP. I didn’t need him for an all-time new one (ATNO) since I have worked a few Thai stations on SSB, but he would be a new one for me on CW. He was pretty light and just working stations on the east coast and I just wasn’t getting through. The propagation was not in my favor. I checked back about an hour later, assuming the path would move westerly. By then he was stronger and a few minutes later I had him in my log – a good 8,427 mile QSO running 5 watts!

It is important to be a student of propagation. I’ve been at this a long time and am still amazed by some of the interesting quirks of propagation. We need to remind ourselves to check the long path, as well as the potential for skew path. Maybe the DX station will be stronger if we try another beam heading!



QRP DXing & Contesting (cont.)

Tip #6 – To “zero-beat” or not to “zero-beat”

In a simplex CW pile-up, i.e., when the DX is listening on his transmitting frequency, it can often be difficult for the them to distinguish between the calling stations. It may be beneficial to call slightly off frequency to provide a bit of separation from the other callers. The downside is that if the DX station is using a very narrow receive filter, he may not hear you unless he is deliberately tuning above and below his transmit frequency. High powered stations with loud signals may still be able to be heard by the DX when they are off the listening frequency, so they have an advantage in that respect.

Tip #7 – Split Frequency operations

DXpeditions and other rare DX stations will often operate “split”: listening on a frequency other than their transmitting frequency. Typically, their receive frequency will be at least 1 kHz higher on CW and 5 kHz or more on SSB. It is crucial to listen – wow, there’s that word again! – to their instructions. On CW they will usually just send “up” when they call CQ or QRZ. On SSB they will usually specify how far up they are listening, e.g., “listening up 5” or “listening up 5 to 10”. If they are listening over a range of frequencies, which is not unusual, then it becomes a bit of a guessing game to determine where they are listening to improve your chances of being heard.

In a future column we will dig a bit deeper into the challenge of chasing DX stations that are operating split, especially when we are using QRP and explore some techniques/tips to work them. But admittedly it is a bit like playing the lottery.

In the next column, we will shift our focus to contesting with QRP. Obviously, there is considerable overlap in the tactics and strategies used for QRP contesting and DXing. And of course, even if you are not an avid tester, contests are a great place to pick up needed countries for your QRP DX awards!

Please send me some of your tips and experiences with QRP, as well as questions you may have. After all, we are all in this together and we can learn from each other, striving for greater success while chasing DX with QRP!

73,

60 Meters—The Channel Band

By Joe, W8GEX—w8gex@aol.com



Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/347995275954755/>

60m website: www.60metersonline.com

60m Podcast: Joe W8GEX and Don K8MF0 were recently on The DX Mentor Podcast to promote and discuss 60 meters. Check it out here: <https://youtu.be/Mq7YN6euHHM>

Antarctica LU8DBS/Z: He now has a 60m antenna—look for him

From Dan K3ZXL to VR2ZXP:

Hi Alfred,

Congratulations! And thanks for the well composed list of LOTW confirmations. You are the First Hong Kong Ham Operator to achieve the 60 Meter Awards. !!!

Congrats again.

Best Regards, Dan Schaaf K3ZXL. 60m awards manager

NEW COUNTRY:

CB0ZA: Here is an update on Juan Fernandez Islands, CE0Z. The CB0ZA team is going there February 13-20, 2024. They are including 60M.

9M2 West Malaysia: Is active on the band now.

ZD7 - St. Helena Island—IV3FSG, Elvira, is heading to Jamestown, St. Helena. She is including 60 meters. She will be using Club Log Livestream at <https://clublog.org/livestream/ZD7Z><https://www.qrz.com/db/ZD7Z>

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60 Meters—The Channel Band (cont.)

Namibia V51WH : I will be back in Namibia from November 16, to April 2024. I will operate from the farm near Omaruru and will pay attention to 60 meters.

Vy 73, Gunter, V51WH + V55Y

T32TT East Kiribati: Is now active but not sure when they will on 60m. As always, watch your cluster. They'll be on FT8 and will always send a 73.



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DX Engineering is a proud sponsor of major DXpeditions like 3Y0J Bouvet Island 2023. Our active operators are dedicated to making ATNOs possible for hams around the globe. See you in the pileups!

DXer's Trivia Game

By Mike, WOVTT

Many people are familiar with the popular New York Times "Wordle" game. It's a nice brain teaser that Susan and I use to decide which spouse is smarter than the other each day. Recently, with a group of friends we were discussing Wordle, and a friend

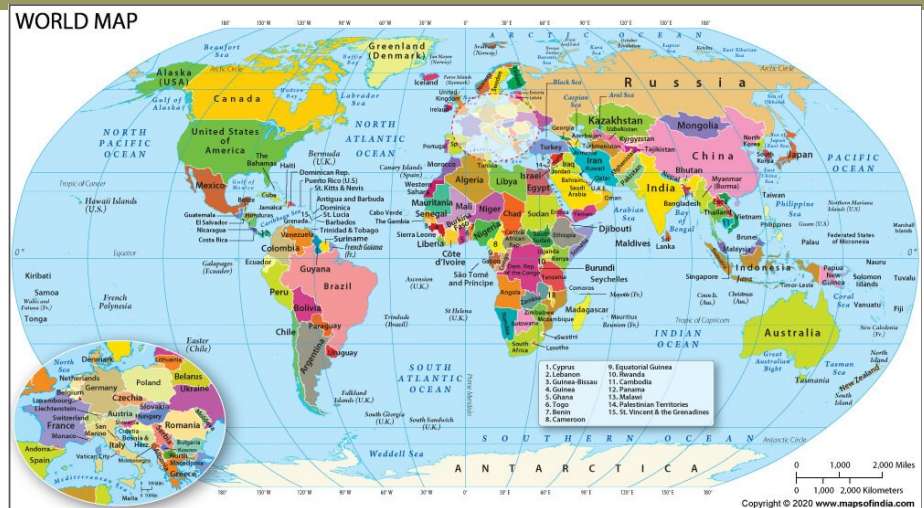
asked if I was familiar with a geography game called Worldle? She thought that would be good for us "ham radio guys".

Naturally, I had to check it out. The game displays the outline of a country and gives six chances to guess what it is. Incorrect answers get hints; distance in kilometers and direction (eight compass points) to the correct country. After guessing the country, the next round shows the outline of all of its neighboring countries, giving several chances to guess them. Subsequent rounds are to guess the capitol city, population, and currency.

Worldle does not use the ARRL DXCC country list, so not all of their "countries" align with our "entities". For example, England, Scotland and Wales are all bundled into the United Kingdom; but they do list Guernsey, Jersey, and the Isle of Man separately. Worldle uses the ISO 3166-1 country list.

Considering myself a serious DXer, I thought this game would be fairly easy. (Spoiler alert: it's NOT!). Those little island countries all look alike, and how many of us really know or care about the geographic outline of every little island? We just need to know which direction to point the beam. Naming the neighboring countries is easy for EU, AS, NA, and SA, and not too hard for AF, but those island countries are tough. Most of us probably know all of the Caribbean countries, and the South Pacific island nations, but not their exact arrangement or location. Just point the beam in the right direction and start calling.

Being a life long map geek (even before discovering ham radio), I really enjoy this little game and play it every morning. I hope it amuses some of you as well. <https://worldle.teuteuf.fr/>



3B8M 2023 Experience

By Olof, G0CKV Permission was given by G0CKV to reprint this article

We enjoyed another instalment of our 3B8M adventure in 2023. The trade winds provided natural air conditioning, unknown birds sang for us, the ocean waves hitting the reef added a soothing noise effect, the views of the sunsets and sunrises and the full moon over the lagoon distracted us. For added context we occasionally checked the UK weather forecast.

A great team with some new operators meant more know-how and experience shared and also new dynamics. Antennas went up quickly and were taken down at record speed. The problems of the world were discussed and sorted under the stars on our veranda/shack.

3B8 is very far away from amateur population centers. Low elevation angles matter. The large majority of our QSOs are towards the NW – same direction for EU and NA. Our QTH is right on the ocean so we use verticals to benefit from their superb low-elevation pattern when they can have salt-water in the Fresnel zone.

Being far away also means long journeys and jet-lag. Then there is only so much you can pack in your luggage. Good planning is required. On an in/out field-day-style operation there is no time to find bits and pieces locally and they would probably not be available at any rate.

There is no chance to win the world from such a distant location as 3B8 – the bands are just not open enough hours and the distance means weaker signals in general. So we don't do this to win but to have fun and learn from each other and then find ways to improve year by year.

As an upgrade this year we used broadside arrays of 2-element VDAs and an omni vertical dipole for 20-15-10. The operator could select one broad VDA towards NW, two phased VDAs towards NW or an omni vertical dipole.

To improve our low-band reception and more quickly pull callers out of the noise we again experimented with receive antennas. A single K9AY was placed out on a rock in the lagoon.



3B8M 2023 Experience (cont.)

The prepared termination box for the K9AY was the only item that we (that is I) somehow forgot to pack so we improvised using a large FT43 toroid to build a transformer and a resistor kindly donated by a local resident ham. The K9AY was fed to a 40-80-160 triplexer followed by separate preamps for each band. We experimented with diversity receive.

Propagation at our latitude was fine but not as good as last year. 10 opened later and closed earlier than expected, 15 did OK almost around the clock, 20 was dead midday +/- 3 or 4 hours, 40 was good as usual an hour or so before our sunset until 1-2 hours after sunrise. The low bands performed much worse than last year. Noise on the bands was actually lower but the signals we heard were also low. We called and called but the stations we called didn't seem to hear us. Was this all an effect of the high solar flux providing increased attenuation on our latitudes right under the sun in local summer? Generally we had the impression that E/W paths up in northern latitudes were better than N/S paths but that may well have been our imagination.

With our team of 7 operators we had planned to run six stations but given the low-band condx down here we shared 80/160 on one station. As usual we used K3 radios with SPE amplifiers but this year we also used a Flex6700 with a 403A amplifier. We had no technical issues during the contest. With the help of our filters and stubs and carefully planned antenna placement we had almost no inter-station interference issues at all. The harmonics from 40 into 20-15-10 were as always the most obvious but that could easily be handled by operating a bit up on 40. High tides messed up our 80 and 160 radials but we spotted that and adjusted; strong winds broke loose a top-loading wire but that was also spotted and easily fixed.

Our major problem is getting the balance right between antenna ambitions and making time available to relax and enjoy the exchange of radio stories in good company and in a quite exceptional setting. We had the opportunity to meet up with local 3B8 friends a couple of times – a great way to learn more about a fascinating and beautiful country. Click to view photos on this link—<https://3b8mars.org/2023/11/29/2023-3b8m-team/>

If my arithmetic is correct we worked 12 unique calls from EI, 138 G, 3 GD, 5 GI, 25 GM, 1 GS, 2 GU and 9 GW. We had 6-band QS0s only with G6XX and M6T this year. We had 5-band QS0s with EI7M, G0BNR, G3vMW, G4IIY, G6T, GS7V and MD4K. Final Score: 24 596 754 Team in 2023 included 403A, G0CKV, G3XTT, K0AV, KX7M, M0SDV, WD6T.

3B8M will be back next year.

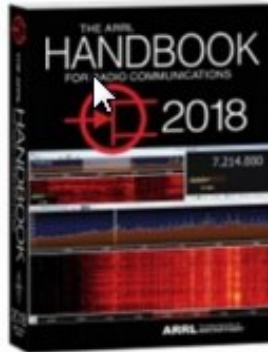
Olof G0CKV



ARRL OH Section Updates

From our ARRL Section Manager, Tom Sly, WB8LCD

Hey Gang, Do you get updates from your ARRL Ohio Section Manager via email? If not, go to: <http://arrl-ohio.org/handbook.html> and get registered.



What's the catch? I want to get everyone checking in to the Ohio Section website as often as possible, and in order to register each month, you have to visit the website often! There's nothing else to it. I pay all expenses, and from time to time, I Give Away more than just a Handbook. And, you'll never know just what months will be those special times that I will have more than just a Handbook to Give Away!!

Did you see the ad from ARRL recently? Well, they liked my idea so much that they've copied it. Yup, they were giving away a Handbook too!

Many of you ask me just how do I know when the drawing is on? Well, that's easy all you need to do is check in on the Ohio Section Website on a regular basis and watch for the big RED Arrow that will appear on the left side of the page. This is the sign that the drawing is on and you need to get registered. So, keep a sharp eye out on the website and check in often! <http://arrl-ohio.org>



Ragchewing, aka “The Magic Side of CW”

By Enzo Nicosia, M0KTZ



I read this article in the CWOPs newsletter, Solid Copy. I have been hesitant to jump in and have a “rag chew”, or conversation, using CW because my fist is a bit lacking. However, as my dad would have told me, You can’t pass the test without doing the homework! So, I have set a goal to have a good ragchew every week. In 2024, it will be to have good QSOs twice per week.

The author, M0KTZ, Enzo, and the editor, Dick, N9EEE, kindly granted permission to reprint this here.

"Sometimes I ask a friend if they won't consider letting me nominate them for membership in our club. I am sad when some say that they aren't contesters and wouldn't fit in. Of course, the club is not like that." -
- John N7HCN

This comment, shared by John in a private email, made me think a lot about the external image of CWops. Indeed, article 7 of our Club bylaws says:

7. All forms of CW interest and purpose are welcome, including code practice, ragchewing, contesting, traffic-handling, emergency communications, etc., and all kinds of sending methods, including sideswipers, straight keys, bugs, electronic keyers, keyboards, and the like are acceptable.

Our website further clarifies this intention by stating that we “Celebrate the unique art form of Morse Code” by supporting learning, the art of conversation, contesting, award chasing, and by recognizing excellence. But there is a general feeling that associates CWops strongly with contesting alone. Well, the reason is probably obvious: CWT is a very successful weekly event that fills the band with plenty of signals and enthuses CWops members and non-members alike.

Ragchewing, (cont.)

Similarly, CW Open has become a major fixture in the yearly contesting calendar, seeing the participation of hundreds of operators. Both of these events are "contests" in a general sense, i.e., periods of activity during which participants try to collect the largest possible number of contacts adhering to a prescribed QTC format.

But there is obviously more than that to our Club. There is a lot of support for learning CW, thanks to the efforts of the CW Academy advisors -most advisors are CWops members. There is award-chasing, with a line-up of different awards that can be collected by members (the scoring is made super-easy by the excellent web tool by Fabian DJ5CW!). And there is also the art of conversational CW, commonly referred to as "ragchewing," which is the point of this article.

I am sure you already know that CWops has a yearly activity dedicated to conversational CW, whereby participants report monthly the number of QSOs lasting more than 20 minutes (QTX) or more than 10 minutes (MQTX). But the point is not just to accumulate QSOs, but rather to exchange more than the bare minimum information to call it a valid contact (RST and NAME) and to engage in on-air discussions with fellow CW lovers. And I am sure you are aware of the "Giving Back" program, whereby experienced CWops members schedule a weekly slot of on-air activity to encourage newcomers to try out a standard QSO. You can find more details about QTX and Giving Back in the monthly columns dedicated to them in *Solid Copy*.

I am also sure that the vast majority of CWops members have not had a conversational CW recently, and some might not have had a "long" conversation over CW ever. We, the QTX bunch, argue that you might be missing out on a mesmerizing and most entertaining aspect of our hobby, and we hope that this article will enthuse you to give it a try. In this article, we provide a collection of "impressions" about ragchewing, with the aim of conveying at least part of the feeling associated with this aspect of the hobby. Then, we discuss a few common misconceptions and obstacles that would normally keep people away from conversational CW, and we provide a few practical tips on how each of them can be overcome.

Connecting minds through the ionosphere

So, what is so special about ragchewing? Well, in a sense, there is nothing special to it, at all. Conversational CW is just what it implies: a chat between two human beings, carried over CW instead of speech. On the surface, it is not much different from an in-person chat with a friend, from a discussion over the phone, or from a synchronous Internet chat (but yes, it is different from a forum or a reflector, since it is "synchronous").

Ragchewing, (cont.)

At the end of the day, you are just exchanging thoughts in real-time with another person. On the other hand, ragchewing differs from other synchronous ways of communication in three important ways. First, because, pretty much like any other ham radio activity, it does not need any third-party infrastructure to take place, unlike the phone network or the Internet. Nevertheless, it allows to cover immense distances, thanks to the help of ionospheric propagation. Third, CW is quite a unique way of encoding words; a mode that can be enjoyed only when our brain releases any tension and we "let it flow."

These might seem rather minor differences, but this is probably what makes conversational CW magic and special to some of us; you are using your own equipment to have a discussion with a person thousands of miles away, using a mode that speaks your heart and your mind, all the way through. After you have been in conversational CW for a while, and you have overcome the few obstacles you find at the beginning of the journey (we talk about them further down), you might start appreciating ragchewing as the closest thing to telepathy that humanity has been able to conceive. While you are in a long conversational QSO, you often forget that there is a key, a rig, a headset, and an antenna through which the dits and dahs that compose each single character travel to and fro. You have just the impression (which is indeed very real and concrete, especially over longer, informal chats) that your thoughts are transferred to the brain of the correspondent, and theirs just pop up in yours.

Most ragchewers describe this as a most intimate and relaxing experience:

"Being transparent, sharing your heart with another human being, eyes closed, fingers and thumb on the paddles, the ionosphere bringing minds in touch, thinking not about the gear or the fist or the bands, just the other person and the slight hesitation while they think or the rush when they are enthusiastic. Romantic notions? Maybe. But could kings of old have any greater power? We can't ignore this thing, it's bigger than Samuel F. Morse ever imagined. It is no longer a job, but an art, a language, and a culture." -- John N7HCN

And there is indeed a culture of CW ragchewing, as well as many sub-cultures. A virtue that all ragchewers have in common is patience. They say that ragchewers are "those hams who have nothing special to say, and still have plenty of time to say it," which is only partially true. When you are into ragchewing, you don't measure your activity or satisfaction by the number of QSOs in your log. You are not in a rush to accumulate points.

Ragchewing, (cont.)

You don't need another multiplier to make it to the top ten. Actually, there is no top-ten, as there is no ranking. And there is virtually no externally set time limit to the duration of your on-air activity, apart from the grumpy looks of your spouse who wants you to shut the bloody thing off and dash to the grocery shop. In a sense, ragchewers are the sloths of ham radio.

This almost automatically means that ragchewers are generally very understanding and accommodating with newcomers. Since there is no push to finish the QSO ASAP, or to go through a pileup in an efficient manner, a ragchewer will usually go out of their way to make the correspondent feel comfortable. During a conversation, you will have plenty of time (and ways) to notice if your correspondent is struggling understanding what you said, being it due to QRM or speed mismatch. And since the point is actually to have a meaningful conversation, there is normally no need for either party to ask for QRS during a ragchew; the two fellows will simply adjust their keying to a speed that makes the conversation possible and amenable for both, under the ongoing conditions. But don't be fooled by the "sloth" side of the affair. Many ragchewers also enjoy high-speed telegraphy. So, it is not at all uncommon for regular fellows that you have worked many times in the past and know you well, to QRQ to the limit you set last time, and take it from there. This is really where the "telepathy effect" starts to become real and concrete.

Another special thing about CW ragchewing is that these simple chats often result in enriching discoveries and new friendships. You might start noticing that you have lots of things in common with the people you chat with on air. You will have the chance of hearing about a particular antenna or transceiver that your pal has been experimenting with, and you might want to give it a try. But, more often than not, a contact might open unexpected windows on unexpected worlds (usually outside of amateur radio) that you may not knew existed. As when I found out that one of my correspondents was into amateur restoration of antique steam locomotives, or when in a casual QSO I discovered that Morris Dancing was a thing (and a quite popular one). Or when I realized that another frequent correspondent was living in a tiny village in the midst of the forest, in Northern Sweden, which seems to have come straight out of a fairy tale.

When you are into ragchewing, you will also start recognizing the "fist" of your on-air buddies. In fact, the vast majority of ragchewers do not send code with a keyboard. This means that no two ragchewers will sound exactly the same on air. We enjoy using straight keys, paddles, side-swipers, and bugs, and sometimes we employ several or all of them in the same QSO, as each QSO normally consists of several QTCs on each side. Even when using paddles and an electronic keyer, which guarantee a perfect 3:1 ratio of dahs versus dits, the code you produce still has a unique character.

Ragchewing, (cont.)

Such a character or fingerprint is given by the rhythm of spaces between characters and words, by the way we start each sentence, by the set of abbreviations we use, and by our specific manner of pausing and taking a breath. All these things make our fists "recognizable," even if we strive for a perfect 3:1 CW with perfect spacing. These are the things that make our CW unique. It is not uncommon to say to a frequent contact "happy to hear again your voice", as indeed we do recognize the CW voice of our fellows on air, exactly as you recognize a familiar voice in a crowd. It has happened many times to me to guess that a certain operator was behind the key of a special event callsign, and I was indeed right, as their voice (even when immersed in a perfect 3:1 code) was unmistakably recognizable.

Speaking of ragchewing subcultures, we know that it is often considered rude to BK into an ongoing QSO, except for very serious reasons. Indeed, you should be a lightning bolt to BK into an ongoing CWT QSO, but still, you got my point HI. Well, if you are listening to a ragchew among European stations, you might quite often hear other stations breaking-in, and a three or four-party roundtable QSO has started. This normally happens among hams who know each other very well or belong to the same Club/Group. I have seen this happening a lot among a bunch of QRQ German stations, but this is considered absolutely normal among Italian ragchewers as well. And believe me, this is a quite entertaining and vibrant kind of activity. Some of these round-robin QSOs can even last for a couple of hours, with a dozen or more stations signing in and out and participating to the ongoing discussion. It is like entering a pub and having a chat with the four pals you find at the bar. You take turns in saying something about the current state of affairs, and then another buddy chimes in with their comments. Then two new pals arrive and join the lot with their own trusted pint on hand, while one of the others has to go to pick their daughter from her weekly rugby training and signs off. Only, all of this is happening in CW, among people who are hundreds of miles apart from each other. Yet, they are enjoying themselves, creating and consolidating friendships.

Oddly enough, ragchewing can be a fantastic way for shy and introverted people to get out of their shell. After all, you are chatting of lighthearted and basically useless stuff, with people you have never ever met in person, and whom you might not ever meet in your life. It might seem odd at first, but then you realize that CW conversations are extremely good at making you feel comfortable, and the more you ragchew, the more you crave for it.

Finally, I would like to dispel another widespread myth about ragchewing: it is not, and does not necessarily have to be, an exclusive activity. There are many operators who have a strong preference for ragchewing over other CW activities, but there are many more to whom ragchewing is just part of the enjoyment they get from CW, as they are also keen contesters and successful DX chasers.

Ragchewing, (cont.)

There is nothing like "ragchewer once, ragchewer forevah!!!" Ragchewing has its own pace and its own ways, as contesting and chasing do.

You might prefer one or the other (or all of them together) depending on your character or inclination, or simply due to the contingency of your life. As much as one can be more talkative at times, and more meditative at other times, the nice thing about ragchewing is that you will not miss anything vital by not engaging into a longer CW chat for a while, or for years. There is no unique DX entity to chase. There is no important trophy to win. There is just thousands of human beings looking for a chat and a connection. And the joy of making that happen over CW.

Sorry Sir, I can't ragchew today because...

...excuses, excuses. We know all very well that you might face some initial obstacles which could restrain you from fully enjoying ragchewing on the bands. The good news is that those difficulties are not insurmountable, and in any case you are not alone; every single operator who has found themselves into ragchewing has been there. We have all felt the fear of not knowing who was going to reply to our CQ call, and what kind of chat we would have found ourselves into. We were scared of not being "good enough" and wary of making a mess out of it. I have collected below several "hints" about overcoming these obstacles, and some concrete suggestions about dispelling misconceptions about ragchewing. The contributions come from the whole QTX gang, in no specific order.

I am scared of calling CQ.

"I used to be a little shy about calling CQ, but the big advantage is that the person who responds can hear me. When I answer a CQ, I don't know how well the other op can hear me or how long conditions will allow us to continue chatting."

Indeed, many operators are scared of calling CQ for a standard or conversational QSO, as they don't know what awaits them. This might be especially true if you are just starting to explore conversational CW. In that case, making a sked with a code buddy is a great way to get started. First off, you already know the person at the other end of the QSO, which removes part of the tension.

Ragchewing, (cont.)

Second, you might agree in advance on some topic for each QSO, so that you know already what the chat will be about, more or less, and you could even scribble down a couple of points to cover during the QSO.

I don't think I am good enough.

A regular QTX participant offered:

"That fear is still an issue for me. Sometimes my lack of confidence makes me wonder whether the other op really did have to walk the dog or feed the cat when going QRT! Having a sked with a friend increases my confidence that he or she will forgive my mistakes."

Well, as we said before, this preoccupation is pointless, as ragchewers are a welcoming and supporting bunch. No correspondent is there to judge your sending or to count how many mistakes you have done so far. Just relax and take it easy. It is a conversation, and the correspondent has been in your shoes already. They know how you feel, because they felt more or less exactly the same during their first longer QSOs. They will do the best they can to support you, either by adjusting their speed to yours or by agreeing to as many requests for repeats as needed. The point is to have an amenable chat. If you happen to find a colleague who is less patient and less supportive than that, just pass some minimal information, give them a courteous 73, and spin the dial.

I don't know how to start a chat, I don't know what to say, and I don't want to chat with a stranger!

Another big conundrum. How would you start to get off the standard QSO script? The easy answer is, you can talk of almost anything, really. Let's go through a few suggestions from QTX folks:

"Here is an idea for how a beginner can break into ragchewing, which has worked for many beginners. Several clubs have special activities focused on beginners, and ongoing beyond the usual rubberstamp QSO. For instance, the Straight Key Century Club (SKCC) has what it calls the Weekend Sprintathon, once a month. It's like an ultra-slow-speed contest, but is very casual and informal. To the point that those QSOs often get into the ragchewing side of things."

"It can work well to ask the other op a question about his/her QTH, for example, "are you near the ocean?" Or, if I have visited that area, I might tell them about my experience."

Ragchewing, (cont.)

"When I am in ragchew mode, QTH is often a springboard for conversation. I live in the Lake Country area of Waukesha County in Southeastern Wisconsin, in a town called Pewaukee. That's a lot to get across in CW, so of course I don't. But if I'm on 40m, there's a likelihood of familiarity with the name of my town or they immediately equate it to Lake Country where we have nearly a dozen large recreational lakes. And then that inevitably leads to fond memories of water-skiing shows, landing a muskie, sailing competitions, hiking the Ice Age Trail, or many other memories. On the other end of the key, I often know their small town or city where I've traveled on business or might know someone there and ask questions about what they like about their area. And then that springboards into some other "rabbit hole" in the conversation. You never know where it will lead."

I don't know if the correspondent wants a longer QSO.

"There are a few ways I signal to the other op that I am up for a ragchew. When reporting my weather, I might say something conversational instead of the temperature. For example, 'warm today es looks like spring is finally here.' Or, when telling them about my antenna, I might say "2 ele yagi-used to be 3 elements but the wind took down the director". Or, when talking about rig, you might add some information about your key, which is something that normally remains outside a "standard" QSO. At that point, the correspondent might be in a conversational mood, and they could get it from there. In that case, they might come up with a comment about their local WX or a little story about their own homebrew key. And you are in a ragchew already. Otherwise, they might get to the finals and 73, and you would be off to look for another QSO. In either case, you lose nothing at all by having made the attempt.

I don't know how to end a conversation without sounding rude.

Well, you normally have this problem even when trying to put an end to an in-person conversation. The simplest reason for that is that you don't have much more to say. At that point, you could really tell the correspondent something like "WELL JIM, I REALLY NEED A STRETCH AND A CUP OF COFFEE NOW. QRU? BK". They would normally reply with something along the lines of "FB Tom, CFM QRU = MNI TNX FER THE NICE QSO..." and get into their finals. Over a longer chat you might use a polite way out, as in "OK DAVID, I WONT KEEP YOU LONGER. TNX FOR THIS VY FB QSO..." and go to the final 73. More often than not, you might really have a good excuse to terminate the conversation, like in the prosaic (but true!) "SRI BUT THE XYL IS YELLING AT ME, AS DINNER IS READY = GOTTA RUN = TNX FOR QSO..." or in "SRI JANE, REALLY NEED TO MAKE A MOVE NOW AS I HAVE TO GO TO WORK SOON = TKS FER THIS QSO...." and so on.

Ragchewing, (cont.)

Anyway, you might want to take into account that the "finals" in a ragchewing QSO might be quite "lengthy" and allow some time for them. After having declared their intention to drive the QSO to an end, your correspondent will normally thank you several times, and send all sort of greetings and best wishes. These are normally heartfelt and sincere, as when you are wishing farewell to a good friend.

I am not confident with head-copying

Some operators are scared of not knowing what kind of information the correspondent is about to send. But head-copy is indeed the only way to fully appreciate ragchewing.

"The biggest thing that holds me back is worrying if I am not copying everything. Getting comfortable with that is vital. Otherwise I won't push my copy limit. Having a place where I can find partners to practice ragchewing with who are in the same boat I am has been tremendously helpful." (Send that 10 times, really fast -backwards!)

"I'm sure head-copying is the way to go. Many hams have told me not to worry about getting every bit of info in a QSO. They say that if you keep at it, you'll get the gist of what is being said, and that is the important thing."

"One way to practice head-copying text is to use the LCWO site's "convert text to CW" feature. You can paste in some text and then send it to yourself at whatever speed."

Many CW lovers have used this trick (or another related software called "ebook2cw", still by the same Fabian DJ5CW) to translate and "read" in CW their preferred classic books. This is a terrific way to improve your head-copying skills. Not just in terms of the percentage of text that you can read without issues, but, more importantly, to practice the ability of "letting it go", i.e., trying to keep our brains away from the details and concentrated on the overall meaning of the message being sent, without becoming too much frustrated about having missed bits and pieces here and there. After all, if under marginal conditions you hear some "XYL... CHORES... GARDEN... SRI MUST GO" and you miss the rest, you know already what is going on there, right?

I cannot send/receive at high speeds.

Many operators who are confident contesting at 30 wpm+ are ready to admit that they would have a hard time copying a conversation at even much slower speeds. There is no reason at all to be ashamed about that.

Ragchewing, (cont.)

Contesting at higher speed is a different beast, and it is somehow facilitated by the fact that we already know the structure of the QTC (usually RST followed by a number), so our brain can fill in the blanks with that template more easily. Receiving the description of what our correspondent sees out of their window in that moment, or a rant about the amount of weed they had to pull out of their front garden over the weekend, or an excuse for having to end the QSO due to the postman ringing at the door with a delivery that was long overdue, well, that is a completely different business.

The reality is that conversations might, but do not necessarily have to, happen at high speeds. In fact, any speed at which you are comfortable is good for a ragchew. Many QTX participants have suggested that their ragchews normally happen at any speed between 18 and 25 wpm, which seem to cover a large portion of the activity on the bands anyway. Learning to send/receive at those speeds should not be a problem for any CWops member, as this level of skill is required for Club nomination and sponsorship. In any case, ragchewers are normally more than happy to QRS (slow down) if they notice that you are sending at a slower speed, or if you explicitly ask for "QRS PSE" during one of your overs. The point of ragchewing is to have a pleasant conversation, not to show-off. What matters are the things you say, not how quickly you get to the point.

Having said that, I must confess that there is a totally new level of pleasure in CW conversations happening at 30-35 wpm or more. When speed increases, the whole business becomes just a matter of letting the discussion flow. There is little time to think about what to say next, and there is no time at all to focus on the exact movements you need to do in order to send each of the letters of a word like "COINCIDENTALLY." Your brain knows, and your fingers will do their job. You just think to the next word, and it gets sent over as if you were speaking or typing. Words are short at explaining this kind of experience in full. You should try it yourself. Another good reason to keep improving our CW skills HI.

It is not possible to ragchew at QRP power levels, is it?

"QRP operators have to deploy a more strategic plan to their on-air operating than LP or HP stations. I find it very difficult to call CQ and get a response when operating QRP. And I usually look for S9+ signals to reply to knowing I likely have a lesser signal and want to make it easier for the other op not to succumb to too much impact from QSB. I dunno, maybe I'm overthinking it".

Ragchewing, (cont.)

Well, it is true that ragchewing can get slightly more difficult at QRP (5W or less) power levels, as QSB and QRM might chop away part of a QSO. But that's not much more difficult than having a longer chat at 100W. Many ragchewers (including myself) operate routinely, primarily, or exclusively QRP. And they manage to have long discussions with likely-minded fellows. There is no magic there; if propagation allows the difference between a 100W signal and a 5W one is 13dB, or about 2 S-points. So, if a station puts a 100w signal and is received at S9+10dB (not unusual, at all), the same station would still be audible at slightly less than S9 if they put out a 5W signal. Many of us would have a hard time telling the difference between the two of them. OK, that's the theory, but in practice, how many chance do I have to have nice ragchews if I am running QRP?

Well, the main ingredient here is knowing your stuff, and in particular, being able to read the current propagation conditions. It is true that calling stronger stations is an easier way of getting into longer chats.

But I have had many 30-min-plus QRQ (30 wpm+) ragchews at 500mW (yes, I mean half a watt here) on both sides. It surely does not happen everyday, but it happens much more frequently than not, and definitely almost every day at 5W. Obviously, I can only dream of having a ragchew from my QTH in London with a station in Montana on 10m at night during sunspot minima. Even if I were running full legal power into a Yagi, the odds would be close to null. Knowing what the propagation conditions are, and which bands will probably bring your signal where, is absolutely fundamental at any power levels, and moreso at QRP. The price to pay for ignorance is frustration. But the more time you spend on the bands, the more you understand what are the best time slots to talk to certain areas in a reliable manner. It just boils down to practice and experience.

I have no time.

Really? Think again. You might not have enough time to make a dozen 30-minute QSOs a day (been there). But again, ragchewing is not about the sheer number of QSOs. You might get a lot of satisfaction from just one or two friendly chats on the air a day. After all, if it's the amount of code sent and received that gives you pleasure, the fact that such an amount of code is scattered across a sequence of super-short exchanges or split between two longer chats with your airwaves pals does not require a different amount of on-air time.

Ragchewing, (cont.)

But I can't just get on air and go chatty. I need a motivation for that.

Fair enough. It is undeniable that for some operators the challenge of going up a ladder and reclaiming a trophy is an integral part of their operating practice. Well, you do have plenty of trophies and awards that recognize ragchewing activity. The CWops QTX/MQTX initiative actually provides several levels of perpetual and annual awards to chase. Other Clubs and CW-focused organizations have similar activities with associated awards. Notable examples include the Straight Key Century Club SKCC with its many ragchewing challenges and awards, and the mythical "Marathon" (get 100 ragchewing contacts with other members, each lasting for at least one hour (good luck with that!)); the EU CW Club (EuCW) and its Snakes and Ladders activity (work stations in 5min+ QSOs each month, collect grid squares and discover whether any of your squares was a snake (lose points) or a ladder (gain them)); and many more.

Wrapping up: you can (and you should) give it a try

I really hope that this short article has convinced you to give a stab to conversational CW, as it is a fun, rewarding, and absolutely mesmerizing aspect of our hobby. Just get yourself comfy, brew a cuppa, sit in the shack, spin the dial, and get ready for a fantastic trip.

I would like to thank all the folks who participate monthly to the QTX/MQTX activity; many of them have contributed much of the text you have read, and in particular Kat KK6CN, Christine K0ALT, Larry, KF6NCX, John N7HCN and Dick N9EEE. Special thanks go to Dick N9EEE for his continuous encouragement, and to John N7HCN, for several interesting email exchanges and for his previous "Ragchewing 101," a great resource on ragchewing which appeared in [Sol id Cop y April 2019](#). Go and read it now!



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Japanese Castles on the Air—JACOTA

Castle #5 by Greg Cook, JO3SLK

This is part 6 of the Japanese Castles on the Air program submitted by Greg Cook, JO3SLK. Thanks to Ray, N9JA, for connecting us for these great articles.

Castle 5. Ikeda castle

I'm back on the castle trail again! It has been a long time, but I decided that I could now take a short trip to a nearby castle to operate from. The corona virus situation is still serious the Kansai area, and there are travel restrictions for "non-essential" reasons....but visiting and operating at a castle again is something I considered "essential!" So, I drove the 25 minutes it takes to reach Ikeda castle from my house and talked to the park director about operating Ham radio on the castle grounds. He said that I would need to submit a formal request to the city office, but in principle it should be OK. He gave me the necessary forms and I had a friend fill them out in Japanese and then I sent them by email to the director. A few days later the director called me and said that the city had approved my request, so I was good to operate on Friday, the 23rd of July. So, Ikeda castle is the topic of this month's JACOTA operation. The city of Ikeda, where Ikeda Castle is located, is also famous among hams for the Kansai Ham Festival.

It was the second day of a 4-day holiday/weekend, and I was somewhat concerned about a lot of people visiting the castle....and also about the heat! The weather was forecast to be hot and humid, and the forecast was correct. I arrived at the parking lot very close to the castle about 8:15am and waited for the castle to open at 9:00am. There are only 6 parking spots at the lot very near the entrance of the castle, but there is another large parking lot just north of the castle, that is just a short walk to the entrance.

Ikeda castle is located in Osaka prefecture, and about a ten-minute walk from Hankyu Ikeda station. Ikeda castle is a small castle, similar to Shoryuji (May issue of FB News.) and is easy to visit in a morning or an afternoon.

Japanese Castles on the Air—JACOTA (cont.)

History of Ikeda castle

The castle was originally a small fortification built by Ikeda Noriyori in 1334. The Ikeda clan ruled the area from this time through to the Sengoku Period. The castle was involved in many battles and struggles for power in the area and gradually grew in size and strength with each one. The castle fell to Oda Nobunaga in 1568. Nobunaga recognized the skills and intelligence of Ikeda Katsumasa, lord of the castle, and made him a retainer. Ikeda rebuilt and strengthened much of the castle, learning from Nobunaga's castle techniques. Araki Murashige took over the castle in a coup in 1570 and expelled Ikeda Katsumasa from the castle. The castle was abandoned in 1580 when Araki moved to Itami Castle. (History courtesy of Jcastle at <http://jcastle.info>)



Ikeda main keep and surrounding pond. The Tenshu is a reconstruction and is very nicely maintained. You can sit on the platform and view the pond, a very peaceful experience.

Japanese Castles on the Air—JACOTA (cont.)



Main gate, Otemon Gate and a wooden bridge to the castle. To the right after you pass through the gate is an office and rear area. The staff in the office are very nice and helpful.

A tea house on the castle grounds.



Japanese Castles on the Air—JACOTA (cont.)



To the left of the gate is a nice garden.



A large open ground with foundation stones. The grass is very green and trim.

Japanese Castles on the Air—JACOTA (cont.)



The vast green lawn of the castle grounds. It would be great to set up a large antenna on the grass and operate here all day...but not in summer!
The castle is at the far end of the grounds.



The reconstructed Tenshu.

Japanese Castles on the Air—JACOTA (cont.)

Setup

I found this spot next to the Tenshu that looked like a good place to set up my station and operate from. There is some shade from the Tenshu roof, which I thought would be nice, as the forecast was for a hot and humid day.

The stone ledge at the base of the Tenshu is where I can set my bags on and sit while operating. I had my IC-705 transceiver in the LC-192 backpack, which held everything I needed, including an antenna.

I decided to use the Icom AL-705 magloop antenna as it is compact, is easy to mount on a tripod and I have finally learned to tune it fairly quickly. I wanted to use the Buddistick Pro® tripod, but I forgot an adaptor I needed to mount the antenna tuning box to the “Versa Hub.” I ended up mounting the antenna to my camera tripod, which had the correct sized base screw.

Constructing a vertical dipole would have been the best antenna to use on 40 meters, but the location was too close to the Tenshu and the walking path, and I had to think about the visitors that would be walking past my station. Setting up on the wide grassy area would have been perfect, but that was not allowed, and there was no shade nearby. In addition, the place I chose had a pretty open view to Osaka and Kobe.

I hung the Go Pouch on the tripod for some additional weight (batteries, adaptors, tablet) and to show my call sign tag in the top pocket. Several visitors seem to understand what I was doing, and paused to watch. (Next Page)



Japanese Castles on the Air—JACOTA (cont.)

HF and D-Star Operations

The Ikoma 430 repeater was fairly easy to access with a simple whip antenna and 5 watts, and I used it for D-STAR contacts. It is located high on Mount Ikoma, east of Osaka. Unfortunately I couldn't access the Tanimachi repeater, JR3VH, owned and operated by the Tanimachi Repeater Club, where I am a member. The Tanimachi repeater is located in the center of downtown Osaka.

Later in the morning I switched to HF. I found a clear frequency in the SSB portion of the 40 meter band and called CQ, but got no reply. I thought my signal was too weak or the antenna was just not tuned right. I called a friend in south-east Osaka, and he said he couldn't hear me at all...the signal seemed to skip over

Osaka. So I went hunting for other stations calling CQ and managed to work stations in Mie and southwestern Hyogo prefectures. RSTs ranged from 43 to 57.



Antenna setup and ready to go.



Taking a break in the shade of the Tenshu (castle keep).

The day was getting hotter and more humid, so I packed up the station, gave my thanks to the nice castle staff and told them I would send them a link to the August FB News site. By the time I got back to my car I was sweating, but it had been a great day and a lot of fun. I hope other hams will operate from Ikeda or another castle that they find. JACOTA operation is a lot of fun and learning more about the castles is very interesting.

Our DX Friends are saying....

As we have done in previous newsletters, I sent our DX Friends a question and asked for their opinions. The question was "What has the history of your ham radio equipment been? In other words, what equipment did you start with, what other equipment did you own/build, and what do you have now? Thanks to our former interviewees for sharing their thoughts...

My first HF radio was a B25 with atu attached ..old army radio with a telephone microphone. Then a FT101 followed by a Kenwood TRC 70 followed by a Kenwood TS50 followed by Yaesu FT450 and finally a Kenwood TS570S that I am using for SSB and digital modes

I enjoyed every radio with the pros and cons but the HF radio I thoroughly enjoyed was the B25. I traveled 6 years around South Africa with it on a bus and the antenna I used I built myself out of twin flex or the other name for it; "ripcord ."

This is my story

73 Enjoy the evening and be safe

De Zs2ec, Theunis

In our club, we had a Kenwood TS-515 transceiver; many, many, years back and that was the first radio I have come in touch with. It was a good radio, typical Kenwood, trusted, and great to operate. The next one was my brother's Heathkit HW-101.

The first radio I owned was a Yaesu FT-200. I operated one snowy day and the SWR was as high as the Empire State Building! After a few hours of operation, the radio just blew the fuse and after a replacement, it was just fine. I was a rookie then, poor radio. Then it was a Atlas 350XL and a Yaesu FT-101Z. I own a Kenwood TS-830S with the external VF0. I operated in many contests and RTTY contests also. Finally, I bought a KenwoodTS-850S. Those radios have a great tuner. Still in love with that transceiver. I was checking the Yaesu FT-920 and finally bought an Icom IC-775DSP, I still have that radio. I think I will use this radio for many, many, years. I like its' 200W output and its' good receiver. It has all filters installed including the roofing one.

With the years, if money permits I will buy one FT-5000 (high-power version). That is my dream, maybe one day.

I hope it is fine for you, best of luck!

73 es DX de [Janez S51DX](#)

Our DX Friends are saying (cont)

My Transceivers

1975 - 1985

I bought my first HF station at OZ4SJ (SK), Svend Aa. Jensen in Valby. And I was in Copenhagen to pick it up myself.

OZ4SJ imported radio amateur equipment from America; such as Heath Kit, Drake and Ten-Tec.

It was 1975 and I had spent a lot of time visiting different dealers and seeing what equipment there was to choose from. Transceivers with transistors in the PA stage had started to appear, so I was not interested in getting a transmitter with tubes. This meant that there were not that many models to choose from. On the other hand, there were more dealers then and I visited several shops here in South/Central Jutland and Funen to look at the goods.

One of the Transceivers I was very interested in was an Atlas 350-XL All solid state SSB/CW Transceiver 350Watt 10-160m Full-QSK which could be obtained from OP Electronic in Nykøbing F. but it was too expensive for me.

Other options were Heath Kit building sets which were very popular but difficult to obtain in Denmark. There was a very sold model SB-102 SSB Transceiver which cost DKK 5,900 (Delivered through OZ4SJ) and there was the new model SB-104 Single Sideband Transceiver which was somewhat more expensive. Heath Kit also made a Low-Cost model HW-101 5-Band SSB-CW Transceiver but it did not have full break-in and it had tubes in the PA stage.

Since I was only interested in CW, my interest fell on Ten-Tec, which had a good reputation and was already at the forefront of transistor technology, as well as famous for their perfect QSK (real full break-in that cannot be found better ;o)

My wallet limited me to ordering a Ten-Tec Argonaut 509 from Svend Aage and it cost me around DKK 2,900. - picked up in Valby, of course. It became my first station with which I ran countless QSOs until 1978 when I



Our DX Friends are saying (cont)

bought a Triton IV 540. You can read about my previous Transceivers below.

My first radio amateur station 1975 - TEN TEC Argonaut 509

My first station which I was very happy with. It had a really good receiver and then it had silent diode switching instead of relay switching at transmitter/receiver (QSK).

Frequency range 10-80 meters

Modulation types CW/USB/LSB

Frequency Stability <100 Hz @ 10.5 to 14 VDC

Sensitivity <0.5 μ V at 10 dB S+N/N

Selectivity 2.5KHz v. 6dB

Single Conversion: IF at 9 MHz

Antenna impedance 50 Ohm

Transmission power 3 Watt Out

CW QSK!



First QS0 on 19 December 1975 [DM4ZEB]

Last QS0 on July 16, 1978

My first radio amateur station 1978 - Ten-Tec Century 21 Model 570

Frequency range 10-80 meters

Modulation types CW/SSB

Frequency Stability <10 Hz @ 10.5 to 14 VDC

Sensitivity <1 μ V at 10 dB S+N/N

Selectivity 0.5 / 1.0 / 2.5 KHz

Direct Conversion receiver

Antenna impedance 50 Ohm

Transmission power 30 Watt out

CW QSK



I only had this station for a very short time. The receiver simply could not be used, it could not keep up with the Argonaut receiver at all.

First QS0 on 18 July 1978 [F6DYF]

Last QS0 on September 10, 1978

Our DX Friends are saying (cont)

My third ham radio station 1978 - Ten-Tec Triton IV 540

This was a really nice station with which I made more than 6,000 QSOs until July 1982. After 1982, it only became very few (Family life and the computer had taken over my interests ;o)

Frequency range 10-80 meters
Modulation types CW/SSB
Frequency Stability <10 Hz @ 10.5 to 14 VDC

Sensitivity <0.3 μV at 10 dB S+N/N
Selectivity 2.4KHz v. 6/60dB
Single Conversion: IF at 9 MHz
Dual-gate MOSFET RF stage and MC1496 mixer

Antenna impedance 50 Ohm
Transmission power 100 Watt Out
CW QSK - The famous Ten-Tec that works!

First QSO on 12 September 1978 [OZ2QK]
Last QSO October 29, 1985



My fourth radio amateur station 2011 - Yaesu FT-450

Frequency range 160-6 meters
Modulation types CW/SSB/AM/FM
Frequency Stability ± 1 ppm/hour v. 25°C
Sensitivity <0.25 μV at 10 dB S+N/N
Selectivity 2.2KHz v. 6/60dB
Antenna impedance 50 Ohm
Transmission power 5-100 Watt

First QSO on September 11, 2011
[5B9CKV]



I started with the Yaesu FT-450 in 2011. (It has now found a new happy owner in the Faroe Islands :o)

Our DX Friends are saying (cont)

My fifth ham radio station 2011 - Ten-Tec Eagle 599AT

A simple little station with a super good receiver. November 2011 my Eagle came home from the USA. So how is it to use?

The operation is quite simple. It doesn't have many buttons, but there are the ones you need for a quick setting. I like radio stations best without a whole lot of settings that I don't use for anything anyway. I only ride CW and use a paddle so the Eagle suits me really well.



When I'm working on a tape, I actually only use the VFO and the BW/PBT and AF/RF Gain buttons. They are well positioned and easy to get to.

The receiver works very well. When you've just got the RF gain set to match the band, it's amazing how much you can hear. RF gain should be set reasonably low on most bands. After that I mostly use BW and VFO.

The transmitter can deliver 100W and it's a good clean signal which several times in Pile-Ups means that I got through after quite a few attempts. It cannot be due to the effect nor my antenna, which is a LW ;o)

Another good thing is the small size as well as the low weight. It is easy to carry as hand luggage on any plane and I use that as well.

My Sixth Ham Radio Station 2012 - Elecraft K3

In the fall of 2012, I was tempted beyond my means and gave myself an Elecraft K3. The transceiver that is praised everywhere and is famous for its robustness and participation in many DX-peditions around the world. The model I bought had 2 receivers, Antenna tuner, 100W PA, 400Hz 8-pole filter, 6KHz + 2.4KHz filters, RF i/o module and Digital Voice recorder.

I don't know exactly how old it was. It can be hard to tell from the serial number (2334) and the seller didn't know, but the best estimate I've come up with is approximately December 2008 (then s/n 2362 was produced).

The K3 is really a superstation with a receiver that is second to none to all the other radios I have tried (Yaesu 450 and 1000, Kenwood TS950 etc.) and probably also surpasses my Ten-Tec in certain respects, as it has slightly more setting options.

My experience with Elecraft and Ten-Tec is that they are both super stations when it comes to CW (and that's the only Mode I use).

Our DX Friends are saying (cont)

I use both stations with equal pleasure and what Elecraft has in the receiver, the "Eagle" has in return in "Silk smooth Break-in" which is a joy to work with.

First QSO on December 11, 2012

Last QSO ??

My seventh amateur radio station.

Over the past 10 years, I have had almost the entire Elecraft series at home – K1, K2, KX3, KPA100, KAT2 and more and have also tested the K4.

The radio following me now is a K3s (#11432) with 100W, ATU and filters – 6K, 2.8K, 1.8K, 400 and 250hz.

The station has already been on many trips and was last in Iceland from where I participated as TF/OU2I in the CQWW DX CW 2023 Contest with an excellent result.

For now I have no intention of replacing my K3s with anything else. It is ideal for traveling and it meets my needs perfectly.

However, I am experimenting a bit with the uSDX transceiver project and some small antennas, but it is not at the serious end.

Many thanks to AJ8B Bill for your fantastic composition of the magazine and herewith also Xmas greetings to all SWODXA's members. Best wishes for a peacefully happy new year.

Hope to meet you on the CW bands - in the next Contest.

Best 73 de **OZ2I Henning**



New Submission Tool for DX Marathon

By Mark—WC3W (wc3w@arrl.net)

Ladies and Gentlemen of The DX Marathon Program:

We wanted to make all of you aware early of an exciting change we have been working on throughout 2023 to simplify the submission process for your 2023 results to be submitted between January 1-5, 2024.

Why are we doing this? The answer is simple. We are trying to continue to make participation easy for everyone AND we must position our program for future growth as we expand. We don't yet know what 2023 will bring in terms of participation but in 2022, we grew at a +46% rate. We have exciting enhancements we wish to make in the future so we must pay careful attention to our processes to make it possible to continue to administer the program in a quality manner.

How does the submission process work? In the past, you created an Excel file and that was your submission. Some of you edited this worksheet manually, directly in Excel, but most used tools like AD1C's to process an ADIF export from your logging program, or if you were using DX Keeper, you generated the Excel worksheet directly. This Excel file is still accepted, and you can upload it on our new Submission Tool to get started with your entry.

Now, however, you can skip all these steps, generate an ADIF file from your logging program, and upload this instead of the Excel file. The Submission Tool will help you select, review and edit your entry directly, making any additional tools and applications completely optional. You can find a link to the new Submission Tool right in the middle of www.dxmarathon.com.

The most significant benefit to you with the new tool is that it will allow you to review, and more importantly, EDIT, each one of your entries.

Why is this a benefit to you? Well as you all know, you and only you are responsible for the integrity and accuracy of your reported QSO's.



New Submission Tool for DX Marathon (cont.)

Just as the case in the past, you get a wrong CQ zone, you list a pirate, or you make a typo, your QSO will be rejected, and you will lose the point. The new submission tool does not check the integrity of your QSOs; that is for you to do just as you have in the past.

Stated another way, your results as reported are only as good as the accuracy of your log. Therefore, we encourage all participants to carefully check all of your information before submission. The tool will make this easier for you to accomplish.

If you've been using Excel to keep track of your progress or use DX Keeper or AD1C's tool to generate the worksheet, you can still keep your workflow.

We have beta-tested the tool for the last 2 months with over 100 participants. The results that we have thus far are excellent and those that have used it are very impressed. Of course, in a beta test, we did uncover some issues which have been corrected.

You will notice with the tool, that there will be a list of questions as you continue through the process to include your station data, your call, and your antenna details. If you have a club affiliation, be sure to include that as well. If your club is not in the provided list, that's fine, just make sure all clubs settle on a single descriptive input, for example, the Northern Illinois DX Association should decide on NIDXA or whatever they choose (or even better, send us an email with the name and we'll include it in the list). The antenna questions will help define your entry classification, i.e. Unlimited, Limited, Formula, or QRP.

The tool is live now. Go ahead and try it out. As was the case in the past, you can have multiple submittals, the last of which will be the only one to be maintained. Also, your early submittals are held confidential within our system and are not available in the public domain. I encourage all to start using it to avoid a panic rush when the official submittal is due between January 1-5, 2024.

We want to encourage more software developers to produce ADIF files that work flawlessly with our tool, and if their apps do a better job at selecting QSOs than our does, then they can produce an ADIF, or even an XML file, that only has one QSO per entity and zone, so no further decisions are needed.

New Submission Tool for DX Marathon (cont.)

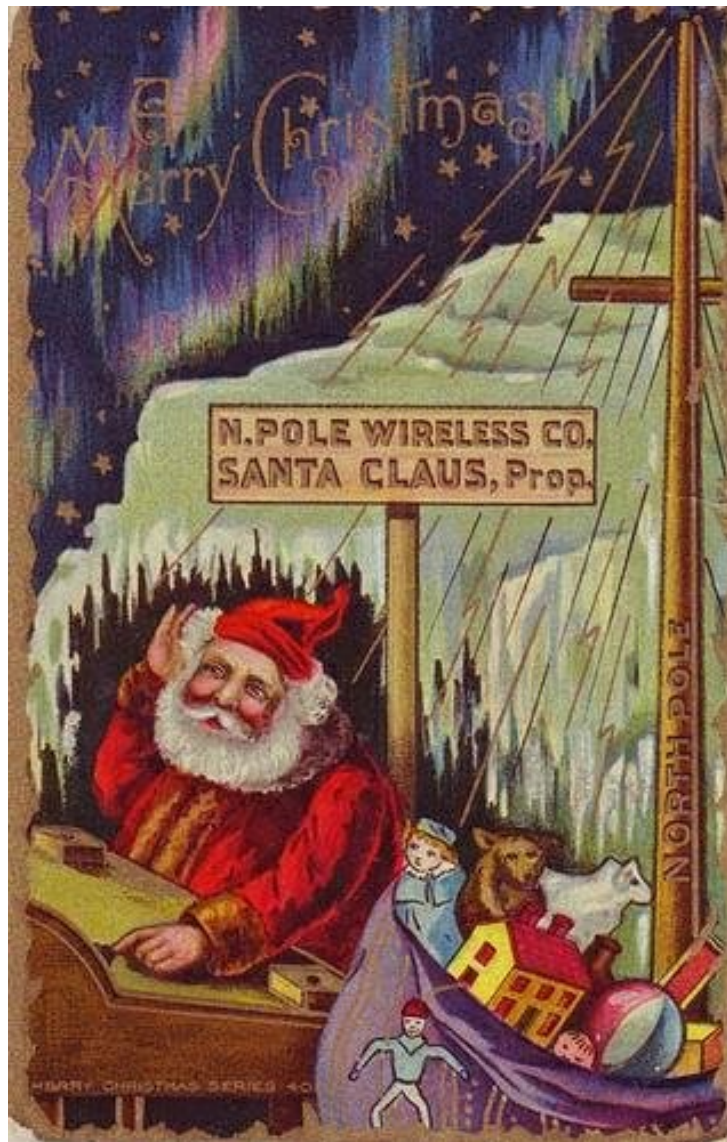
Your DX Marathon administrative staff are always available to assist you. I would also encourage you to join DX Marathon Group IO as that is a great forum to get many of your questions answered.

PLEASE TRY IT OUT NOW! JUST DO IT! If you have any issues, please email both Sebastian at KI2D@dxmarathon.com myself, at wc3w@dxmarathon.com and describe the issue. Any other comments are appreciated.

73

Mark-WC3W

CQ DX Marathon Program Administrator



My First Beam Project

By Bill, AJ8B (aj8b@arrl.net)

Since 1980 I have been chasing DX with various degrees of effort and varying degrees of success. I have had a variety of rigs including an HW-101, TS-530SP, IC-718, FT-950, and my current Flex-6400. I have used a variety of wire antennas when and where I could. The one constant companion has been my 6BTV vertical. (Fig. 1) Over the years, I have added the 12M and 17M kits, the radial ground plate and the tilt-over base. I have been able to confirm 310 countries, WAZ, and 1,600 in the Challenge. All good totals for a modest station. However, to get to the next level, I knew I had to get some aluminum in the air.

If you know me, then you know my limitations. I am 6'9" and not slim. However, my big challenge is that I have had 4 hip replacements. That really limits my climbing, whether it is a ladder or a tower section. So, I had to find a solution that met my physical needs and would not force a housing refinance!

At the 2022 DX Dinner®, I happened upon a discussion between several hams. One had just put up a hex beam and the other two hams were telling him how much he would love it. They mentioned that although it was a 2-element beam for 6M through 20M, it was lightweight, easy to build and easy to get into the air. You will see my inexperience with such matters as this in the rest of the article. However, I am always looking to learn!

I checked around and after reading several of the reviews in QST¹, I settled on the K4KI0 hexbeam². Since I had not built a beam and raised it before, I thought this experience would be something I could share, and a few others might benefit. So, here it is...



Figure 1 My 6BTV Vertical with the 17M kit installed.



Figure 2 32" x 6" ID PVC

My First Beam Project (cont.)

I was having chili with Joe, W8GEX, and Janet, W8CAA, and the topic turned to the hex beam. I mentioned that I was trying to determine the concrete needed to get the push up mast secured. It really didn't seem like it would be a lot, but it would be permanent. I had the perfect area in a clearing in my woods for just such a project. Joe told me about a way to secure the pole that I had not heard of.

Sink a 32" piece of 6" I.D. PVC in the ground. (Fig. 2, Fig. 3) Pack the space around the outside of the PVC with pea gravel. (Fig. 4) Use a 4x4 as the "tower" portion of the assembly. The 8' long 4x4 will go into the PVC, allowing over 5 feet of 4x4 to mount to. Once you put the 4x4 into the PVC, use more pea gravel around the 4x4 to really pack it down. I used a broom handle as a "tamp." Always keep an eye to make sure the 4x4 is plum. Once this is done and you have it packed, that 4x4 isn't going anywhere!

A bonus is that if you need to take it down, a wet/dry shop vac can be used to remove the pea gravel allowing you to lift the 4x4 out!



*Figure 3 My grandson digging the hole.
Lucky Me!!!*



Figure 4 Finished Mount

My First Beam Project (cont.)



Figure 5 4x4, rotor, and thrust bearing on "tower" portion.
Looks crooked but it isn't!

Building the Hex Beam:

Carefully unpack the hex beam components. I received 2 boxes from K4KI0, excellent instructions, and clearly marked components. However, I missed one of the bags that contained about 1/3 of the mounting hardware. I contacted K4KI0 and ordered what I needed. They overnighted it to me. A few days later, I found the missing bag. I sent it back to K4KI0. Not only did they give me full credit, but they paid for shipping both ways and then followed up!

I painted the spreaders to protect the fiberglass from UV deterioration. Rust-oleum proved to be quite effective.

Figure 7 shows the mast plate and the feed point together ready for the spreaders. The next several pictures show the steps in putting it together.



Figure 7 Mast plate and feed point in place - ready for the spreaders.



Figure 6 The spreaders laid out for painting.

My First Beam Project (cont.)

Figure 8 shows the spreaders together and mounted to the mast plate. The spreaders each have 3 sections that slide into each other. Once the spreaders are pulled up and held in place, they are quite mechanically sound.

Figure 9 shows the assembled antenna at the "antenna farm", ready to install. There was one spreader in the original box that had the wire holding clamps in place and that was used as a template for the rest. I did some minor physical adjustments of the wire tension.

I performed some SWR measurements for each band to make sure there was nothing wrong. All checked out OK.

I was now feeling the pressure to finish for two reasons. First, I only had to install the rotor, the thrust bearing, the guy wires and the push-up mast to be on the air. Secondly, it is 2 weeks until CQWW CW and 2 days

before a major cold front is due with wind and rain. So, I was up and out early on that Saturday!

Figure 10 shows the Yaesu 450G rotor mounted to a steel plate using "L"-channel hardware used in garage door systems. I used 1/8" 9" x 12" steel plate⁸ to hold the thrust bearing and the rotator. Figure 11 shows the thrust bearing installed.



Figure 8



Figure 9

My First Beam Project (cont.)



Figure 10



Figure 11

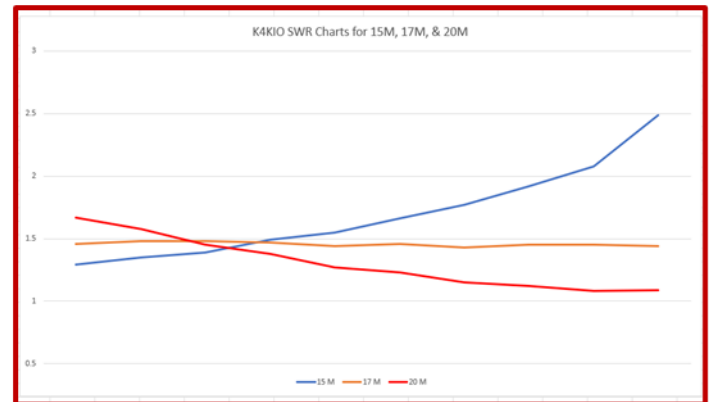
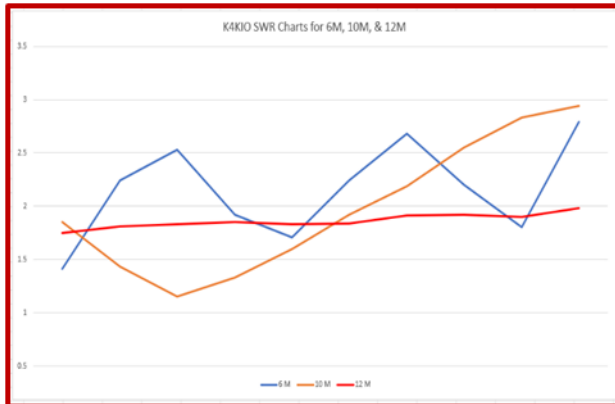
I dropped the pushup mast³ through the thrust bearing⁴ and into the rotator⁵. I used a ¼" piece of wood as a spacer between the bottom of the mast and the rotator housing. This allows the thrust bearing to hold all the weight. I dropped the guy wire Ring Kit⁶ over the mast between the top and middle sections. We (my son Patrick and I) secured the thrust bearing and then the rotator.

Once this was done, I attached the guy ropes to the Guy Ring. You must be careful not to get your feet tangled up in the ropes, the coax, and the rotator cable! I was able to lift the hex beam assembly up to Patrick and he was able to drop the antenna mast pipe into the push up mast. We secured it with two 2.5" stainless steel bolts. Patrick then pushed up each section and I secured it. Finally, we secured the guy ropes to the guy anchors, and we were ready to go!

The SWR charts are on the next page. It has really performed well. The rotator interfaced beautifully with my DX Suite^{7,9} logging program. Now I need to remember that this does work differently than a vertical!

My First Beam Project (cont.)

If you have any questions, just drop me a line and we can set up a sked. I bet I can work you now!



¹ QST August 2017

² [KIO Technology \(k4kio.com\)](http://k4kio.com)

³ [WiMo Antennen und Elektronik 18305-5 WiMo Aluminum Telescoping Masts | DX Engineering](#)

⁴ [Yaesu GS-065 Yaesu Rotator Mast Bearings | DX Engineering](#)

⁵ [Yaesu G-450ADC Yaesu G-450ADC Medium-Duty Rotator Systems | DX Engineering](#)

⁶ [WiMo Antennen und Elektronik 23050 WiMo 23050 Metal Guy Ring Kits | DX Engineering](#)

⁷ [DXLab \(dxlabsuite.com\)](http://dxlabsuite.com)

⁸ [Amazon.com: 1/8" x 9" x 12" Steel Plate, A36, Hot Rolled, 1/8" Thick : Industrial & Scientific](#)

⁹ [MDS-HAM Amateur Radio Products](#)



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SWODXA Station
Trustee W8EX

—
KC8RP—Richard Pestinger
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SouthWest Ohio DX Association (SWODXA)

Club Fact Sheet

Who We Are: *SWODXA* is comprised of active DX'ers and contesters with a deep passion for all aspects of Amateur Radio. We welcome everyone who is interested in joining our club to please contact us. *SWODXA* members are active in all facets of DX and Contesting. We also travel to, and fund various DXpeditions all over the world. *SWODXA* sponsors the annual DX Dinner held on the Friday evening of Hamvention weekend in Dayton, Ohio. In addition, *SWODXA* members moderate the Hamvention DX Forum and host the *W8DXCC DX Convention*. *SWODXA* is proud sponsor of the prestigious *DXpedition of the Year Award*.

DX Donation Policy: The policy supports major DXpeditions that meet our requirements for financial sponsorship. Details are available on the website at: <https://www.swodxa.org/dxgrant-application/> and elsewhere in this newsletter

Club History: The Southwest Ohio DX Association (SWODXA) is one of the country's premier amateur radio clubs. Though loosely formed in mid-1977, the club had its first formal organizational meeting in August of 1981 where Frank Schwob, W8OK (sk), was elected our first President. While organized primarily as a DX club, SWODXA members are active in all aspects of our hobby.

Requirements for Membership: We welcome all hams who have an interest in DXing. It doesn't matter whether you're a newcomer, or an old-timer to DXing; everyone is welcome! Visit <http://swodxa.org/member.htm>

Meetings: The club meets on the second Thursday of each month at Hunter Pizzeria in Franklin, OH, and virtually via ZOOM. Members gather early in the private room for dinner and then a short business agenda at 6:30 PM, followed by a program. If you enjoy a night out on the town with friends, you'll enjoy this get together. Meeting attendance is NOT a requirement for membership.

Club Officers: Four presiding officers and the past president (or past VP) make up the Board of Directors. The current roster of officers are: Past President Tom Inglin, NR8Z, President Bill Salyers, AJ8B; Vice President Kevin Jones, W8KJ; Secretary Mindi Jones, KC8CKW, and Treasurer Mike Suhar, W8RKO.

Website: We maintain websites at www.swodxa.org and www.swodxaevents.org managed by Bill, AJ8B. These sites provide information about a variety of subjects related to the club and DXing.

SouthWest Ohio DX Association (SWODXA)

DX Donation Policy

The mission of SWODXA is to support DXing and major DXpeditions by providing funding. A funding request from the organizers of a planned DXpedition should be directed to the DX committee by filling out an online funding request.

(<https://www.swodxa.org/dx-grant-application/>)

The DX Grant committee will determine how well the DXpedition plans meet key considerations (see below). If the DX Grant committee recommends supporting the DXpedition in question, a recommended funding amount is determined based on the criteria below. The chairman of the committee will make a recommendation at the general meeting on the donation.

Factors Affecting a DXpedition Funding Request Approval

DXpedition destination	Website with logos of club sponsors
Ranking on the Clublog Most Wanted Survey	QSLs with logos of club sponsors
Online logs and pilot stations	Logistics and transportation costs
Number of operators and their credentials	Number of stations on the air
LoTW log submissions	Bands, modes and duration of operation

H40GC	H44GC	ZL9HR	XX9D	HK0NA	FT4TA
KH1/KH7Z	EP2A	FT5ZM	C21GC	VK9WA	NH8S
K4M	CY9C	VK9MA	PT0S	FT4JA	YJ0X
6O6O	VP6D	TO4E	XR0ZR	VP8STI	VP8SGI
W1AW/KH8	K1N	3D2C	VK0EK	S21ZBB	E30FB
ST0RY	TI9/3Z9DX	VK9MT	K5P	9U4M	TX3X
VU7AB	3Y0Z	3C0L	TX7EU	CE0Z	3C1L
TI9A	3D2CR	3B7A	K9W	VU7RI	6O7O
C21WW	CE0Z	T30GC	T30L	D68CCC	W8KKF/WP5
K5D	3Y0J	T33A	3Y0J	CY9C	