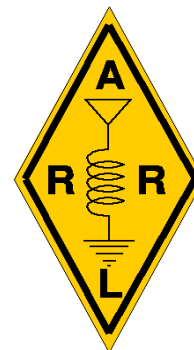


November-December 2008

"Ohio's First DXCC Field Checking Club"



The NODXA RAG



Fireside Chat With KB8NW

Fellow DX'ers,

Some changes have taken place since I last wrote. It's a new year, the break-up of the Netherlands Antilles is on hold possibly until the end of 2009, so there will be no new entities from the Caribbean until then.



There is still no big improvement on the propagation, and it seems to be about the same as last year. There have been some reports stating that this solar cycle may be a weak one. Speaking of sunspots, did you know during 2008 there were 272 spotless days out of the 366 days (Leap Year) or 74.37% of the year's days? With conditions like this, no wonder it was hard to work DX in certain regions. August and December were the worst months with 31 and 28 spotless days, respectively. June and November were the best months with 19 and 15 spotless days, respectively. The rest of the months (of the year) were all in the twenties. Let's hope 2009 will fair better.

As far as DX goes, it was good to hear that Petrus, ZS8T, from Marion Island, is finally active and should be active possibly through March, but on a limited basis. Operations from Glorioso Island did not happen in 2008 (a big disappointment for many DXers) and 2009 is still a big mystery.

What is there to look forward to in 2009? Coming up in February (between the 12-26th) is the larger operation from Desecheo Island. This island is ranked 6th on "The DX Magazine's" 2008 most wanted list. There should be no problem working this operation because this DXpedition is being run by a very well known and organized group. Activity will be on all modes and bands. NODXA has donated funds to this operation. Other DXpeditions to look forward to in February and March are: Tuvalu Island (prefix T2, February 12th-March 2nd), Chatham Island (prefix ZL7, March 6-11th) and Lord Howe Island (prefix VK9L, March 23rd-April 3rd).

I do not have anything else to report this month. Hope to see you at an upcoming meeting. Keep warm; it has been a cold winter so far.

73 and Good DX de Tedd KB8NW

"The Mission of the Northern Ohio DX Association is to promote and support Amateur Radio and the DX Community around the world."

Minutes of the October 6th, 2008 NODXA Meeting

The meeting was opened by the President, Tedd, KB8NW at 7:30pm. There were 15 members and 1 guest present.

After a round of introductions, the minutes of the September 8th meeting were read. Dwaine, K8ME, corrected the minutes of the September meeting to include the fact that the plaque the club will sponsor is for the Great Lakes Division. Thus, the plaque will be for the ARRL DX-SSB Contest, Great Lakes Division, Single Operator (SO), High Power. After this correction, the minutes were approved.



The Treasurer Mary, N8DMM, reported a balance of \$Ka-Ching! in the account. Dave, WD8IOU, reported that he is working on the newsletter and it will be our soon. Dave said has a continuing need for articles.

Tedd, KB8NW reported that the repeater was okay and that the K8MR cluster was unknown at this time. Pete, N8TR, reported that he had logged on, but it was not connected to K8AZ.

Old-New Business

Tedd, KB8NW, reported that the "annual renewal letter" is ready and will be mailed out soon. Tedd also reported that he will send a letter to K8MR to see if we really still need the radio packet cluster.

Dave, WD8IOU, thanked everyone who helped take down Stan's, K8VI's tower. They are Tedd, KB8NW, John, K8YSE, Dwaine, K8ME, Dennis, K8LBT, Pete, N8TR, and Mary, N8DMM. Stan had a 55' crank-up tower and TH-7DX antenna. The job reportedly went smoothly and some antenna parts are for sale.

Dave also reported that Stan, K8VI, expressed his thanks to all who helped. Dave further reported that he will compile a list of Stan's transceivers and other equipment.

Dwaine, K8ME, moved, seconded by Ron, K8VJG that the winner of the club-sponsored plaque for the ARRL DX-SSB Contest be given a one year free membership to the club. The motion passed.

Tedd, KB8NW, reported that he had received an email stating that next years Great Lakes Division Convention will be held in September 2009 in Findlay, OH. Details are not firm at this time.

DX

Tedd, KB8NW, reported that starting October 1st and continuing through December 31st, the Fall Classic DX Event sponsored by the Country Uncle DX Group will be held on 160 through 20 meters, CW, SSB, and digital modes. Further information at www.countryuncledx.com.

Tedd also reported that there will be a Dxpedition to Desecho beginning sometime during the first-quarter 2009 and scheduled for a two week operation. Tedd will put out information on the web when he gets it.

Tedd also requested a moment of silence for our member Don Altmos, W8IMF (SK). The club is saddened by his passing.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, November 3rd.

The 50-50 raffle was won by Carl, K8BCK. The amount of \$15 was donated back to the club.

The meeting was closed by the President, Tedd, KB8NW, at 8:05 p.m.

The program this evening was a "show-and-tell" by members of the club. A brief description follows.

Dwaine, K8ME, reported on having his Kenwood TL-922 Amplifier brought up-to-date and having an improvement made by changing the band switch with a more reliable one. The original one arced and caused many problems. The modifications were made by Don, KI6SZ, who lives just east of Hara Arena in Dayton.

Pete, N8TR, demonstrated an old General Radio hermaphroditic connector, type 874, which is

uni-polar and does not require the usual male-female ends to connect together; just turn the connectors 90 degrees from each other and plug together.

John, K8YSE, displayed a remote 1 watt transmitter he had designed and built back in 1972. The purpose of which was to begin transmitting if the door to his Corvette was opened (i.e. theft in progress). The transmitter transmitted on 147.97 MHz and he kept a 2 meter receiver tuned to that frequency in his apartment.

Carl, K8AV, having recently returned from an Army reunion in Seattle WA, recounted how he was fascinated by radio during his Army days stationed in Baumholder Germany. He had pictures of himself in the "ham shack" (an old bus) in Germany in 1957. This exposure to radio brought him into the hobby early on.

Mary, N8DMM, displayed a 220 watt (just a medium size) American Beauty soldering iron. Pete, N8TR, rehabs them. Their irons range from 100 to 600 watts; 500 and 600 watt models are two-handed. Pete also reported that to solder PL-259 connectors, you need a lot of mass in the tip to get the connection hot enough. The American Beauty line is still made, but by an unknown manufacturer.

Respectfully submitted, Al, N8CX, Secretary

Minutes of the November 3rd, 2008 NODXA Meeting

The meeting was opened by the President, Tedd, KB8NW at 7:30pm. There were 16 members and 2 guests present.

After a round of introductions, the minutes of the October 6th meeting were read. The minutes were approved as read.

The Treasurer Mary, N8DMM, reported a balance of \$Ka-Ching! in the account. Mary also reported that we had a new member. John Nestelle, N8VN, of Parma Hts. Dave, WD8IOU, donated \$10 for printing of the renewal letter.



Tedd, KB8NW, reported that repeater is okay. Pete, N8TR, reported that rf cluster had not been connected for about a week, but was okay two weeks ago. Bruce, N8DJX, reported that K8AZ was down at the same time. Pete reported that Jim, K8MR, does check the cluster often.

Dave, WD8IOU, reported that he is working on the newsletter and it will be our soon. Dave said has a continuing need for tips, articles, etc. Dave also reported that the renewal letter was mailed to those who no longer get email or print copies of the newsletter.

Old-New Business

Ron, K8VJG, reported on the rather sudden passing of Tom, K8MMM, of Chester Twp. He was a big 6 meter operator.

Tedd, KB8NW, reported that permission had been granted to NA5U, a large DXpedition group, for the KP5, Desecheo DXpedition. The group wants a \$500 donation for a club logo on their QSL card and \$250 for a club name on the QSL card. Tedd reported that this was a "first-class" DXpedition group. They will operate 160 through 6 meters, CW, SSB and RTTY. A request will be made for satellite operation as well. Bruce, N8DJX, moved, seconded by Ron, K8VJG, that the club donate \$250. to the DXpedition. The motion passed.

Tedd further reported on the Field Day results as published in QST. The club garnered 6,074 points with 2,017 QSOs.

Other details were: the club was 44th in 2A nationwide, 2nd in Ohio for category 2A and 4th in the Great Lakes Division for category 2A.

Dwaine, K8ME, reported that West Park Radiops had come in 1st in the ARRL 10 meter Contest, Ohio Section, last December. This was a multi-op effort using the station of AC8E.

Tedd, KB8NW, wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and reminded everyone that the next meeting will be Monday, December 1st.

The 50-50 raffle was won by Mary, N8DMM. The winning amount was \$14.

The meeting was closed by the President, Tedd, KB8NW, at 8:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Al, N8CX, Secretary

Let's Get on the Maker Bandwagon by Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

About a week ago, I got an e-mail from a ham down in Texas who had attended the Maker Faire (makerfaire.com). "Makers" are people who love to tinker and make things. They even have their own magazine, Make (www.makezine.com).

He was amazed at the lack of any amateur radio content. He wrote, "The Maker Faire was unbelievable. Incredible stuff. Pedal powered carnival rides, robots, computer drive routers, kits. Outside of a table with a Vectronics kit, and a license manual, and a QRP book, the only radio stuff was from a pirate radio group."



I'm kind of amazed at this as well. It just goes to show how disconnected amateur radio is getting from the mainstream. These are exactly the kind of people we want to get interested in amateur radio, yet there was no one there representing us.

Ham radio needs to be at these events and get plugged into the "maker community." The Faire has not yet released attendance figures for this particular Faire, but more than 65,000 people attended the Faire held in May 2008. Dayton, with its attendance of about 20,000, looks anemic by comparison.

I blogged about this back in May (<http://kb6nu.com/why-cant-dayton-be-more-like-the-maker-faire>). One of the things I suggested then is moving Dayton to some place like Austin. Seriously, if you were a new, young ham, where would you rather go, Dayton, OH or Austin, TX? Let's be real here.

And can there be a worse place for an event than Hara Arena? The parking lot, where they hold the flea market looks like a mine field, and it usually rains, making the flea market a wet, unpleasant experience. Is it any wonder that fewer and fewer vendors choose to haul stuff out there?

Some of us older hams might fondly reminisce about the bargain we found while traipsing around wearing a trash-bag poncho, but a story like that is not going to resonate with new hams.

Please don't get me wrong. I don't mean to badmouth the Dayton Amateur Radio Association or the Hamvention. I actually think that they do a great job, all things considered. I'm just pointing out that if ham radio wants to again be part of the mainstream, we have to get with the program. Unfortunately, that program probably won't be at the Hara Arena.

Ham radio has got to figure out how to latch onto the Maker phenomenon. At the very least, the ARRL should have a booth at the next one, and in addition to all the books and t-shirts, they need to come up with some kind of demo or display to attract makers into ham radio. I don't know what exactly, but I'm willing to start talking about it.

This phenomenon might also be a boon for clubs who hold hamfests. Just as the computer craze turned ham swaps into ham and computer swaps in the 80s, perhaps ham clubs could turn their hamfests into a combination hamfest and Maker Faire in their communities.

As I said earlier, Makers are exactly the kind of people we want in ham radio. Let's go out and get them.

New Band Switch Replacement for Kenwood TL-922 by Dwaine Modock, K8ME

The band switch in my Kenwood TL-922 disintegrated in mid 2007. Knowing that replacement switches were not available, I went and purchased another TL-922 from eHam.net. I was reading the reviews about the TL-922 on eHam.net, and some of them talked about a fellow in Beavercreek, Ohio, who has redesigned the circuits and the band switch problems out of the Kenwood TL-922 amplifiers. Kenwood knew about these modifications but didn't want to update the amplifier because they were planning to discontinue it.



Everybody on eHam.net was raving about Don Kessler, KI6SZ, modifications to the TL-922 so I called him in mid November. I found out he has a "PHD" in electronic engineering and that this is just a hobby of his, redesigning and improving the TL-922, because he had numerous problems with his amplifier.

I discussed the issues I have had with my TL-922 Amplifiers with Don. He told me that he has redesigned the band switch, designed a 12 & 17 meters mod, plus added QSK to the amp; these features were not in the original design. He also redesigned the parasitic circuit to eliminate parasitic oscillations which is one of the major problems with these amplifiers.

I asked Don when I could bring my both my amplifiers to him for repair. He said that as long as I wasn't in a hurry just bring them down. So in early December 2007 I hand delivered my amplifiers to Don in person because I didn't trust the delivery companies to get them there in one piece.

I found out that Don located the company that made the band switches for Kenwood and he called them on the phone. Don was invited to the factory in Japan to discuss his new switch design and possible minor production. So after many phone calls and trips to Japan, the company agreed to make the switches in small batch production. Don's new design included thicker ceramic wafers and thicker contact sweep arms in the wafer but the switch is the same size as the old one.

I told Don to go ahead and put new band switches, do the 12 & 17 meter and parasitic oscillations mod's plus the "QSK" break-in keying mod to both TL-922 amplifiers.

The switches were \$150.00 each; all the other modifications was \$350 for each amp. I called Don and told him I was going to buy two new 3-500Z tubes for each amplifier from RF-PARTS and that they would be shipped directly to him for installation and testing of the amplifiers.

The amplifiers were totally checked out and tested with the new tubes and Don provided a booklet about all the modifications, with pictures, plus a test card of every band with all the data test results. When I went to pick up the amplifiers about 3½ months later, he reviewed with me everything he did and actually ran each amplifier in his Ham Shack before I left to drive back home.

The amplifiers work great! If anyone has similar problems with their TL-922, contact Don Kessler KI6SZ; the switches are available from him.



K8ME Shack Visit

by David Autry, WD8IOU

Early last December, Karen (my XYL) and I paid a visit to Dwaine, K8ME. The purpose was two-fold. First, I need a picture of Dwaine's TL-992 amplifier for the previous article and secondly, we wanted to see Dwaine's Christmas decorations. While we were there, we also run into fellow NODXA member, Dale, NA8A, who was visiting Dwaine.

Dwaine has a nice, well equipped, comfortable shack. The main operating position consists of a Yaesu FT-1000 Mark 5 transceiver, MFJ 2500 watt antenna tuner, and the custom Kenwood TL-922 amplifier. The shack also features an impressive full wall world map.

Out back, Dwaine has a 60-foot US tilt-over tower. Dwaine favors Cushcraft antennas; on the tower is the huge X9 beam (you don't see many of those around), a five element 6M beam, a AW3S WARC band beam with the 30-meter add on kit, and a 2M/440 vertical. A very impressive setup!



Dwaine, K8ME, ready to bust the pile ups!



Karen Autry, XYL, and Dale, NA8A, wishing that I would put the camera away.



Dale instructing Dwaine on the finer points of DXing.

Command of Italian Marines, the commander C.F. Russo Vittorio and the whole 28° Gruppo Navale for the perfect logistic support and great hospitality received, the Delegazione Italiana Esperti (D.I.E.) of the Italian Embassy of Tirana, the Command of Guardia di Finanza of island of Saseno, the A.K.E.P. office (particularly Lady Dervishi e Mister Ilir Shehu) for the temporary licenses ZAO/, the friends C.V. Tiziano Peretti IWOEVL and Coppola Tommaso IZ7JXQ for their precious help, our very good pilot Pasquale IZ8GDO for the compilation of ours beautiful QSL.

Many THANKS to ours sponsors all (See the links in our website)!

We also thank all OMs that had QSO with us and allowed the total of 15.228 contacts.

The ZAO/2008 team invite all to read the various infos on our activity and to see many pictures on our website (in continuous updating) edited by Aldo IZ8IDX: <http://www.sazan2008.altervista.org> (Don't forget to sign the guest book). More info on: <http://dx-hamspirit.com> - <http://www.mdxc.org> - <http://www.myspace.com/ik7jwx>

Alpha Power Ships First 8410 Amplifier

Alpha Radio Products LLC announced today that the first production AP8410 amplifier shipped from its Boulder, Colorado facility. The AP8410 is the latest in the line of legal-limit (1.5-kilowatt output) tetrode amplifiers from Alpha Power.

Alpha president Molly Hardman, WØMOM, reports, "We are excited to release this newest member of our Alpha family. We engineered cost-effective technology upgrades into the new amplifier, to ensure its long-term affordability and maintainability. We also included several features to enhance operational performance including improved screen-grid regulation, simplified AC line-voltage tap selection, and provision of a USB interface for remote monitoring and limited control. The new amplifier retains all of the rugged dependability and functionality of the familiar two-tube tetrode design that was first introduced as the Alpha 91B over 15 years ago, but raises the feature and performance bar of this class of amplifier worldwide. The release also comes in time for us to provide some of these amplifiers to the upcoming KP5 expedition!"

The amplifier uses the Alpha Power brand VTX-X118 tubes, a ceramic, external-anode, indirectly heated tetrode that, unlike the excellent Eimac 4CX1000A, is qualified to handle the grid current that might be experienced in the AP8410. The tube has an excellent reputation for low-intermod, having been used by Collins Radio, among others, in their 30S1 and other commercial amplifiers.

Alpha Senior Engineering Manager Brad Focken, who oversaw the new amplifier's 18-month



development, is very pleased with the result, "This has been a great opportunity to engineer the product to use modern components and assembly techniques. We considerably simplified the wiring harness and used surface-mount parts wherever possible. We expect to be able to produce this amplifier for many years to come."

Beta-tester Mike Higgins, K6AER, is clearly in love with the new amplifier. "I own, and have owned, many amplifiers over the years, but this is clearly in a class of its own. The only way they will get this out of my shack is to pry it from my cold, dead hands! It has excellent measured IMD, and on-the-air reports indicate that audio quality is superb, as you would expect from an Alpha."

The AP8410 joins the AP9500 1.5-kW auto-tune amplifier and the AP2100 legal-limit dry dummy load, along with other high-power RF products in production at Alpha.

Alpha Radio Products LLC is an engineering and manufacturing company in Boulder, Colorado. It produces high-power radio-frequency (RF) components for the government, industrial, and radio-amateur markets. The company was founded in 2004, when it acquired the Alpha and ETO lines from previous owners. It produces new equipment and services legacy equipment under the Alpha and ETO names. For information, contact Molly Hardman, (303) 473-9232. <www.alpharadioproducts.com>.

Dots and Dashes

by David Autry, WD8IOU

Congratulations to NODXA member Metro, W8MET, who took second place in the CQ-WE 2008 QSO Party. Metro also took "High Retiree" prize in this contest. Metro's score was 30828 CW and 74704 SSB for a total of 105532. Great job Metro!

Dwaine, K8ME, wants to remind us that IRCs have increased in price by 25 cents. The new cost for a single IRC is \$2.10 and is valid for only for 2009.

Nelson, K8DJC, sent me a web site about a massive antenna project. How about a 3-element 160 meter beam and a 5-element 80 meter beam all on a 330 foot tower? For all the details, and some great pictures, visit <http://tinyurl.com/8g5m7e>.

Carl, K8AV, found a fascinating web site that has PDF files of old Radio Shack catalogs. This site brought back many fond memories of my youth; I've spent many hours pouring over these catalogs dreaming of some way to acquire a Space Patrol walkie-talkie. Here is the link to the site: <http://www.radioshackcatalogs.com/index.html>.

FOR SALE

GPS -- Magellan Maestro 3100, Auto-Navigation System, new, never used. \$145.00

YAESU FT-100D XCVR Operates 160m-440, Plus FC-20 external automatic antenna tuner, with separation kit for mobile use. \$750.00

KENWOOD TR-7400 2 Meter XCVR 50 watts has independent frequency switches on the front panel, was using it for local packet network. \$40.00

OAK computer/hutch combo, two drawers besides the four door hutch. Mint shape. \$200

CONTACT: Dwaine at k8me@sbcglobal.net

PHONE: 440-582-3462

**Sign
up
now**



2009 Dayton Hamvention Bus Trip

CARS is again sponsoring a Bus trip to the Dayton Hamvention, the 2009 bus trip will take place on Saturday May 16.

The Bus trip will cost \$35.00 dollars per person, we need a minimum of 35 people to break even, the bus will be stopping for breakfast on the way down, with a brief stop on the way home for quick bite. You are responsible for your food and Hamvention ticket costs.

The bus will be leaving at 3:00 am from the Kmart parking lot at the intersection of Engle Road and Bagley Road, in Middleburg Heights, Ohio, Engle Road is a 1/4 mile west of I-71, which is the first intersection you come to, Kmart is behind the BP Gas station. Vehicles will be safe, there will be security to watch cars.

Bus tickets must be purchased and paid for in advance. If we do not sell 35 bus tickets by May 8, 2009 the bus will be cancelled and your money returned.

If you have any questions please bring them up at a cars meeting or contact me by email or phone: Dwaine 440-582-3462 or K8me@sbcglobal.net

See you on the Bus
Dwaine ---K8ME



Meeting Information

*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.*

NODXA Information

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

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

Newsletter Submission: wd8iou@adelphia.net

NODXA Club Officials for 2008-2009

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: David Autry, WD8IOU (440-238-0417)



DXCC Info

As of December 2007, the current DXCC Entities total is: 338.

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. and DX) \$20.00

Name _____ Callsign _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State/Prov. _____
 Country _____ ZIP _____
 E-mail _____
 Telephone _____
 ARRL Member? _____ Exp. Date _____ DXCC Member? _____
 Special Interest _____

Newsletter Contributors

Thanks to the following for their contribution to this months edition: N8TR, N8DMM, KB8NW, N8CX, K8YSE, K8ME, K8AV, K8DJC, W8MET, IK7JWX , and KB6NU.

