



"Ohio First DXCC Field Checking Club"

The NODXA RAG

NO8DX - Special Event Callsign
W8DXA - NODXA Repeater 147.360
K8MR - PacketCluster 144.91 & 145.57

Web-site: <http://www.papays.com/nodxa.html>

Newsletter: wd8iou@adelphia.net

Northern Ohio DX Association
P.O. Box 450783
Westlake, Ohio
44145 U.S.A.



September-October 2005

Poolside (Closed for the Season) Chat With KB8NW

Fellow DX'ers,

The propagation has been pretty poor lately. This was just one of the topics that some members had a discussion about at the last NODXA meeting in October. Members reported that the propagation for the recent Kure Island (K7C) did not seem to favor Northern Ohio. As this was being typed the K7C operation was beginning to go QRT, and for those who needed it, I hope you were able to work them.

As we move into the winter months, hopefully the propagation will be better. However, we are still heading towards the bottom of the sunspot cycle. Naturally, this means next summer will probably be worse. So, enjoy the winter DX as much as you can.

The next important DXpedition coming up will probably be Glorioso (FR/G). All indications and reports seem to have the operation taking place in late November. There still should be many other things to work before the FR/G hits the airwaves. Remember, you have two major con-

tests (CQWW DX CW/SSB Contests) that take place at the end of October and November. These contests usually bring out interesting islands and countries.

We had a pretty good turnout at the last October NODXA meeting in spite of the high gas prices. It was good to see a few of the NODXA members from the Mansfield area attending. I hope you can attend next month and possibly bring a friend. We will have another DVD to show.

73 and Good DX de Tedd KB8NW



Minutes of the NODXA August 1, 2005 Meeting

In the absence of the President, Tedd, KB8NW; the meeting was called to order at 7:33pm by the Treasurer, Mary, N8DMM.

There were 18 members present.

After a round of introductions by those members in attendance, the Secretary, Al, N8CX read the minutes of the July 11th meeting. The minutes were approved as read.

The Treasurer, Mary, N8DMM reported a balance of \$Ka-Ching! in the account.

Ray, W8BIN and John, K8YSE reported about the interference to the repeater caused by WKNR 850AM (the old WJW). The interference is a broad spectrum arcing sound seemingly appearing on modulation peaks. It can be heard even on VHF.

Pete, N8TR, reported on the cluster. He said that in about a month we will have a T1 Line for an internet connection or an AR cluster which costs money or, a LINUX setup would be free. Glenn, AF8C, volunteered to help with setting up a LINUX system. Pete said that we only need a Pentium 1 or 2 for the job.

Dave, WD8IOU, reported that the newsletter is in progress.

Old Business: Mary, N8DMM, read some items that had been supplied from Tedd, KB8NW. In addition to mention of the Warren Hamfest and the Ohio QSO Party. A short discussion was held concerning another donation to the Peter I DXpedition. Action was deferred until the President was back at the next meeting.

George, K8KR, reported on the Ohio QSO Party website and all the information that was there.

Nick, W8XD, John, K8YSE and Pete, N8TR are all at the top of the DXCC Honor Role with all 335 entities confirmed.

George, K8KR, is close behind with 332 entities confirmed.

Bob Haynes, K8RH, a NODXA member, came to the meeting late and reported that the interference from WKNR might not go away soon. He reported that the transmitters are unmanned and

that there may be one person who services it as he makes his rounds would be called in on the interference report.

George, K8KR, gave a lengthy report on his recent visit and station setup at N Royalton Middle School. The setup was from 8am to 3pm and 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th graders came through and viewed the display. A CW, SSB, and VHF station were shown. They had an SSB contact with Belize, V31.

Due to the Labor Day holiday, the next meeting will be Monday, September 12.

The 50-50 Raffle was won by Denny, WB8K.

Tonight's program will be a DVD Ducie DXpedition.

The program for the September meeting will be a tape of the 1989 Bouvet DXpedition

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12pm by Treasure, Mary, N8DMM

Respectfully submitted, Al, N8CX, Secretary

Minutes of the NODXA September 12, 2005 Meeting

The meeting was opened at 7:34pm by the President, Tedd, KB8NW.

There were 12 members present.

After a round of introductions, the Secretary, Al, N8CX, read the minutes of the August 1st meeting. After two minor corrections, the minutes were approved as read.

The Treasurer, Mary, N8DMM reported a balance of Ka-Ching! in the account.

Pete, N8TR, reported that membership is down a little this year. Al, N8CX, asked what the fiscal year was and when dues are actually due. The club uses May 1st through April 30th as its fiscal year.

Ray, W8BIN and Pete, N8TR, reported on recent interference problem and work on the MCI tower where the repeater antenna is located. Pete, N8TR, took pictures of some cable routing and some bare wire that was touching a newly installed dish antenna. This was causing the arcing which produced the interference problem.

John, K8YSE, credited Bob, WA8CEW with

discovering the cause of the problem. The 145.15 repeater has another problem and has been removed for repair. Pete, N8TR, also reported that the 145.57 cluster is down and that the 144.91 cluster is operating.

Dave, WD8IOU, requested articles for the newsletter.

Dwaine, K8ME, reported that he has received QSL cards from Field Day. He had also received a certificate from the Whitby ARC, VE3WOM. They were a Special Event station during June 2005 and NODXA worked them on Field Day.

Tedd, KB8NW reported that the Ohio Section Conference was the following Saturday (September 17th) in Columbus.

A discussion among the members discussed the situation in Louisiana. The ARRL sent out emails stating that hams should not go south.

Tedd, KB8NW, commented that the Cleveland Hamfest was coming up on Sep 25th. He asked for table volunteers at the NODXA club table. Tedd also commented that members should be receiving emails concerning the upcoming Great Lakes Division election for Director and Vice-Director.

The club had no new requests for monetary donations to DXpeditions. Concerning the Peter I DXpedition, the club decided not to send additional funds. It was reported that they had recently received a sum from the Northern California DX Association.

The 50-50 raffle was won by Dwaine, K8ME. The amount was \$19.

The scheduled program tonight is a tape of the 1989 Bouvet DXpedition

Before the program, John, K8YSE, gave a demonstration of Echolink operation on his 444.075 UHF repeater. He has been experimenting with it for about a year. He explained and demonstrated various "quick key" operations. He then brought up the AH6GR repeater in Hawaii. www.Echolink.org has free software and all the details of operation. Echolink,

Yaesu's Wires, IRLP and VoIP are all different systems and have different uses.

Bruce, N8DJX, questioned a declining balance in the Treasury. Mary, N8DMM, explained that

donations and other expenses take their toll. The newsletter costs \$50 to \$60 per month.

Ron, K8VJG, purchased a VHS-DVD combination unit for the clubs' use from his own money. He declined to be reimbursed for the purchase. The members thanked Ron for his donation.

The meeting was closed at 8:43pm by the President, Tedd, KB8NW.

Respectfully submitted, AI, N8CX, Secretary

"Romeo, Romeo, Wherefore Art Thou, Romeo?"

Gather 'round the campfire, boys and girls...

A few months back, I posted a note on the Society of Midwest Contesters reflector asking if anybody knew the whereabouts of our dear old friend Romeo Stepanenko, 3W3RR. As many will recall, Romeo had a habit in the late 1980's and early 1990's of popping up with his gear from some of the rarest countries in the world of ham radio, make tens of thousands of contacts, and then getting us armchair DX'ers to flood him with requests for QSL cards (which included "green stamps") that often came very late or not at all.

There was also that minor issue of him not being able to provide the DXCC administrators with the proper documentation from some of his adventures, proving he was indeed where he said he was. In the parlance of DX'ing, Romeo was the ultimate Slim, a pirate.

I'm a musician, and I figured if ever there was somebody that was worthy of a scurvy-dog, sea-shanty kind of song, ol' Romeo was that person. There were rumors he was a shady character, who showed up at the Dayton Hamvention in 1999, years after being expelled from DXCC, and then disappeared from the face of the Earth. He is the sort that is perfect for song and story. I needed factual material for the tune, so I started to do my homework. The note to the SMC reflector was the beginning of that homework.

I didn't get much response other than a couple of notes that said, "Yeah, whatever happened

to that guy?" So, In July 2005, I posted a note on Eham.com in their DX forum, entitled "Wherefore Art Thou, Romeo?" Again, no info.

So, I started searching on Google. I found an article online about ham radio in Afghanistan that mentioned him in passing, and a site that had several of Romeo's QSL's (including WX9X's fake P5/ROMEO card he handed out at Dayton one year). I printed the articles and stuck them in my notebook I keep for writing lyrics, where they have sat for a while, collecting dust. I forgot about it and moved on to other projects.

On the evening of October 19, 2005, I received a phone call from an inspector with the U. S Postal Service based in St. Louis. He said he needed to meet with me concerning an investigation of "...one of my associates." I obviously made myself available at his earliest convenience, which was the next day's lunch hour.

I ran over to my friend Matt, NM9H's place. Was he trading endangered animals over the Internet? Circumnavigating customs laws by importing fresh fruit from Venezuela? Ripping tags off of mattresses and mailing them to Botswana? He assured me he was doing nothing of the sort, as he was "...an old man with a house full of kids, with neither the time nor energy to be surreptitious."

A night of fitful sleep ensued. We jazz and folk musicians have a sordid history in America, often lumped together with other unsavories like gangsters, communists, and bootleggers. Which of my compadres had warranted constabulary intervention, and how did the Postal Service get involved? Besides, my youthful indiscretions are long over, as I have nothing to be discrete about any longer and I'm closer to middle-aged than youthful. In short, like my friend NM9H, I'm boring and getting old.

The Inspector came to my place today (20 October 2005), and after some pleasantries, asked if the name Roman Vega meant anything to me; I truthfully answered no. He then asked if I was a ham operator, to which I said yes. He then asked if the name Romeo Stepanenko meant anything to me, and I nodded uncertainly. The Inspector then produced a printout of my Romeo

inquiry on Eham.com. He said he was following up on an investigation from the US Department of Justice in San Francisco concerning our beloved Romeo, and he wanted to know why I was asking about him in a public forum.

I gave him a Reader's Digest version of ham radio, DX'ing, and an overview of the DXCC program. I explained how Romeo pretended to operate from various exceptionally rare places, duped tens of thousands of us into sending him SASE's with green stamps included, and was then caught and expelled from the DXCC program for these fraudulent ham activities. I explained why this caused such a scandal to a program that has had an exceedingly high level of ethics and scrutiny associated with it over the years.

He was quite interested in people sending dollars along with QSL requests. I explained it was customary to help pay for the QSL you're going to receive, especially when dealing with an operation from a place as rare as Myanmar or North Korea.

I then had to explain to him why I'd want to write a song about such an unsavory character. As I explained, every hobby or pastime has some level of folklore or legend attached to it, and Romeo is one of the most infamous characters in the history of DX'ing. In baseball, people wrote songs about Jackie Robinson and Joltin' Joe. Bob Dylan wrote about Emmett Till. Heck, Frank Zappa wrote about a wacko dubbed by the press as The Illinois Enema Bandit. Numerous ballads have been written about pirates, oddballs, do-gooders and ne'er-do-wells in all cultures all around the globe. Ham Radio DX'ing may be a small culture in the grand scheme of things, but it is a culture nonetheless. It stands to reason that, just like any other culture, the heroes are glorified and the villains are reviled. To me, writing a song about Romeo seemed logical and fun.

After an hour of questioning by the Inspector (nice guy, by the way), he said it was quite obvi-

Thanks to the following for their contribution to this months edition: N8TR, N8DMM, W8BIN, KB8NW, N8CX, K8YSE, K8DJC, KX9X, N5NW, K6AER, eHam.net, and the ARRL Letter.

ous I wasn't involved in any of Romeo's current shenanigans, and proceeded to tell me The Story:

Roman Vega, aka Romeo Stepanenko, was arrested and extradited from Cyprus to the United States in March of 2004, and has been charged with 40 counts of wire fraud and trafficking in stolen credit card numbers. He is alleged to have done this in online chat rooms. The Inspector I spoke with indicated that he allegedly bilked over \$3 million out of this scheme. Romeo has pleaded not guilty to all charges. He has been held in northern California, as he is considered a flight risk. His trial is scheduled to begin in San Francisco on Monday, November 28.

Here is a link to the US Department Of Justice press release: http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/can/press/html/2004_06_04_vega.html

Here is a link to the actual indictment filed in Federal Court: http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/can/press/assets/applets/2004_06_04_Vega_ind.pdf

As Paul Harvey would say, "Now you know the rest of the story."

The Inspector never informed me that I was not allowed to discuss this, so I'm posting it here for all to see. He indicated the case against Romeo looked quite good indeed, and that they were following up on all leads they had concerning him. I was "lucky" enough to have been considered a Person Of Interest; I got to see a copy of my Federal subpoena, where I was "commanded" to appear in Federal court on November 28 at 8:30AM. The Inspector indicated this would probably not be needed. He did mention that San Francisco is quite nice this time of year, though, and it was almost a pity I wouldn't get to take the Government up on their free "vacation." I gave him one of those nervous smiles and waited for him to move on.

He left me his card, said he'd file his report, and told me I'd probably never hear from him again. He did give me the case number (Northern District Of California CR04-0101 CRD), since it's a matter of public record. The fact that I was sitting on the edge of my seat as he was telling me this, slack-jawed and with my eyes as wide as saucers, might have had something to do with him giving me the info as well.

How did I get associated with Romeo? I'm just a ham operator who had one QSO with him when he was in Vietnam (still my only 3W QSO), spent probably hundreds of hours listening for him from his other far-flung locales, but never worked him anywhere other than 3W. I just happened to ask the right question at the wrong time. It certainly is interesting what bites sometimes when you go fishing, eh?

I'm finally recording my solo CD now. I'll be sure to let everybody know when it's done. I could use a lead player, though; maybe I should give WB6ACU a call...

73, Sean Kutzko, KX9X, Gillespie, IL

Recharging HT Batteries

By Michael S. Higgins (K6AER) via eHam.net

Many hams often wonder why their batteries last only a few years awhile other hams are using their rechargeable batteries 6 years after buying their HT with long use cycles. Your charging and discharge habits have more to do with your battery life cycles. These tips will optimize performance and obtain longer life cycles from your rechargeable batteries.

1. Initialize your new battery by charging overnight before using it.
Nickel Cadmium or Nickel Metal Hydride: 14-16 hours.
Lithium Ion: 1 to 2 additional hours after charger light turns green.
2. New, non-initialized batteries must be stored in well ventilated, cool and dry locations. Batteries stored in these conditions may be stored:
Nickel Cadmium - up to 2 years.
Nickel Metal Hydride - up to 18 months
Lithium Ion/Polymer - up to 18 months
3. If used batteries are removed from service for periods longer than 30 days, they should be discharged to about 50% of their capacity before storage.
4. Batteries which have been stored for more than two months should be fully dis-

charged and recharged.

5. Do not leave your radio and fully-charged battery in the charger when not charging. Continuous charging will shorten battery life.
6. Only charge a battery when it needs it. If it is not fully discharged, do not re-charge it. Carry a spare.
7. Stabilize batteries to room temperature (72 F) before charging.
8. Do not return fully charged non-impres batteries to the charger for an "extra boost". Repeated short cycle charging will shorten battery life.
9. Batteries will not store indefinitely. Do not buy a spare battery to use in a few years after your present one dies. The battery will last longer with careful use than sitting on the shelf indefinitely waiting for initial use. Buy your replacement battery when you need it.
10. Store batteries at room temperature. Batteries exposed to low or freezing temperatures will have a shortened life.
11. Do not quick charge batteries from a high current source. It will separate the internal acid gel and you risk explosion from heat build up.
12. Not all batteries packs are built the same or have the same quality. Buy cheap and buy often is the caveat in the two way radio world.

Ham Radio for the World!

By Marty Watt (N5NW) via eHam.net

Although I'm now local to Dayton, I had a business trip to take and found myself at the Dayton airport for a 1:35pm flight Sunday afternoon after the Dayton HAMVENTION, bound for Detroit. Probably 20 or 25 hams on the flight (regional jet, capacity around 65 I'd guess). As we were waiting, the only seat vacant was next to me. Who walks down the aisle?

Martti Lane, OH2BH.

Man, what an absolute stroke of luck. 45 un-

interrupted minutes of conversation with perhaps one of the greatest ambassadors of ham radio in the world. I almost felt like I'd been granted an audience with the Pope or something ... But here was a very down-to-earth guy genuinely interested in a conversation with me. Very sincere, very genuine, and very easy to speak with.

Martti spoke at the contest forum, and was organizing WRTC 2002 in Finland. But on the plane, he spoke to me about the first WRTC in Seattle, and the problems that were encountered that the Organizing committee was trying to avoid 10 years later.

That led to a discussion of what good ham radio can do as ambassadors, and how little the typical DXpedition (both general DX and contest) adds to the local environment. He (like I) visited Albania. I made about 45 contacts. He made several thousand contacts, and created 20 or so licensed amateurs, and instituted the amateur radio system in the government of Albania. Even the license document format (double columns, in Albanian and English) was his creation.

He didn't say this to brag ... far from it. Rather, making a positive impact on the locations he visits has become a priority. He was so taken aback by the hospitality of the Albanian people, and how the experience impacted him (and his son, who accompanied him). But since then, his outlook on DXpeditions has changed. As he told me, DXers will never be the Red Cross, nor should we be. But we (as a whole) need to examine ways we can leave the areas we visit better than we found them. And not just with our equipment. We have to also share our knowledge. And, hard as this is to realize, we may have a little to learn ourselves. Martti freely admits he got more from his experience in Albania than he left.

He spoke of his host family back in 1992, and the matriarch going about each morning to gather the day's food from various vendors in the neighborhood in which they lived. This same ritual occurred during my visit two years ago. One shop for bread, another for produce, another for meat. Nothing beyond that day, as preservation of foods is still quite difficult, and appliances hard to come by.

NODXA Club Officials for 2005-2006

President - Tedd Mirgliotta, KB8NW (440-237-2816)
V. President - Dwaine Modock, K8ME (440-582-3462)
Secretary - Al Moriarty, N8CX (216-221-3682)
Treasurer - Mary Michaelis, N8DMM (440-236-5426)
Newsletter Editor - David Autry, WD8IOU (440-238-0417)

As of March 2002
Current DXCC Entities Total is:

335

But one particular morning, the matriarch returned with something special. After asking around, she had located an egg. One egg. And as the family gathered, they insisted that Martti's son enjoy the egg that obviously they hadn't had in some time. Martti's son told him that was the most difficult egg he had ever eaten. But the family did receive their reward ... they enjoyed him, enjoying the egg!

He spoke of the Solomon Islands trip, and how they convinced the locals to manufacture soaps and other materials from the native coconut trees. For a \$25 donation to the local cause, you got a commemorative QSL, rather than the standard QSL. You got the card perhaps a few days quicker. But the locals got the money. He ex-

pected to raise perhaps \$4,000 to \$5,000 and ended up with five times that, through the generosity of the DX community.

I really didn't intend that this sound "preachy". But I hope we all begin asking questions of the DXpeditions about how they have a positive impact on the places they visit. I hope we demand our contesters who are selected for WRTC also remember that they are ambassadors for amateur radio and the USA, whether or not they want to be. The WRTC is an excellent opportunity. Recall the US Hockey Team at the Nagano Olympics? They trashed the place after a loss. They forgot that they were not only competitors, but also Ambassadors.

Other countries come to mind -- North Korea

offered some real opportunities before the current crisis, and perhaps will still be an opportunity, just as Albania did in 1970 when Martti first visited. It took 22 years, but Amateur Radio is now established. And the Albanian regime was even tougher than the current North Korean regime! Many inroads can still be made in Southeast Asia, China, and the African continent. Ham Radio -- Ambassadors of International Goodwill. Martti, thanks for sharing that plane ride with me. It has changed my outlook on Amateur Radio, and how we might impact our world for positive change.



Just hanging out on Field Day! (Photo by K8YSE)



NODXA Meetings are held the first Monday of each month at the **Gourme Family Restaurant** at 15315 Pearl Road (Rt. 42) just west of Interstate 71 and south of Rt. 82 in Strongsville at 7:30 PM. Come early and have dinner and meet your fellow DXers and enter the 50/50 raffle.

NODXA Application and Renewal Form

The Northern Ohio DX Association is a non-profit organization with a primary interest in DXing. We encourage all DXers to join our group and share the interest and fun of DXing. Please complete the application below and send along your appropriate dues or renewal to:

NODXA, P.O. Box 450783, Westlake, Ohio 44145

- First Time Membership/Renewal (U.S.) \$12.00
- Foreign Membership (outside U.S.) \$22.00
- *Foreign Membership (no printed newsletter) (but w/Web access for newsletter) \$12.00

Name _____ Callsign _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State/Prov. _____
 Country _____ ZIP _____
 E-mail _____
 ARRL Member? ___ Exp. Date _____ DXCC Member? ___
 Special Interest _____

Newsletter circulation: Pete Michaelis **N8TR**, Mary Michaelis **N8DMM**, and "Radio Ray" **W8BIN**

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Please Rush**



The Northern Ohio DX Association
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