



HAMLETTER

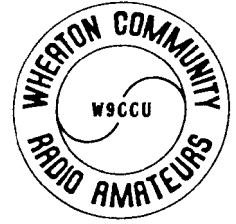
Published Monthly

Wheaton Community Radio Amateurs

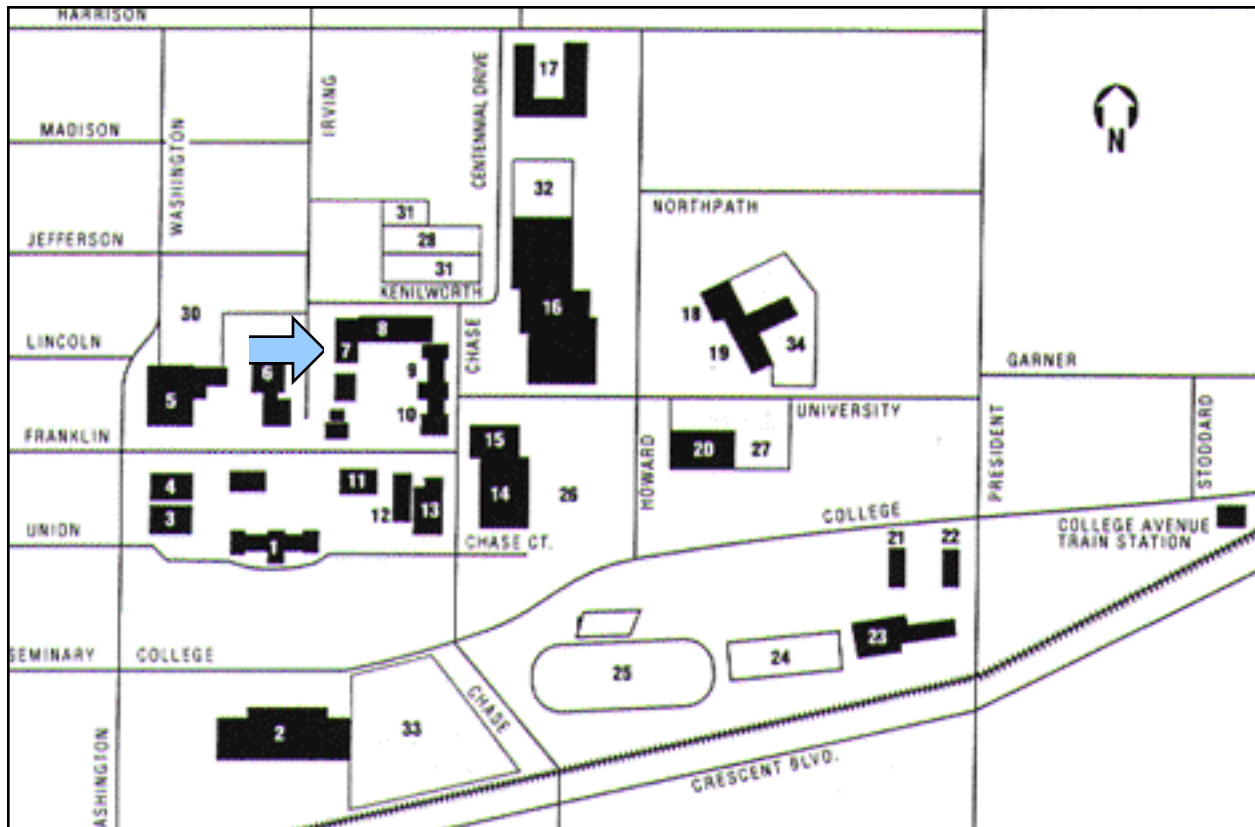
Issue 449

Founded 1948

October 2000



WCRA IS MOVING ITS MONTHLY MEETING LOCATION FROM COLLEGE OF DUPAGE TO WHEATON COLLEGE EFFECTIVE THE OCTOBER 6TH MEETING



As most of you are aware, the College of DuPage has elected to begin charging WCRA for the use of the classroom used for our monthly membership meetings. The Board conducted a search of the available facilities in or near the Wheaton/Glen Ellyn area. Wheaton College offered to rent us a large classroom less expensively so the decision was made to relocate our meeting site effective with the October Meeting.

The Wheaton College campus is located just Northeast of downtown Wheaton and North of the railroad tracks. Refer to the above map. The meeting will be held in Breyer Hall in classroom #8. Breyer Hall is #7 on the above map. Parking is behind Edman Chapel which is #30. Park in the lot and walk East beside Buswell Memorial Library (#6), cross Irving Street and enter Breyer Hall. The entrance has the number '603' above the door on the outside of the building. After entering the building, make two left turns and proceed downstairs. The entrance to classroom 8 is directly ahead at the bottom of the stairs. There is also an entrance to the left several paces down the hall. Breyer Hall may also be accessed from Amerding Hall ((#8 above) off of Kenilworth with parking in the Kenilworth lot (#31 above). The meeting will begin at the usual starting time of 7:30 PM and talkin will be available on the 39 machine. This club meeting is not sponsored in any fashion by Wheaton College.

OCTOBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

- 3rd: Club breakfast **every** Tuesday morning 7-9 AM, Glen Oaks Resturant, Glen Ellyn
- 5th: Club Brunch 10:30 AM Carol's Garden, Carol Stream
- 6th: WCRA monthly membership meeting at the Wheaton College in the Breyer Hall Classroom 8 at 7:30PM. Program to be presented by Antennex.
- 8th: Chicago Amateur Radio Club Hamfest, in Oakbrook Terrace, entrance at Park View Drive, North from Cermak Road (22nd Street) one block West of Route 83.
- 12th: Club dinner held at the Glen Oaks Restrurant, Glen Ellyn 6:30 PM
- 15th: DEADLINE FOR HAMLETTER SUBMISSIONS
- 19th: Club Brunch 10:30 AM Carol's Garden, Carol Stream

WCRA General Membership Meeting - October 6th - Wheaton College - 7:30 PM

WCRA was founded in 1948 and continues to be involved in all facets of Amateur Radio supporting the healthy growth of the hobby through diversification and participation. Our members have always been our most important asset and we would like to see you join us for our next meeting. Our business meetings are followed by a break for conversation, coffee, soda pop, and fat pills. This is followed by an amateur radio related program. We would like to see you there to share the enthusiasm.

HAMLETTER

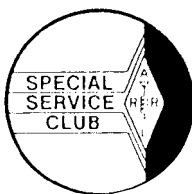
Newsletter Address:

526 South Gables Boulevard
Wheaton, Illinois 60187-4728
eMail: donlin@xnet.com

Club Mailing Address:

Wheaton Community Radio Amateurs
P.O. Box QSL
Wheaton, Illinois 60189

First Class Mail



From the President's Gavel

by Joe N9WRO, WCRA President



Labor Day has come and gone, fall is in the air and the club is hard at work getting ready for the 2001 HamFest. We need everyone's participation. If you have never worked for the HamFest before, please consider working with us this year. If you have worked with us before, please do so again this year. The HamFest is our only money making activity and the club needs your help. This Labor Day we once again worked the Glendale Heights Parade. The Club Van was back in service and functioned as our command post as well as providing power to light their check-in site. We also had a bicycle-mobile and a golfcart-mobile operation. The weather was great and I had the opportunity to ride at the end of the parade passing out candy to the kids. As always our operators were professional and efficient. The parade committee asked if we would work again next year before we had even setup!! We want to thank the following members for their participation.

Jim – W9DHX John – N9MWF Eileen – N9TWS
 Carl – N9GZR Greg – KB9NGJ Dale – KB9WOQ
 Wayne – KF9JC Kurt – KB9RTO Kim – N9XE
 Janie – AE9JG

The executive board has voted to attempt to sell the tow behind generator. We have a few nibbles of interest but we want to give first preference to club members. We require a minimum bid of at least \$700.00. We will be accepting bids from club members through October 15, 2000. If we have no acceptable bids by then we will go to the open market. If we receive no acceptable bids at all, the executive committee will ponder the fate of the generator.

Remember, new meeting place in October - Wheaton College

WCRA Staff

Elected Officers

President	Joe ,	N9WRO
Vice President	Janie ,	AE9JG
Secretary	Robert ,	N2EFT
Treasurer	John ,	W9LQL
Custodian	Kurt ,	KB9RTO

Volunteer Committee Chairs

Club Call Trustee	Tom ,	N9CBA
Christmas Party	Dale ,	NJ9E
Club Awards	John ,	N9MWF
Club Truck	Steve ,	N9OA
Elmer/Know-Code	Vince ,	K9VG
Elmer/Know-Code	George ,	KG9CG
Field Day	Frank ,	KG9H
Field Day	Dale ,	NJ9E
Hamfest	John ,	N9MWF
Health & Welfare	Harry ,	W9AXI
Historian	John ,	N9LIN
Interference	Greg ,	N9SA
Refreshments	Janie ,	AE9JG
Membership	Carol ,	KB9FYL
Membership Retention	Robert ,	N9XS
Public Relations	Eileen ,	N9TWS
Public Service	Joe ,	N9WRO
VHF/HF Awards	Peter ,	W9UF

Amateur License Staff

Training Classes	Jack ,	KA9HEL
Novice Instructor	Rich ,	AA9KZ
Nov/Tech Instructor	Robert ,	N2EFT
General Instructor	John ,	WB9VGJ
General Instructor	Pat ,	K9JAU
Extra Instructor	Sang ,	N9ZGS
Volunteer Exam.	Harry ,	K9HK

WCRA Repeater Administrative Board (RAB)

Trustee/Tech Adv	Tom ,	N9CBA
Chairman	Don ,	N9NYX
Secretary	Marty ,	KA9RCC
Member	Gary ,	N9VLL
Member	George ,	KA3HSW
Tech Advisor	Larry ,	KA9KDC

WCRA Radio Nets

Sunday 8:00 pm	145.390/(-600)	Net Control: Rotates
Sunday 8:30 pm	224.140/(-1.600)	Net Control: Marty KA9RCC
Sunday 9:30 pm	145.390/(-600)	WCRA RTTYNet
Tuesday 8:00 pm	145.390(-600)	ARES Net
Tuesday 8:30 pm	444.475/(5.0)	UHF Net

WCRA Repeaters

145.390/ 144.790	103.5(1A) or 107.2(1B)	PL Encode/Decode
224.140/222.540	Carries Access - SKYWARN	Service Liaison
444.475/449.475	114.8 Hz(2A)	PL Encode/ Decode
145.310/144.710	WCRA, W9CCU-1	Full Duplex Packet Repr

HAMLETTER

Editor	Don ,	N9NYX
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Features	John ,	N9LIN
Features	Peter ,	W9UF
Features	Frank ,	KG9H
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Printing	Wayne ,	KF9JC



From the WCRA History Files

by: John Lauder,
N9LIN
WCRA
Historian

Remembering Nathan Stubblefield—

Who was Nathan Beverly Stubblefield? In Murray, Kentucky, he is known as the poor melon farmer, with no formal training, who demonstrated his invention—the wireless telephone. At that time, Guglielmo Marconi, generally considered to be the father of radio, had only been able to transmit beeps. Mr. Stubblefield had broadcast the human voice. The year is reported as 1892. He said, "I have solved the problem of telephoning without wires through the earth as Signor Marconi has of sending signals through space as well as through the earth, because my medium is everywhere".

Nathan Stubblefield was born in, grew up in, lived in, and died in Murray, Kentucky. He was the third of four sons of William and Victoria Frances Stubblefield, born on December 27, 1860, on a farm near Murray. It is said he was obsessed with electricity from an early age, but was not considered to be a good student in school. At the age of fifteen he dropped out of school and spent his time learning all about science. The people in the community in Murray knew about Stubblefield's Black Box, which caused voices to appear out of the air.

He was married in 1881 and began farming to support his family. He was not thought of as a very good farmer. He used what little money they had to buy equipment for his experiments. He had some success in patenting a lamp lighter and an electric battery. He was considered to be a strange person, and his patent success caused him to be even more so. He distrusted everyone, thought people were trying to steal his secrets. His home was reported to be wired, so that if a stranger approached within a half mile, a series of bells would sound.

In 1888 he was awarded a patent for an improved telephone and established the first telephone system in Murray. Everything went well, until the Bell System arrived and put him out of business.

He continued to develop the wireless telephone until his demonstration in 1902 brought him national attention. After showing his neighbors the wireless telephones, that did work, he was contacted by the St. Louis Post Dispatch newspaper for a demonstration. This was arranged and on January 10, 1902, a reporter participated in the test and reported, "I could hear every syllable the Stubblefield boy spoke into the transmitter as clearly as if he were just across the room". The distance was about a mile. He then demonstrated the invention in Philadelphia in May 1902. He was invited to Washington, D.C. At this demonstration one of the black boxes was placed on the steamship, Bartholdi, on the Potomac River. Other boxes were placed along the shore of the users' choosing. A complete success was accomplished. The Washington Evening Star's headline for May 21, 1902 was, "First Practical Test of Wireless Telegraphy Heard for Half Mile. Invention of Kentucky Farmer, Wireless Telephony demonstrated Beyond Question".

For awhile he was associated with the Wireless Telephone Company of America. However, he became disillusioned after he learned the company was a fake and cheated people out of their money. After Washington he went home to stay. Up to this point he was using ground conduction, where the earth carried the signal. Now he started to experiment with magnetic induction. He became obsessed with his experiments and estranged from his family. He lost his home and moved into a shack on a friend's property. On March 28, 1928, the first man ever to broadcast the human voice was found dead of starvation on the floor of his shack. He was 68 years old.

In 1930, the citizens of Murray, Kentucky erected a monument to their radio genius; they call him The Father of Radio. The memorial commemorates the day in 1892 that he performed the unusual demonstration of wireless voice communications.

When asked why he worked so hard on wireless telephones he said, it would be too difficult and expensive to string wires and poles all over rural Kentucky. Mr. Stubblefield is another one of those interesting but little known individuals we should learn more about and remember.

Source: Scenic Driving Kentucky by William and Cora Kappele: Smart-Daaf Boys 2002 "All In One" Radio, Television and Desktop Almanac by Troy Cory-Stubblefield.

73, John, N9LIN

FOR SALE:

Kenwood TS-530SP HF 160-10Mhz Digital Display; with 500 hz CW Filter, second external VFO VFO-230, and Shure 444 desktop mic. \$450.

Will also sell matching Kenwood AT-230 external antenna tuner with rig for \$125. All very clean condition.

Contact: **Harry**, **K9HK** 630-953-0519 or
<mailto:kamer@attglobal.net>kamer@attglobal.net

WCRA Meeting Minutes

by: Robert Mitlieri
N2EFT
WCRA
Secretary



THE BIRTHDAY MEMBERS OF OCTOBER

Ron	N0EPT	10-01-57
Marilyn	KB9FEI	10-01-31
Al	W9NXX	10-03-24
George	N9JIB	10-04-23
Jack	KB9OAR	10-05-48
John	N9LIN	10-10-30
Howard	WB9IRH	10-11-30
Gerald	WB9WBN	10-11-47
Frank	K9FFG	10-13-53
Norman	W9KCJ	10-14-48
Lloyd	W9HQP	10-15-18
Marc	W9KAN	10-16-41
Carol	WD9CNW	10-16-56
Robert	KB9GOQ	10-20-23
Bill	N9CLL	10-21-22
Jim	N9TEB	10-22-25
Tom	N9OKQ	10-26-45
Tim	WD9CNX	10-27-49

WCRA Minutes from the September 8, 2000 Meeting:

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 p.m. by the President, **Joe, N9WRO**, and introductions were made by the board and all attendees. A motion was made and accepted to approve the minutes of the August meeting. Vice-President, **Janie, AE9JG** (new call), reported that tonight's program will be a presentation on the events in Plainfield ten years ago. Next months presentation will be by Antennex. Septembers membership meeting will be at Wheaton College in Breyer Hall. Secretary, **Robert, N2EFT**, provided an explanation on how to access the mail reflector and its purpose. Treasurer, **John W9LQL**, gave a report of the club's financial condition. Membership, **Carol, KB9FYL**, four new members were voted in at this meeting. Hamfest, **John, N9MWF**, there will be a Hamfest committee meeting the following Wednesday at Janie's (AE9JG) house. The Hamfest committee is still looking for a commercial chairperson. John asked if offering a cash equivalent for Hamfest prizes would be good idea. Committee meetings will take place once a month. Public Service, Joe, N9WRO, The Glendale Heights parade participation was a success. The truck was present. Truck, **Steve, N9OA**, the truck is in the COD parking lot. Those wishing to, may visit the truck after the meeting. Historian, **John, N9LIN**, took a count of how many members present participated during Plainfield (there were 11). Training, **Jack, KA9HEL**, reported that there are Tech and General classes scheduled. There are seven registered for the Tech class but only four for the General. Hamletter, **Don, N9NYX**, spoke of the advantages of providing the Hamletter via the Web. Announcements: **Roberto, WA9E**, has Radio Expo tickets and brochures. **Steve, W9SRB**, offered to help members with FCC ULS registration. New Business: The board decided to sell the tow-behind generator. There was some discussion on how to sell it – or auction it. The meeting was adjourned at 20:43. Refreshments and the presentation on Plainfield followed.

Reprint from the August HAMLETTER

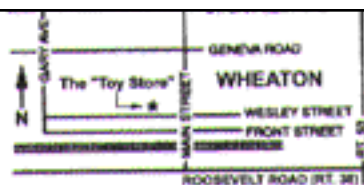
At the last membership meeting many of you asked if the instructions for subscribing to the club reflector could be reprinted.

As many of you will remember from the June membership meeting, the WCRA Board of Directors has decided to work toward eventually delivering the HAMLETTER to you via the **World Wide Web**. In attempt to facilitate this move toward the internet, **Robert, N2EFT**, the club Secretary, has set up a WCRA mail reflector. It is easy to subscribe by opening your web browser and going to www.gth.net. On the left side of this page from the drop down menu select **WCRA**(it is way down the list). Then click on **subscribe**. This will allow you to send and receive email from other club members that are also subscribers. The club website can be viewed at: www.qsl.net/wcra.

Amateur Radio Toy Store

117 W. Wesley St.
Wheaton, IL 60187
(630) 668-9577
Fax: (630) 690-9335

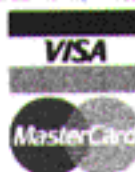
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10 A.M. to 5 P.M.
Monday – Saturday

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Scanners – Antennas – Books – Tapes – Accessories



ATTENTION:

The WCRA Hamfest website is now up and running. Content is being built slowly. View it at: www.wheaton-hamfest.org or wheatonhamfest.org



Activities on the HF Bands

by:
Peter Barr
W9UF

One of this fall's most awaited DXpeditions will kick off later this month, as Kingman Reef is put on the air in a major undertaking. The team leaves from Honolulu by air on Sunday, October 15 for Kiritimati Atoll (Christmas Island) in Eastern Kiribati. They will be met by the motor schooner Machias, for the first leg of their voyage, which will be to Palmyra Atoll. At Palmyra Mike, KH6ND, currently active as KH6ND/KH5, will join them. (Mike currently has over 16,000 ISO's logged on 10 bands.) They may have the opportunity to spend some time at Palmyra before continuing to Kingman Reef, which is a tiny, barren and extremely narrow coral cay.

During at least 12 days at Kingman, they will be QRV on all bands from 160 to 6 meters, on CW, SSB and RTTY with up to six stations operating at one time. Machias will be anchored in the lagoon for the duration of the stay. Depart at the end of October for Kiritimati and the team will return by air to Honolulu on November 5th.

While they plan to serve all constituencies, the team's major targets are Europe (where this entity is at the top of the most-wanted list), WARC bands, low bands, RTTY and six meters. The extremely small size of this coral cay presents a layout and operational challenge to the team. Their strategy to meet this challenge will include heavy use of vertical antennas on all HF bands and 160m to achieve minimum takeoff angle in a very small and radically marine environment.

A group of 13 international YL operators will visit Norfolk Island from October 5th to 12th following their visit to the International YL 2000 Convention in New Zealand. They will use the special call of AX9YL. This "mini-DXpedition" will not be using beams or amplifiers but will rely on their YL voices to work the world, propagation permitting. The group girls will be on both CW and SSB, and request that you please give them a call if you hear them. QSL will be via the VK3 bureau or direct to Gwen, VK3DYL, with SAE and sufficient return postage (\$2 or two IRC's).

A German team consisting of DJ7UC, DL4WK, DL7BO, DL7DF and DL7UFR will be in Togo, October 3-9th as part of a two week/two country DXpedition. Activity will be on all HF bands plus 6 meters CW/SSB/RTTY with an emphasis on the low bands. Their equipment consists of 4 transceivers, 2 linear amplifiers, 2 beams, a vertical, a 21m high vertical for 160 and 80m and a 5-element beam for 6m. After their Togo operation, the team will be active in Burkina Faso October 10-15th. No callsigns were available at the time this was being written. QSL via DL7DF. For more details and updated information, visit their Web page at: <http://www.qsl.net/DL7DF/>

The Bavarian Contest Club will be operating in Morocco again as CN8WW in the upcoming CQ WW Contests. They will be a Multi/Multi team, so there is a very good chance to work CN on all bands from 160-10m. There will be a new picture QSLcard for the upcoming activities. Work them on 5 or 6 bands and receive a special QSL card to honor your high performance. Before and after the contest they will operate as 5C8M on CW, SSB, RTTY, all bands (including the WARC bands). More detailed information can be found on their homepage at: <http://www.dl6fbl.de/cn8ww/> QSLcards for CN8WW and 5C8M go via DL6FBL (bureau or direct): Bernd Och, Christian-Wirth-Str. 18, D-36043 Fulda, Germany.

Frank/WA2VYA, Bruce/WA3RHW, Ken/K2WB and Jack/N2VW, all members of the Frankford Radio Club, will operate from VP5JM's QTH on Providenciales (NA-002) in the Turks & Caicos Islands from October 24-31st. They will be in the CQ WW DX SSB Contest (October 28-29th) as VP5T as a Multi/Multi category. Activity will be on CW, WARC bands and PSK31 before and after the contest. QSL VP5T to N2VW. E-mail requests for VP5T bureau cards are OK via n2vw@arrl.net. QSL portable callsign to homecall CBA.

During the coming month of October, Toni/EA5RM and Pedro Luis/EA7DBO will be active from Sihanouk Ville in the southern part of Cambodia as XU7ADB. They plan to arrive in Phnom Penh at 10:00 AM (local time) on October 3rd. If the customs do not delay their plans, they will be on the air that same evening and continue until the early hours of October 11th. Operation will be on 80-10 meters SSB/RTTY, with some CW. They also requested a license for 6 meters band, but the authorities did not accept their request. They will use an Icom IC-736 to drive an amplifier using a couple of 4CX250Bs to try to give readable signals in Europe. The antennas will be a tri-bander beam for 10/15/20 meters and wire dipoles for the others bands. An online log will be available on a Web page during the operation (updated everyday). The Web is active now with picture and info at: <http://www.qsl.net/xu7abd> QSL is via EA4URE at: Union de Radioaficionados Espanoles, Apartado 220, E-28080 Madrid, SPAIN

Adam Boettiger, W7MP will be active from Bandos Island (IOTA # AS-013) in the Maldives (Islands southwest of India), signing 8Q7AB starting September 30 through October 9, 2000. This location also counts for CQ Zone 22 for the Worked All Zones

Award (WAZ). Equipment: ICOM 706 MK IIG to Ameritron AL 811H at 800 Watts to Butternut 9-band vertical & Alpha Delta 10-40 dipole. Bands of operation will be 10-80 including WARC. All operation will be split - QSX up. For additional information, an online form to request cards via the bureau, propagation window projections, frequencies, further updates and more, see: <http://www.dxpedition.com/QSL> via W7MP. NOTE: This is a newly assigned call and is not in the Callbook yet. QSL information is as follows: Adam Boettiger, W7MP, 420 SE Kathy Street, Sherwood, OR 97140

DX Potpourri

"The 59(9) DXReport" states that Bert, WA1O, will head back to Antarctica in November as part of the International Trans-Antarctic Science Expedition. He will set up temporary camps for 3-4 days along the route for QSOs during his spare time. Look for KC4/WA1O.

The NG3K "Announced Operation" tables for the 2000 CQ World Wide DX Contests are now available. They can be found at the following URLs:

SSB - <http://www.ng3k.com/Misc/cqs2000.html>

CW - <http://www.ng3k.com/Misc/cqc2000.html>

This year he's added the ability to view the operations sorted by any of: Call; DXCC Entity; or CQ Zone. The tables at the above URLs are sorted by callsign. If you want to see the data sorted by DXCC Entity, just click on "DXCC" in the table header. Likewise, click on "CQZ" in the table header to view the operations arranged by CQ Zone. If you're viewing either the DXCC or CQZ view and want to return to "By Callsign" listing, simply click "Call" in the table header. The alternative views should become quite useful as the number of listed operations grows towards contest time.

Lanny, W5BOS, will be on from Cay Sal Bank in the Bahamas beginning October 6th or 7th for 2-3 days. This is the last 'unnumbered' IOTA island group in the Bahamas. The callsign will be W5BOS/C6A. QSL via W5BOS: Lanny Phillips, 8381 FM 2101, Quinlan, TX 75474-4836

Houssein, J28FH, is a new operator in Djibouti. He is using a single band 10 meter rig with a small amplifier (70watts) to a mobile antenna 3 meters high. He is building a 3-element beam for the HF bands. There are reports that he frequents the frequency 28580 kHz after 1930z. QSL via WA2VUY.

The Aland Islands contest station OH0Z will be active in the CQ WW SSB Contest (October 28-29th) by Ari, OH1EH, as a Single Op/All band category. QSL via: Ari Korhonen, OH1EH, Kreetalank.9A1, FIN29200 Harjavalta, Finland.

QSL routes for the 2000 IOTA Contest are available at the following Web page: <http://www.arrakis.es/~ea5eyj>

Kenny, K2KW, informs OPDX that he has just launched a new

Web site called "DX Holiday". The goal of this site is to share information on DX operating locations, and DXpedition "how-to" information. He hopes the readers find it helpful, and he especially hopes they will contribute to it! Check out: <http://pages.prodigy.net/k2kw/qthlist/>

Castres DX Gang member Bernard, F5XX, will be QRV from Reunion Island from October 11th to 23rd. He will use FR/F5XX or FR5/F5XX from the QTH of FR5CD. QSL CBA.

The French A52FH team from the Clipperton DX Club installed the radios and antennas for the first Bhutanese Radio Amateur Club station, A51AA, which came on the air for the first time September 12th. QSLs go via F2VX until a more permanent QSL management arrangement can be made. It is the goal to make A51AA a full-fledged club station, which will encourage young Bhutanese people to become familiar with electronics, telecommunications and ham radio. This station will also act as an operation site for guest operators coming in from abroad. It is housed in a new villa, just outside of Thimphu, the capital. Check out the website at www.sophun.com.bt for more information, which will be updated shortly.

Dennis, RZ1AK has an explanation on sending QSL Cards to Russia. Check his web page at: www/ql.net/rk1ak/mail.html

Finally, October kicks off Contest Season. Here's some of what we have to look forward to:

9/30 - 10/1

Louisiana QSO Party www.tchams.org/users/contest/laqp
Texas QSO Party www.flash.net/nars/

10/7 - 9

VK/ZL Contest (SSB) www.wia.org.au/federal/contests.html
California QSO Party www.cqp@contesting.com
RSGB 21/28 MHz Contest (SSB) See October QST
TARA PSK31 Rumble See October QST

10/14 - 15

Pennsylvania QSO Party See October QST
FIST CW Fall Sprint www.fists.org

10/21 - 22

Illinois QSO Party www.megisnet.com/~jematz/ram/html
QRPARCI Fall QSO Party See October QST
Asia - Pacific Sprint (CW) see their web-site at:
www.01.u-page.sonet.ne.jp/ja2/je1jkl/apsprint.html
Worked All Germany Contest (SSB) See October QST
JARTS World Wide RTTY Contest See October QST

10/28 - 29

...and the Granddaddy of them all..

CQ World Wide (SSB) www.cqww.com/cqww/

DX QSLing – An Art or Science?

by Steve W9XF

If you enjoy DXing, you probably also enjoy receiving QSLcards from those far away places you've worked. A card in the mail from a DX entity (or, for that matter, any card!) is always a pleasant surprise. The frustrating part of QSLing is waiting for what seems an eternity to receive some cards. Some never show up. While few hams enjoy a 100% return on QSLs they send out, you can improve your return percentages by following certain guidelines and "tricks of the trade." This article is a compilation of various methods that have been and are being used to maximize DX QSL returns. Some of you DX OTs may find the following information to be rather mundane and repetitive, but please bear with me for the sake of those new to DX QSLing. You might, like me, learn a few new tricks.

First and foremost, after you've made a new DX contact and decide you want a card, be sure you completely and legibly fill out your QSLcard. Missing or unreadable information will only serve to confuse the recipient and may delay if not prevent him/her from sending you his/her card. Fill out all the blanks on your card, especially those relating to the QSO, such as the DX callsign, date & time, frequency, signal report and mode. Once you've completed filling out your card, you'll need to know where to send it. DX ops usually mention their QSLroutes. These routes usually consist of 3 types: via a QSL manager, direct or via "the bureau." Let's talk about QSL managers first.

A QSL manager is someone who receives and sends out cards for someone else, usually DX ops. These people are overworked and underpaid as in no pay but they do it because they enjoy helping others out. When working DX, listen closely for QSLing instructions as many will have managers and using them will save you time and aggravation. The ideal situation in this case is a DX op who has a US manager. Simply send your card with a US-stamped "SAE" (self-addressed envelope) and 99.9% of the time you'll get a card back. In the case of a foreign QSL manager, follow the same instructions, except for the amount of postage you include. This will be discussed later in this article. The return rate for foreign managers is usually about the same as with domestic managers, although it may (and usually does) take longer for a card to reach you. If the DX op doesn't have a manager, the next option is to send your card, SAE and return postage direct.

"Direct" is just that: the op's home or callbook address. In most cases, you can find this address through various internet sources. The one I use almost exclusively is http://www.alltel.net/~johnshan/dx_ss_routes.html (use the "underline," or Shift Dash key on the left and right sides of "ss" in place of the spaces or you'll get an error message). This site provides a number of different callsign databases, not to mention QSLmanagers, dxpedition information, propagation, etc. I usually start out with Buckmaster on this page as it seems to be the most complete. Type in the callsign and click on the "Srch" button. You should see a new window with the callsign information and address. If you don't get an address, try a different database. Sometimes you won't be able to find an address. As an example, I've noticed that a number of Russian callsigns come up blank. Try country-specific databases or QSL manager searches as well. Assuming you've obtained an address, you now need to maximize the odds of your letter getting to the DX op. There are certain guidelines you should follow in this area. Use only the recipient's address as well as your return address on the outer envelope as well as on your SAE. Don't include callsigns on either address. Certain countries' postal workers have learned that any mail with callsigns usually means some form of payment for return postage, either "green stamps" (US one-dollar bills), "IRCs" (International Reply Coupons) or stamps of the country to which you're sending your card is enclosed. Green stamps and IRCs are negotiable (IRCs have black market value) and, in some countries, are worth the risk of opening a letter. We'll discuss both of these a little later in this article. If you use either, put them inside the SAE along with your card. As a suggestion, use #10 business envelopes for the outer mailer and 6" x 3" envelopes as SAEs. Both are readily available at office supply stores in various quantities. There are also individuals who offer specialized mailers for QSLing. I happen to use one type of these mailers, although there are a number of varieties and suppliers available. E-mail me if you'd like additional information such as sources, cost, etc. at w9xf@att.net. Understand, however, that no matter what type of envelopes you use, if someone wants to know what's in there, they'll open the envelope. That being said, once you've determined the DX's address, you'll now need to decide what type of payment to enclose for postage.

As mentioned above, there are at least 3 ways of including return postage. Green stamps are commonly used. Usually one or 2 are all that's needed by the DX op to fully pay for return postage. Be aware that, while US currency is accepted in many countries, it's difficult to exchange in some countries. Consider what you'd do if you received, for example, Nigerian currency. Of those countries that do readily accept and exchange green stamps for that country's currency, one is all that's needed in most to fully cover return postage; however, a number of countries' postage costs are very expensive and 2 green stamps are needed. One country in particular that requires 2 green stamps is Germany. As many QSL managers are German, be sure to include 2 green stamps with any cards you send to them as well. If you're skeptical about using green stamps, you could also use IRCs.

(This article will be continued in the next HAMLETTER)