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November 2009

# K5D - Desecheo Island Expedition

We'll have the video from K4UEE of the recent K5D Desecheo Island DXpedition.

The menu selections this month are: Home Style meatloaf, Roaster Turkey on Croissant and Chicken Caesar salad. Coffee, Tea and fountain drinks included along with Apple, Chocolate Cream OR Lemon Meringue pie.

And please note the Happy Hour in the bar is 3:00 to 7:00 pm and 9:00 to 12:00 pm for those that partake...

## November Meeting

Tuesday, November 10, 2009  
Dinner at 6:30pm – Program at 7:30pm

### NEW LOCATION!!!!

**Marie Callendar's Restaurant**  
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# Hearing Aids and Ham Radio

by Ward Silver NØAX

As you may know, I wear hearing aids in both ears and have for about fifteen years. Here are a few tips and thoughts on hearing aids that might be of interest to those of you that need a little help with your hearing or that aren't getting any younger and thinking about it. Bear in mind that my hearing loss is basically a high-frequency roll-off above a couple of kHz. Your specific need should be evaluated by a professional and may have stronger bearing on what type of hearing aid you need than the things I discuss in the rest of the article.

## Digital or Analog?

There's not even a question - get digital aids. They use similar signal processing devices to what we have in our radios, with similar effects on the audio output. This is now the dominant technology and rapidly replacing analog instruments. Your main questions will be about the signal processing features of the signal processing, discussed below. The digital aids acts a multi-band graphic equalizer, very similar to those used in audio systems. In addition, the digital aid will have several "programs" that set up the aid's features in different ways for different environments. The hearing aid technician will explain this to you in detail. It would be a good idea to make it known that you have some technical background so the discussion can take advantage of your expertise.

## Behind-the-ear or In-the-ear?

I started with behind-the-ear aids because at the time, the smaller in-the-ear aids were too expensive. This has changed, with the new "open ear" style offering a lot of features without the molded housing that goes in the ear canal. I have tried the open-ear style and I do like the sound quality. I changed to in-the-ear aids, however, because placement of the microphone in behind-the-ear aids tends to skew its pattern to above, behind, and to the side of the listener. This may not help with face-to-face conversation and dead-ahead audio sources, such as TV. In-the-ear aids can take advantage of the natural focusing provided by the external ear. Behind-the-ear microphones also don't help as much with most telephone handsets - you have to learn to hold a cell phone farther back so that the speaker is closer to the aid's microphone, for example. Behind-the-ear aids are also generally quite uncomfortable with earmuff-style headphones that many of us prefer in the radio shack - if they can be worn under earmuffs at all. If you have to take the aids out when wearing headphones, they can't help you with receiver audio. So I wear a mid-sized, in-the-ear aid that has worked out well. Many vendors will let you try open-ear-style aids as way of finding out what features and settings you like whether you buy behind-the-ear or in-the-ear aids.

## Signal Processing

The first component of audio processing you'll notice is compression or AGC. Compression is good in a hearing aid because it prevents overload and distortion. The price is somewhat increased background noise. In addition, if you are using the aids with a radio, the two AGC systems - one in the radio and one in the aid - increase the amount of compression and the different time constants of the compressors can actually hurt intelligibility of the received audio.

You'll also notice that just like the receiver's DSP, some of the features of the hearing aid will color the audio in perceptible ways. For example, feedback cancellation is a nice feature, but it will also try to get rid of single-tone signals like CW! The effect of noise reduction in the hearing aid are often similar to those of the radio's DSP. You get used to them and the benefit of reducing noise generally outweighs the presence of artifacts.

This is where the different programs of the digital aids become really handy. While the advanced features are great in normal conversation, they get in the way when on the radio, so be sure to have one program in which compression is turned off along with feedback cancellation and other artifact-inducing features. I said, "I want

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one program that only has gain and frequency response correction!" If you have enough programs, you might even want to try to set one up for CW and one for voice! It would be a good idea to take an audio player with recorded CW and voice signals to use as the aids are set up for you. The gain-and-frequency response program has also turned out to be the right one for me to use when I'm listening to music, as well.

### Selecting a Vendor

There are number of good hearing aid companies and representatives, including Costco. Mid-range to high-end hearing aids are all very good. After trying two independent hearing aid companies (both local to Puget Sound) my current set of aids is from Miracle Ear. Both the smaller companies had better sale prices, but both struggled and were eventually purchased by Miracle Ear. Costco certainly has good prices, but the sales and service support is weak - they are a commodity retailer, not a health-care company. I chose Miracle Ear primarily because of after-sale support and the availability of service around the US. Miracle Ear, which has several offices in the Puget Sound region and the company works with Sears, setting up shop in larger Sears stores, country-wide. I like knowing that wherever I am, a Miracle Ear representative is probably not far away and that has come in handy a couple of times when I had to get a microphone screen unplugged, for example. I use the office in the Overlake Sears store and the staff there has been very helpful to me and to my mom, who also wears hearing aids. Your hearing, your location, and the importance of after-sale support will all color your decision. Consider this a recommendation of Miracle Ear, both for the quality of the hardware and the service.

### Alternatives

How can you tell if you need a hearing aid? Ask your family for their honest opinion and then listen to what they tell you. "Green-bar guys" are an industry legend, referring to the volume control on the TV that they are always turning up and up and up. Meanwhile, they insist that their hearing is just fine and why does everybody mumble? If you're not hearing the phone, if you can hear someone talking but can't understand what they say, if the pileups all sound like mush - you probably need help with your hearing. One way to experiment before trying a hearing aid is a pocket graphic equalizer, such as the Koss EQ50 Portable Stereo Equalizer that can be found on the Internet for about \$20. Wire it up to your radio or audio player and experiment with the settings. You may find that a little boost on the high frequency channel or dropping the low frequencies helps or maybe just some additional gain is what you need. The cost is low and you'll learn something without having to make an office visit.

### Summary

All of us are getting older and hearing often takes a hit on the way. The perceived stigma of wearing hearing aids is largely non-existent as people are wearing headphones and earpieces everywhere you look. Good hearing matters not only on the radio, but in our personal lives, too. Take advantage of what is becoming ubiquitous technology to restore your hearing.

## ***Up the Tower Review***

By Jim Hadlock, K7WA

*Up the Tower, The Complete Guide to Tower Construction*, by Steve Morris, K7LXC

While hundreds of books have been written about amateur radio antennas, until now no one has written a book about amateur radio towers, the structures that support many of our antennas. WWDXC member Steve Morris, K7LXC, is well known to many of us as a friend, antenna expert, and professional antenna and tower installer. He has written a column in the National Contest Journal ("Up the Tower") and is the moderator of the popular Tower Talk reflector on [www.contesting.com](http://www.contesting.com). Steve and Ward Silver, N0AX, have also published

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comparison studies of HF Vertical and HF Tribander antennas. This new book is an essential resource for anyone planning to install a tower, and guide for anyone who already owns a tower and is faced with maintenance and repairs. Bob Locher, W9KNI, says in the Introduction: “Steve’s book tells you how to do the planning, the design – and the execution! All with safety and engineering as paramount objectives.”

Steve started out like most of us, learning by reading the few available resources and by trial and error. His interest in towers and antennas eventually led to a business serving hams and working on commercial antenna installations. This book is the result of his years of experience as a tower and antenna installer and information collected from other experienced amateurs. Chapters on Land Use Regulations, Grounding, use of trees, and Insurance are written by experts in their fields, but the strength of the book is Steve’s thorough coverage of the subject matter based on his vast personal experience.

Planning and Safety are two primary topics. Anyone considering a tower should honestly look at his or her amateur radio interests (HF, VHF, Rag Chewing, DX, Contests), space available and the total cost of the whole project. Unfortunately, we live in a society that also includes Land Use Regulations, Building Departments, and the interests of neighbors. It may be that a wire antenna supported by trees will be an easier and less expensive alternative to a tower and beam. Safety to persons and property is also critical – as the warning labels on many antenna products say, “YOU CAN BE KILLED!” Any antenna we put up should be installed in a safe and secure manner. Steve devotes several chapters to planning and safety issues.

If you’ve already decided to build a tower, other chapters cover the nuts and bolts of preparing the base, putting up a tower and installing an antenna. Steve begins and ends with the LXC Prime Directive, which states that you should always “DO what the manufacturer says” and it’s corollary, “DON’T do what the manufacturer doesn’t tell you.” In other words, follow the directions. The directions come from tower manufacturers, hardware standards, and suppliers of the many tools, products and accessories used in a tower installation. Steve describes several types of towers available on the market, along with guy wires, turnbuckles, and other items necessary to complete the installation. He also covers masts, rotators, control and coaxial cables, and all the other accessories necessary to complete the installation.

Chapters on Maintenance and Long Term Planning remind us that what we build needs attention and monitoring to prevent failures and accidents. Chapter 31, “When Something Fails,” covers situations where something goes wrong and a damaged antenna or tower has to come down. This and removal of used antennas and towers are the most dangerous situations we may face. Sometimes professional assistance and equipment (cranes) will be necessary to safely dismantle an old or damaged structure.

The final chapter, “A Few Final Tips,” consists of 32 concise pieces of information and advice. Steve’s book covers the subject of amateur radio antenna and tower installations like it’s never been done before. It should be on every ham’s bookshelf who is considering building a tower or who already owns one.

*Up the Tower* is available from: [www.championradio.com](http://www.championradio.com)

## **Contest Activity for October 2009**

by Mike Dinkelman, N7WA

**W**e have now completed two of the Trophy Competition events – CQWW RTTY and SSB. You'll find the club SSB results below. The next trophy event will be CQWW CW during Thanksgiving weekend. While the ARRL Sweepstakes tests are not trophy events, please get on and support them over the next several weeks. These are a lot of fun and being domestic contests, not quite as subject to the whims of ol' Sol.

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Call	QSOs	Zones	Cntry	hr	Score
USA M/S HP					
W7VJ	1221	111	278	46	1,279,032
W7VMI (@NN7SS)	934	97	248	39	841,455
N7ZG (@N7WA)	676	98	220	48	583,212
USA SOAB HP					
K7EDX	766	71	163		478,530
W7TSQ	424	30			261,747
NG7Z	160	40	68	7.75	44,712
USA SOAB LP					
W7OM	464	74	178		320,400
K7HBN	363	63	130	22	194,737
N7BK	337	51	99	18	138,000
W7QN	194	42	80		63,806
USA SOAB(A) HP					
K7EG	219	42	93	8	81,540
USA SOSB/160 QRP					
K7SS	39	4	4	10	296
USA SOSB/40 HP					
W7WA	940	33	105		353,004

### 3830 CQWW SSB Soapbox

Call: W7WA Was pleased with what I could hear and work with my 2 ele yagi.

Call: K7SS DX worked: KH6LC, KH7C, NH6P (finally made it Fred!), KH6MB, KH7XS, KL7RA, and our neighbors to the North VE7 VE6 VE5. DX heard and not worked: too many to mention. Most heard not worked: KV4FZ, XE2S. Why 160 SSB QRP?.....because it's there. Just like the QSB waves on 160, many moments of deep frustration, followed by great joy if/when the QSO is completed. Now I can say ..."DONE THAT!" .....and move on.

Call: K7EG Contacts were largely made Fri PM & Sunday. I was QRT for most of Saturday due to family event. 15M was very hot Sunday. 20M gave me lots of JA's and four hours of EU on Sunday. Now, I can put my microphone back into the closet.

Call: K7HBN Most fun, catching OH,OH0, and LA on 15 meters around 2000Z on Saturday. I'm not so sure I enjoy the grind as much as in younger days, but there is

**Travelling Trophy Contest Participation**

For each person participating in a contest activity (as a single op or as part of a multi team) that contributes to the WWDXC travelling trophy score, a entry in a special 'participation raffle' will be made, a drawing for prizes TBD to occur at the end of the contest season. Example: W7XYZ submits scores for CQWW SSB, Salmon Run, and ARRL DX CW. Since only two of these (CQWW and ARRL DX) count towards the trophy, W7XYZ will receive two tickets in the raffle.

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always a highlight or two.

Call: NG7Z With a four year old grandson afoot, not much time to spare in the chair this weekend. All S&P contacts. What a zoo on 20M! I passed over many stations because the QRM was just deafening. I was pleased to make the 160M contacts using a beverage antenna to hear. Put in the wire on Wednesday running south. Equipment used was an Icom 756Pro3 and PW1 amp, yagis for 40 and above, 80M quad loop for 80M and inverted L for 160. The amp is new and sure works well.

Call: W7VMI We had fun getting together for a Multi-single to test the new antennas and set a new Vashon Island record! We used the Vashon-Maury Island radio club call, W7VMI. We pushed for 100 countries, so we're pleased to have reached 128 total unique countries. The new (and old) antennas worked well. We didn't use the Mult station much, since usually only one band was useful.

Our numbers were a bit low on the low bands, perhaps due to the unsettled propagation. 40,20 and 15 meters took up the slack, with pleasing numbers. We listened often on 10 meters, and never heard a thing. We managed to move a local hero for the one double-mult.

N0AX seemed happy with the updates to his ole' QTH, and he managed QRM while K6UFO caught a nap to power him through the overnight. N7LKL lured N0AX away from the radio with cookies, and got to CQ for JA's on Saturday evening. W7NNN came over Sunday morning, and worked Europeans during the too brief morning peak. Good fun, Thanks for the contacts! W7VMI (@NN7SS, K6UFO, N0AX, N7LKL, W7NNN)

Call: W7VJ Would place this outing in the "painful" category. Beyond the miserable conditions (with exception of a fabulous opening to Asia on 15) we were plagued by a series of irritating station issues, largely due to insufficient time to set up as I would have liked. We ran out of time to tune the four square on 80, which made the new system effectively unusable this year given the awful winter wx that awaits us. RF in our mult station created SWR issues at times which lost us valuable time. This, and our location, which I still think is the worst in the U.S., made things challenging.

That said, we did have a lot to be thankful for. Our team is a group of great operators who are committed to the effort. We could have stopped a few times, yet everyone was in it for the long haul. The 15 meter opening proved that the new 6/6 stack is doing its job. Very much appreciated all who worked us or who we worked. Thank you. Also now have a game plan for additional station improvements to mitigate this weekends issue.

## **DX Packet Alert Network Frequencies**

By Bob Nielsen, N7XY ([n7xy@clearwire.net](mailto:n7xy@clearwire.net))

K7EK-1 - Spanaway (DX Spider Node), K7EK sysop.

Telnet to: [k7ek.dyndns.org](http://k7ek.dyndns.org), port 9000

RF: 144.91 MHz - Connect to network node W7DK-5, then type DXC.

145.01 MHz - Connect to network node SEA, then connect to network node K7EK-5, then type DXC.

N7XY Bainbridge Is. (DX Spider Node), N7XY sysop.

Telnet to [n7xy.net](http://n7xy.net), port 7300

W7JD-2 - Spanaway (CC Cluster Node - South Tacoma Contest Club), K7EK sysop

Telnet to [k7ek.dyndns.org](http://k7ek.dyndns.org), port 7373

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RF: 144.91 MHz - Connect to network node W7DK-5, then type DXC2.  
145.01 MHz - Connect to network node SEA, then connect to network node K7EK-5, then type DXC2

W7PKT Auburn (DX Spider Node) 145.73 MHz, KA7CSE sysop.  
Telnet to [w7pkt.net](http://w7pkt.net), port 7300

W7DX Bellevue (AR Cluster node) 145.75 MHz, N6MZ sysop.  
Telnet to [w7dx.net](http://w7dx.net)

AR Cluster user documentation is available at <http://www.ab5k.net>  
DX Spider user documentation is available at [http://wiki.dxcluster.org/index.php/DXSpider\\_User\\_Manual](http://wiki.dxcluster.org/index.php/DXSpider_User_Manual)

Lee Sawkins, VE7CC has written a versatile Windows user program which works with AR Cluster, CC Cluster or DX Spider nodes. It can be downloaded from <http://www.bcdxc.org/ve7cc/default.htm>

## Totem Trader

IM COLLECTING OLD (pre 1960) QSL CARDS. Glad to purchase any quantity of old cards. Prefer DX, and this being a DX club, my guess is that's what might be around. OLDER THE BETTER.... got some from the 1920s this week ...quite a few 7?? call signs. ... still looking for an old 7SS card for myself. going to post what other 1920s 7 cards I get, and offer scans to current call holders. Found 7WA and 7DZ in this group of cards so far. 73 K7SS Dan 206 679 5777 [desk@nwlink.com](mailto:desk@nwlink.com)

I have a excellent condition Force12 model 5BA (5-band Yagi, 3 feed lines 15ele, 33' boom, 20-17/15-12/10 ) DX Machine that comes with three optional 5KW F12 baluns. Current price is \$2500 shipped (Antenna \$2,055.00 + Baluns \$300 + \$145 Shipping from Texas. ). Antenna configuration is 3 interlaced full size monbanders with no traps: total windload is 11 sq. ft. & weighs about 75 lbs. ftI will sell for \$1000 FIRM picked up at my home in Spokane. rgds & 73, Mike N7KR Contact: Mike Stephens email [mikestephens-milkeycorp@comcast.net](mailto:mikestephens-milkeycorp@comcast.net) Verizon Cell (509) 710-8146

KT34XA and Cushcraft shorty forty! Make offer. Pick up or will deliver within reasonable distance from Seattle. Call Andy, K7GEX, 206-364-3997

One Force 12 C4-XL partially disassembled. If interested cal Bob W7TSQ at 425 778 4805

FT-1000MP Mk V ser 406000xx, with INRAD roofing filter, extra IF filters: 1.8Khz-8.2, 1.8Khz-455, 400Hz-8.2, 400Hz-455, 250Hz-455. This is a 'backup' rig, not my main FT-1000MP, so has had little use since I purchased it two? years ago. With FP29 Power supply, manual(s), box, microphone. Prefer not to ship. \$1900.00 – Brian Moran, N9ADG, call 206-390-4376, or [brianmo@yahoo.com](mailto:brianmo@yahoo.com)

For Sale: Force 12 EF-180C Rotatable Dipole antenna with 2 relay control box and balun - 83Ft long (Full 80M band coverage). New condition. Very similar to Current Top of Line Version (Sigma 180 Magnum from Force 12) which sells for around \$1500 without shipping. Asking \$600 and prefer local pick up in Seattle, WA area. Shipping is not practical. Works very well on 30M also. Bagged me 120 countries on both bands in less than 3 years. John Owens - N7TK [jcowens1@comcast.net](mailto:jcowens1@comcast.net)

I also have a Kenwood Model SM-220 Station Monitor in new condx that has the BS-8 Panadapter. It works

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with Kenwood xcvr's that have thte 8.83 MHz IF. (eg TS-850, etc.) that I would like to sell for \$350. John Owens - N7TK [jcowens1@comcast.net](mailto:jcowens1@comcast.net)

**Palstar AT1500BAL Dual Roller-Balanced Line Antenna Tuner.** Balanced double L network configuration. Dual precision edgewound silver plated coils with vernier drive. 1500 watts PEP. 160M to 10M band coverage. Like new. Excess to me needs since I no longer try to operate 160 from my tiny city lot. \$300. Patrick, [W7TMT@dayshaw.net](mailto:W7TMT@dayshaw.net)

**Kenwood TS-430 HF Transceiver** w/ power cord. Works great. Prefer local sale. \$150 w7tmt@dayshaw.net

**Kenwood TS-850SAT HF Transceiver** w/ power cord. Very good cosmetically, perfect functionally. Matching Kenwood 500hz CW filters and one SSB filter. Factory manual and box. Original owner. Non-smoker. Prefer local sale. \$500 Patrick, [W7TMT@dayshaw.net](mailto:W7TMT@dayshaw.net)

**Cushcraft A3S beam with 40 meter kit.** Excellent shape. Was just taken down. Factory manuals. (Local sale only. Local delivery possible.) \$250 Patrick, [W7TMT@dayshaw.net](mailto:W7TMT@dayshaw.net)

**Rohn Tower Sections/Masts and Parts** (Local sale only. Local delivery possible.) All parts purchased from ARS in Georgetown in the mid-90's. Patrick, [W7TMT@dayshaw.net](mailto:W7TMT@dayshaw.net)

- One 10' section, Rohn 25G. Excellent condition. \$75
- One 9' section, Rohn 25G, Pipe Top includes rotor plate. Excellent condition. \$100
- One Rohn House Bracket, HG25HB. Excellent condition. \$100
- One Rohn 25G flat roof base mount. Excellent condition. \$50
- One Rohn 10' section of 2" thick walled mast. \$50
- Rohn Pushup Mast - 50'. Good condition. \$75
- Rohn Pushup Mast - 40'. Good condition. \$55
- Rohn Pushup Mast - 30'. Good condition. \$45

**Three 10' sections, 1" heavy walled TV mast** with heavy swaged ends. Excellent condition. \$30 for the three. Patrick, [W7TMT@dayshaw.net](mailto:W7TMT@dayshaw.net)

**CD45 II rotor with controller and mast base.** Works great. \$150 Patrick, [W7TMT@dayshaw.net](mailto:W7TMT@dayshaw.net)

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The *Tabloid* depends on submissions of articles and news items from its readers. Send all items of interest to the *Tabloid* editor:

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20148 6th Avenue NE  
Seattle, WA 98155  
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**Joining the Western Washington DX Club**

To join the WWDXC or sponsor a new member, please send an SASE for a membership application form to the WWDXC, P.O. Box 395, Mercer Island, WA 98040. Annual dues, including a subscription to the *Totem Tabloid*, are \$25.00.

**Internet Access**

Information on the Western Washington DX Club is also available on the internet at [www.wwdxc.org](http://www.wwdxc.org) or by email to [info@wwdxc.org](mailto:info@wwdxc.org).