



The North Florida DX Association

PileUp

The NFDXA Newsletter



Volume 1, Number 3

March 2009

<http://nfdxa.com/>

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March 21 Next Meting Date

The next meeting of the North Florida DX Association will be held at 4 p.m. Saturday, March 21 at the QTH of club past president Ron Blake, N4KE.

The weather is projected to continue 'spring-like' with only a slight chance of afternoon showers expected. (If the long range weather projections are made using a 'model' similar to that used for sunspot projections we may be in for a good soaking! - Ed.)

Please check the RSVP page <http://nfdxa.com/meeting> at your earliest convenience and click on if you'll be able to come and if you'll be bringing a guest.

Although no particular program has been planned for this month's get-together aside from good food and fellowship, David Price, WA4ET, will be finalizing his order for NFDXA polo shirts and your input is needed on whether or not you wish to place an order. (See story below-Ed.)

That's 2000z 21Mar09 at N4KE's QTH.

Marathon Ranks Unchanged

N4NN's still tops the NFDXA list in the year-long CQ DX Marathon rankings with 222 countries worked since January 1, but K4UTE is drawing closer by upping his total to 218.

Seven others in the club have posted totals and its hoped that number will increase as we head into the summer DXpedition season.

You can check the latest postings by turning to page 12 in this issue, or by going to: <http://nfdxa.com/cq/summary.asp>

MIDWAY DXPEDITION IN OCTOBER

Midway atoll will be activated as K4M for two weeks from October 5 through Oct 19 this year. This will be the first operation from this site since 2002.

For more details go to:

<http://www.midway2009.com>

Order Your NFDXA Polo Shirts

David, WA4ET, has volunteered to order NFDXA club polo shirts and asks that each member contact him ASAP with how many shirts they want, as well as their desired shirt size.

He'll present the list of confirmed buyers he already has at the March 21st meeting. Buyers can verify the information David has is correct, i.e., the shirt size, call sign and spelling of the name are correct..

As described by David in NFDXA reflector e-mails and in person the shirts will be white polo shirts with a pocket on one side and the club's logo embroidered on the other.

The addition of a pocket was by popular request of the NFDXA membership. The wearer's name and call sign are to be embroidered over the pocket.

According to WA4ET the size of the circular NFDXA logo will measure approximately 9 cm from top to bottom which is slightly larger than the logo on the last polo shirt order. The

logo will be embroidered directly into the shirt material..

Although there was some discussion among the membership as to which side the pocket was to be located the usual placement of the pocket on a polo shirt is over the left breast. On the current NFDXA shirts, the logo is on the wearer's right, name and call on the left over the pocket. Club Secretary Mike, NF4L, suggested the membership stick with this placement.

All that remains is for those who want to buy a club polo shirt to contact David and place their order as soon as practical.

David will make one more reminder posting on the NFDXA reflector before he places the order which he plans to do during the third week in April. David further asks that club members be prepared to pay in full when the shirts are distributed as he will special order them on his personal account.

Sunspot Trivia

Sunspots have not reoccurred because:

- 1) We are being punished for reckless excesses (e.g. 160M yagi's)
- 2) ET's corrected the sun's acne problem
- 3) There never were sunspots. All previous references to sunspots have been deleted. Similar to what Galileo went through because the church claimed the sun is perfect. Claims of the existence of sunspots is heresy.
- 4) Al Gore

Or it it because:

"There are no predictions for new sunspots, but these events tend to occur suddenly. . . Just as Cycle 23 had a double-peak, we are perhaps observing a double bottom, centered on August 2008 and early 2009, or with the second minimum perhaps some time in the near future. We won't know it until it has passed, but it sure feels like a minimum at the moment. **(K7RA ARRL Propagation Forecast Bulletin 10 06Mar09)**

Eight weeks until. . .

Like the economy it seems the QSL card processing at ARRL always seems to be running behind the curve.

But apparently things are looking better. At least there's light to be 'seen' light at the end of the card backlog tunnel.

According to Bill Moore, NC1L, card processing is only running eight weeks behind, that is, if your cards were received at Hq January 16th supposedly they are just now getting to them.

Can we to take that to infer the economy is going to start 'looking better', too? Apparently, someone has yet to turn on that light.



Kick the tire, light the fire...

And the first one in the air is the leader!



That was one of the expressions dating back to WWII when men flew the fabled war birds that were on display during the recent Keystone Heights air show.

Among those in the crowd was NFDXA's Cory Mc Donald, NIWON, who did more than attend. He was there to take an hour-long ride in a legendary P-51D Mustang, the long-range fighter plane that escorted the B-17 Flying Fortress and B-24 Liberators in their

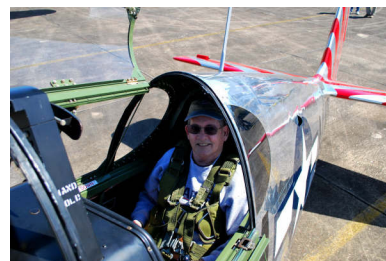
bombing missions over Germany and occupied Europe.

Cory has long admired the P-51 and has a family connection with the extraordinary fighter-interceptor as well. His father-in-law was a flight instructor during WWII, providing advanced training in the AT-6 'Texan' as the last step before they transitioned into the Mustang.

Although the Mustang typically configured as a single seat fighter-interceptor some have been modified to provide a so-called 'jump seat' immediately behind the pilot. As Cory learned the seat is cramped and there's not much leg room.

He also found it hard to take pictures while pulling 4-g turns

But the inconvenience was more than overcome by the thrill of being able to ride and actually handle 'the stick' of this true aviation legend. "I flew it IFR for awhile", said Cory adding in this instance "IFR meant **I Follow the Road!**"



Who Can Remember When...and Where?



Who amongst us remembers what this picture represented, where it was and when? If you think you know the answers, check your remembrances with the story below. (W4FDA photo)

Ah, Yes...Those Were the Days...

Does the address 7305 Mayapple Road in Jacksonville ring any bells? A concrete block building about 15 by 36 feet?

Bingo! It's all coming back to you. The original 'clubhouse' for the North Florida DX Association. The structure was built by W4FDA back in 1963 for his use as a hamshack and contest QTH and was located in back of his house

"I ran many multi-single contests from there," says Pres. "We had a 100 foot tower."

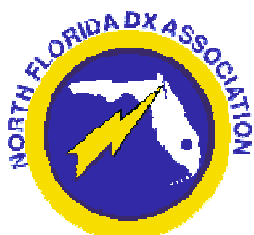
For a number of years the building did double duty as the clubhouse for the NFDXA. "All our meetings were there for several years," Pres said. "Even after I left and took up residence across town, we still had meetings there."

As the phrase goes... "Ah yes, those were the days..."

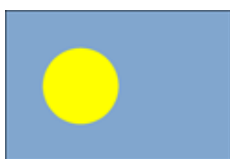
WWV Voice Silent Key

The person behind the recorded voice of Time and Frequency Station WWV in Fort Collins, Colorado has passed away.

Announcer Don Elliot Heald, of Atlanta, Georgia, who gave WWV its human touch, passed away on Thursday, February 19th.



W4ZR



The DX Calendar

The following list is a combination of the **NG3K** and **Daily DX** calendars and was compiled by **Richard, K4UTE**.

Start	End	Prefix	Call	QSL Manager
14-Mar	15-Mar	6Y	6Y8XF	G3TXF
14-Mar	28-Mar	FG	FG/F5TGR	F5TGR
14-Mar	16-Mar	T8	T88AA (OC-009)	JH2BNL
14-Mar	16-Mar	T8	T88MM (OC-009)	JA2NQG
14-Mar	15-Mar	V4	V47CD	G4FAL
14-Mar	27-Mar	VK9C	VK9AA (OC-003)	DL8YR
15-Mar	22-Mar	VK9N	VK9N/ON5AX	ON5AX
16-Mar	18-Mar	KH2	AH0F/KH2	JA2NQG
16-Mar	18-Mar	KH2	NH0AA/KH2	JH2BNL
17-Mar	24-Mar	VP5	VP5/K4IRI	K4IRI
17-Mar	24-Mar	VP5	VP5/N4PJ	N4PJ
19-Mar	25-Mar	4K	4K0CW	DL6KVA
20-Mar	25-Mar	VE	VE9/VA7AQ (NA-014)	VA7AQ
21-Mar	11-Apr	FG	FG/F4EBT (NA-102)	F4EBT
21-Mar	23-Mar	LU	LT9L	EA5FL
21-Mar	22-Mar	VP5	VQ5B	N4PJ
22-Mar	6-Apr	VK9M	VK9GMW	HA7RY
23-Mar	29-Mar	SV	SV1AIN/8 (EU-052)	SV1AIN
23-Mar	29-Mar	SV	SV1GYG/8 (EU-052)	SV1GYG
23-Mar	29-Mar	SV	SV1QN/8 (EU-052)	SV1QN
23-Mar	29-Mar	SV	SW1GYN/8 (EU-052)	SW1GYN
24-Mar	31-Mar	CT3	CT3/DF7ZS	DF7ZS
24-Mar	3-Apr	VK9L	VK9LA (OC-004)	VK4FW
24-Mar	8-Apr	VP5	W5CW/VP5	W5CW

(Continued next page)

The DX Calendar ... page 2



Start	End	Prefix	Call	QSL Manager
25-Mar	2-Apr	J6	J6/W5JON (NA-108)	W5JON
25-Mar	1-Apr	YJ	YJ0AAC (OC-035)	VK4HAM
26-Mar	29-Mar	9M6	9M8Z	M0URX
26-Mar	4-Apr	E5/S	E51SIX	W5GJ
28-Mar	29-Mar	CN	CN2BC	DL7BC
28-Mar	29-Mar	CT3	CS9L or CT9L	DJ6QT
28-Mar	29-Mar	D4	D4C	IZ4DPV
28-Mar	29-Mar	FR	FR/F4EGZ	F4EGZ
28-Mar	29-Mar	GD	GD8K	GW0ANA
28-Mar	4-Apr	GD	GT4BRS and GT6BRS	GW0ANA
28-Mar	29-Mar	GJ	MJ4K	G3NKC
28-Mar	29-Mar	KH0	AH0BT	7L1FPU
28-Mar	29-Mar	KH6	NH7A	F5VHJ
28-Mar	29-Mar	OM	OM0A	OM0AAO
28-Mar	29-Mar	P4	P40A	WD9DZV
28-Mar	29-Mar	TA	TC3EC	TA3GO
28-Mar	29-Mar	VE	VY2/N1SNB	N1SNB
29-Mar	30-Mar	VP5	VP59V	W5CW
29-Mar	30-Mar	ZS	ZT2V	N15DX
30-Mar	16-Apr	E5	E51XBG	HB9XBG

For your futures file... Often hard-to-hear **JDI, OGASAWARA**, with Operators Hide/JM1LJS and Hiroyuki/JG7PSJ will be active as **JD1BLK** and **JD1BMH**, respectively, from Chichijima Island (AS-031) **between April 29th and May 12th**. Activity will be on 160-6 meters using CW, SSB and the Digital modes. QSL via their home call signs.

And another semi-rare one, **C2I, NAURU** is in the works. **EA4ATI Dani**, is planning a DXpedition to **Nauru Island** and the tentative dates are in early **May 2009**. He is looking for other operators, additional yagis and financial support. Check out the **C2ITI** Web site at <http://c2iti.madrono.net/> for details of the planned upcoming DXpedition.

Whatever Happened to Heathkit? Part 1 Louis Frenzel



(Editor's Note: The following article from the Feb 18 edition of *Electronic Design* was brought to my attention by Richard, K4UTE with the thought it would be of interest to many 'old timers' in NFDXA, a category happens to include ye olde editor! Part 2 will appear in the April PileUp.)

Whenever I mention to folks that I used to work at Heathkit, a few people actually ask, "What's Heathkit?" Yes, I suppose that does date me a bit. Others will say, "Oh, yes, my dad used to build Heathkits." Anyway, some of you do remember Heathkit, and fondly in most cases. If not, let me explain.



There once was a time in electronics when you could actually build circuits and equipment yourself. You needed a design that you could create yourself—or if not, get from one of many magazines, including *Electronic Design*. You could buy the resistors, capacitors, transistors, or tubes in the olden days, then put them all together on a metal chassis, a breadboard, or a finished printed-circuit board (PCB). It was quite a project but doable, and many hobbyists like hams built these designs on a regular basis.

In the late 1940s and 1950s, someone invented the kit business. Companies designed a product and sold it as a bundle of parts called a kit. You could buy the kit for a fraction of what a comparable wired unit would cost and then build it yourself. The outcome was quite favorable—a workable electronic product and a great sense of accomplishment you got from the construction.

Heath was one of those companies that help started the kit business. Ed Heath founded the company in 1926 with, of all things, an airplane kit. He died in a test flight in one in 1935, but Howard Anthony kept the company going. Right after World War II, he bought a batch of electronic surplus. Out of that came one of the first successful kits, a small oscilloscope for \$50, which was a real achievement in its time. With that success came many new products.



Heathkit probably succeeded more on its ham radio products than anything else. Most of the early kits were shortwave radios, transmitters, accessories like antenna tuners, and the famous Cantenna, a 1-kW non-inductive power resistor in a paint can with mineral oil for the heatsink. Heathkit went on to create an extensive line of small and large transceivers and big power amps, many of which are still operational today.



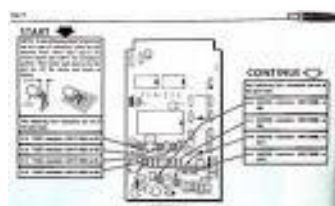
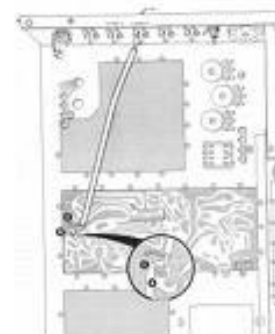
The Successful Years

Later in the 1950s and 1960s, Heathkit expanded into audio equipment, TV sets, and lots of other consumer products. The company even had a low-cost line of test equipment with scopes, multimeters, generators, counters, and other items. While Heathkit had competitors like Allied Knight, Lafayette, Eico, and a few other smaller companies, it essentially beat the pants off everyone else because it had a better product.



But Heathkit's good reputation really came from offering a better assembly manual than anyone else. A poorly executed step-by-step manual is a prescription for disaster for any kit company. If the customer can't build the kit successfully without massive telephone and mail support, it would die a quick death, and many did. Heathkit figured this out early and spent as much development time in the manual as it did engineering the product. Its primary marketing message was "We won't let you fail," and the company lived up to it.

(Continued on page 8)



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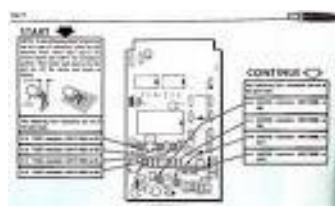
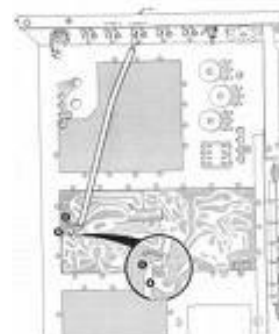
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(Continued on page 8)



On The Road Again...with the TinyTrak4 Jim Hughes. KC4FWS



During our motor coach trip to Alaska in 2005, I began looking for a way to report our position on the Internet in real time. Additionally, I wanted capability to send and received email using HF, TNC, PACTOR and Winlink 2000.

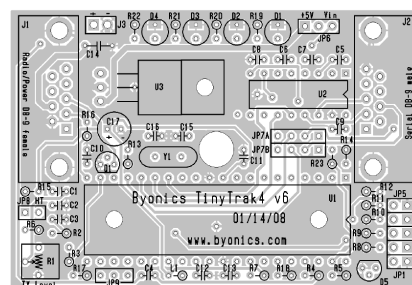
Before we departed Jacksonville, I had installed a Winlink system using HF and a SCS TNC to do PACTOR II. Although a bit slow, the system worked great here in the southeast. On the road, I quickly learned that the HF links were scarce as we went further north. That coupled with various RF interferences I was suffering with the High Sierra antenna on the back of the coach made all of what I had hope to do with Winlink and PACTOR II useless.

I resorted to manually entering our GPS positions manually whenever we stopped for the night and I had an internet connection. As it proved out, we were able to make frequent internet connections throughout the trip. Even through the Yukon along the ALCAN highway, I would often run into someone that had a Data Storm link that I could hook up with wirelessly.

Last Spring I got a little bored. I began looking at Google Earth and playing around with it. I was retracing our travels along the ALCAN. That is when I discovered a web site <http://aprs.fi/> and the APRS interface with Google Earth. I had looked into APRS a few years earlier, but never did anything with it. The Google Earth interface ignited my interest and I began to search out more info on APRS. I discovered it had come a long way. I quickly discovered numerous web sites on the subject of APRS. One that caught my attention was <http://www.byonics.com> and the TinyTrak4 kit. I always loved to build small projects and was into playing around with GPS. I thought the TT4 kit was an easy project to begin with. I ordered it, within a week; I had all the parts arranged out on my desk. All I had to do was properly place and solder them on the pc board.

I know a few of you are now laughing. Especially those who have seen me put on a PL259. I know what you are thinking. No it did not take me days. After reading the well-written instructions and studying the schematic, I proceeded to get out my soldering iron and thin solder. I was anxious to get started. In about two hours, it was done. Man! Did it look good! Now, for the smoke test!

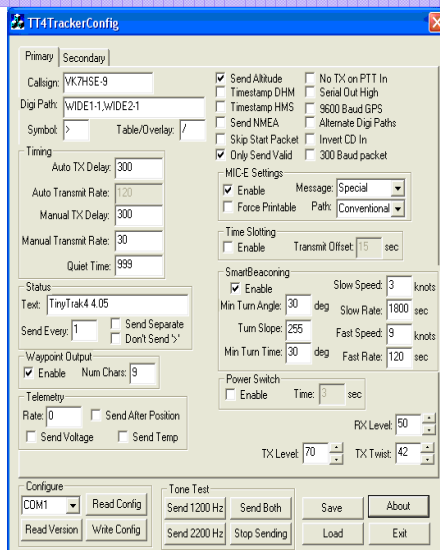
The book that came with the TT4 gave all the information I needed to do the setup and load the firmware updates. I also found much help on the Yahoo Groups site <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tinytrak4/>. The TT4 was in beta testing and was available only in kit form at the time. So, there was much activity on the group site that gave many ideas on how to get around the setup routines.



Tiny Trak4...continued from Page 6

Everything went well until I began trying to set the transmit audio level. There was just not enough audio. I had a friend of mine, Jim Cook, AL7RV test the level using his analyzer. That is when I decided to change the value of R6 from 220k to 100k. I finally got a good audio signal. (Note: I noticed now the instructions mention this problem and in some cases, they even recommend to just take R6 out and short it.

Everything seemed to be ready for the setup using a terminal program and the software. It went rather quickly and within an hour, I had it up and running. The web sites such as <http://aprs.fi/?call=kc4fws> began producing the spotting data without any effort. Other displays such as those described on <http://xastir.sourceforge.net> offer some alternatives. After several weeks of playing with it and doing some tweaks, it remained very stable. There are a couple of short videos of what I am using on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2yPgSB6ErY0> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3hCXII2ac0>.



Several trips displayed all the data with no problem. The only thing I need to do is put it to use on another trip to Alaska. Hopefully, in 2011 that will happen when I retire one more time.

— Jim Hughes, KC4FWS

Bob Heil Featured on YouTube

Chances are whether you are a ham radio operator or a music buff you've heard of Bob Heil, as in Heil Microphones.

Recently a St. Louis television station produced a feature story on Heil who lives and works just across the Mississippi River in Illinois. One of the little known facts about Bob Heil brought out in the feature is that he's an accomplished musician in his own right, a concert organist.

The TV station's feature ended up on YouTube and it paints a very positive picture for Ham radio. Check it out—it's a little over 9 minutes long.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vc19UqLK5Pg>

Live Software Defined Radio on Internet

A group of Dutch engineering students have come up with a novel ham radio project and posted it on the Internet for all to enjoy.

It's an online, *real time* software-defined receiver for 80, 40 and 20 meters located in the student ham radio club (PI4THT) at the Univer of Twente in Enschede, Holland.

Alert Reader W4GJ is the one who came across this site and brought it to our attention. Bob said his first thought was "to try transmitting on a select frequency and listen to your signal as it sounds in Europe." Interesting thought; how DO you sound to other stations? It could be scary.

At any rate, here's the address of the site. It will take a few seconds to load. Once up, read and follow the instructions. It tunes with the mouse, not unlike PSK. Also, there's a place for you to enter your comments. Have fun.

<http://websdr.ewi.utwente.nl:8901/>



Heathkit...continued from page 5

I went to Heathkit in the early 1970s to start its education and publishing product line. The idea was to extend the concept that building a kit was an educational endeavor and that we could expand on that idea with more formal learning materials to supplement the kits. We built a line of self-instructional courses on electronic fundamentals and a wide range of other topics. A line of kit trainers accompanied the instructional materials. The first products emerged in 1974 and were instantly successful. We followed up with micro-processor learning packages, which were hot for their time. And, we developed the Hero robot kit that came out in 1982.

I was also involved with the development of the Heathkit computers. We created the H8 and the H11, not to mention the H9 terminal, and of all things the H10, a paper tape reader/punch. (What was I thinking?) The H11 kit used Digital Equipment Corporation's (DEC) famous LSI-11 board. We packaged that into kit form with some 8-in. hard drives (remember those?) and the RT-11 operating system with Basic—not bad for \$1200 at that time. The all-in-one H89 and others came later.

(Reprinted from the February 18, 2009 edition of *Electronic Design*)

Postscript: How many Heathkits have you built? How many are you still using?



10 more reasons you may be addicted to Ham radio

1. You actually believe you got a good deal on eBay.
2. When you see a house with a metal roof, and your only thought is what a great ground plane that would be.
3. You have pictures of your radio equipment as wallpaper on your computer's desktop.
4. Every family vacation includes a stop at a Ham radio store.
5. The first question you ask the new car dealer is: "What is the alternator's current output?"
6. You buy a brand new car based on the radio mounting locations and antenna mounting possibilities.
7. You have tapped out Morse code on your car's horn.
8. A lightning storm takes out a new Laptop, Plasma TV, and DVD Recorder, but all you care about is if your radios are okay.
9. Your wife has had to ride in the back seat because you had radio equipment in the front seat.
0. Your wife was excited when you were talking about achieving that critical angle, but very disappointed when you finally did.

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DX Quiz—"Enough I Say" by Ward Silver, N0AX

Most NFDXA members can remember the happier times, like when 10-meters was open all day to everywhere. As **N0AX**, author of the **DX Quiz** that follows avers: "Enough, I say! Fie on this miserable solar minimum... Let us stop this wringing of hands and crying in our beers." OK, let's just drink the beer, and answer the following questions about the vagaries 10 meters. This quiz first appeared in the November/December 2007 issue of *The DX Magazine*. The correct answers—as opposed to the ones you may have entered—are on Page 12.

- 1) How do ionospheric hops from the F-layer and sporadic E clouds compare?
 - A. F-layer hops are shorter
 - B. F-layer hops are longer
 - C. There are hops on 10 meters?
 - D. Don't know, never heard an F-layer hop on 10 meters before.
- 2) When an E-W 10 meter skew path opens, in which direction is it offset from the Great Circle path?
 - A. South
 - B. North
 - C. Up
 - D. Down
- 3) How does ground wave on 10 meters compare to ground wave on 20 meters?
 - A. 10 meter signals don't propagate by ground wave
 - B. 10 meter ground wave is longer
 - C. 10 meter ground wave is shorter
 - D. 20 meter signals don't propagate by ground wave
- 4) For there to be "short skip" on 10 meters what has to happen?
 - A. Both stations must be pointing their antennas north
 - B. The signals must be horizontally polarized
 - C. The signals must be vertically polarized
 - D. The MUF must be significantly higher than 30 MHz
- 5) Short skip on 10 meters is an indicator of good propagation on what other ham band?
 - A. 2 meters
 - B. 6 meters
 - C. 20 meters
 - D. 80 meters
- 6) To convert a CB whip to 10 meters what must you do?
 - A. Lengthen it
 - B. Shorten it
 - C. Fatten it
 - D. You can't do it
- 7) On which of the following frequencies are beacon stations allowed by the FCC?
 - A. 28.100 MHz
 - B. 28.245 MHz
 - C. 28.495 MHz
 - D. 29.700 MHz
- 8) When is it easier to bounce signals off the moon on 10 meters?
 - A. During the full moon
 - B. Day time
 - C. At the solar minimum
 - D. At to solar maximum
- 9) Where does the Extra Class band start on 10 meters?
 - A. 28.025 MHz
 - B. 28.200 MHz
 - C. 28.300 MHz
 - D. There is no Extra Class band on 10 meters
- 10) What happens to 10 meter signals when they encounter the D layer?
 - A. They are attenuated
 - B. They are enhanced
 - C. They are embarrassed
 - D. They are reflected



Answers on next page



The NFDXA Marathon Totem Pole

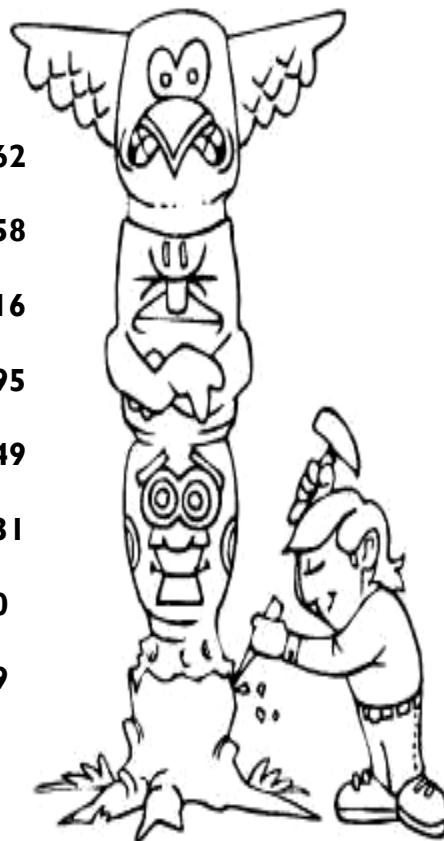
Where do YOU stand? <http://nfdxa.com/cq>

Between **January 1** and **December 31, 2009**, work as many DX stations as you can, any band, any mode. Work each country only once, unless it spans zones. To add a new zone for the same country, just type the new call and zone over the old ones and click the "Log it" button. To delete a call, erase the zone from your log page and click the "Log it" button. □

The Top 10

(All 9 of them)

N4NN	222	40	262
K4UTE	218	40	258
K4EB	178	38	216
N4KE	159	36	195
NF4L	116	33	149
NIWON	101	30	131
NU4Y	71	19	90
NW4C	41	18	59
KC4FWS	1	1	2
All Others	0	0	0



Answers to page 11 DX Quiz

1) B 2) A 3) C 4) D 5) B 6) B 7) B 8) C 9) D 10) A

Here's a bonus question:

When the MUF approaches 10 meters, does the F-layer propagation get stronger or weaker?

Answer:

Neither, because the MUF is still *lower* than 10 meters!



Be 'In The Know'
Tune in the NFDXA net
Wednesdays 0100Z 3.625 MHz



GROUNDING

A rural farm wife called the local phone company to report her telephone failed to ring when her friends called - and that on the few occasions, when it did ring, her dog always moaned right before the phone rang.

The telephone repairman proceeded to the scene, curious to see this psychic dog or senile lady. He climbed a telephone pole, hooked in his test set, and dialed the subscriber's house.

The phone didn't ring at first, but then the dog moaned and the telephone began to ring.

Climbing down from the pole, the telephone repairman found:

1. The dog was tied to the telephone system's ground wire with a steel chain and collar.
2. The wire connection to the ground rod was loose.
3. The dog was receiving 90 volts of signaling current when the number was called.
4. After a couple of jolts, the dog would start moaning and then urinate.
5. The wet ground would complete the circuit, thus causing the phone to ring.

This demonstrates that some problems actually CAN be fixed by pissing and moaning.



A Language Barrier?

Anybody care to speculate what "UP" translates to? Inductively it seems to translate to :

- 1) Tune on the frequency
- 2) Be a cop
- 3) "Who is the DX"
- 4) Call on my frequency
- 5) .
- 6) .
- 7) .
- 8) .
- 9) .
- N)

(K3KO via DX-IS Yahoo Newsgroup)

'Tis the season...Almost

With thunderstorm season right around the corner (except where it's already here), some reading about lightning protection is in order.

Both ICE Radio Products ICE website <http://www.iceradioproducts.com/10.html> and Polyphaser http://www.polyphaser.com/technical_notes.aspx are well-known in the ham community and have extensive listings of products and application information. Polyphaser also publishes the book "Lightning Protection and Grounding Solutions for Communications Sites", an excellent reference.

(N3JPU via ARRL Contest Update 04Mar09)



**Learn
something
new in
Amateur
Radio!**





Ham-Mag Jan 2009 <http://www.ham-mag.com>

Luck is something you hear described as "The harder I work, the luckier I get." Or as **Tree N6TR** put it the other day, "Luck = Preparation + Opportunity + Effort." Truer words were never spoken. You can't buy your way to good luck. You can't read a book and have that sixth-sense about propagation that seems to reside in some operators. It takes practice, practice and more practice... Another form of luck is to recognize it when you get it. That's how you get lucky.

— 18 Feb 09 ARRL Contest Update (www.arrl.org/contest/update)

A Closing Thought...

It would seem that those who have been voicing the line that ham radio is either dead or in the process of fading away into the past haven't tried finding a clear frequency during a contest or a big DXpedition weekend.

During the recent ARRL SSB fracas at times it was difficult—if not downright impossible—to wedge oneself in-between contest CQers.

And if you listened long enough it became clear that some weren't even trying to find an open spot—they just put on the 'boots' and started stompin'!

Be that as it may, it is heartening to find so much activity on the bands despite conditions that continue to be the absolute worst in the memories of a growing number of long-time hams.

At a recent meeting of the Gainesville Amateur Radio Society a discussion on sunspot activity was interrupted by someone

asking the question: "Daddy, what are sunspots? The question was meant as a joke, but the reality was most of the people attending the meeting hadn't been licensed long enough to have even experienced an active sunspot cycle!

Which makes all the apparent growing interest in contesting and chasing DX even more intriguing.

K5D closed out its recent two-week DXpedition with more than 115,700 Qs in the log. And ZL7T operating from remote Chatham Island made 10,580 contacts in just 5 days!

If there's this much long-haul activity during one of the worst sunspot minimums in modern memory, what's going to happen when propagation starts getting better?

Hopefully, the answer won't be that we all have to get bigger 'boots'!

— NW4C

