

WESTERN WASHINGTON DX CLUB, INC.

# Totem Tabloid

January 2018

**NEXT MEETING IS JANUARY 9**



This month's program is not to be missed—the first opportunity anywhere to see and hear about the Mellish Reef VK9MA operation. And we'll have no less than team leader (and Club President) Rob, N7QT and Brain, N9ADG to tell us all about it. You'll regret it if you stay home.

**Rob's 125<sup>th</sup> Street Grill, 125<sup>th</sup> and Aurora Avenue North Dinner at 6:30 p.m., program at 7:30 p.m. Dinner is \$ 20 including tax and tip.**

**Please RSVP your dinner plans to Adam, K7EDX at [k7edx@arri.net](mailto:k7edx@arri.net)**

# The President Speaks

Rob Fanfant, N7QT

I would personally like to thank all of you for electing me president of the Western Washington DX Club. It is my goal to help guide and serve our club as well as Adam has done for so many years. My primary goal is to continue working closely with our board members, and each of you, our club members to make this a fun, exciting and vibrant organization that we can all be proud of.

For those of you who know me well, I will still continue participating in ham activities such as attending the Dayton Hamvention, Visalia and Friedrichshafen hamfest(s). There is also a possibility that we will try to activate another island in 2018. Therefore, I have asked Adam to cover for me in this role as there will be times in 2018 and beyond when I might be unable to attend one or more of our club meetings.

I am looking forward to hearing from each of you as to what you would like to see our club do better, or different, than what we have been doing?

This past weekend was fun as I finally got a chance to get back on the bands after returning from Mellish Reef by participating in the Stew Perry 160M contest. Brian (N9ADG) came over and we just had fun “working them” so to speak. We were able to work most of the U.S. and a few Caribbean stations and just a handful of JAs. Our QSO total came in at 314 contacts which is much less than last year’s 800 QSO count, as conditions seemed to be in poor condition.

Hope you all had a wonderful holiday season and are looking forward to the new year. As usual, I find this a time of the year a great time to review my performance against last year’s goals, as well as setting new goals for the new year. Here are a few ham radio goals that I have decided to pursue this year. The first is to install a custom built 4 square RX antenna in an effort to improve my station’s 80m/160m RX station capability. My second goal is to start working on “where to next” expedition planning. The team is looking forward to activating several locations, even higher up in the most wanted world ranking. We have started the application process for two entities, and are inquiring about a third. In either case we hope to get confirmation in late 2018 or early 2019.

Talking about rare ones, Bouvet 3YØZ (<https://www.bouvetdx.org/>) is going to be on the air in a few weeks and I expect most of you are looking forward to working them as well. I need them for an ATNO and am excited to participate in what promises to be a wild and crazy worldwide pileup!

Adam has been working with our club’s board members to determine our club’s response to a series of proposed motions by the ARRL board related to its Code of Conduct.

Look forward to having Adam discuss the issues with all of us and its importance at our next club meeting.

Look forward to seeing you all at the next club meeting scheduled for January 9<sup>th</sup>. This month's program will be on our recent VK9MA Mellish Reef expedition and will be presented by Brian (N9ADG) and myself.

73,

Rob N7QT

## **Random Comments From the Editor**

Congratulations to the new officers of the club: Rob, N7QT, President; Adam, K7EDX, Vice-President; Dennis, K7DSE, Secretary; and Brian, N7RVD, Treasurer. These are the folks who step up and volunteer to make the club run smoothly and prove that the 80-20 rule is alive and well. Please say "Yes" if one of them asks you to do something for the club. The Board of Directors now looks like this (in addition to the officers): Kirk, N7UK; Larry, K7EKD; Walt, K7ZQ; Rich, W6RS, Tom, NU7J; and John, KE7B. Collectively this is the group that makes the club run so give them a smile when you see them at the meetings and be nice when you're asked to do something. If you encounter any of them in the pileups, of course, give them no quarter.

Congratulations are also due to the winners of the club awards: Walt, K7ZQ, was recognized as Member of the Year; John, KE7B, received the New Member of the Year award; and Adam, K7EDX, received the Johnny Dack Lifetime Achievement Award.

Jim, K5RX, is a friend of Conrad, N5CR and as you'll see is a dedicated 160 meters operator. He recently sent to Conrad a detailed report of his operation in the 2017 ARRL 160 contest where, believe it or not, he was QRP. Conrad posted the report to the club reflector and obtained Jim's consent to publish it in the Tabloid. Look for the report at the very end of this issue. Even if you have no interest in 160, I think you'll enjoy reading the report.

The long-awaited operation from Bouvet will soon take place. I've written before about the huge commitment of time and money being made by the 20 brave souls who'll soon be signing 3YØZ for our benefit. It's not too late to express your appreciation for their efforts and for the new one I hope everyone gets by sending along some money. It's tax-deductible by routing the donation through the Northern California DX Foundation. This will easily turn out to be the most expensive DXpedition in history (at least in financial terms) so I hope you'll contribute. Go to [http://3y0z.w2qo.com/?page\\_id=3847](http://3y0z.w2qo.com/?page_id=3847) for the details of how to do so.

I've heard a few comments about the timing of the Bouvet operation, i.e., why are they going now when sunspots are non-existent? I don't know for sure but I suspect the answer is "because they can." In any event, you might want to read a recent article by Enrico, IZ5CML, that was reprinted on the DX Coffee website entitled "Is it Worth Organising Big DXpeditions During a Solar Minimum?" I won't spoil it by telling you that it was the butler in the parlor with the candlestick but you can find out the conclusions he draws by going to <http://www.dxcoffee.com/eng/2017/is-it-worth-organising-big-dxpeditions-during-a-solar-minimum/>

I hope everyone works 3YØZ that wants to and that everyone has a great 2018.

## Contest Activity Report—January 2018

Mike "Dink" Dinkelman, N7WA

I hope the holiday season was enjoyable and the New Year is starting off well. They say that time flows faster the older you get. I can't contradict that statement at all. Seems like just a short while ago it was a hot and smoky summer. Now, we are in the dark months. However, Field Day is only six months away per the calendar and if the past six months are any indication, it'll be knocking on the door in no time.

Meanwhile, let's review December's activity:

**ARRL 10M Contest** (this did not go well and I was surprised to see Q totals over 100...)

Call	QSOs	Mults	Op Time	Score
<b>SO CW HP</b>				
W6SZN	73	14		4,088
<b>SO CW QRP</b>				
K7HBN	23	7	3	644
<b>SO CW Unlimited HP</b>				
K7DSE	60	10	2.2	2,400
<b>SO Mixed HP</b>				
K7RL	109	20		7,760
KD7H	62	6	4:29	1,308

**SO Mixed LP**

N7LOX	109	22	16	8,404
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**SO Mixed Unlimited HP**

K7SS	70	16	2	4,560
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**ARRL 10M Soapbox**

**W6SZN:** I think I qualified for WAWA--the Worked All Washington Award, not the East Coast convenience store. I've missed NE in many contests and somehow worked 2 in this modest effort. I thought I might miss CA until fellow NCCer Bob, K3EST heard my weak signal. Thanks for the QSOs.

**KD7H:** After using my Buddipole in the CQWW-CW contest because of storm damage to my antennas, for the 10 meter 'test I ground-mounted my old Hustler 6BTV vertical and, because of the marginal conditions, I decided to use my amplifier (400 Watts). Since the band was so challenging and I mainly worked stations in Western Washington, I was so happy to get a string of Californians. I missed most of Saturday since my wife and I went to see a play at the Seattle Repertory Theater. Culture--other than ham radio--is important, at times. Thanks to everyone who participated in this year's ten meter contest!

**K7SS:** 10 meters... please come back... we all miss you !

**K7RL:** Very tough. Missed the big opening Friday night. This is such a fun contest, so maybe it should be moved to June during low sunspot years?

**N7LOX:** Lost my main rig, back up old TS 830 worked quite well... put up my 4 el monobander for this one. wish I could say time well spent. not. fun in a weird way.

**ARRL 160M Contest**

Call	QSOs	Sections	Countries	Op Time	Score
<b>Single Op HP</b>					
K7CW	594	78	5		104,331
K7RL	468	77	7	9	80,640
<b>SO Unlimited HP</b>					
K7SS	331	74	8	10	50,320
N7BV	157	54	7	9.5	17,766

## **ARRL 160M Soapbox**

**K7CW:** I probably should have stayed up the first night. Oh well. I didn't hear much in the way of DX, but we're working on it. Didn't get KH6! I heard KH6AT working K7SS, but he was gone when the Q was done. Never heard him again. Nice to have VY1AAA show up as XO1X. No Europeans heard, and I tried. Worked JH0INP well into daylight at 1558. Conditions could have been a lot better, but this one was still quite fun. 1500 watts to inverted-L with crummy ground plane. Un-terminated BOG for receive.

**K7RL:** Always fun when a band like 160M comes alive during this SB contest. Missed MAR, PAC, PR, NNY, NNJ and oddly LA for the sweep. Didn't stick around past 11 PM local, so missed any potential Pacific activity. A special thank you to these EU stations that called in and put a smile on my face: OHØR, OH1XX, SM5EDX, and OH3XR. That was an unexpected surprise. Nice to see the band opening to EU again.

Most QSOs consisted of riding the QSB wave. Some stations started out loud, then faded into the noise, then came back again. All within the exchange cycle. Thanks to all that hung in there to complete the QSO! My antenna is a full size vertical made from insulated #12 wire supported by a tall tree with a FCP radial system, and within 200 meters of salt water on a bluff. I've had a lot of trouble keeping elevated radials in the air as my property is heavily treed - every year stuff just keeps falling on them and always during contest season. Because of the terrain, ground radials just aren't an option. Maintenance has been nothing short of a nightmare keeping radials intact.

This year I installed a FCP radial system as per K2AV ([k2av.com](http://k2av.com)). At 66' in total length, and about 10' above ground, it takes up much less room and seems to be as good as my previous full size elevated radial system. During the contest, there were times I felt loud, and other times, not so much. Perhaps that's typical on 160M.

I think my vertical wire in the tree might have some attenuation because it's...well...in the tree. Need to figure out a way to get it in the clear, and hopefully squeeze out some additional performance. Thanks to all for the Qs!

**N7BV:** Various holiday functions allowed for only a limited time OTA. Props seemed weak, all in all an exercise on 160M for this station's new FCP for the 160M L antenna. Tks for the contacts.

## **Membership Update—January 2018**

Jim Hadlock, K7WA

The Western Washington DX Club welcomes one new member this month:

Den Niles, WV7S, of Olympia - you may have worked Den with his previous call, KH6XT, where he achieved 8-Band DXCC.

Looking ahead we have the Mike & Key Electronics Show and Fleamarket in Puyallup coming up March 10th, and the Pacific Northwest DX Convention will be in the Vancouver, B.C. area in August.

Have a Happy and DX-ful New Year!

### **January 2018 Contest Calendar**

Bruce Horn, WA7BNM, has a website that is truly a one-stop place for all things related to contesting. The link is [www.contestcalendar.com](http://www.contestcalendar.com) or Google “WA7BNM” and the first hit is Bruce’s site. With just a few clicks, you’ll find everything you need to know about every contest, large or small. I find it very useful when I hear a station that I want to work that is obviously exchanging contest reports and I don’t know the exchange.

### **DX Alert Nodes**

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

#### **Current DX Node telnet addresses:**

W7PKT- w7pkt.net, PORT 7300

VE7CC-1 145.71 MHz or telnet to dxc.ve7cc.net, port 23

### **WWDXC DXCC Ladder**

Jim Rockey, WA7SRZ

The WWDXC DXCC Ladder is maintained on the website. You can find it by clicking on “DXCC Ladder” on the homepage or by going to <http://www.wwdxc.org/dxcc->

[ladder-2/](#) and clicking on “click for dxcc ladder” The Ladder is published in the Totem Tabloid once a year in the January issue. Please send your updates to me at [wa7srz@frontier.com](mailto:wa7srz@frontier.com). Here is the ladder as of January 1, 2018:

<u>CALL</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>PH</u>	<u>CW</u>	<u>DIG</u>	<u>CHAL</u>	<u>160</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>HONOR ROLL 330</u>	<u>ALL</u>	<u>CURRENT</u>														<u>BAND</u>
																<u>DXCC</u>
<u>1/1/2018</u>		<u>339</u>														
N7TT	379	337	357	340	9	2114	90	197	281	157	365	229	333	167	295	8
W7OM	372	339	369	349	321	2694	138	313	349	307	355	335	347	304	343	9
W7LFA	369	339	369													
K9JF	368	339				2327	184	236	296	215	343	284	313	223	255	9
K7ZA	361	339		351		2516	114	210	301	326	356	336	339	302	304	9
K7GEX	359	339	359	314		2466	106	213	306	282	354	314	331	254	303	8
K7RI	358	339	349													
K7EG	356	339	355	351	286	2389	91	260	300	268	353	210	325	259	276	8
K7LAY SK	356	339	356	344		818	175	164	176	177	316	215	254	145	218	9
W7HR	356	339	346	298		1168	15	158	146	10	308	77	220	31	217	5
W6RS	351	339	337	328	214	2086	1	118	274	273	335	203	300	246	235	8
K7DS	351	336	350	100		906		112	131	22	291	38	163	30	142	5
W7IIT	351	337	187	344		513		5	117	3	151	2	88		147	
K2AZ	350	339	336	341	11	2238	208	216	271	248	331	248	300	205	259	9
N7BK	350	339	350	12			3	54	82		344	64	265	24	201	
W7BJN	349	339	349		5	1172	9	122	157		247	168	224	88	157	6
W7TSQ SK	348	338	344	301	130	1592	53	146	220	103	326	148	259	128	231	5
W7AV	348	337	319	317	129	1853	49	144	218	199	313	261	240	190	221	8
K6UFO	347	339	338	336	237	1449	100	105	118	107	300	113	260	134	210	6
N7TK	346	339	340	298	111	1709	95	119	186	183	335	237	233	163	184	8
W7VV	346	339	287	307	13	1069	20	65	176	41	309	101	205	28	141	
KD7H	346	336	300	324	147	1600	4	159	235	259	321	253	276	238	228	8
W7KSK	344		340	333	202	925		137	172	4	252	5	161	4	204	
K7BTW	343	335	331	334	269	1826	24	123	229	213	330	241	291	186	223	8
K6KR	342	335	304	331	51	1407	16	143	266	78	313	99	263	62	211	5
W7QN	340		331	316												
NU7J	339	334	288	330	66	1535	32	111	224	139	316	207	249	105	169	8
W7NP	336	330	311	225	169	1128	3	38	118	34	301	105	209	140	188	
K7LAZ	330	327	291	323		1732	73	131	223	214	313	251	227	180	166	8
K7MH	328	322	281	239	94	910	7	105	120	20	264	64	177	27	122	5
W7LEA	327	325	327			1176	11	95	147	1	292	197	187	115	131	
W7IU	324	333	312	304	255	1707	7	63	176	170	312	248	277	224	223	
N7YX	324		256	108	1		6	51	90	30	230	48	166	23	139	
K7MO	320	314	249	266	41	1159	22	121	173	58	244	124	199	87	141	5

W7ZF	318	317	267	173	149	775	3	22	55	20	199	110	140	60	169	
WC7Q	315	316	235	305	154	1585	5	86	187	147	297	252	238	185	187	
K7DSE	314	312	276	301	39	1411	2	12	182	135	294	237	241	153	160	
W7VAS	313	311	285	227	141	1155	9	23	96	47	270	224	198	147	138	
WA7SRZ	311	311	309	9	16	768	2	21	30		227	126	143	97	126	
N7XY	306	295	258	233	6	497	2	3	78	19	139	26	110	21	104	
AG7N	306	301	208	289		1090		46	161	52	239	147	198	98	156	
N7RVD	306	279	148	175	36	505	4	26	61	8	157	18	142	10	82	
K7WA	304	294	79	286				49	185	12	188	125	190		147	
NG7Z	289	287	128	286	113	1072	22	72	157	108	230	125	187	60	118	
K7JF	287	278	62	128		242			16	20	111	40	36	11	35	
W7UDH	277	268	9	255	0	281	0	1	12	6	192	8	62	0	0	
K7EKD	268	268	224	214		1042	16	21	120	104	166	155	187	129	144	
W7OLY	260	258	209	229	177	965	18	75	145	27	227	57	194	58	168	
KZ1W	255	253	255	5	82	965	6	64	110	0	205	141	177	107	152	
KX7L	254	251	98	228	131	876	11	50	121	75	185	105	154	44	126	
KE7B	240	238	36	138	183	813	18	89	143	97	175	121	107	22	37	
N9ADG	220	218	148	187	78	608	106	49	99	28	154	26	86	6	56	
K7ADD	207	207	189		120			1	15	55	20	158	118	117	79	107
N7GCO	207	205	205					11	18	89		170	123	172	79	155
K7ZG	188	185	76	178	24	379	0	13	42	4	114	10	115	3	78	
KB7HDX	163	162	162	3	34	399	1	13	19	2	125	18	103	19	100	
KE7WUD	121	121	106	28		177		2	13	3	35	22	36	17	47	

## DX Info Sources

John Owens, N7TK ([jcowens1@comcast.net](mailto:jcowens1@comcast.net))

Discovering what countries (sorry, “entities”) are currently operating on the bands and getting a confirmation (QSL or LOTW) once you work them has become easier in one sense with the flood of electronic information and more difficult in another sense, as the amount of available information is almost overwhelming. Below are some very useful websites that will help solve these problems. If you have other sites that you have found helpful and think should be on this list, please send the info to me at [jcowens1@comcast.net](mailto:jcowens1@comcast.net) and I’ll include it in future issues.

### Useful DX Sites

The Daily DX ([www.dailydx.com](http://www.dailydx.com)) (subscription service but can’t be beat for timely info)

The DX Zone ([www.dxzone.com/catalog/](http://www.dxzone.com/catalog/))

Internet Ham Atlas ([www.hamatlas.eu](http://www.hamatlas.eu))

### **Announced DX Operations**

DX World (<http://dx-world.net>) (look for the “DXW Weekly Bulletin”)

NG3K Amateur Radio Contest/DX Page ([www.ng3k.com/Misc.adxo.html](http://www.ng3k.com/Misc.adxo.html))

DXing Info ([www.dxing.info/dxpeditions](http://www.dxing.info/dxpeditions))

Ohio/Penn DX Bulletin ([www.payays.com/opdx1044.html](http://www.payays.com/opdx1044.html))

### **QSL and Manager Info**

Pathfinder (Pathfinder.exe) (<http://www.dxlabsuite.com>) (Click on QSL Info)

QSL Manager Lookup ([www.IK3QAR.it/manager](http://www.IK3QAR.it/manager))

K3WWP QSL Routes ([http://home.windstream.net/johnshan/dx\\_ss\\_qsling.html](http://home.windstream.net/johnshan/dx_ss_qsling.html))

HamQTH Callbook ([www.hamqth.com/](http://www.hamqth.com/))\_

ORCA DX and Contest Club ([www.orcadxcc.org/index.html](http://www.orcadxcc.org/index.html)) (Good access to QRZ.com)

Global QSL (Card design and bureau QSL service-print and mail) ([www.globalqsl.com/](http://www.globalqsl.com/))

## **Announced DXpeditions**

Here are the DXpeditions and dates I have in my calendar as of January 2, 2018 (with no representations that the information is accurate, complete and/or won't change):

Somalia (6O6O)	January 3-16, 2018
Eritrea (E31A)	January 14-23, 2018
Bouvet (3YØZ)	January 25 (?)-???
Comoros (D68I)	January 28-February 10, 2018

Here are the sites and bulletins I look at to find out what's happening on the bands:

The Daily DX	<a href="http://dailydx.com">dailydx.com</a> (subscription and free trial available)
DX World	<a href="http://dx-world.net">dx-world.net</a> (free)
NG3K Page	<a href="http://www.ng3k.com">www.ng3k.com</a> and then click on ADXO at the top (free)
DX Summit	<a href="http://www.dxsummit.fi">www.dxsummit.fi</a> (free)
DXScape	<a href="http://www.dxscape.com">www.dxscape.com</a> (free)
DX Heat	<a href="https://dxheat.com">https://dxheat.com</a> (free)

## **Totem Trader**

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### **The 2017 ARRL 160 Contest Jim Eppright, K5RX**

[This article is published with the permission of K5RX and the North Texas Contest Club]

QRP category

Equipment: Elecraft K3 with subreceiver and K3 without subreceiver, Oak Hills Research WM-1 QRP Wattmeter

Beverages: 9 directions:

- 0 deg. 540' (was 560') - Minnesota Beverage;
- 41 deg. 2100';
- 60 deg. 830' - removable
- 88 - 268 deg. 960' - reversible;
- 120 deg. 1150';
- 135 - 315 deg. approx. 1360' - reversible
- 210 deg. approx. 700' - removable (the old temporary Ducie Island Special Beverage)

Transmit Antennas:

4 X 1/4 wavelength wire verticals in rectangular array - 2 pairs spaced

1/4 wavelength endfire NE/SW, pairs spaced .66 wavelength broadside to NE/SW. Each wire is 92' vertical with remaining approximate 35' sloping at 45 degree angle toward top of respective tower; approx. 16 radials on each, most radials 140' (three somewhat shorter, four about 150').

Logging Program: N1MM V 1.0.6916

Drugs: Anacin, Benedryl

## **Pre-Contest**

### **Line Noise**

I located and got fixed three very loud noisy poles fixed in the two-month period before the contest. Each was interesting.

1. One was a broken wire from one phase of a line to its lighting arrestor on a pole in Prosper. The 14.4 kV had no trouble jumping the gap. It was an amazing 8.25 miles away at a about a 65° heading, and about 3/4 mile north of K5IU. Of course, Dick heard it up to a much higher frequency than I - I could not hear it above about 6.9 mHz. There are three different electric companies with poles in Prosper. When I finally figured out which it was, it was fixed within three hours of my report! The great service was from Grayson County Electric Coop. I dealt with the same guy I did several years ago on what was my longstanding line noise DX record. K5MR had worked with them years ago and they knew a noise complaint meant something was amiss which needed correction for reasons more than just radio noise. This dropped the noise level on the 60°deg Bev from S9 +10 with blips above that to S7 at 1835 kHz.

2. Another was at what is normally innocuous heading of 195°. However, it was so strong, I heard it to one degree or another on every Beverage. A wire was almost severed at a transformer on a pole about 4 miles distant. The CoServ communications guy found the exact pole after I told him the area. He was on his way to pick up his son at a junior high school while listening to a local 50 kW 820 kHz AM BCB. As he got near the pole, it wiped it out and came through his blue tooth speakerphone in his truck.

3. The third took me the longest to locate. As I got closer to the noise source, I got some inaccurate headings from the pre-amplified ferrite loop. I had trouble finding spots far enough away from power lines to avoid their antenna effect. The noise source was in an older, developed area. It was 7 miles away at a heading of 145° and audible even on the 88° Beverage. Of course, it was worse on the 120° and 135° Bevs. When I got to it, it was louder than anything I had encountered on 1.8 and 440 mHz using the FT-817 and ancient

KLM 6 element 440 mHz Yagi with a log cell. After being fixed, my noise level dropped about 5 dB toward the southeast allowing another noise in the general direction to be audible. I suspected that might be the case because when I nulled the first noise with a noise canceler I could hear another noise.

Unfortunately, these three were not the only noises. The Monday and Wednesday before the contest I tried to find the second noise to the southeast and another noise audible on both the 315° and 268° Beverages. I had no luck to the southeast, partly because the northwesterly noise was QRMing it!

On Wednesday, I was determined to find the northwesterly noise. In addition to the contest, I wanted to be able to hear XW4ZW, who was due on the day after the contest. It took me about 1 ½ hours owing to my not believing some headings I got on 1940 kHz with the loop - I thought I was too close to power lines for reliable headings. I found the electric line the noise was on, but two poles had some noise on 440 mHz. I could not get right to them as they were on private, fenced property, which does not always deter me, but there were nearby houses. Luckily, one of the property owners was home and allowed me to traipse across his property.

One pole struck me as more likely to be the culprit than the other, but I was not confident. The noise on 440 mHz was not as strong as I would have thought given the very strong noise on 1.9 mHz. There was an underground drop at the end of the line to the house of the cooperative property owner. We talked for awhile and he mentioned there had been a problem with the underground line, which was at least 40 years old. Two conductors were arcing. The electric utility had repaired it by splicing at the break not by replacing the entire underground line. It occurred to me the line might have broken again, not enough to cause lights to dim, but enough to generate noise. The noise was at a 288° bearing and 4.75 miles.

At any rate, the noise was not eliminated before the contest, so I decided to QRP it instead of struggling to hear weakies through the northwesterly and southeasterly noises. Had I but one of them, I would have merely used a noise canceler. Two made for too much complexity. I had gotten a DX Engineering NCC-2 for better noise canceling than the MFJs sometimes provide. It seems more often than not, the phase setting on the MFJs is at one end or the other of its range, so I suspect having a bit more range would afford more cancellation.

Finding space for the NCC-2 is problematic. Being QRP, I did not bother to put it in service.

### **Other Noise**

Now there are lots of new houses to my north. And new noises from who-knows what. For a while, there was a very loud white noise on the Minnesota Beverage. It just vanished. Now

there was a buzz around 1980 kHz. It was easily discernable over about 10 kHz wide and it tapered off into the background noise beyond that.

I found the house and the noise remained despite throwing all the breakers. So, it must have been on battery backup or from a cable bringing the noise into the house. The alarm system was a prime suspect and the homeowner was going to call the alarm company first. At any rate, about 10 days later, it was gone. I need to find out what it was - I hear a similar noise on a different frequency on the Ducie Island Beverage. The same alarm company has a lot of customers around here. The yard signs make it obvious who they are.

## **Beverage Work**

Thursday before the contest, NN5T came up to what-used-to-be the country. Yan, after being molested by Baron, my ten-month old wire fox terrier puppy, helped me inspect and repair the 120° and inspect the 315/135° Beverage.

The Beverage wire at the terminating resistor on the 120° was broken. I had suspected the terminating resistor was open because I was able to cancel the northwesterly noise using it as a noise antenna. The front to back is normally too high to allow that. It was easily fixed.

The 315/135° Beverage needed some minor tree trimming. Also, there were some breaks in the ladder line insulation in the first 750'. That segment has no nearby trees. The ladder line was hanging rather low in spots. I have seen deer more often than I used to years ago, likely due to encroachment of their habitat by the development of hundreds of acres in the area. I theorize they have hit the line, perhaps with antlers, during very cold weather, causing the breaks. Many of the 3/4" PVC tubing Beverage supports, which sit over either 1/2" electrical conduit or rebar stakes, had sunk into the ground up to four inches.

There was another contribution to the lower height of that Beverage. I had used a wire configuration slightly different from previous ones to attach to the tubing and through which the ladder line passes. That subtracted a few inches of height.

After the contest, I would change the wire configuration and also place 2" o.d. heavy-duty fender washers N9MM gave me over the stakes for the PVC tubes to sit upon, keeping them from sinking into the ground. That will help, but undoubtedly there will be times the ground gets softened enough and the wind is strong enough for the stake to wallow out the hole enough for the PVC tube to tilt and sink. Eventually my plan is to replace that segment with open-wire line supported by T-posts with short lengths of PVC tubing above them to hold the line.

## **Transmit Array Work**

On the menu for Friday of the contest was some radial work. The radial between the R45 and V3 had broken. I had replaced it and connected it at the tower but not on the vertical end. I also had a very long radial ready to install.

But first, as is my custom, I checked to see if control voltage was making it to every terminal on the terminal strips on each of the three switching units of the beam steering combiner. When I have more time, I like to take the covers off to see the relays are actuating. However, in the past, whenever a relay is not actuating with voltage at the terminal strip, it is because a back-EMF diode has shorted. And when that is the case, the voltage on the respective terminal is zero. So, with limited time, I just set the control boxes to get voltage going out to all relays and verify it reaches the terminal strips. Turned out, I measured no voltage on one of the terminals of the V3-V4 pairs combiner. So, the new long radial wire got installed as a control wire from a central junction. By the time all that was done and tools put away, it was 2230Z and the contest was proceeding. I put the QRP Wattmeter in line and set up N1MM, but did not take time to hook up the 41° Beverage to the second K3. I figured I could do that later when the S&P rate slowed.

## **QRP Contest Experience and Goal**

As some know, QRP contesting is no stranger to me. I managed to win the US/VE QRP category in the phone SS and the 10 meter contest from the current QTH and, from the old city QTH, set W5 records in the CQ WW and ARRL DX on both CW and SSB. I QRPed the ARRL 160 in 2011, placing 2nd US/VE and setting the West Gulf Division record.

I worked the CQ 160 CW in 1998 setting a Texas record from the old city QTH. I did that for the same reason as this time - line noise. I had plenty of fun not having to worry about the line noise then and was surprised at how well I did with the 70' omega-matched tower. That record would stand eighteen years until 2016, when I upped it by 76% from the current QTH.

With my 2011 totals of 539 Q x 85 mults = 93,755, I mainly wanted to top it and maybe hit 600 Q's this time around. In 2011, I had the TS-950SDX set up, poorly, as a second receiver on the 41° Beverage. There was some hum on the received audio. I also found diversity using the transmit array on the subreceiver (right ear) was very helpful, not only when running, but S&P'ing, too. Because of those things, I did not even try to use the TS-950SDX. This year, the second K3 has no hum on the audio. In recent contests, I had become more adept at using N1MM to switch frequencies between the two radios, allowing me to find a station on radio 2 and then swap VFOs with radio 1, work the Q, then swap

again and go back to running. So, I had hopes of being able to add some Qs using the second radio.

## **First Night**

I am not well rested and expect to do some sleeping after EU is out. I finally fire up and S&P K4WW at 2245Z. Signals are pretty good already, but sunset is only 35 minutes away at 2320Z. First DX, if you consider 500 miles DX, is XE2X at 2349Z. Jorge is just across the Rio Grande from Hidalgo, Texas. Ciudad Acuña, just across the river from Del Rio, Texas, is closer at 360 miles. Remember XERF?

At 2337Z I get a much longer haul Q by working WW1ME in ME at 1740 miles. I am a bit surprised to bust the pile early to ZF9CW (K5GO). He is 300 miles closer than WW1ME. The band seem decent. I even work another ME at 0021Z, K1JB. These New Englanders are not loud, but their atmospheric noise levels are surely lower than ours, and most hear well but for QRM.

I cannot get through to C6AGU, but know he will be easy after the hoard thins. Ditto TI7W. Indeed, not much later I work them both in a ten-minute span starting at 0048Z. Liberal use of the XIT is paramount. A few minutes later I find VE3CX for ONN. He usually calls me when I am high power, so I am glad to know he runs, too.

I try running when I stumble across a very clear frequency. If I get any answers at all, I usually get one right away and work from three to twelve stations. The rate is great, frequently two and three a minute until it ends. But not for long and when it ends, it really ends! CQing for five minutes or more after the end gets nothing. Spotting, especially spots from the reverse beacon network, obviously accounts for this phenomenon. This is the one instance of spotting I find beneficial.

From 0531 to 0550Z, I have my best run of the contest with 21 Qs on about 1870 kHz. Most distant callers are AA4AK in ME at 1622 miles and N2KW remote operation in WMA. Activity peters out much lower in frequency than a few years ago. I find UA2F CQing at his sunrise period about 0635Z. He is weak and has a hollow sound. No one else calls him and I keep at, just in case, but with little hope of success. He is very far north and probably has a super low noise level. The cost of wasting a few minutes QRP is a lot lower than if I were high power. He finally he QRTs without making a single QSO. EA5RS has a good signal, but, somewhat surprisingly, also cannot hear me.

At 0651Z, a whispery, weak and very hard-to-copy S53O calls me. I do not know

how he can hear me, but he seems to, so into the log he goes. Maybe he has a remote receiver. We shall see if it was a good QSO or a figment of my imagination. I was pretty tired. If valid, it is the only EU Q for the night.

EI2CN operating as EI0R had a good signal when I heard him call and work K5NA. Other EU was mostly weaker. OK2ZI called me with a good signal, no doubt from a spot, but could not hear me at all.

I hear W1SJ a few times, but he is not very loud and cannot hear me. At 0926Z he does, giving me VT. A few minutes later, W1OP in RI, finally hears me after several calls during the past couple of hours. Club station W1OP was the first top band RI we worked from W5YG - Rice U. - in the 1970s. I always like to hear them, even though not the first RI in this contest.

CO2JD is another hard one. He does not hear many people well. Although he is no louder than earlier, at 1035Z I work him. Already had worked CO2AN, but fun to get through. I catch VO1HP easily at 1054Z Saturday morning. That was a kick. There were some guys much closer I amazingly beat out.

As sunrise approaches, I hope for a good opening to JA. I have worked JA once before QRP, but never in a 160 test. Conditions never were close to good enough to permit it. I hear JA3YBK running, well, CQing. He is almost inaudible. Maybe the next morning, but certainly not this morning. I also hear no KH6s.

Sunrise is at 1314Z. I hang it up after working NC0B in CO at 1342Z. I am exhausted. There was enough action I was able to make it through the night without sleep, but just barely.

I heard all states but HI. I was not loud enough to work WL7E - he was pretty weak and had only two callers in the five minutes I listened. I heard N0UD in ND S&Ping, but could never attract him.

First night totals: 413 Q X 80 mults. Missed sections: ND (heard), PR, LAX (heard), EB (heard), PAC, AK (heard), EWA and NT. I am not optimistic about cracking 600 Qs. I think I have worked everyone there is to work, except for some second-night only types. If EU comes in better the second night, I should be able to spend more time calling without sacrificing many US/VE Qs. Some horribly weak stations responding to my 5 W CQs were KV2X, N2JJ and K3HX.

## Second Night

I am far from fresh after I awake in the afternoon, but expect to be able to take several breaks the second night being QRP and having a much-reduced number of stations to work.

It seemed most W6's were hearing impaired for the first night. Given that, it is surprising I lack only EB, LAX and ORG in California. I expect to add it regardless of conditions. I expect to work N0UD or another ND station, too. With the island still a mess, I do not expect PR to be workable. NT? Maybe. And surely KH6 will be easy. KL7 not so likely.

I finally straggle onto the airwaves at 2308Z. Local N5IR answers my CQ, followed by K9HWL then nada. So, S&P it is. There are quite a few second-nighters to work. I again CQ on very clear frequencies, but the "runs" are very small when they happen at all. I also get up around 1872 kHz to run and work the second K3 for S&P Qs. The total rate is not too bad for the second night. 0100Z hour gives 26 Qs and 0200Z 27 Qs, actually better than those hours the first night. So, the second radio was very helpful. K8JQ gave me mult WV. N8II could not hear me the first night. At 0234Z, I get OM3RM, only my second EU of the contest, completing the QSO after lots of repeats of my call and exchange.

Finally I get East Bay via N6DZ at 0313Z. Can LAX and ORG be far behind? Six minutes later I bag TM6M with little work. He has very few callers, despite a good signal. A few kHz above is G4AMT of similar strength and I think another one is in the bag. Well, not so fast. I am the only caller, but he copies "W5OB" somehow, then gets "K5OB" and a few other iterations finally ending with "K5R" something, but never gets my full call. He finally gives up on me. After that, I hear no one else call him.

As in the last QRP efforts, I use the heck out of the N1MM bandmap. When you are QRP, there are plenty of stations who do not come back in a few calls. Almost every time, when I go away and come back in five or ten minutes, I get through quickly. It is so easy to click on the call in the bandmap and not bother with putting stations in memory. I don't even remember how to do that on the K3, I've done it so little. It can be tempting to keep calling until one gets through, especially if it is a mult, but more than three calls is a demoralizing waste of time easily avoided. However, I violate my own rule occasionally, sometimes for no good reason.

At 0804Z, I get through to N6PE in ORG and only two minutes later K7LFY in EWA. The latter was some work - lots of callers. And I only have 3 dB gain over a single vertical toward the NW. EWA taunted me. I heard K7QBO S&Ping perhaps a dozen times, but never running. I would move up a little and CQ, move down a little and CQ, send "UP" on frequency when he completed a QSO, and none worked. Working K7LFY was a big relief.

EU sunrise and no more EU is logged, darn it. I start to doubt getting to 600 Qs, and JA has never been in the QRP cards. After a break, I return to the radio at 1027Z. Again, I run and S&P using the second radio to find new stations. Between the two, the rate is so good, relatively, I keep expecting things to dry up completely any minute, but I cruise through the 600th Q. I add 18 Qs before 1100Z, with more calling me than I get S&P.

Then another 27 Qs during the 1100Z hour, again with more calling me than I get S&P. Good rate continues during the 1200Z hour with 26 Qs. In light of it being the second night, the rate for these 2 ½ hours is astounding to me. On the second radio, I hear a rather frantic set of callers on about 1926 kHz. I cannot hear the object of their fervor. So, I swap the VFO frequencies with the main radio to access the other Beverages. “599 AK.” It is KL7SB. I did not anticipate how easily I get him. (Turns out, he was at the KL7RA station.) His signal is fair and there were lots of callers. XIT is my best friend!

Even though JAs are better than the first morning, they are not nearly strong enough to get through with 5 W. Most are S&P, too. The sun rises at 1314Z. JAs have all but disappeared. I resign myself to the finality of the opening. I take a short break. When I return at 1325Z, I find KM6Z in LAX with a fair signal, but he cannot hear me. Sure wish he had gotten on the air sooner. AA6XV is another who had poor receiving capability. I had a problem being heard by W6s in 2011 as well. I have about 5 dB gain toward southern California. I do not know what their receiving problem is. The Pacific Northwest and New England inexplicably hear me much better than California, and California is 300 to 400 miles closer than either, only 1230 miles from K5RX.

Speaking of poor receiving capability, a non-Californian, AD4ES in FL, was at the top of the list. He was a solid S9 for a long period. Even after his sun rose, when his noise level should have dropped but his signal was undiminished, he heard not a trace of me.

The pain of being unheard in LAX is quickly forgotten at 1332Z when I hear JA3YBK better than ever. I think he is probably not strong enough for him to hear me, but I do not hesitate to call. The Q is done quickly! I tune up the band and find JH2FXK, whom I work almost as easily.

I spend another 20 minutes on the band and work but three Ws. I am again exhausted. Had it been ordinarily second-night slow, I no doubt would have not been able to stay awake through the night.

## Results/Comparisons

	QSOs	Pts	Mult	DX mults	Pt/Q	Score	Oper. Time
2017	675	1392	88	10	2.062	122,496	26:34
2011	539	1103	85	11	2.046	93,755	27:59

N.B.: Operating time is calculated by N1MM which disregards off period under 30 minutes. I had several, so actual operating time is likely one or more hours fewer.

2017 661 2 pointers, 14 5 pointers

2011 531 2 pointers, 12 5 pointers

Missed sections:

2017: ND, PR, LAX, PAC, NT (only ones not heard were PAC and NT)

2011: LAX, SB, SDG, KL7, MB, NT (only ones not heard were SDG and NT)

Only 1 Q with these sections:

2017: NNY, EB, SB, SJV, AK, EWA, NL, MB, SK, BC

2011: WMA, NLI, SFL (weird), VI, EB, ORG, SJV, NL, AB, SK

DX heard and not worked - several EU, but I didn't keep track either year. Conditions to EU much better in 2011 and to JA much better in 2017.

Section/Q's:

	2011	2017
MN	36	38
IL	27	37
NTX	22	21
TN	21	23
VA	20	30
ME	4	7

Almost certainly, I will be running 1.5 kW for the CQ 160. The line noise situation is much better already. The 288 degree line noise is gone. There is a new intermittent noise of some sort around 335° audible on the 0° and 315° Beverages. For a while, I have had an intermittent line noise bearing about 75°. It is not terribly loud and audible only on the 60°

and 88° Beverages. I have an idea where it is. K5IU seems to be hearing it on the higher bands and plans to do a hunt on his own. I expect these noises fixed, but they alone will not keep my Acom 2000A off for the CQ 160. Usually by that contest, the line noise is bearable and manageable with the noise cancelers. It seldom is for the ARRL 160.

73

RX

TOTEM TABLOID  
Western Washington DX Club, Inc.  
P.O. Box 395  
Mercer Island, WA 98040

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The *Totem Tabloid* is published 11 times per year (no August issue) by the Western Washington DX Club, Inc, P.O. Box 395, Mercer Island, WA 98040.

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