



February 2016

NEXT MEETING IS FEBRUARY 9

**MAKING EZNEC EVEN BETTER: AN INTRODUCTION TO
ANTENNA OPTIMIZATION USING AUTOEZ**

“Good antennas are a vital component of an effective station.”

I doubt that any WWDXC members would argue with the above statement. Many of us like to experiment with antenna design and construction, and have used Roy Lewallen’s wonderful EzNEC software to model our designs before cutting wire or tube. Optimizing a design can be done in EzNEC by changing parameters, but editing the wire list is a time-consuming and error-prone process.

AutoEz, written by Dan Maguire, AC6LA, provides a major improvement to the EzNEC user interface and supports design optimization. In about an hour, I plan to demonstrate the capabilities of AutoEz coupled to EzNEC using a simple dipole model, and hope to inspire you to try this powerful tool next time you design an antenna.

Rob Martin
K7QJ / G3WKH

Rob’s 125th Street Grill, 125th 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@arrl.net

The President Speaks

Adam Blackmer, K7EDX

What a month for starting out the New Year! Three highly-wanted entities on the air. All of them were new ones for me. As I write this, VP8SGI, the South Georgia DXpedition team, is wrapping up. It will be fascinating to hear about their adventures just a week or so ago on South Sandwich. As most of you probably know, they were forced to evacuate the island when the bay started to fill up with ice. In another part of the world, the K5P Palmyra Atoll team had some difficult propagation to contend with in the beginning but they finished out their time strongly. Exciting times to be a DXer!

If you're reading this you most likely are an active reader of our Yahoo group. It's a highlight for me as a member of the club. I enjoy the member interaction and the spotting that goes on. Additionally, we have some seriously smart folks in our club and there is always something new to learn. But on rare occasion the use of the Yahoo group strays from its intended purposes. In general, please keep the topics ham radio related. If you are going to get into a longer conversation with just one member, please take the conversation to regular email. Lastly and most importantly, treat others the way you would want to be treated.

Coming up quickly on March 5 is the Mike and Key Swap Meet at the Puyallup Fair Grounds. Once again this year we will have a club information booth on the 2nd floor. We need some help manning the booth. The more people we have the better. What's in it for you? The first two people to sign up get in for free. What's better than that? You can get in early on Saturday! If you are willing to help, please email me.

I hope to see you at the club meeting next week!

Random Comments From the Editor

[The Random Comments piece will not appear this month. It has been displaced by the following editorial from your Editor. For better or worse, Random Comments will return next month.]

Shooting Yourself (and Everyone Else) in the Foot

There is a relatively new phenomenon that has attacked DXing and DX pileups. I'm sure you've all heard it. It is the non-stop calling when the DX station is listening for calls and goes back to one and the related pernicious practice of sending your call when the DX station asks for a call that bears absolutely no resemblance to yours.

Here's what I'm talking about (and the call signs are fictitious): VK9AA works a station and then sends QRZ or TU or whatever the operator is using to let everyone know that he's finished with that QSO and is looking for calls. K7XXX calls but VK9AA goes back to someone else. Nonetheless, K7XXX continues to call, sometimes sending his call three or four times without listening. Meanwhile, VK9AA has worked someone else, finished that QSO, and again solicits calls. K7XXX calls again but loses again, as VK9AA goes back to someone else. Undaunted, K7XXX pushes the button and sends his call again, multiple times.

I am at a complete loss to explain what K7XXX thinks he's accomplishing. VK9AA is obviously working someone else, so all K7XXX is doing is to create QRM and make the completion of the current QSO more difficult, perhaps requiring repeats until VK9AA is satisfied that he has the call sign of the station he's working correct. It also makes it much more difficult for those in the pileup to find the station that's being worked so you can decide where to place your signal. In my 50+ years of ham radio, I don't recall ever working a station while I was transmitting, and unless you have 100% duplex capability you have no idea what's going on while you're transmitting. All you can do by engaging in this practice is to delay getting your call (and the call sign of everyone else) in VK9AA's log.

Please don't tell me that you're trying to "tail end" the current QSO. I bet not one guy in a 1,000 knows how to tail end correctly. Even if you're that one guy, very few DX stations accept tail enders, for a very good reason: if they do so it will encourage the other 999 to attempt what they think is a tail end but isn't—and now all you have on frequency is an undisciplined bunch of callers, a mass of stations calling incessantly and rarely coming up for air. For the DX station, it just means more delay as he tries to get the call sign of the current QSO in the log correctly.

A disclaimer here: I am not talking about getting out of sync with the pileup, i.e., when VK9AA does not come back to a station in the normal time for a reply and you call again—and maybe again. This happens all the time and even the very best operators end up calling when VK9AA is also transmitting. An example: VK9AA finishes a QSO and sends TU. The pileup calls, and you send your call sign once (you all do that, right?). Then there's silence—VK9AA comes back to no one. So everyone calls again, right? Of course, and hopefully VK9AA comes back to someone and the rhythm of the pileup continues. If the DX station does not maintain a predictable rhythm, he invites a second round of calling and the chaos that ensues. Back when I went on one or two DXpeditions each year, I learned very quickly that maintaining the rhythm of the pileup was critical. I can recall instances where I literally could not get even a single letter of a call sign, both on CW and phone. On most DXpeditions where I was one of the operators, especially from Clipperton and Rotuma, there were many times when all of the stations calling were about the same signal strength (except for the guys with 6 over 6 and a legal limit amplifier, or more). There were many times when all I could hear was a buzz. I think it was Rusty, W6OAT, who taught me the trick of going back to *someone* in order to

maintain the rhythm of the pileup—I used JA1USA when working JAs even though I was pretty sure that JA1USA was not calling. Getting out of sync is unavoidable—but that’s not what I’m talking about here.

Even worse from an ethical standpoint is the following: VK9AA manages to get a partial call from the pileup and sends “WB5?” -- and 10 or 15 stations proceed to send their calls: K1XXX, WD8AAA, AG9XX, etc. What can explain this? If the stations calling other than the WB5 are not copying what the DX station sends, then in my opinion they have no business being in the pileup. Assuming the stations calling know that the DX station is trying to get the WB5’s call, by sending their call signs they are *deliberately* creating QRM and slowing down the process. Stated otherwise, these stations who presumably want a QSO and get in the log are actually making that goal more difficult to achieve.

What motivates this behavior? Perhaps these callers think (or hope) that the DX station will give up on trying to work the WB5 and instead work one of them. This is a foolish hope. Many DXers and DXpeditioners are also contesters. Because all contest rules severely punish a busted call, it quickly becomes ingrained in contesters to do everything humanly possible to get the call correct before logging it. And all DXpeditions that involve more than one operator keep track of the accuracy of each operator, so there’s plenty of peer pressure to be as accurate as possible. Finally, the QSL manager who has to deal with emails and telephone calls involving busted calls in the log will make his views known to the group leaders about who on the team is accurate and who is not. Bottom line: sending your call hoping the DX station will give up on the WB5 and work you instead is simply not going to happen.

Dick Norton, N6AA, is a world class operator and DXpeditioner and at one time held most of the contest world records for both phone and CW. Dick told me a long time ago that the ideal pileup is to have *one* station calling at a time. That’s not likely to happen in the real world but anything the pileup does to delay the orderly working of stations is counter-productive. Presumably the stations in the pileup want to work the station they’re calling. But calling all the time and, even worse, sending your call when it bears no resemblance to the call the DX station is trying to get is really shooting yourself in the foot—and doing the same to the other stations in the pileup.

What I’ve said above is, of course, just my opinion. If you have a different view of this or perhaps have an innocent explanation for what I’ve described, let me know. With your consent, I’ll publish any comments in the Tabloid.

January 2016 Contest Activity

Mike "Dink" Dinkelman, N7WA

No real comments this month. I'm definitely in a radio slump personally (I blame work for that). I did notice announcements for Contest Academy and DX University were published on the Visalia website (<http://dxconvention.org/>) in the past few days but no real details yet. I do hope to see many of you at the Puyallup Flea Market next month.

Now, on to last month's activities...

ARRL RTTY RoundUp

Call	QSOs	State/Prov	Countries	Op Time	Score
Single Op HP					
NW7D	676				63,544
WC7Q	412	52	11	6.5	25,956
N7RVD	309	48	22	6.5	21,630
KZ1W	240				13,440

SO Unlimited HP

K7MO	1292	56	24		129,200
@K7BTW					
W7VXS	834	55	15		61,716
K7EG	31	19	9	2	868

Soapbox

K7EG: Rotten DX conditions. Pulled the plug.

K7MO(@K7BTW): Conditions were not very good. We did not really have a EU opening, so almost all of those mults were lost this year. No JA runs either. Our score was down about 50,000 points from 2 and 3 years ago, which is to be expected with declining sun spots. After the contest everybody left for home in the snow. Bottom line: We had a lot of fun.

NW7D: Enjoyed the 2016 ARRL RU RTTY contest, 80 meters was in very good condition and worked all 50 states in the contest. Worked the EU and S. Africa on Sunday morning.

KZ1W: On just a few hours, had to remember how to work RTTY, played with antennas only on 80 & 40, and looked for new band fills, got 3 on 40. Conditions were so-so and DX was pretty scarce. About 50/50 run vs S&P

N7RVD: I played around for a few hours. My low power amplifier has a bug and kept turning itself off. After a few hours of fighting it, I just left it off. I suspect the amp has a bad ground or cold solder joint. Gotta pull it apart... Will try again in August.

WWDXC DXCC Ladder

Jim Rockey, WA7SRZ

The WWDXC DXCC Ladder is now 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.

DX Info Sources

John Owens, N7TK (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 and I’ll include it in future issues.

Useful DX Sites

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

The DX Zone (www.dxzone.com/catalog/)

Internet Ham Atlas (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)

DXing Info (www.dxing.info/dxpeditions)

Ohio/Penn DX Bulletin (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)

K3WWP QSL Routes (http://home.windstream.net/johnshan/dx_ss_qsling.html)

HamQTH Callbook (www.hamqth.com/)_

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

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

Announced DXpeditions

Here are the DXpeditions and dates I have in my calendar as of February 2, 2016 (with no representations that the information is accurate, complete and/or won't change):

Wake Island (K6W)	Postponed
Equatorial Guinea—3C7GIA	Postponed
North Korea (P5)	Postponed to “late Summer” 2016
South Georgia-- VP8SGI	Ongoing—started Jan. 29 at 1500Z
Guinea—3XY1T	February 18-March 4, 2016
Palestine (E44Y)	Cancelled
Heard Island (VK0EK)	March 6-April 20, 2016
Juan de Nova--FT4JA	March 29-April 11, 2016
Cocos (Keeling)--VK9CK	March 14-26, 2016

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

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

February 2016 Contest Calendar

In case anyone reading this is not aware of it, Bruce Horn, WA7BNM, has a website that is truly a one-stop place for all things related to contesting. The link is <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/> or just 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)

Current DX Node telnet addresses:

W7JD-1 - w7jd.ddns.net, PORT 9000

K7EK-1 - k7ek.ddns.net, PORT 9000

W7PKT- w7pkt.net, PORT 7300

Totem Trader

FOR SALE: Have a mint condition **Heathkit SB-221** that is fully modified and on-air checked that I want to sell locally. If interested, I can provide additional information if you contact me at 425-745-0577. John Owens, N7TK

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The Totem Tabloid

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Articles and News Items

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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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