

DXers are fortunate

Required reading for anyone attending our February program.

by Jay Musikar, AF2C

Members of the Amateur Radio fraternity often wonder what species they should file DXers under. Sure enough, we DXers are a breed unto ourselves.

DXers sometimes act like civilized humans, sometimes like beasts of prey, and sometimes even like plants. Most hams, including many DXers, enjoy an intelligent QSO with a new acquaintance in a foreign land. Conversation with hams in other lands often develop into real "ragchews" - if another DXer, in "beast of prey mode," doesn't interrupt.

When in this mode, DXers use every stalking technique they know. The name of the game is to work the DX station, and put another notch in the gun by getting a QSL card for the contact and submitting it to the ARRL's DXCC Desk.

Near the bottom of a solar cycle, when no DXpedition is stirring up the bands, some of us go into "plant" mode - perhaps finger tapping and staring into space.

Where is the true DXer, the individual with bags under and red lines in the eyes? Why, suffering from high blood pressure and membership in the demographic group with the highest divorce rate. And he or she may be as close as your bathroom mirror.

Yet the person to feel sorry for is the non-DXer. Nothing brings a tear to the eye of a DXer more quickly than seeing a ham "wasting time" ragchewing - well, other than seeing a fellow ham in front of the "boob tube" during a DX contest or DXpedition.

The poor non-DXer continues the aimless chatter with a ham in the next state-about fishing, handling traffic, or

how much they love Amateur Radio. It's a sad picture.

DXers know that all hams should chase DX. They understand that the reward comes as a DXer's stature grows - from a little acorn into a full-fledged nut. They know that nothing beats watching a 1000-dollar rotator, wide-spaced 5-element beam, and 90-foot tower gracefully arch over in a windstorm, and crash through the living room ceiling. Or how about the "togetherness" you and your spouse feel holding opposite ends of 300 feet of 414 Copperweld for a new vee-beam, when one of you lets go? Ah, the ecstasy, as the love of your life extricates you by cutting that vee-beam leg into 3-foot sections.

How about the joy, the bliss of stalking a rare DX station for three hours, only to listen to his "old buddy" move him to another band for a long "ragchew." And let's not forget the wonderful feelings that swell from deep within, when, after days of yelling or pounding the keyer, the DXpedition finally comes back to you-just as someone turns on an electric mixer. What non-DXer ever shares such drama? And aren't you a better ham for having lived so richly, so fully, and for acquiring that peptic ulcer?

The non-DXer lives in a vacuum-the wearisome emptiness of hamming without DX. Trouble is, the non DXer is too tranquil to know it. But a glance at him shows what those years of bliss have done. He looks youthful. He has an easy laugh and faultless digestion. It ain't natural!

from the June '95 North Jersey DXA NJDXA Newsletter, Bob Greenquist, Editor. Reference: *The Unfortunate Ones*. Paul

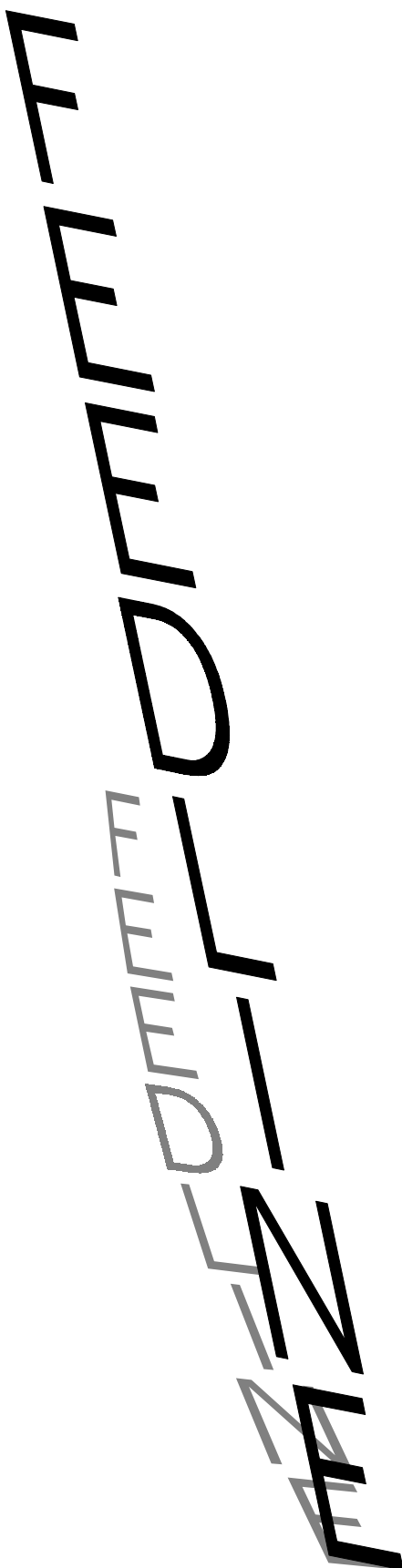
PSSST!..... hey buddy.....ya need a fix?

After ICOM closed their Atlanta service facility, *Mike Mahaffey, AD4QB*, had to decide if he wanted to follow his job to Washington state. NOT! Mike specializes in all HF, and VHF and UHF mobile rigs. **AmPro**, 770 974-7710, located in Ackworth, Georgia is an authorized ICOM and YAESU warranty service center. Non-warranty HT's are considered on a case-by-case basis. Rates are \$55 per hour, plus parts and shipping. Average turnaround time is three weeks. (I waited nine weeks to get my ICOM from Bellvue Wa.)

Just up the road in Kennesaw, Georgia is *Milton Lord, N4DA*, 770 422-1415, and his **HAM Repair** shop. Milton can handle any KENWOOD warranty problems and will also repair YAESU and ICOM HF and UHF rigs. (No ICOM or YAESU HT's please.) Rates are \$50 per hour, plus parts and shipping. Average turnaround is one week.

Both shops recommend UPS/FEDEX over the USPS and request you send the rig in its original carton. Rigs that arrive poorly packaged are subject to a re-packaging charge. Of course, the listed turnaround times are subject to parts availability.

KM4LB



Working a DX “split” operation

by Omri Serlin, AA6TA

It's common for a DXpedition station to work “split” operation - the DX transmitting on one frequency, but listening on another. It keeps the pileup off the DX frequency, so everyone can hear the DX station better. It also allows the DX to transmit on a portion of the band that's quieter because it's not available to most of the callers.

Working split requires ingenuity on the caller's part: it can become an exciting game. In split mode, on a dual VFO transceiver, one VFO sets the receive frequency, and the other the transmit. Your rig's instruction manual shows how to set up for split mode operation.

CW splits are usually just a few kHz, so you can often work split on CW using the receive independent tuning (RIT) control, though it's unhandy because it moves the receive rather than the transmit frequency. A few rigs offer a transmit independent tuning control. - ed).

Splits on SSB are typically 5 to 10 kHz, and occasionally much more, so you must have dual VFOs or a separate receiver.

Most DX stations announce their listening frequencies often. And as the pileup grows, they tend to widen the split, to spread the callers out. A DX on 14.195 may say, “listening 200-210” or “listening to 210”, meaning he or she is scanning from 14.200 to 14.210. But the DXer never says in what order, which could be upward, downward or at random.

Where should you transmit? One strategy is to quickly scan after the DX selects each caller. If you find that station, when the DX says “QRZ” transmit on the same frequency, or up or down by whatever increment you think the DX is tuning. If you can find several worked stations in a row, you may discover a pattern. They you can predict where the DX will listen next, and be there!

Friendly souls on your local DX Cluster act as spotters to find those worked stations. This predictive work can be effective. Some DXers expend a major effort divining the pattern. They pride themselves on getting through on one, or at most, very few calls.

But while you're trying to learn the

is to pick a more-or-less quiet spot, perhaps near the center of the announced scan range, and stay there, throwing in your callsign every time the DX completes a QSO. The advantage of the central frequency is that the DX must cross it twice in an up-and-down scan pattern. And, if the scan is random, you are no worse off than anyone else. Another advantage of staying in one spot is that you may chase some of the other callers to quieter frequencies.

Transmitting on the DX frequency in a split operation is a major no-no. “Policemen” may send, or shout “UP!, UP!” to let you know that you goofed: a few may add juicy comments on your mental limitations. Avoid embarrassment by following the Amateur's golden rule: *Listen before you talk.*

Here's a tip: any time you hear a DX station working “contest style,” but you can't hear anyone the DX works, assume it's a split operation. To work the station, first find the pileup, then join the fun! GUD LUK OM!

from the May '95 Electronics Museum ARC (Los Altos, CA.) EMARC Relay” AA6TA Editor, via the ARNS.

Necessity mothers spools of invention

by Huck Hucakbee, AA5BU

Amateur Radio often spawns inventive genius. An event in the Alps mountains late in WW II will illustrate. I went to Europe late in the war, assigned to the Army's first microwave communications equipment - top secret stuff for transmitting scrambled telephone messages for General Ike and his forces.

One repeater station comprised four trailers, with four 10 kW power plants, two antenna trucks, four equipment trucks and a jeep - all operated by a squad of ten men. To prevent excessive temperature rise, the vans had exhaust fans, but no source of heat. That was fine for North Africa, but not for high in the Alps in winter. It was like trying to heat a country outhouse with a candle. Among our equipment were twelve spools of Signal Corp telephone wire. Each fifteen inch diameter spool contained one mile of wire. The electrical resistance of the wire on each spool was 110 ohms.

We moved all of the spools into the operating vans, and connected the wire ends across the 120 volts AC line from the generator. But, alas, it didn't work. The coiled wire had so much inductance that only a few milliamps of current flowed producing little heating.

After much thought we tried sending current through the two wires of each pair in opposite directions. Presto! 400 watts per spool - more heat than we needed! It was great coming out of the bitter cold and snow and sitting on those warm spools of wire. Twelve spools ate up half the output of one of those generators. But who cared? We weren't cold anymore.

With that lesson, I learned another great truth: even meager resources often can become adequate, if you add a little ingenuity and persistence.

from the September '95 Austin (Tx)ARC's AARC-Over - Mickey McInnis, Editor, via the ARNS.

Why did it work?

I invite your comments or tutorial on the physical aspects of inductance to add to our collective knowledge. Send your text to TKLIMALA@MCIMAIL.COM for inclusion in the March Feedline.

Editor

DXer's put cross-discipline skills to good use.

by Bob Lukaszewski, KB9MS

Chasing DX gives hams a chance to use their tnc and packet skills. The network used is called the DX Packet Cluster. This system is a real time BBS of sorts that announces DX stations, their frequency and the station that heard them, and maybe a short comment about signal, or if he's listening up etc. Well.. Where can I find this BBS..??? There are several frequencies used by the DX Cluster which employ 1200 baud tnc's, they are:

147.57 W4DW (direct to the cluster)

144.93 SWAN (west)

145.67 DXJARS (south and east)

To connect to any of these nodes type "C (nodename)," then follow any special instructions given by the node.

If you are in the North Raleigh Area use the 147.57, If you are in the Cary area use the 144.93, and if you are east of Raleigh or near Benson use the 145.67. Some trial and error on these frequencies is in order to see which one suits your needs or you hear and get into the best.

The nodes DXJARS and SWAN are tied to W4DW by a 440Mhz 9600 baud backbone. At this time there is no user 9600 baud channel available. But it is planned for the future, and when it is available there will be messages on the cluster explaining how to use it. There are some small details that must be followed when using this system:

NO BEACONS (turn off your tnc's beacon)

NO CW ID's (turn off your tnc's cw id)

NO CONNECTS on these frequencies except to the appropriate node.

NO BEAMS use an omni antenna as high as possible and run enough power to be heard by all the stations connected to the node. This may vary depending how the high antenna is, and where you are. This is done to prevent *hidden transmitters* and the chance of slowing down user traffic.

These pre-requisites are done to limit traffic on these frequencies to cluster users and the node. The more traffic on here the more collisions and the slower the service to you.. the user.

Give it a try, you will need to register when you first log on. This is done to keep a log for your station. In the log will be

Don't be the audience

"On the air, as elsewhere, we are known by the company we keep."

by Ken Edelstein, KE2EP

Applause, the sign says, and the studio audience claps their hands. "Laugh," it says, and the audience roars. Not everyone gets the joke, of course, but an enthusiastic person waves the signs, and the audience responds-just to be polite.

It's okay for someone in a studio audience to laugh and applaud, even if they aren't sincere-so long as the approval they show by doing so harms no one. But if the humor is racist, sexist, ethnic, religious, or attacks an individual, I would refuse to provide the requested response. I would get up-even in the middle of the show-and leave.

Volumes have been published about "proper" Amateur Radio operating procedures. The common thread of these "Guidelines" - be they FCC Part 97 regulations, the ARRL Operating Guide, or the policy statement of a local repeater - concerns what to do when transmitting.

But most of the time we listen; we're the audience of the person transmitting. And none of those guides provides listening rules.

Most of us don't enjoy listening to the arguments and fights that are the prime activity of a few hams. Those people's differences, whether with individuals, repeater clubs, or the FCC, are best discussed over the telephone-if at all.

Cross-discipline (continued)

your name, qth, phone #, and coordinates (if you know them).

These will be used when you ask the system where a certain country is, it will tell you how many miles and direction from your qth it is. There is also a good help file on the cluster as well as a printed manual available for a minimum donation to support the cluster.

Enjoy it, and if you have any questions feel free to give me a call. If I can't answer your question, I'll get an answer from the cluster guru's.

Bob KB9MS

147.15

833-0199

We are all painfully aware of the venom spewers among us. And we know that they lead unhappy lives. We understand that they fight, curse, and put others down to forget their own misery. And we recognize that they are far beyond the help of amateurs (or Amateurs); they need professional care.

What they lack in number they make up in "air time" spent haranguing whoever will listen. When they can make someone spite another person they don't even know, it makes their day. Misery indeed loves company.

When you are "the audience," you are involved. It follows that if someone leads a QSO in a direction you feel is improper, it's up to you to express your feelings. Notice I said "you feel." It's your values that are on the line. How should you express your feelings?

The best option may be to QSY. But if you feel the Situation warrants verbalizing your objection, you can say something like "I don't agree," or "This is not the place - for that kind of talk."

We hams certainly need not limit the content of our QSOs to rigs, antennas, and Santa Claus. We can discuss serious subjects, so long as we take care not to hurt anyone. So stay alert; try to divine the intent of anyone for whom you provide an audience. Does he or she try to make another person feel bad? Ask yourself how you would like such things said about you, your friends, or your family.

Those who listen without taking part in a hurtful QSO will perceive little moral distance between the vulgar speaker and that speaker's guffawing audience. On the air, as elsewhere, we are known by the company we keep.

So next time, don't provide an audience for a malcontent, Instead, QSY or turn off your radio. A clown without an audience soon becomes a silent clown.

from the June '95 Olympia (Wash.) ARS 'Watts

Cycle 22 isn't over

*Just when you thought it was
time to dust off your rig...*

by Glenn Williams, AF8C

The Royal Observatory of Belgium, the world's official sunspot keeper, has revised its predicted timing of the end of Cycle 22 and the start of Cycle 23. The observatory has rescheduled the transition for May '96, and said that propagation will begin its upturn in September '97.

That means Cycle 23 should reach its peak years in 1999. On average, from the middle of the low-activity point, which signals the end of one cycle and the beginning of the next, it takes three years for solar flux to peak. Flux then typically stays relatively flat near the peak value for two years, before declining for six years.

So expect HF propagation to get even more rotten before it improves.

from the Jun@July '95 West Park Radiops (Cleveland, Ohio)
W8VM Log - AF8C Editor, via the November 1995 Amateur
Radio News Service

Cary Amateur Radio Club

The Cary Amateur Radio Club meets on the fourth Thursday of the month, 7:30 p.m. in the lower level of the Christian Life Center of White Plains United Methodist Church. The June, November, and December meetings are held off-site. Call for location of those meetings. **Next Meeting: February 22, 1996.**

1996 Officers

KB9MS	Bob Lukaszewski	833-0199	President
N9CGD	Tom Doligalski	481-1236	Vice-President
K4IWW	Will Harper	467-0224	Treasurer
N4UE	Herb Lacey	467-9608	Secretary

Feedline

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Special DX-Edition

A sneak preview of our February 22 program.