"Ohio First DXCC Field Checking Club"

The NODXA

RAG

NO8DX - Special Event Callsign
W8DXA - NODXA Repeater   147.360
K8MR   - PacketCluster 144.91 & 145.57

Web-site: http://www.papays.com/
nodxa.html

Newsletter: wd8iou@adelphia.net

Northern Ohio DX Association
P.O. Box 361624
Strongsville, Ohio
44136   U.S.A.

October-November-December 2006

Fireside Chat With KB8NW

Fellow DX'ers,

The year 2006 is coming to a close very quickly as I am typing this (less than a week and a half away). As I look back on 2006 I would have to say that it was a banner year for DXers. There were two new DXCC entities (Montenegro/YU4 and Swains Island/KH8/S) added to the ARRL DXCC List. Imagine, two new entities in one year, which I believe is pretty rare.

We also had several major operations take place in 2006 which include Peter I Island (3Y0X), Libya (5A7A), Lakshadweep Islands (VU7LD), Revillagigedo (XF4DL) and Aves Island (YX0A/YX0LIX). Even though the propagation was not the best, chasing the above operations

brought some excitement and a challenge to avid DXers. Let's hope the year 2007 is as fruitful as 2006 but with better conditions.

If you haven't heard, there will be a major change coming soon. It seems that the FCC will be dropping the code requirement for a ham ticket very soon. I recommend going to the ARRL Web site and reading the updates and details there.

In closing, I want to remind everyone that the January meeting will be held on the 8th and NOT on the 1st. It will be a very short meeting due to the OSU football game being played on that same night (GO Bucks!).

Lastly, I hope everyone has a great and safe holiday season and a great New Year in 2007. May the new year bring better propagation and possibly Scarborough Reef and Yemen (for those who need it).

73 and Good DX de Tedd KB8NW

NODXA Meeting Minutes

The NODXA Meeting minutes are unavailable due to Club Secretary, Al, N8CX, health problems. The following is a short note from Glenn, AF8C.

"I talked to Al today. They are using new state-of-the art surgical techniques to seal the incisions they did in the past few days. He needed a blockage in his hip artery opened up to allow antibiotic IVs to get to his foot. The foot was cleaned out and is now in a bandage configuration that is high tech.

"They actually use sponges and tape, and also a permanent IV port that can last a year. Al believes he will go home Tuesday. He is in SW General, but the room is now 123 in the "TCU" I think he said. I just call the hospital main number to get them to dial his line."

On behalf of the club, I would like to wish Al a speedy recovery and a quick return to good health.

Review of N3FJP's Amateur Contact Log v 3.0

By Mike Herman, WB8EVI

For years I just used an Excel spreadsheet for a log. It worked and was cheap. I kept seeing the magazine ads for this one, and decided to give it a try. The trial version is free, and the full registered version is only $19. Installation on Windows XP of the basic program is very easy, just take the defaults. There are some additional features that require a little more effort, but not much.

Features are many. You can edit the fields you would like to see, and even move them around a little on the screen. It will keep track of how many of this and that you worked, for award tracking. You can import and export standard ADIF files and AC Log files. If you download the free wave files, and enable the feature, when you click on a box, and a pleasant female voice prompts you for the data. This same voice will tell you if it sees one you need on the DX cluster, if you enable cluster monitoring. Yes, that is also in the program. It will work with telnet or with a packet link. LOTW uploads are also painless. Call book data can be automatically entered from CD-ROM, QRZ.com lookup, etc, or you can download files ready to go from the website. Twice a year both FCC and RAC call data are available for download in AC Log format. If you can't wait, simply download the data from the FCC yourself, and use the built in conversion program to make the data readable by AC Log. I have done it both ways without a hitch.

Interfacing your rig is not very complicated. I have done it with an IC-756, my prior rig, and with my FT-1000MP. This allows fields for the band, mode, frequency, etc. to be filled in for you by polling the transceiver for data. Many of the common rigs are in the menu to pick from. Just plug your rig into a free serial port and configure the software options according to your rig's manual.
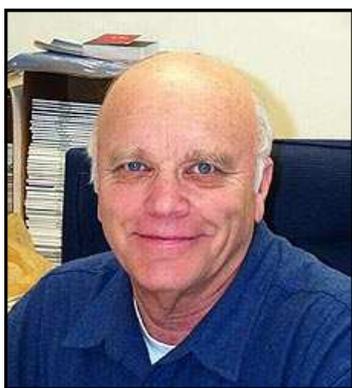
One of the newer features of this program is transmitter interfacing. You will need an interface to operate your PTT circuit that will work with a serial or parallel port on your computer. If you also want the rig interfacing with data, as mentioned above, then you will need a second free serial port or a parallel port for PTT operation. I followed a suggested schematic for a parallel port interface that is on the website. Two transistors, a diode, and a couple of resistors are all it takes. The entire circuit fits inside the DB-25 parallel port connector. I plug this into a stereo Y adapter from Radio Shack with my key, into the back of my FT-1000MP. With that arrangement, I can use the keyboard or my hand key. Within the program you configure what you want sent with each function key on your keyboard. F12 just puts the entire keyboard to use, for easy conversations. I pro-

grammed F1 through F11 with my call, CQ, QTH, etc. It is also possible to use voice or RTTY with the transmitter interface, but I have not tried either yet.

AC Log is not the most feature rich logging program out there, but for under $20 you get more than I need. Oh and once you register, you are paid up for all future releases. Each update is just a download and easy install away. I recommend you download it from http://www.n3fjp.com and try it for yourself.

N7NG Resigns

On Thursday, December 14, 2006, much to my regret, I delivered a letter of resignation to David Sumner, K1ZZ. Such an early departure had not been my plan but had become necessary. On Friday, in a meeting with Dave and Mr. Harold Kramer, ARRL Chief Operating Officer (COO), I made it clear, when asked, that my resignation was in no way a retirement. I also conveyed that it did not indicate any fundamental differences with ARRL outside of the jurisdiction of Mr. Kramer. I offered them the opportunity to release information about my resignation, but Mr. Kramer could send only a terse two-line message, and then only to the HQ Staff and the closed reflector of the ARRL Officers, Directors and Vice Directors, hence this message.

All in all, it's been a fun six and one-half years. The League has been a great place to work, and I'd do all but the last 22 months over again. I thank all of you around the World for your great support. In particular, I offer special thanks our volunteers - advisory committee members, log checkers and advisors. I also urge all of you to support the ARRL financially. Be sure to tell them what you want, though - they don't

always ask. I hope to regenerate an active interest in Ham Radio back in Wyoming. Maybe there'll be another DXpedition or two as well, and look for N7NG - Jackson Hole - to be an active Wyoming contributor to LoTW as long as it's in business.

73, Wayne, N7NG
Jackson Hole, Wyoming

Quick and Easy
Radial Attachment

Robert Harper, AF0H, via eHam.net

For quite some time I've been in need a quick, simple, and convenient way to attach radials to my homebrew 20-meter vertical. Having tried many common methods, I knew there had to

be an easier (and more permanent) way. I finally came up with what I think is a workable solution that's inexpensive, practical, and fully functional.

A simple hanging loop made from #6 Solid Copper Ground Wire solved my problems. Coming down from the coax attachment, it makes a simple loop - which is easy to solder to. The only tools needed to attach the radials would include a propane torch, solder, and flux (optional). As you can see, with 8 radials, there is plenty of room left to add more if I decide to. It took longer strip off insulation and solder than it did to install the antenna itself. If I decide to move the antenna or take it down, all I have to do is cut the radials off at the solder joint. Worst case, it's easily replaceable without any real cost. Sure beats spending $50.00 on a radial plate when this works just as well.

W8QWI, SK

Tedd, KB8NW

It is with great sadness to report that NODXA has lost another great DXer. Al Altomari, W8QWI, became a Silent Key this past week (November 17). Complete details are unknown right now, but are forthcoming. Please watch the papers for any details. He was a great NOARS and NODXA friend who I will miss. I was glad to see him (with John, K8YSE) this past summer at the NOARS annual picnic.

Outgoing QSL Service Rate Increase

ARRL Letter via Glenn, AF8C

The ARRL Outgoing QSL Service has announced a new rate structure, effective January 1, 2007. The new basic rate will be $5 per half-pound (8 ounces -- or approximately 75 cards) or any portion of a half-pound. That's a change from the current rate of $4 per half-pound or any portion. The new rates are in response to a major postal rate increase and price restructuring in early 2006, after which our postage costs nearly doubled. One pound will now cost $10, and larger packages will be assessed $5 for each additional half-pound (or portion thereof). For example, a package containing 1.5 pounds of cards will cost $15, while a package containing 1.75 pounds of cards will cost $20. For smaller packages, the new fee is only $1.50 for 10 or fewer cards, $2.50 for 11 to 20 cards and $3.75 for 21 to 30 cards. The new rate structure will help to cover increased postage and basic handling costs for smaller packages while continuing to offer a price break to moderate-volume users submitting less than one-half pound of cards. The ARRL Outgoing QSL Service is available only to ARRL members. The last rate revision went into effect in March 2001.

IRC Info

This seems like a pretty knowledgeable web page about IRC expirations:

http://www.n6hb.org/s-a/irc.htm

He says the old ones DO NOT expire. That seems to differ with what I remember So I got out my paperwork. Guess what?

The "little" ones are NOT marked to expire, but the NEW ONES "Beijing Model 1" EXPIRE at the end of THIS MONTH. So you have to replace them with the newer "Beijing Model 2"which expires Dec. 31, 2009.

ALL YOU FOLKS with the larger format IRCs: get them out, and read the fine print on the lower back for the expiration date. Or else in January you can wrap them around your cigars and smoke them!

73, Glenn, AF8C

NODXA Club Officials for 2006-2007	As of July 2006 Current DXCC Entities Total is:

NODXA Club Officials for 2006-2007

President   - Tedd Mirgliotta, KB8NW (440-237-2816)
V. President   - Dwaine Modock, K8ME   (440-582-3462)
Secretary   - Al Moriarty, N8CX   (216-221-3682)
Treasurer   - Mary Michaelis, N8DMM (440-236-5426)
Newsletter Editor - David Autry, WD8IOU   (440-238-0417)

As of July 2006
Current DXCC Entities Total is:
337

Whole House AC
Surge Protection

Michael S. Higgins, K6AER, via eHam.net

There is a great device on the market which I have been using for many years to mitigate surge damage from AC mains. Not many hams know this but over 90% of electronic damage to the home from lightning surges comes in via the power line and not through the antenna and other direct strikes. With many miles of above ground power lines and even those feeding underground AC lines you can see up to 10,000 volts coming in via your 220 volt home feed.

Hams will spend a great amount of time grounding their antennas, station, coaxes and control lines but neglect the AC feed from the power grid. When a power surge arrives via the AC main the voltage is looking for a ground. Upon arriving at your AC panel no ground is available. No surge device is there so the high voltage races through the house wiring looking for the lowest impedance path to earth and guess where that is…your wonderfully grounded station.

By installing a surge protector at the AC panel along with a very good panel ground you have just closed the door on the most common high voltage surge path into the home. You can build your own surge protection for under $10 just by buying 150 volt 22 MM MOV's from Mouser or DigiKey, but there is a better deal.

Intermatic makes a surge protector you can install on your own panel for under $60. They are available from electronic supply houses and some hardware stores. All you need is two spare 20 amp breakers for each 120 volt side of your split phase panel and about fifteen minutes and you're done. Cost of the surge protector is under $60 and as the info commercials would say there is a

bonus. With the purchase of the surge protector you get a limited $10,000, 5 year insurance policy should your electronics be damaged by a voltage surge after properly installing the device. The Intermatic device is sold under part number IG1240RC. It is enclosed in a heavy plastic case with a green and white ground wires and two black leads for each AC feed. The directions are clear and easy to follow. Once installed you will find a Green LED's to indicate that each 120 volt line is working. Upon a surge the red led will be lit. If resetting the breakers does not extinguish the Red LED you will have to replace the surge protector.

Given you get surge protection and a five year insurance policy for under $60 how can you lose. Maximum surge protection is up to 60 KA. The product is compliant to NEC code 285. A word of caution in AC panel surge protection, your surge protection will be only as good as your panel ground. In most cases a single 8 foot ground rod is not a low enough ground impedance compared to what you might have installed on your station. You may want to install more grounds or have your ground rod tested by an electrician for ground resistance. A good ground will have less than 5 ohms ground resistance. Also your station and tower ground must be bonded with your panel ground via a number 4 solid copper line. This is also a NEC code.

This year four of my friends on twenty meters got hit by lightning. Three had proper grounding and had minimal damage. The forth had minimal grounding and lost a TS-2000, FTDX9000 his computers and much of his station equipment. He had insurance but was off the air for 2 months waiting on the insurance company. Proper grounding is always safer and in the long run and much cheaper.

NODXA Application and Renewal Form

The Northern Ohio DX Association is a non-profit organization with a primary interest in DXing. We encourage all DXers to join our group and share the interest and fun of DXing. Please complete the application below and send along your appropriate dues or renewal to:

NODXA, P.O. Box 361624 , Strongsville, Ohio 44136

First Time Membership/Renewal (U.S.) $12.00
Foreign Membership (outside U.S.) $22.00
*Foreign Membership (no printed newsletter)
(but w/Web access for newsletter) $12.00

Name_____ Callsign_____
Address _____
City _____ State/Prov. _____
Country _____ ZIP _____
E-mail _____
ARRL Member? ___ Exp. Date _____ DXCC Member?_____
Special Interest _____

NODXA Meetings are held the first Monday of each month at the ***Gourme Family Restaurant*** at 15315 Pearl Road (Rt. 42) just west of Interstate 71 and south of Rt. 82 in Strongsville at 7:30 PM. Come early and have dinner and meet your fellow DXers and enter the 50/50 raffle.

Newsletter circulation: Pete Michaelis **N8TR**, and Mary Michaelis **N8DMM**

Dated Material
Please Rush

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