



M.C.W.A. NEWS

Vol. 16 #2

February 2016

AMATEUR RADIO

MEETING February 2, 2016

Socializing - 6:30 PM
Meeting - 7:00 PM

Crystal Lake Bank
5100 Northwest Hwy
Crystal Lake, IL 60014

Program :

Jack W9MU, on antennas,
SWR and other magical,
mystical stuff in our hobby



Does antenna installs ?

Feb. Hamfests

13 MRAC & MAARS
Brookfield, WI

<http://www.w9rh.org>

Jan. Contests

5 NCC RTTY Sprint

6 MN QSO Party

6-7 VT QSO Party

6-7 10-10 QP SSB

8-12 ARRL School
Roundup

13-14 CQ WW WPX
RTTY

14 PODXS 070 Club
Valentine Sprint

20-21 ARRL Int'l DX
CW

20 Feldhell Sprint

21 NAQP RTTY

See : WA&BNM
contest
calendar

Jan. DX

7 S. Cook Is.
E51RJR

9 St. Barts
FJN9SW

2-10 St Martin FS

NY2RF Replaces K1ZZ Tom Gallagher, NY2RF, of West Palm Beach, Florida, will succeed David Sumner, K1ZZ, as the chief executive officer of ARRL, effective April 18. In that role, he will oversee all activities at ARRL Headquarters in Newington, Connecticut. Meeting in a special webinar session on January 25, all 15 ARRL Directors voted to elect Gallagher as CEO and Secretary, positions that Sumner will relinquish on April 18. Gallagher will join the ARRL staff as CEO-Elect on February 29, and a transition period will follow.

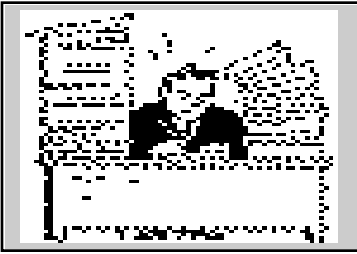
Jan. DX

4-11 Belize V31JZ/p

2-25 St. Kitts/Nevis V4

1-9 South Georgia Is. VP8SGT





**FROM THE
EDITOR'S
DESK**



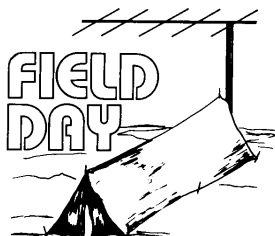
2016

Still only \$10.00

Pay at meeting
(N9OK) or use
application form at
mcwa.org

FIELD DAY 2016 !

As we sit here in the cold and snow, we should be thinking about the pleasant weather we'll have in June. Will M.C.W.A. be participating in Field Day this year ???



M.C.W.A. NEWS

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NEW ! McHenry Wireless Association VE Testing NEW !

Contact is Steve Maresso (KB9OLD) 847-477-3518

Testing is conducted (quarterly) at 7:00pm on the Third Tuesday for the months of February, May, August, and November. Walk in's welcome until 8:00pm. No appointment necessary. Testing Requirements:

1. Cost for 2016 is \$15.00. (Cash, or check made payable to ARRL) If initial test element is passed, the person testing may continue to take the next test element(s) at no extra charge during the given session. Retesting of an element failed during the same test session will require payment of an additional \$15.00 test fee.
2. Must show original, and provide copy of Amateur Radio license and/or CSCE (if upgrading).
3. Must show a valid Government Issued Photo ID (Passport, Driver License or State ID Card) for identification.
4. SS Security Number or FRN number required. Location: Free Methodist Church, 934 N. Seminary , Woodstock, Il. 60098



DIFFICULT CONDITIONS FOR DXPEDITIONS

Whenever dxpeditions head to remote places anything can happen. The VP8STI group had to leave their portable QTH at Southern Thule Island in fear of their lives today. Storm conditions and ice flows were cause to abandon their station for a while and stay at sea. They will return for their belongings and equipment when conditions permit. Then consideration must be made about operating from VP8SGI on South Georgia Island on the next leg of the journey.

The crew of K5P is scheduled to wrap things up tomorrow. They have run a faithful effort. They have been at a warmer location on Palmyra Atoll. This team must be commended for their sacrifices as well. We are always grateful for the efforts such teams make.

Unfortunately there has been a lot of complaining about both operations. To put it simply, the propagation has been more favorable between these dxpeditions and certain regions of the world than other locations. Many spots on clusters have reported "No sig hr" or "Very light but workable." One spot said "Nil on all bands." A number of disappointed hams have added sad commentary to their frustrating notations on clusters. I heard one operator say on the air, "Maybe today will be the lucky day." But it didn't happen.

I have been listening when possible for QSO's with these dxpeditions. It seems likely now that I will not be in their logs. You may wonder why, but several factors made contacts difficult. On many of the bands on which I work dxpeditions there has been a consistent QRN atmospheric level of s6 to s9. If the ones working the stations say, "Light but workable," an s1 to s3 signal will not be heard. Another issue is personal schedules. We can't be at a radio 24/7. I did hear whispers at

times. Today I actually heard a K5P op for a few moments on 15m phone, but the signal faded. I did hear other DX stations coming in at 59 plus. I worked ZZ462SP on 12m. The strength was s9.

Stations in South America, where there is more light at this time of year, had success. They were also closer to the operations. Stations on the West Coast and Gulf Coast seemed to do better. At times, stations in Asia were reporting 59.

Location, daylight, solar conditions (which were poor) and other factors all figure in. It was good for some and not so good for others. That is one of the components of our great hobby. You never know until it happens. The operators had a mission of pleasing the whole world, but nature didn't provide the best circumstances. It's hard to change what is! We thank the efforts of those who sacrifice time, money and absences from family.

Hopefully we will be seeing VP8SGI as we head into February. Other announced operations in the shortest month (Leap Year this year) will be 7P8C, 5V7TH, 3D2PW, A35T, 3XY1T, V63DX and S9RK.

We are all still hoping to see a P5 come to reality.

As the dxpeditions were winding down today, propagation started showing signs of improvement. The A and K indices were lower. That's the way it goes some times. As DX operators we always look forward to the next thing. Better days lie ahead.

Best DX and Happy February (the daylight is increasing)..... Dave KA9OZP



RMS Braveheart

M.C.W.A.

Hard of Hearing Hammin'

Stephen (KE7WAV) on December 28, 2015

Let's face it--hearing aids are great sometimes but I hate wearing them ALL the time. And even if I do some things are just plain hard to hear anyways. I have been a ham with a hearing loss for a while and for some of you this is nothing new; while for others I have met they think it means the end of their ham radio days.

This article is not a complete guide to radio for the hearing impaired, rather it is a few suggestions from a ham who can't always hear.

I have had a hearing loss a long time (since I was a kid). I grew up using American Sign Language and English, but my hearing loss is only moderate. Yes I read lips but only when I have to, and on the air MOST of the time that's not an option.

Here are a few tips I wanted to share:

1. Good Speaker and/or good headphones. It can make all the difference.
2. RIT, move the voice or CW pitch up and down until you find a frequency that is easier for you to hear.
3. Filters, they really help!
4. (I know this one will take some heat but...) learn code because it stays on one frequency that can be adjusted with RIT to fit into a range you can more easily follow with your ears.
5. Try modes like PSK-31 where you can hook a radio to a computer and make tons of contacts without ever hearing a thing! This one has tempted even some of my profoundly deaf friends!
6. Make your radio time more fun with a friend who has better ears. You both work the station together in your shack--its kinda fun. My nine-year-old son likes to brag that he gets more calls back then I do. He repeats what is said and we work the QSO together-- we get to hang out and have fun and I get to work on the radio!
7. Use a decoder program, yes some feel this is cheating but if you can't hear the CW all the time it can sure help.

Don't let a hearing loss be the end of your radio -- explore and break new boundaries, you might find new joys in an old hobby.

de eham.net



WIAW/ Cards ready to go !

ARRL has 30 boxes (800,000 cards) of the WIAW/ Centennial QSL cards ready to be shipped. This editor expects they won't reach their owners via the Bureau system until March or April at the soonest. Hopefully, no one had to fill these out by hand.

Tnx K9QVB

North American "RST" Stations on the Air Activity Set for February and March

The "RST" stations will take to the airwaves in February and March from several locations in Alaska, Yukon Territory, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut, with members of the North Country DX Association (NCDXA) at the helm. All call signs will have "RST" suffixes: KL7RST, VY1RST, VE8RST, and VY0RST. The idea is to further promote Amateur Radio in that part of the world. The joint KL7, VY1, VE8, and VY0 is a first.

The event gets under way on February 15 at 0001 UTC, and it continues through March 27 at 2359 UTC. Exchange signal report and state/province. (The NCDXA RST stations will send town or city).

All modes on 160 through 6 meters will be used, and SWLs are welcome to participate. The object is to work or log (SWL) as many NCDXA "RST" stations as you can from their different locations. Work/log each "RST" station only once per QTH/band and mode. Cross-band, cross-mode, or remote operating is permitted.

de ARRL

M.C.W.A.

An Open Letter to the 'Ham' in Thursday Night's Pile-Up

By Don Keith, N4KC

Dear Sir (and I use the term “sir” with some hesitation):

Could you please help me with something? You, I, and hundreds of others were on 40-meter CW the other evening attempting to make a quick contact with the VP8STI DXpedition on South Sandwich Island. Yes, it was quite a pile-up but the DX operator was doing an admirable job of pulling stations out of the bedlam for this rare one. He was especially diligent in getting partial calls and staying with them until he finally got the station's full call from the din and made the contact.

Then, there you were. VP8STI would send something like, “WA6?” and wait. But you blasted away, despite the fact that your call sign—a one-by-two starting with a “K” and with nowhere near a “6” contained therein—was totally different from the station's he was trying to work. You did not just do this once or twice, by mistake. I heard you hammering away out of turn for at least a quarter hour, consistently calling when the DX clearly was not responding to you. And you were usually on the same frequency the targeted station was transmitting on, as if you landed there on purpose.

So help me understand, please. Is it your experience that these types of bullying tactics actually work? Is that how you managed to be ranked, according to your QRZ.com page, #1 on the DXCC Honor Roll? Do you still have to do this sort of bull-in-the china-shop thing, even though you have a multi-element beam and an amplifier that appears fully capable of exceeding the maximum legal limit of power output? I'm serious. Is this the kind of operating it takes to get the most satisfaction from this aspect of our fine hobby?

Oh, I know there are far worse transgressors. They deliberately launch QRM galore on the DXpedition calling frequency, attempting to ruin it for everybody. They send or utter words and terms that would make a stevedore blush. But these are clearly disturbed individuals who merely add to the challenge of the chase as they demonstrate their psychoses right in front of God and everybody. They have no interest in contacting the DX entity. The only tingle they get in their miserable lives is provoking the “band cops” to respond. And it works. But I understand their behavior. They are sick folks. You, though, seem perfectly normal, an exemplary Ham, from what I can tell from your profile. But not so when your big sig is rattling my headphones while a weaker guy underneath you tries to complete his precious contact-in-progress. That is when you fire up that full gallon and

repeatedly ignore the DX operator's specific instructions, delaying the process, keeping others who follow procedure from making the Q until propagation goes bye bye.

There is another difference between you and those mentally challenged tuner-uppers and sick serial dit-senders. You, it appears, are actually hoping to make the QSO. Make it with all urgency. And make it at all costs. Never mind if you are wiping out the station the DX is doggedly attempting to respond to. And you continue to emit RF even if it is obvious the VP8 op is not going to acknowledge your boorishness. Trample on! And do all you can do to make the contact, even if you already have South Sandwich confirmed. After all, since you claim to be #1 on the Honor Roll, that would be the case, right? Oh. You need the “band/mode.” So grab it ahead of all those who need just one contact for an all-time new one. They can get their ATNO in fifteen years, when the next VP8S group activates that frozen little patch of dirt.

I also know there are many who denigrate both DXing as well as those of us who enjoy it. They decry the quick-and-dirty “599 TU” contact and absence of any real human interaction in such “communications.” You and others like you are a primary example they employ to make their case, too. But many of us are avid DXers despite you. We simply look at tyrants like you as another obstacle, like lack of sunspots or a weak final tube in the amp, something we really cannot do anything about at the moment, making the eventual consummation of the QSO even more rewarding. As with other Amateur Radio activities, I believe we should enjoy what we enjoy and freely allow others to enjoy what they enjoy without ridicule. But do you really have to confirm their most negative stereotype of the typical “serious” DXer, with your Extra-class call sign, your Honor Roll certificate, and your big-boy station?

So tell me, is it worth it when and if you get the “599” and can move on? Is this really the way we all should be behaving in the pile-ups? Does it ever work? It must, because you kept doing it.

But then, you know what? After about fifteen minutes of obliterating just about every station the VP8 tried to work the other night, I heard you make a call when you were actually supposed to. And the VP8 came right back to you.

Accident? I don't think so. I think the DX op was doing a good thing by ignoring your butt when you were pushing the rest of us around. It would have served you right if he continued to do so, even when you did it the right way. But I suspect you are too arrogant to get the message and would have simply categorized him as a bad op and just kept creating your mayhem.

-----> next page

M.W.C.A.

Thank you for reading my letter although I suspect you have no idea I am directing this diatribe at you. Regardless, allow me to wish you a sincere "73" and "Good DX!"

Emphasis on "good."

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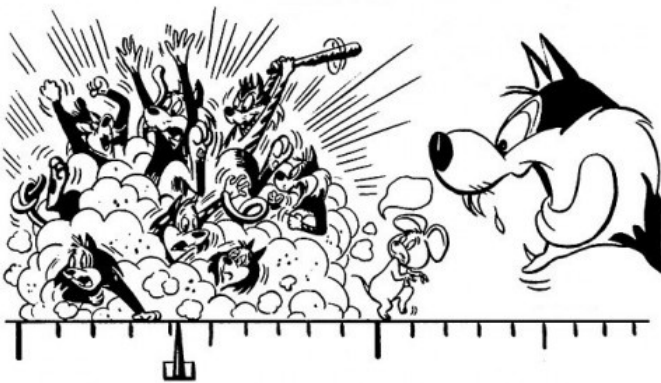
Don Keith, N4KC is a best-selling author with more than thirty books in print. He writes on a number of subjects including Amateur Radio. His web sites are <http://www.n4kc.com/> and www.donkeith.com .

de eham.net

[Editor - There are times in rare DX pileups when tempers flare and some feel the need to voice their concerns (i.e. rant) .Sometimes it's just better to blow off steam this way that to live one's fantasies or stalk another ham.]

"THE AMATEUR'S CODE (Creed)"
Common Sense Rules for All of Us Worldwide!
The "Amateur's Code" has worked for almost 100 years and works well when used by every ham!

CONSIDERATE, LOYAL, PROGRESSIVE, FRIENDLY,
BALANCED & PATRIOTIC



Do You Ever Just Listen?

lou giovannetti (KB2DHG)

I got into this hobby way back in the early 1970's. Long story short, a mentor ham friend of mine gave me an old Halicrafters Receiver. I was 12 years old at the time...

I remember sitting up to all hours of the night, listening just listening to all those mysterious radio signals and noises. Tuning in on foreign broadcast stations and the Morse code conversations I could only imagine what they were saying. (Hence my love for CW) I remember jus listing to plain old dead air...

I often found myself wondering what signal I might just catch, maybe even an alien from outer space!

To this day I still find myself just listening...

We Amateurs (and I could be wrong) engage so much on getting the signal out but hardly ever talk about what's on the air!

One of the most fun things I do with this hobby is SWL (short wave listening)... I will spend hours just going through ALL the bands from top to bottom and bottom to top. It is just so cool listing to the wonderful mysterious sounds of space.

So I ask you? Do you still listen? And I don't only mean listening to just ham radio operators...

I tune in to most everything... Although short wave has lost a lot of broadcast stations, there is still much out there. You just have to keep tuning. Our transceivers have SO MUCH MORE than just the ham bands!

If you have not or are new to the hobby, ham radio, I strongly recommend you set a side a night or day, turn on the rig and tune around and JUST LISTEN...

Do you listen?

[Ed. - One of the major failings in our hobby is that people just don't bother to listen. In the DX World, people toss their calsign into the fray and where they are acknowledged they promptly ask "what's your call, what's your name and where are you located?". The DX operator is usually too diplomatic to tell the guy he's an idiot. Get all the info possible before you make that call !]